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CREATIVITY - PTU1! EDITORIAL

A pox on education. With four percent of our population in college and each of us spending twelve plus years pursuing the holy grail of knowledge through education it's time to holler BULL. Knowledge may be power, but the truth may point you to freedom, but our educational system is a stupefying waste of time. This is a warning to all those who still struggle for betterment for our nation's schools and universities. Truth #1: Schools don't exist to impart knowledge and understanding to students. Schools exist to provide jobs for citizens who can't hack it outside a safe bureaucracy. Schools exist to enrich construction firms. Schools provide another method of parceling our "pork barrel" dollars. Schools also provide a few per-level administrative positions for the politically and socially faithful. Students are merely a necessary evil of education. You can learn a lot, but you are taught very little.

Truth #2: Creative thinking, education's chimerical goal, is an easy sell to the world of today. Our society is glutted with those who want to be lured into creative thinking. We have a glut of intellectualism. Fortunately, a pop electrician earns more than a humanities PhD, or we'd have thought ourselves into a crude barrel. If literally verbiage, Stone Age. Sophistry is a far easier goal for education to achieve than developing the ability to do, to produce. Truth #3: A competent, 'doer' is worth a thousand good ideas. Our system is desperately short of people who know how things work and how to get things done. For every ten capable of thinking, great thoughts, there's only one guy who can turn out a useable, finished product. Great thoughts are worthless without competent implementation. The Last Truth: Blame only yourself when you can't do something. If you've got four years plus college and can't manage your finances, blame yourself. If you end in a 'nothing' job, blame yourself. If you've never accomplished any of your great ideas, blame yourself. If you're so confused you have a "nothing" job, blame yourself. If you've made a few upper-level administrative positions for the politically and socially faithful. Students are merely a necessary evil of education. You can learn a lot, but you are taught very little.

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By the way, how often do you feel absolutely bored and wasted sitting in some classroom? If you're thinking it may not be worth it have a pox on education. With four percent of our population in college and each of us spending twelve plus years pursuing the holy grail of knowledge through education it's time to holler BULL. Knowledge may be power, but the truth may point you to freedom, but our educational system is a stupefying waste of time. This is a warning to all those who still struggle for betterment for our nation's schools and universities.
Speculations

ORBITING COLONIES

by Charles R. Bowles

Visiting and colonizing other star systems requires technology that we do not presently have and probably will not have for a significant period of time.

Except for possibly Mars and Venus even the planets of our own star system are not suitable for colonization even for the distant future. The technological requirements for transport to and maintenance of colonies are extreme. However, establishing colonies on the moon, in ocean orbit and in solar orbit requires no significant technological development, only national and economic commitment. With such a commitment we could see earth-orbiting colonies before the year 2000 and solar-orbiting colonies two or three decades later.

In less than four years the Space Shuttle is scheduled to go into service. The Space Shuttle is a significant change from previous space projects in many ways. First, the shuttle and its booster rockets are reusable. Only the large external fuel tank is expendable. This cuts the cost per pound of putting a payload into orbit dramatically. Also, the shuttle is the first manned vehicle to actively sell missions to other government agencies, other governments and private corporations, domestic and foreign, in an attempt to broaden the economic base for space development. It is also the first vehicle designed to recover and return satellites to earth as well as place them in orbit. The 60,000-pound orbital payload, being utilized for military, scientific and economic projects from 1980 to 1991, will go a long way in laying the technical experience needed before large, permanently manned satellites can be built. The shuttle will also help convince the taxpayers and voters of this planet that space projects are really profitable, but most of all, practical.

Another project seriously being considered might move us rapidly into the giant manned-satellite era. NASA is committing tens of thousands of dollars to feasibility studies on orbital solar power stations. The first working-scale model of the Satellite Solar Power Station (SSPS) was launched in 1978. The proposed design of the full-sized SSPS calls for two adjacent solar collectors, each 97 square kilometers with 32 square kilometers of solar cells. Between the two collectors would be a dished-shaped transmitting antenna one kilometer in diameter aimed back to earth. The receiving antenna grid on the ground would cover 55 square kilometers. The station would deliver to the ground power system 10,000 Mega Watts or about three percent of the present U.S. electric generating capacity. Because the earth's axis of rotation is tilted relative to the sun, an equatorial synchronous orbit would keep the SSPS in sunlight and operated twenty-four hours a day year round, except for a few hours at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. Also, in this quitorial synchronous orbit, the SSPS would appear to be a fixed point in the sky and one aimed at a ground of approximately one degree of latitude. To prevent atmospheric and meteorological interference the transmitter will probably operate in the microwave radiation range. Although strong security would be observed around the receiving antenna, to prevent animals or people from entering into the area, even exposure for several days at the center of the receiver antenna would be harmless. THE POWER CONVERSION efficiency is a critical factor in the SSPS due to the fact that most efficiency occurs at the point that heat which is very difficult to get rid of in space. Only twelve percent of the solar energy hitting this space platform can be converted into electricity. The efficiency drop from the time the electricity leaves the solar cells until it enters the commercial grid on the ground would be only 40%. Expected technical advances should bring these losses, due to atmospheric causes and the conversion of electricity to microwave and back to electricity, etc. down to 25%.

That the SSPS can be built and utilized with present technology is not questioned. The question is the cost. The latest estimate of capital costs of the SSPS is $1720 per kilowatt with expected developments, but the same source gives a present capital cost of $900 per kilowatt and a possible high cost of $2940 per kilowatt, all based on the utilization of the reusable space transport vehicle in the construction.

A major consideration in cost is the expense and availability of alternative energy sources. The oil embargo and the resistance of the western states to having a portion of their mountains relocated due to oil shale and coal mining and the increasing reliance on rapid proliferation of nuclear power plants all make the SSPS costs appear more practical.

PROFESSOR O'NEIL of Princeton to build a large permanently manned space colony to assemble and maintain large numbers of Satellite Solar Power Stations has received attention and support (Analog July 76, Smithsonian Feb. 76). The concept, if implemented, would resupply the SSPS assembly crew with food and oxygen and the cost of rotating them back and forth also by an almost self-sufficient colony in space.

THE COLONY would be located in space at a point called L5, roughly at the apex of an equatorial triangle with the earth and the moon at the other two apexes. The proposed colonies come originally in two sizes: both colonies were a pair of long cylindrical rotating stations located back to back. The smaller cylinders would be 100 meters in diameter and one kilometer long. The larger cylinder 600 meters in diameter by three kilometers long holding 100,000 people. People would live on the moon soil for raising some crops, homes, streets and even rain clouds. The sun would be reflected into the interior of the structure by the billions of sus-
ing the molten-mixing stage before they can be cooled. (Microcircuits may be one of the first space manufacturing industries due to the very high value to weight ratio of the product.) Metal alloys never before possible could be produced in space. Small quantities injected into molten sheet migrate to the top of the cooling liquid before it solidifies. In zero gravity the bubbles would not migrate, resulting in a high-strength light-weight steel which would look a little like plastic foam.

Why Manufacture the individual components of a space station heavy enough to withstand the forces of getting them into orbit when you could put the partially-processed material into orbit and then finish the manufacturing processes to produce a far lighter and flimsier structure? Once the SSF is in place there will be no strong forces applied to it in the form of wind or gravitational forces. Why manufacture the solar collector's metal support frame and the transmitting antenna out of metal manufactured in space many times thinner than the thinnest aluminum now manufactured? This is currently under development to produce solar cells in a continuous ribbon process offers the possibility of making a small fraction of the cost of solar cells to a small fraction of the former cost. Why should the manufacturing process in space and the thickness of the solar cells by a thousand times? Extruding molten substances of any composition into super-thin sheets is very difficult on earth. If the extruder goes faster than the mechanism pulling the sheet along, the molten sheet will build up thicker than desired. If the extruder goes faster than the mechanism pulling the sheet along, the extruder will tear and separate. In space the molten extruded sheet will drift effortlessly through vacuum until it has cooled and gained strength. Then it will be gently maneuvered into the desired position.

The ability to produce and alter g-forces is an important part of the advantage of space. By increasing or decreasing the spin of a portion of the manufacturing facility, the g-force can be varied from zero to several g-forces at any point in the manufacturing process. Also there should be a g-value between 1/8th and 1/4th earth's gravitational force, which would be the most productive for physical labor. The force would be strong enough to allow the man to hold his balance and work, but weak enough to allow the man to lift several times his own weight with relative ease and move about doing his job with speed and ease.

The void of orbital space would be an honey industries both as an infinite source of vacuum and as an area without life forms or population. The vacuum is better than any that can be produced on earth, and is free to use in getting rid of unwanted vapors and liquids without an environmental protection from any Environmental Protection Agency. Industrial processes such as the final stages of plutonium manufacture, and scientific research such as the advanced experimentation with genetic modification of bacteria and viruses are inherently dangerous to life. Less spent on safety systems, backup systems and more backup systems to prevent contamination. The need for most of the material that would be reduced or eliminated by a space facility in earth-orbiting or skimming-orbiting would be reduced or eliminated by a space facility in earth-orbiting or skimming-orbiting. (The series 999 is based on the use of the moon as a dump for dangerous radioactive waste. The free energy of space would be a tremendous advantage to most industries. The atmosphere filters out most of the energy from the sun. Southeast or a clear summer midday receives only about 11% of the solar energy that, and indeed, along would receive. Solar cells would provide ample electricity for most industrial applications in space. Light from the sun is used for melting, fusing, large volume welding, etc. by a large parabolic mirror made of thousands of yards of super metal foil. This free energy would also supply fuel. Soil crops, or hydroponics, and the proposed way of feeding the population on space colonies, but there are many other possibilities. Plankton and algae might be used in an intermediate in the food chain... Algae or plankton could be pumped through fairly small plastic tubing extended out and a massive spider web. Materials imbedded in the plastic during manufacture would filter out or reflect most of the harmful radiation, but not the radiation beneficial to animal growth. The temperature, and high sunlight exposure twenty-four hours a day, would stimulate algae and increase production rate. (Algae forms account for 90% of the photosynthesis on earth, so why not for oxygen and food production?) In the more distant future the food may be totally or partially synthesized. Photosynthesis results in a large amount of light to bond carbon dioxide and water into a hydrocarbon chain with the liberation of oxygen. Carbon dioxide and hydrogen gas heated over a catalytic plate of copper oxide and chromium oxide is the way more than 30% of the methyl alcohol produced in the world is made. From the methyl alcohol starting point or several starting points virtually all the compounds found on earth and foods can be synthesized. The present complication is the high cost due to the complexity of the processes required. But in space, with the unlimited supply of energy and the advanced technology, the potential of these items of food may become the most efficient and most economical.

Space colonies may become the home of earth's excess population not due to the need for room or the problems of industrial pollution, but because the colonist might be the only place the extra mouths can be fed. With so many manufacturing advantages, limitless energy and no absolute limit on food production, orbital space seems a very promising area for growth. Indeed, with many prominent politicians already speaking of the future in terms of Diminished Expectations, space might be the thermal energy source significant economic and population growth.

When space colonies become large enough in size and diversity to be totally independent of earth both physically and emotionally, this new orbit to solar orbit to mine the asteroid belt or even to the orbits of the other planets in our system offers an advanced civilization significant advantages and a variety of resources. Even the asteroids will probably live above the planet. Mars will have no stored energy like Earth has; no coal, no natural gas and no other energy source. (Many nations already mining asteroids would make a very interesting objective for war games. Who needs strange creatures invading from a distant star system? It's much easier to request a reason for war. Imagine wars between earth and its orbiting colonies of Barren Earth and its orbiting colonies of Mars and the rest of the planets and asteroid belt.

Colonies could be soft and easily destroyed or protected by force fields making them a very difficult target. They could have a fixed orbit or a variable orbit and be able to shift slowly or one planet's orbit to another planet's orbit. The populations would make themselves very difficult to attack. The movement of the entire manufacturing capacity of a civilization to an equivalent of a nation, anywhere) from the orbit of one planet to another within the solar system would prove an interesting game situation.

And for the gamer who must have interesting conflict, consider the development programs laid out for future civilization for the next five to ten decades in orbital colonies. Is it not likely that other space civilizations are going through a similar orbital colony growth phase? The exploration of stellar space may be plentiful. Solar energy will be available only during daylight hours, whereas, orbiting colonies above Mars will have solar energy continuously.

The development of orbital colonies within our solar system is more than feasible and probable, but also a very interesting game situation.

Who needs strange creatures invading from a distant star system? It's much easier to request a reason for war.
show that many, even most civilizations have more of their populations living on orbiting planets than on planets. Orbiting manufacturing colonies would add significantly to even interstellar warfare games.

**THE SPACE WARSHIP: PROGNOSTICATIONS**

by Scott Rusch

In TSG #3 I stuck myself out on a limb by calling for more science in our science fiction wargames. I believe when one makes such statements one should try to back them up, so here are my ideas on the warship of the next few centuries.

"more science in our science fiction wargames"

First off, I am going to work with extrapolations of present technology and with devices which one can reasonably expect will be invented. There will be gravitic drives or impervious Puppeteer hulls. There are possibilities enough to explore without considering them.

The first problem is the ship's drive. Low acceleration (i.e. Ion) or high fuel consumption (i.e. Chemical) drives will probably not be used. This leaves various fission and fusion engines. The NERVA engine is not efficient enough to be much good. The DUMBO and gaseous fission engines, on the other hand, will be more useful, as they heat the fuel better. The DUMBO is, at the present time, the most practical of the fission engines available. (See Kingsbury's article in the December 1975 ANALOG.)

As for the fusion drives, the Orion nuclear pulse drive (propulsion by a series of small nuclear explosions) or a drive as yet undiscovered would heat fuel as a fission drive can do. Both can give us the high accelerations needed for warships to allow them either to escape slower enemies or to pick the moment of attack.

**GAME DESIGN NOTES**

Describing a good game is simple, if you're willing to put in nine parts sweat for every part of genius. Basically, you start with a design concept, some sort of framework and/or constraints for what you would like the game to achieve. For example, THE YTHRI was conceived as a tactical space conflicts assault and conquest game. It was to be a fairly simple, 2-player game with short playing time. It required some rethinking to suit Anderson's book, The People of the Wind, though the relation would be fairly abstract. Each event with criteria/constraints sounds like an academic course-work exercise without real meaning. But, you'll find having a central concept an invaluable backstop when deciding on design detail. As your game design progresses the initial concept will evolve. Don't be too afraid that initial concept if detail design work and play-testing reveals some initial lapses. What you are afraid of is that it does not have something that can be used. The rules should have:

1. A brief introduction that tells what the event is, does, and how conducted,
2. A sequence of sub-events if the major event has different activities that need to be phased,
3. A set-up-for-play section that tells players how to set up the game for play and how to start play,
4. A sequence-of-game-events that tells how to play in one, two, three type steps,
5. A section describing each game event in detail. Ideally this should include:
   a. general statement of what the event is, does, and how conducted,
   b. a sequence of sub-events if the major event has different activities that need to be phased,
   c. a statement of specific rules applicable to the event that covers necessary actions, prohibited actions, and optional actions,
   d. illustrations if appropriate, pictures are ideal, that portray the basics of the event.

A good rule to use for an event is that an event is a series of player decisions and actions that logi-
cally related occur simultaneously in game time. What is useful to explain a complex event that is an indigestible lump as a whole, or when a sequence of sub-actions in an event require some to be done before others. A section describing how you win and/or score the game, and

7. All other sections not covered in one thru six. These may be optional rules, etc. Attributive, the mississippi-anous rule item doesn't belong in one of the other sections. For instance, description of how map terrain affects play counter movement could be classed in the section describing play components when the map is described, in the section covering events or perhaps in both places.

That is a brief introduction into the area your rules should cover. You may structure the usefully, but the same information had better be clearly identified somewhere.

Miscellaneous items: In addition to the summary above, one concept I've found useful is that of entities and attributes. For example in STELLAR CONQUEST the entity class warships had attributes of speed, range, communications, fire power and resource costs. The entity colony had attributes of population, industry, defensive missiles and controlled environment technology where applicable. The entity ship had attributes and each entity is divided into sub-attributes. This allows the game designer to develop a layout according to the player's whim. (Yes, even the situation clears up nicely.)

Another useful tool is to graphically flow-chart sequence of game events: draw a map of all decision points and actions in the game. Creating such a flow-chart with yes/no criteria defined for every possible action, you will quickly see where unresolved decision points are.

You must strive to cover every possible outcome of a decision in the rules. Even so, you'll miss things. In STELLAR CONQUEST a rule states the player withdraws ships suffering a combat to any hex adjoining the contested star-hex. The rule is very clear, except that in one case stars occupy adjoining hexes. If there was combat on both stars, withdrawing ships could conceivably bounce back and forth from star to star. An exception stated in the errata sheet changes), the diagram in the mail that is too poorly organized rules wise to play. It isn't fair to publish a game that is only a guide for experienced gamers who can make their own thing of it. Each game should be able to stand alone. It should be capable of play by a raw, though intelligent, novice.

Two last words. (1) Don't take for granted that rules will spell it out if you don't spell it out. (2) Don't be surprised if you get bogged down, going round in circles with your game. One thing that helps when you start thrashing is to quit and set the game aside. Leave it a few days, as the player withdraws ships suffering a combat to any hex adjoining the contested star-hex. The range of these items is such that there is no fair play in the planet hex of the tactical map, which conjures up visions of STAR RAIDERS. All combat at THE STRATEGIC LEVEL, good pseudo-3D movement system is used. Simple rules give the feel of point-topoint direct jump movement without getting lost with what's on the distance charts. Movement is simultaneous and easy to plot, with some semblance of artificial intelligence. (You know where the enemy's fleets are, but not their composition.) The four strategic maps are used singly or together, positioned at the player's whim. (Yes, even vertically!) I'll pass on guessing the number of possible permutations, but it's a lot.

All combat is at the tactical level. Movement is still simultaneous, but now only on a two-dimensional hex grid. You coast at your previous course until you accelerate at a cost determined by your ship type and cargo status. This requires the expenditure of the energy points you're allocated each turn, which also powers your weapons and screens as well as allows you to launch missiles. Furthermore, to transfer power between these tasks crew units must be available. And as a topping there is a hyperdrive, rear-guard movement unit, which doubles the power within itself each turn until it causes the ship to make a jump to an adjacent square on the strategic map.

To keep this from occurring too soon power can be taken from the unit to give you more than your normal allotment of power for a turn if sufficient crew units are available.

COMBAT IS by a differential system—attack factors minus defense factors. To get the factor for each ship roll 2, 4, 8, 16. The range of a ship's guns is 10 range attenuated hexed. Damage is taken slowly by energy and crew units. Each ship has characteristic sheets having reasonable space for all such changes (as well as for jump movement). Torpedoes have some holding capabilities as well as the power to annihilate the weaker of two ships. If the distance is both few and far between and thus better to soften up the higher class ships for your own lesser ships to have a chance with. (No more than the strongest, undamaged ship in the game go out because of a single torpedo volley!) Victory is on a point ratio system of 5-5, it's fairly easy to keep track. Seven scenarios are provided, including a pseudo-3D movement system. The single strategic level scenario uses an abstracted combat system.

One note on the rules. Though generally clear and complete (after the errata sheet changes), the diagram of the gravity well effects the player is having an uncaught error in the text. Apply a little logic and draw a few examples. The player's the situation clears up nicely.

STARSHIP AND EMPIRE is available for $8.75, including postage from R-Squared Games, P.O. Box 8314, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108. If you like TRILLANETARY, and like long games, (though short ones are included) you should try it.

ELDRITCH WIZARDRY: A SUPPLEMENT TO D & D

by Glen Taylor

ELDRITCH WIZARDRY is the third supplement to DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS, and the second supplement to DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: STARSHIP AND EMPIRE, a space wargame game by Gygax and Arneson. It follows the precedent set by GREYHAWK and BLACKMOOR, the first and second supplements, introducing new material to the basic game system for a more intricate, complex playing experience. Like the other supplements, the new material is organized around the original format for easy absorption into the basic structure of the game.
PSIONIC ABILITIES is the first major addition to BW. Any human of any alignment or any character class, except monks or druids, may have psionic ability. If the character's intelligence, wisdom or charisma is at least 15, he has a 10% chance of having psychic potential. This procedure governs both the chance of gaining new psionic abilities as one advances in level and one's psionic attack strength.

Each of the character classes has its own list of psionic abilities, which it may gain. The catch: when you develop the hidden powers of the mind you lose other things, depending on your character or class. Psychic abilities are assigned randomly until someone reaches a high enough level to be sure of getting a new ability when he advances. At this point he may choose his ability. The list of psionic abilities is long and varied, and most of them are very useful.

Besides regular psionic abilities, BW offers psionic attack and defense modes of various types. Only very powerful psychic types may attack non-psionic creatures. The supplement includes many charts for psionic combat. Each attack and defense mode is a distinct combat ability, not just a variation on the same theme. Psionic energy is expended each time any ability is used.

In addition to Psionics, ELDRITCH WIZARDRY introduces a new character class: the druid, a priest of a neutral-type nature worship. First introduced in GREYHAWK as monsters, Gygax and Arneson here expanded them into a new clerical subclass with their own spells, abilities and hierarchy of levels. Also newly introduced are two types of monsters. The first is the demon. There are seven distinct types of demons, each progressively more powerful, chaotic/evil creatures, plus two ultra-powerful demon princes. All but the weakest are psionically endowed. The second type have psionic attack capabilities and/or astral or ethereal ones, such as Brain Moles, Thought Eaters, Su-monsters, and Intellit Devourers. Unlike the monsters in BLACKMOOR, most of which were aquatic, most of these can be used in standard dungeon or wilderness settings.

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Also included in BW is a modified combat system which takes into account a player's armor type, readiness of weapons, encumbrance, level of spell being used, whether or not he was surprised and his dexterity in figuring at which point in the melee he can attack or cast a spell. Each melee round is divided into six movement segments, and a pre- and post-movement segment. Some may find these stages too cumbersome, but I find them much more logical than simply rolling a die to see which side gets to strike first.

Finally, this supplement offers an extensive section on artifacts designed to put some of the mystery and danger back into BW. I feel they have succeeded admirably. The Artifacts and Relics have tremendous powers unknown to players; they must rely upon rumor or trial and error. It is nearly impossible to foil one upon a non-player character and come through with a whole skin! There are over twenty artifacts in the supplement, with their suggested powers listed. In addition, there are tables containing a virtual cornucopia of possible powers of the things, and referees can freely add to or alter these to make the artifacts and relics. This section should keep players guessing for a long time to come.

BW also adds an element sorely needed—new wilderness encounter charts encompassing the new monsters and character classes introduced in the previous supplements and in several issues of the Strategic Review, TSR's now-defunct magazine. New dungeon encounter charts were provided in GREYHAWK, but no new wilderness tables. The new tables produce the very desirable effect of having some types of monsters substantially more common than others, and since this is achieved by duplication of types on the same table, players can freely alter anything with which they don't agree, as well as insert their own fiendish monster types into the charts.

The PHYSICAL QUALITY of ELDRITCH WIZARDRY is excellent. The cover is in color, a first for TSR, and portrays a human sacrifice. The paper is not the glossy type used in GREYHAWK, but the artwork is superb, including one very amusing picture of--well, see for yourself.

All in all, ELDRITCH WIZARDRY is well worth the admittedly high price of $5.00. It's as good as GREYHAWK, and that's saying a lot. It should put the spice of danger and unpredictability back into D&D, and partially satiate that hunger for new material that typifies D&D enthusiasts everywhere.

Gary Gygax and Brian Blume designed ELDRITCH WIZARDRY with help from many others. It is available for $5.00 ($4.50 for TSG subscribers) from Metagaming Concepts or TSR. Reviews 13
**STARSHIP TROOPERS: RECREATING HEINLEIN'S BUG WAR**

by Todd Roseman

SST is a recent Avalon Hill release which faithfully recreates the heroically fictionalized history of the Terran Mobile Infantry as described in the classic Robert Heinlein novel of the same name. For those people who have not heard of Starship Troopers, it is an SF novel which detailed the "Bug War" (2156-2159 AD), during which the Terrans engaged in two co-belligerent space empires: the Bugs (or pseudo-Arachnids), which lived in the huge underground complex in Ythrian society; and the "Skinies," a humanoid race which eventually realized the error of their ways (after several major Terran raids) and became Terran allies.

The novel (and game) concentrates on the Mobile Infantryman (M.I.) of the M.I. field fitted inside a power armor suit. This suit is stronger than a tank, as flexible as skin and allows the wearer to travel a mile a minute. Even with these suits and advanced weaponry, the M.I. still fulfilled the age-old role of infantryman in the combat with the enemy to make him surrender or die.

Physically, SST is of the same polished quality as characterized recent AH releases. The counters come in seven colors, using both symbols and silhouettes to represent unit types. The counters are well-cut and easy to understand, illustrating attack, defense, and movement factors. The boardgame is rather bland, but the nature of the game makes the terrain appropriate. Additionally, several scenarios require ignoring certain terrain types.

**THE RULES ARE** of the Programmed Instruction variety, a la Tobruch, which make the game quite simple despite a number of intricate rules. The rule book is well organized with few ambiguities, but contains some rather hokey illustrations.

Eight scenarios are provided, two versus Skinnies and six versus Bugs. These scenarios are well-balanced, despite appearances to the contrary, with the decision point coming late in the game. Because of the complexity involved, the average scenario takes about five hours to play.

SST is on a "tactical" scale, with one hex equaling one mile, and one turn equaling twelve minutes.

Each M.I. counter represents one M.I., while Bug and Skinny counters represent a larger contingent.

For those who are not familiar with the Bugs, I'll try to describe the bugs:

The Bugs are not as well equipped as the M.I.'s, but they have a greater asset. The Bugs can see exactly where the M.I.'s are, but the M.I.'s must depend on secondary intelligence to hunt down the Bugs. This is because the Bugs use a hidden underground movement system. The Bug player diagrams his tunnel complex on sheets provided. Additionally, a list of special weapons and equipment is included in some Bug scenarios.

**THE BIRDS** is a game review of THE YTHRI

by Tim Hawkins

The YTHRI is a new game that simulates the book The People of the Wind by Poul Anderson. Two to four people can play, but it is basically a game for two players.

For those who are not familiar with the Ythri, I'll try to describe the Ythri:

The Ythri are bird-like creatures capable of flight. The Terran want the Ythri empire as part of their own territory. In order to do this they must gather a massive force and try to overrun the Ythrian controlled territory. Avalon is on the border of these two empires. It is a successful cultural mixture of these two races.

For those who are not familiar with the Terrans, Avalon stocks its defenses with a powerful array of weapons. When the Terrans attack, Avalon gives up a staunch defense. Eventually they scatter, the space forces are scattered or destroyed. Unable to capture the planet without large losses, the Terrans leave the planet alone. But in a short time the Ythri empire surrenders, and the Terrans again turn their intention to Avalon. This time the brute force of the Terrans proves too much for Avalon, and the invaders gain a foothold on an uninhabited continent.

**GAMES CONCEPTS include:**

- A 16-page, 8x11" rules book; 24 perforation cut counters; a 17x24" four-color Avalon map; and space and planetary combat tables. It comes unboxed.
- The rules book has an attractive cover that opens to Avalon map; and space and planetary combat tables. It comes unboxed.
- The YTHRI was designed and published by Metagaming Concepts, Inc.; 15346 DMA, Austin, Texas 78756.

**GAME PLAY begins with the Terran space fleet attacking the Avalon fleet. The Terrans are three times more powerful and inevitably destroy the Avalon fleet. The Terrans, using their transports, land atmospheric units and bounce troops on the planet. They have to capture the Avalon bases, of which there are five. When they capture three of the five bases, the player wins the game. The number of turns it takes to finish the game will vary depending on the number of turns it takes to finish the game.**

For some reason we humans are unable to leave things alone. We are constantly changing, modifying or doing everything. This impulse is what has led to an ever-increasing desire to improve an already excellent game, STELLAR CONQUEST. When anyone plays STARSHIP TROOPERS, there is a set of rules that should be made on retaining the game's existing balance and structure—not an easy decision to make or implement.

**THE YTHRI provides a good scenario, and Metagaming Concepts should be commended for another great game.**

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**For all in all, playability is good. As the rules note, it is a good idea to make a few alterations with the rules to suit your taste. But basically, THE YTHRI provides a good scenario, and Metagaming Concepts should be commended for another great game.**

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**THE BIRDS** is a game review of THE YTHRI

by Tim Hawkins

The YTHRI is a new game that simulates the book The People of the Wind by Poul Anderson. Two to four people can play, but it is basically a game for two players.

For those who are not familiar with the Ythri, I'll try to describe the basic plot:

The known galaxy is controlled by two empires: the Terran and the Ythri. The Ythri are bird-like creatures capable of flight. The Terrans want the Ythrian empire as part of their own territory. In order to do this they must gather a massive force and try to overrun the Ythrian controlled territory. Avalon is on the border of these two empires. It is a successful cultural mixture of these two races.

However, nature is against the Terrans too, and it isn't long before their army succumbs to heavy-metal poisoning. This coupled with attacks by wild animals depletes morale. Unable to escape, the Terrans surrender.
that a significant portion of the thought processes was engaged, and that the balance desired was achieved. Several sections in the original rules appear to contain omissions or 'unrealistic' values. Most of us will probably have different ideas about the future and its relation to the STELLAR CONQUEST Universe. The following is the author's view which I hope is similar to yours.

The most obvious change in the intermediate rules is in the weapons systems. Originally all costs were revised to conform to a regular pattern of escalating costs. In order to save space a system of weapons systems was implemented and the system of weapons systems was used. Although they are different weapons systems. Under this system of classification a group of weapons grade one, two and three are of grade one.

Interplanetary warships are part of the basic rules. The ship designations are Frigates (FRG), Cruisers (CRI), and Monitors (MN). Each of these interplanetary warships share the same weaponry as their interstellar counterparts, ESC, ATK, and DN, respectively. The technology and equipment necessary for travel between stars will be much more complex and expensive than that needed for travel between planets. As our colonies are self-sustaining it is improbable that we will require in all cases the more expensive ships. However, the limitation on our offensive ability by going to the less costly ship-type will compel players to utilize them with caution. The use of interplanetary ships in several tests seem to add to existing styles of play and does not require completely new approaches. In fact, they fit in very smoothly.

**THE DEVELOPMENTAL COST** of these new rules is below that of an equivalent missile base in view of the higher degree of standardization that is achievable in ship design. The total cost of these ships is set above that of the equivalent missile base in view of the mobility within a star system. Taken together, these costs result in a balance of value between these essentially defensive weapons.

The use of interplanetary ships also requires the use of an "optional predecessor development" to represent the interchange of technology between two similar warships. If an interstellar warship has been developed, logically the development cost of its interplanetary counterpart is cut in half. This is not true for the interstellar counterpart has been developed then the developmental cost of its interstellar counterpart is reduced by one quarter and the necessary to convert an interplanetary warship to an interstellar one is also introduced. The cost of conversion represents the installation of an interstellar drive unit (Mann Schenek, Alderson, Thompson, or whatever) and the necessary modification. The total cost of a converted warship will be 50% higher than that of an interstellar ship built directly. The advantage of conversion is variable and depends upon the use of strategy and opportunity. Of course, the development cost of the interstellar ship must be paid for prior to any conversion.

In general theory interstellar ships develop in space while interplanetary ships may be built on planet. The rules for interplanetary ships are similar to this in the original version. Revising rule 7.3.1, we allow only interplanetary ships to be converted to interstellar ships directly. The development cost of the interstellar ship must be paid for prior to any conversion. In addition, a base at an important location should not be rendered useless by failing to improve its weapons. A missile base of one type could undergo conversion to another ship at a lower cost easier than constructing from nothing. Therefore, the ability to improve missile bases is added in these intermediate rules. Note, however, that a higher total cost will be paid for a missile base than otherwise. The omission of a missile base with weaponry equal to a DN's is corrected by the addition of the Super Missile Base (SMB).

WHILE RECOGNIZING that in SC ship weaponry is different from planetary weaponry and that adequate justification for allowing one a higher rate of fire (ISW) was given in the original rules Weaponry (IW) is therefore substituted and applies to all physical weapons. The omission of some type of defensive improvement is rectified by the addition of Improved Defense (ID). If both players in combat possess IW the advantage is effectively neutralized. Therefore, if one has IW and the other ID the advantage becomes dependent upon prior use or misuse of these developments.

The PFS under the original rules is an extremely expensive weapon to construct in view of the protection it affords. The intermediate rules increase the development cost slightly in order to represent the cost of construction. The implication in the original rules that a PFS is self-sustaining and self-propagating - is not acceptable. An energizing cost is used to represent the necessary expenditure of energy a force must receive. To more accurately reflect the impenetrability of an energized PFS, it is necessary that the PFS be destroyed when an enegized GAMe Turn immediately before or after a production year if ships are to be landed or launched.

In the Intermediate Sequence the intermediate rules establish the balance of value necessary to conform to the pattern of escalating values. Also one new development advantage becomes dependent upon value it gives. Therefore, USC is also reclassified and increased in cost. Also one new development advantage becomes dependent upon the number of ships. The use of interplanetary ships in several tests seem to add to existing styles of play and does not require completely new approaches. In fact, they fit in very smoothly.

**THE TECHNICAL SEQUENCE**

Advanced Ship Range (ASR) extends the operating range of all of a player's ships to 12 hexes. USR is reclassified and increased in cost. The ability to extend one's range should logically precede the ability to operate completely independent of a base. The cost of developing such complete independence should be as great as the advantage it gives. Therefore, USR carries a high cost. USC is also reclassified as such a development would require a smaller commitment than the other Level 3 items require. The escalation in values is a violation of a high level of Standard Technology, because of the degree of advantage given by them. An imbalance in the game would be more noticeable. Robotic Industrial Technology (RIT) is the new name for RUI. These changes in the Technical Sequence are admittedly based upon subjective criteria because of the nature of the subject of speculation.

The new item introduced is Industrial Support Capacity (ITC). It seems plausible that if population can be moved with IU's then the IU's could be moved without population. As the IU is essential to the existence of the population, then they may not move with population. The new item allows to construct CT's capable of moving IU's to and from colony. IU's may not be moved, as game balance is maintained, as long as there are NM planets. No extra cost is required for constructing CT (ITC), which are to land on any inhabited planets. All of the changes made in the intermediate rules are intended to contribute toward a more realistic situation.

Although one person's idea of a more realistic projection of the future may be totally different from another's, I endeavored to base all changes on an objective set of values or hypotheses of what interstellar colonization and conquest might actually resemble. However, any change in a set of rules always seems to generate consequences that are impossible as long as there are NM planets. Extra cost is required for constructing CT (ITC), which are to land on any inhabited planets. All of the changes made in the intermediate rules are intended to contribute toward a more realistic situation.

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9.4 Ship Movement Sequence

Add 1 SCL to allow players SCL's to exceed the MA of his other ships by 1 at all times. -- 10 --

Rev 1 SMA W/Pred: 20
Rev 2 SMA W/Pred: 45
Rev 3 SMA W/Pred: 85

9.5 Weapon System Sequence: All physical weapon systems are classified by a weapon grade. Some may be converted to one of a different type or grade, but only if the system has been developed. An * denotes that the weapon system may be used as an optional predecessor and may be used if the optional predecessor has been developed. To construct a physical weapon it is necessary for an individual colony to "pay" for it alone.

1 MB: Missile Base: A planetary defense system of weapons grade -- 20 -- one with a construction cost of 4 and a conversion cost of 8 to an AMB.

1 FRG: Frigate: An interplanetary warship system of weapons grade -- -- -- -- -- one with a construction cost of 6 and a conversion cost of 4 to an ESC.

1 ESC: Escort: An interstellar warship system of weapons grade -- -- -- with a construction cost of 8.

1 AMB: Advanced Missile Base: A planetary defense system of weapons grade two with a construction cost of 10 and a conversion cost of 20 to a SMB.

1 CRU: Cruiser: An interplanetary warship system of weapons grade -- 25 -- two with a construction cost of 15 and a conversion cost: *ATK 12 -- of 10 to an ATK.

1 ATK: Attack: An interstellar warship system of weapons grade 45 -- two with a construction cost of 20. *CRU 34 --

2 SMB: Super Missile Base: A planetary defense system of weapons grade 65 80 -- one with a construction cost of 25.

2 MN: Monitor: An interplanetary warship system of weapons grade CRU 55 70 -- three with a construction cost of 20 and a conversion cost *ATK 55 70 of a conversion cost of 20 to a DN. *DN 27 --

2 DN: Dreadnought: An interstellar warship system of weapons grade ATK 75 90 -- one with a construction cost of 20.

3 TD: Improved Weaponry: A non-physical offensive system which MN 100 -- allows all of a player's warships and missile bases to fire two barrages per ship/base per fire turn.

3 ID: Improved Defense: A non-physical defensive system which 125 -- raises all of a player's warships and missile bases of weapons grade one and two by 1 grade for defense and requires two hits on a grade three target for destruction.

3 PFS: Planetary Force Screen: An impenetrable shield around a planet which destroys any ship attacking or attempting to penetrate if energized. A PFS generation station has a construction cost of 40 and is automatically destroyed if the planet is conquered while the PFS is down. The station is not subject to attack at any time. To energize a PFS a cost of 10 must be paid in each production year. The PFS must be lowered in either the game turn preceding or following a production year if friendly ships are to land or be launched.

9.6 Technical Sequence

Rev 1 IIT W/Pred: 20
New 2 ASR Advanced Ship Range: Allows a player's ships to 5MA 50 65 operate up to 12 hexes from his nearest colony.

Rev 2 USC Unlimited Ship Communication IIT 60 75
Rev 3 RIT Robotic Industrial Technology IIT 80 95
Rev 3 USR Unlimited Ship Range 7MA or ASR 90

3 New ITC Industrial Transport Capacity: Allows a player to construct CT(TIC)’s which may transport up to 4 IU's per ship without population. RIU may not be transported. Rule 5.2.2 with appropriate substitutions applies to all times.

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**GAME RATINGS**

Some of the functions of reader feedback form repeating for the relatively large number of new readers this issue. Feedback forms in subscribers copies are to serve you in telling us your views and your opinions. Every form mailed in is tabulated for article ratings, game ratings and questions. Every comment and note is read. It's obvious TSG works on a shoestring budget. Readers are satisfied by content and service, not because game ratings and questions. EVERY form mailed in is tabulated for article ratings, game ratings and questions. Every comment and note is read. It's obvious TSG works on a shoestring budget. Readers are satisfied by content and service, not because TSG looks like PLAYBOY. TSG serves a special group of people and we depend on your input.

WORST SF&P GAME OF 1975

When all results of our "worst" rating were in 4,000 A.D. was the "winner". BATTLE OF FIVE ARMIES ran a substantial second trailed by STAR RAIDER. WAR OF WORLDS II and ARGILLIAN WARS. Readers definitely appreciated the opportunity to give the zap when they feel stung. We'll repeat the voting next year so keep your eyes peeled for this year's...
1977 METAGAMING PLANS

After publishing MONSTERS!, which many are finding getting new started with 2,500 subscribers to THE SPACE GAMER. This game has a well-developed and popular player base. The impact of government banking and money management is crucial to the game.

MONSTERS! is published after the game's purple hyper new. It forms a multi-player society level space game. Where STELLAR CONQUEST offers technology, several games like GODSFIRE offer complex political/economic sheets, money management, and stress counters are only partially played. Over 2,500 subscribers have subscribed to the game with the game's full, complex form. In the political segment can have as many as 15 players which may have appeal to some educators or other groups.

Some new games that are not staff-designed are THE YTHRI. It meant delay on HYMENOPTERA but those who've been so patiently waiting shouldn't mind GODSFIRE first. GODSFIRE should be ready for mailing in mid-November.

All that GODSFIRE news is in lead to 1977. Publishing two major STELLAR Multis with non-player plugs. Level Geneva, WI 53147 is enough interest separate projects in the TSG can continue to grow despite almost no advertising during six months of early 1976. This growth shows a point to note to publish a game larger than initial anticipations. The keystone of large projects in 1977 is TSG subscription renewal and continued growth. With strong renewal's TSG could reach 2-3,000 paid circulation in late 1977. That is not just a sign that 15% of your subscription with the game depends on the current level. Renewals should be at least fair given that about 65% of your circle can take just about what we've offered for your subscription with the game's full, complex form.

The size of the game will push HYMENOPTERA, complex and sophisticated in its own right, back until probably February. Multi-player, multi-factor complexity dump will have two brand new games simulating societies with entirely different game systems within two months. We promise the wait is worth it. DIPLOMACY nuts should be warned that GODSFIRE may make you swear off. Don't send METAGAMING CONCEPTS money in the mail. Send announcement in TSG #8 unless you are ordering it as part of the subscription renewal bonus. The price for non-staff-designed games after THE YTHRI. It meant delay on HYMENOPTERA but those who've been so patiently waiting shouldn't mind GODSFIRE first.

STAR EMPIRES

The 2nd part of the Star Probe game system which allows players to progress to the governing of interstellar empires and conduct Fleet combats. Rules booklet from TSR Hobbies Inc., address above, for $4 or from Metagaming Concepts. ($3.75 for TSG subscribers.)

THE CHARACTER ARCHETYPIC

"The ultimate in playing aids--can be used for D&D and/or EPT. Character records, non-player character records, encounter record and more all beautifully illustrated." $3 from TSR Hobbies Inc. address above. (We don't carry it.)

STAR FLEET TACTICS I

A simple tactical combat simulation. Complete package including tournament rules $3.

STARFLEET TACTICS II: CBM TOURNAMENT

Four round modified Swiss pairing system. Will take about 1 1/2 years to play. Entry fee $10. Entry fee and game $12.50. Entry deadline 11/15/76.

ADVANCED SC COMPUTER PACKAGE

Semi-computer moderated, 25 players per session, D&D SC variant using previously published "Advanced SC Methods". Entry fee $10. Includes rules. $8 if you already have the rules. $1 per move. Through March from Layout Design Specialists, Box 485, Glenview, IL 60025.

BATTLE DE MOESKA WINS CR AWARD

The Charles Roberts award for best amateur wargame of 1975 went to a historical war game. Stellar Conquest which was not published and so is not available. The Charles Roberts award for best amateur wargame of 1975 went to a historical war game. Stellar Conquest which was not published and so is not available. The Charles Roberts award for best amateur wargame of 1975 went to a historical war game. Stellar Conquest which was not published and so is not available.

LANKIMAR

The game is based on the series of novels created by Fritz Leiber who gets design credit with Harry Fischer. The "game of swords & sorcery" is set in the fantastic world of Nehwon. "Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser are included characters. This is another TSR Hobbies Inc. game. No price was on the box for the one we have. (We don't sell this one either.)
action when the hardy troopers try to dig out the bugs. Avalon Hill has opted to create the game at the tactical level which is sure to please devotees of the Panzerblitz game. Hopefully the game will be well done in the final version, graphics are sure to be up to the usual Avalon Hill box and standard. Price should be the $10 standard for other A-H games.

**DRAGON PASS—WB & RM**

Greg Staffords White Bear & Red Moon was to have its’ name changed to Dragon Pass in the second edition. But, Greg decided to retain the original name. Our current ads refer to the game as Dragon Pass. Greg also has a final errata from the first edition which is available for 25¢ and a SASE. Write to Greg Stafford, Hoft 6302, Albany, CA 94706. The new edition sells for $10. ($9 for TSG subscribers.)

**GALAXY II NEWS**

In a recent letter Brett Tondreau related some delays in the game turns for this computerized game. Brett had moved into a new job. Those interested in the game can write Brett Tondreau, 5536 Kester Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411.

**NON-RECOMMENDED NOVELS**

As popular novels are going there is increasing tendency for "mainstream" novels to draw on long developed science fiction themes. SHARDIK and THE TOMORROW FILE fall into this category. If you want to read several hundred pages that is tepid, sluggish fantasy saying 'bad is evil and good is nice,' then read SHARDIK. If you want a fair novel that has the obligatory sex of modern novels but is poor so forth then read THIS TOMORROW FILE. HT

**THE DRAGON**

This is TSR Hobbies' 32 pages slick magazine. This second edition has a full color cover again with a few color interiors. Most of the material is still D&D oriented and this issue lacked a Taylor and Fox contents. A fiction piece by Gardner Fox was featured. The Dragon is improving and a sure bet. Six issue subscription is $9, single issues are $1.50. From TSR Hobbies Inc., address above.

**STARSHIP & EMPIRE**

This game was mentioned last issue and we now have a copy. The components include 10 character sheets, four Star Fleet charts, 22" x 35" black & white map 480 counters in four colors and die-cut, combat results table, and four strategic maps with rules booklet. Available for $8 + 75¢ postage from R-squared Games, Box 8314, Salt Lake City, UT 84108. Review anyone?

**STAR COMMAND**

This is rules booklet intended to allow players to fight ship combat with ship miniatures. The booklet is available from Lou Zocchi, 7604 Newport Dr., Biloxy, MS 39532 for $4. This may be a part of a game system that will also include the miniature ship figures at some later date.

**VENEFIC DESTRUCTION**

This is a fairly simple fantasy board game. It has the capabilities of destroy every planet in the universe for his companion and lover, Death. Thanos has the potential of one overload between each planet destroyed. He may not initiate attack on warriors, however, he may counterattack when fired upon. In order to destroy a planet he need only hit one planet side with a nuke from an unlimited weapons cache.

1. Thanos may attack any planet at anytime but Terra. He must attack this planet last.

2. Captain Marvel/Rick Jones are represented by a fri gate and corsair respect fully, starting on Terra. These ships do not have any weapons other than guns. In order for Marvel to exist in the positive universe, he must share space with a Terran boy, Rick Jones. Cap-one to be in this universe the other must be in the negative zone (except for 2.1). Transfers occur in the resupply phase by clashing the negative bands on their wrists. Transfer is one fuel point. Refueling takes place while the warrior rests in the negative zone.

**SCENARIO: CAPTAIN MARVEL AND DRAX THE DESTROYER VS. THANOS OR THE WAR FOR THE UNIVERSE**

by Dennis Colody

Using basic TRIPPLANETARY rules and counters, you can make slight modifications to create an interesting scenario.

1. Characters, descriptions, and objectives

1) Thanos is represented by a dreadnaught starting on the planet Mars. Seeking deflation, he possesses the "cosmic cube" which, when activated, gives him unlimited ordnance (nukes, mines and torpedoes) and never-ending fuel. In order to activate the cube, Thanos must first orbit Jupiter. After attaining orbit he realizes the cube's potential and understands his goal—destroy every planet in the universe for his companion and lover, Death. Thanos has the capabilities of one overload between each planet destroyed. He may not initiate attack on warriors, however, he may counterattack when fired upon. In order to destroy a planet he need only hit one planet side with a nuke from an unlimited weapons cache.

1.1) To give him time to reach Jupiter, Thanos also has a fleet of two corvettes on a preplotted suicide course for Terra, starting stationary or in orbit anywhere within the radar range of Mars. Each ship that crashes on Terra, without being disabled, reduces the planetary defenses by one.

1.2) Thanos may attack any planet at any time but Terra. He must attack this planet last.

2) Captain Marvel/Rick Jones are represented by a frigate and corsair respectfully, starting on Terra. These ships do not have any weapons other than guns. In order for Marvel to exist in the positive zone, he must share space with a Terran boy, Rick Jones. Cap—one to be in this universe the other must be in the negative zone (except for 2.1). Transfers occur in the resupply phase by clashing the negative bands on their wrists. Transfer is one fuel point. Refueling takes place while the warrior rests in the negative zone.
2.11) Should this neutralization of the zone occur, then the warriors may refuel by transfer to the negative zone. This procedure will cost one fuel point to enter the zone and another to leave the zone. Warriors may not alter course or speed while refueling in the zone.

2.2) Captain Marvel, because of his cosmic awareness, can avoid both mines and torpedoes. He cannot, however, avoid a nuke since it does alter the hex that it lands on or passes through. Since Rick Jones is only a mere Terran, he is affected by all types of launched weapons, as well as guns.

3) DRAX, THE DESTROYER, was created from cosmic dust by a godlike being, Kronos of Titan, before the latter was captured and subdued by Thanos. Kronos, foreseeing the menace of Thanos, breathed life into Drax the Destroyer, who exists with the sole purpose to stop Thanos. Drax is represented by a torch ship in orbit around Ganymede and has no weapons other than guns. He is allowed one overload maneuver between attacks on Thanos (close enough to have done damage, even if none was taken). The Destroyer is in a constant state of combat with no regard for his own safety. For, since he is nothing but cosmic matter, he cannot construct or leave the universe (board) will only place him back in orbit around Ganymede on his next turn. If Thanos has already destroyed the planet Kronos has given Drax the capability to appear on the hex where the planet formerly was.

II. Gravity
1) Once a planet has been destroyed, all warriors may pass through the planet hex with no ill effects. Otherwise, passing through a planet wake would be the warrior's death (with the exception of Drax).

III. Destroyed Planets
1) Once a planet has been destroyed, all warriors may pass through the planet hex with no ill effects. Otherwise, passing through a planet wake would be the warrior's death (with the exception of Drax).

IV. Asteroids
1) Passing through an asteroid hex at a velocity greater than one normally moves causes one to determine damage results. Asteroids have no effect on Marvel (cosmic awareness), Drax (the power of Kronos), or Thanos (once he has activated the cosmic cube). On his way to Jupiter, however, Thanos touched an asteroid, and its debris hit him. Each asteroid has a chance to damage a warrior. The suicide fleet is also affected as is Rick Jones since they are, after all, mortal beings.

V. Planetary Defenses
1) Considering the number of superheroes on Terra, normal defenses are in affect against Thanos, unless the suicide fleet is effective. If so, depending on the number of ships that crash into the planet, defenses can range from 2:1 to 1:2. Since the suicide fleet is a surprise attack it is not affected by defenses. No other planets have planetary defenses.

VI. Victory Conditions
1) Thanos wins by destroying the universe and thereby also winning the hand of Death.
2) Marvel/Jones win by staying alive and protecting the universe by eliminating the threat of Thanos.
3) Drax the Destroyer wins if he stops Thanos.

(DREADNOUGHTS from Page 22)


She clenched her right hand into a fist. The gesture activated a digital time display which lit redly among the light blue veins of her delicate wrist, just beneath the loose pale flesh. She regarded the digits.

"It has been but seven hours since the last emergency meeting," she complained, "and only six since I was able to sleep."

The Earl nodded, swallowing his discomfiture. "Oh, yes," he literally ran from the Presence, hardly allowing the chamber's doorway time to dilate fully open before ducking through it.

Lady Alice touched a sensor imbedded in the ornate wood of the carved bedpost. Immediately, the sound of rushing water filled the room. She crossed to the bathtub alcove but allowed herself only a moment to bask in the pinpoint spray of water, stimulants and perfumes.

A rush of warm air dried her, and she went to stand before the holographic mirror of her wardrobe. The holo-mirror flickered again and again, each time showing her own three-dimensional image dressed in a different garb. She chose the most austere of clothing; a black and white colar top. She pressed the ready button and the screen edged, "and only six since I was able to sleep."

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A rush of warm air dried her, and she went to stand before the holographic mirror of her wardrobe. The holo-mirror flickered again and again, each time showing her own three-dimensional image dressed in a different garb. She chose the most austere of clothing; a black and white colar top. She pressed the ready button and the screen edged.

Finally, , the Earl of Tauri two turned to escort her to the stellar chamber. She walked down the dark almost Earth-mediterranean corridors which had been built more than four centuries ago. It had been all of that many years since her remote ancestors first gained mastery of the council's quadrant of the surrounding stellar cluster.

It was musty, dim. Lady Alice did not share her dynasty's love of such places. Yet one more annoyance of her royal life. She ruled over two-hundred billion inhabitants of twelve star systems; most settled in the council's four yellow stars, Tauri, Spica, Bootis and Schedar. The council was only for advice—It was mandatory that she listen to their advice, but her own was forced to accept it. So, her decisions, her edicts, had the force of law, final and resolute, for her planet.

The war too was her responsibility. She would have wished otherwise, hers was not a sanguine nature. She was too pessimistic, too empathic ever to be an able general. Yet, she could force herself when she had to; and most days, ever since first contact with the enemy, she had to.

The enemy, the Scorpii Confederacy, was certainly the aggressor, no doubt of that. Right, justice, all were on the side of the council of stars and their lovely ruler, First-in-Council, Lady Alice.

It was a shame the council was so desperately losing the war. History has always been full of shameful facts.

The council looked up all at once, like an eleven-headed monster, as their hereditary ruler entered the stellar chamber. Lady Alice took her seat at the head of the long, wooden table. Overhead, in glorious counterpoint to the plainness of the chamber's furnishings, the ceiling was a blazing, holographic canopy of bright stars representing not only the stellar cluster's physical appearance, but each star was color-coded as to such things as spectral class, habitability of planets, industrial output of populations and offensive/defensive capabilities. In addition, the stars of the council of stars had been programmed to shine steadily, like beacons, against the starlight flickerings of the others.

"Gentlemen," Lady Alice addressed her advisors, "I assume we once more are on the brink!" She leaned impa ssively down the table's length. "Your reports, please."

She noted that Lord Kevin of Bootis was trying to catch her eye. A warm flush spread to her cheeks. He was certainly handsome that morning, dressed in the
"Coexistence," Lord Kevin shouted.

"Coincidence, is it?" Lord Jason of Wolf leaped to his feet. His tired face shone with sweat, amused as he was to the heat of a sizzling star. "I've been waiting for you."

"The Confeds, thank the First Cause, were destroyed, but at the cost of every missile base of Wolf Four."

"Grave indeed," Lady Alice agreed.

"But you have not yet made any case against Lord Kevin."

"Do you know what this is, Highness?"

Lord Jason waved another, thicker paper.

"Lies," Lord Kevin smiled. "You and I, we speak with our hearts. We cannot be fooled by mere words, sounds which are devoid of love and, hence of meaning."

Lady Alice turned to Lord Jason.

"As most senior member of the Council," her voice wavered, steadied, "you may exercise your duty to now order the arrest and confinement of Lord Kevin of Roots."

Lord Jason raised a gnarled hand, the men-at-arms stepped out of the shadows. The chromed snouts of their rifles reflected the holographic light of the star-mapped ceiling as they escorted Lord Kevin from the Stellar Chamber.

The outer door closed as the guards escorted their prisoner out. It was now silent enough that Lady Alice could hear the breathing of the assembled Lords-in-Council.

She looked about the long table. If she were wise, she would execute them all before harming even one hair on Lord Kevin's finely featured head. Above her flickered the stars while the Council stars burned steadily and, within her, there flamed a terrible responsibility. The heat of it all seemed more than enough to devour the flesh, even the soul, of any young girl.

"Let us plan our war," her voice was cold, as empty as ever were the spaces between stars.

The room was lit only by the dim light from an insect sculpture in the corner of the room. From her bed, Alice could just barely see the silhouette enter her chamber, pause, and look about with as yet night-blind eyes.

"Over here," she whispered to him.

"I've been waiting for you." Lord Kevin stumbled his way to her bedside. Then, his weight beside her, his warmth, it was like so many times before. He could not believe them," he said, whispering into her ear.

"How could I?" she asked as he embraced her.

"I laughed as he held her. "Still, I was a bit doubtful when you seemed to go along with the Juiceless Wolf."

She kissed him. In a moment, all thought of the Council and the Stellar Chamber was gone. The plastic sculpture, following the programming of its artist, dimmed, brightened, dimmed again as time passed, and advanced.

"Alice?" There was no reply. Lord Kevin gently, carefully, swung himself so that his legs were off the bed, his feet resting on the floor. He rose as lightly as a cat, disturbing the mattress as little as possible. He held his breath. The only sound was Lady Alice's midnight breathing, slow, regular and trusting.

He walked to a pedestal table just a few feet away. From a pocket of his tunic, discarded over a chair, he withdrew a small, cylindrical devise. He flicked it on. A beam of partially coherent light illuminated the papers on the tabletop without lighting the rest of the room at all. He examined the papers.

"Dreadnoughts!" the word was torn from Lord Wallen of Nenimm. "Four of them!"

He regained his composure, looked over to see if his startled exclamations had disturbed Lady Alice. She still slept soundly, fully returned to his perusal of the papers.

He rifled the official documents which outlined the new plan of action the Council had adopted after his arrest and removal from the Chamber. It was all there, spelled out so that anyone--and certainly the Confed's best agent--could understand it. The Council of Stars, making a final push, a huge counteroffensive.

He could now understand that for the last year, all the capital from every colony had been put into weapons and technological research. True, that already cost the Council of Stars would economically crush, and would stand no chance for peace.

On the other hand, undestroyed dreadnoughts might be able to turn the tide in favor of the Council. He saw that the dreadnoughts were based on one of Lord Wallen's colonies that orbited Wesen. There, at the outer fringes of the Council's sphere of stellar empire, that would be able to strike at either Dubhe or Cygni in the Confederacy. Either would be a terrible loss to the Confederacy as both were population centers holding much economic clout. Yet, each could only stand against a squadron of dreadnoughts if reinforced by the major portion of all industrial attack ships.

Obviously the dreadnoughts meant a three-dreadnought attack on either Dubhe or Cygni while the remaining dreadnought kept the other colony's forces busy.

He rushed as fast as he could through the Writs until he found the one he sought. Lord Kevin smiled, this was the information that would save the Council if the dreadnoughts could be defeated, it was apparent to Lord Kevin that
Confederacy.

The dreadnoughts were to make a mass attack on the Cygni colonies. Dubhe would be attacked by only one ship. The Confederate's drive would not. Of course, detect which was the stronger force but only that both stars would be under attack. On detection, the Confederates would have to protect both stars and split their forces. And, under normal situations, the star attacked by the dreadnoughts would probably fall.

Not now, however.

It remained only for Lord Kevin to communicate to his masters that it was under attack. This was backed up by the dreadnoughts. The Confederates would pull the bulk of their armada to Cygni as Dubhe's missile bases alone could handle a small attack.

Protect Cygni and, in a short time, the Confederate's savage technology could be geared to producing more dreadnoughts than the Council could dream of. It was Cygni which was the key, the secret of which would cause the stars to align themselves into now, if political, orbits.

Kevin looked for a time at Lady Alice's sleeping form. He pulled a blanket up to cover her bare shoulder, then slipped silently out of the room, smiling to himself. He clutched the papers tightly to his chest, being careful that they made no betraying, rustling noise.

Lady Alice was once more alone. But then, she had been so all of her life.

The idea for "Dreadnoughts" came about while playing a board game called "Conquest." I had managed to tip over a counter while I was moving it on the map, providing my grinning opponent with certain information. As it turned out, the information led him to believe the opposite of what was actually happening.

While not so very nice on my part, I think it does simulate one aspect of war which the above story also attempts to purposely giving your enemy just enough faulty information for him to hang himself! Unfortunately, such a tactic does not make me very popular.

Author's Note

The concept for a problem with a better.wordpress.com

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I read Mr. Bowles article on lasers in issue # 5 with a good deal of interest. It was, on the whole, a very interesting and informative article. I am afraid, however, that I must differ with him on a major point.

He mentions laser arms in space and talked of them moving the effective range of combat out to about 500,000 miles. That is a very impressive figure, but I have to wonder what was done to go about calculating the power and energy required. I thought about it a little more closely.

First of all, since I am a fan of the metric system, I will use metric measurements throughout this discussion. The theoretical range of half a million kilometers, and it could thoroughly destroy a target at that range if it hit it. But, there is quite a bit of difference between shooting at something and hitting it.

Before we go any further, though, let's discuss the laser. We are talking of something that we are shooting at. To use something that we are all familiar with (or should be) let's use a Saturn V rocket. If I remember correctly, the Saturn V rocket is just a shade over 100 meters tall, and about 12 meters in diameter at the first stage. In many ways, the Saturn V is the best space rocket that we have to put it to use and see what kind of damage we can do to our target. Our hypothetical laser had to be accurate to within 1 micron in its tracking to hit the target. Let's call it 5 micron. With this kind of accuracy, 500,000 km is 1.67 light seconds. That means that we have to hit our target by 1.67 seconds to hit our target. This is assuming that our target was in geosynchronous orbit around the earth, and we were shooting at it from near the moon, (approx. 500,000 km). Our target would be moving at about 5.64 km/sec. That would mean that between the time we fired our laser and the time the beam hit (hopefully) the target, the target would have moved about 6 km. So we would have to hit it by 6 km, in addition to tracking it to within 1 micron with our laser. This is assuming that the target was not taking any evasive action. As far as evasive action is concerned, the target would only have to move a maximum of 1 micron in the time it takes the beam to reach the target while aiming during that 1.67 sec., and we miss it completely.

This all indicated to me that engagement with a target at a range of 500,000 km is unlikely to reach 5.0 km, in even the extreme. 5,000 km would be a little more likely, but even that may be too high. At that range, all Saturn V degree long, and the laser would have to track to within .1 mm. This seems almost reasonable, but may still be a little to far.

If you reduce the range to 50 km, the Saturn V is now 1.145x10^-2 degree

Dear editor:

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I have a belated comment on the article in TSG #4 entitled "The PFS Off," in which the price of the new Super Missile Base was stated to be 30 IUs of output for each hex of defense. I expect your staff is able to correct this before the actual price of the SMB should not be 30 IUs but ½ of 40 or 20 IUs.

Donald Kaiser
Lake Bluff, Ill.

I would like to make some comments on your most recent issue of The Space Gamer. Over all, this was your best issue yet. I'm glad that you could add more drawings by Winchell Chung. I really enjoy his style. I think it would be nice to include one issue to all fantasy drawings, or at least add more fantasy drawing in future issues. I didn't expect to see the cover art being done by Mark Norton. It reminds me a lot of the terrible drawing in the rules book of the game STAR PROBE.

As I was reading one of the articles, Summer Clarrens review of those two fantasy games, and while he was talking about all the different colors it occurred to me—about all the color-blind people of the world? I am not color-blind, but I think you should think about this before you profusely splash your markers and boards with a myriad of colors and use color alone for identification. You may even lose customers because of their problem. I have no solution to this, but it just something to think about.

To fully comprehend the article "Ship Effectiveness in STELLAR CONQUEST" you would have to take some time to take place. I don't know where Mr. McDermott got all those formulas, but it was impressive. I don't know if it is real good to take a game apart so much. I like it better as just a simple game of space, the laser will be a very much used, and formidable weapon. However, I think that the ranges involved will be more on the order of 5,000 to 500 km rather than 500,000 km.

Norman E. Apperson
York, N.Y. 03755

This month's "Eldon Tamniah" was the best one ever. Compared to the last one and the one before that (which were sleeping), this was like a light out of the dark. I hope you can continue with the style you showed in the last one.

Tim Hawkinson
Worthington, Minn.

You have a fantastic magazine. Your articles are terrific, and always interesting. Article #6 was, as each issue is, great, to say the least. I was going to comment on your superior art, but as soon as I opened my envelope that cover picture really caught my eye. I don't own any of Winchell Chung's artistic abilities, but this time it just came out gross!! Of course, as always, the rest of his art was fantastic.

Keep up the good work.

Pat Brennan
East Hartford, Conn.

Sit down, take a deep breath, and be calm. I am about to criticize STELLAR CONQUEST.

I have noticed that too many SC games go nowhere. This is due to the PFS and the production problems. In the early part of the game, everyone is too busy establishing himself, building a planet, and keeping track of production to attack his enemies. Sending out raiding parties weakens his own defenses, and many can't bear the risk of all they've built up. Later, when your production has expanded to the point where you can risk some of it, everyone is building hopeless PFS. You can't get through it, and it says in the rules "A PFS does not hinder the building of the player's ships or activity." Contrary to what was said in TSG #2, either drop the PFS or include a way to get through it.

An SFI is coming out with OUTREACH by the end of this month, as you doubtless know. While it doesn't sound as action-oriented as the peerless STARFORCE, it still sounds good.

I must disagree with the fellow that reviewed STAR PROBE in TSG #3. It is not a very good game. For one thing, the player can affect the war. He can find many rich planets, but he'll get into much more trouble. It is as if the player were creating the systems instead of finding them! That is totally out of the question and quite unrealistic. I'm afraid it spoiled the game for me somewhat.

Wolden, New York

Tony Watson
Las Vegas, Nevada

Sincerely,
K. Allen Bjorke, Esq.

Dear Howard:

First of all, you may be wondering what has happened to CHANGELING?---the answer is very little since my current supply of art is insufficient, i.e. the cover is still in California with the artist, and won't be here for a while yet, which has only a little prejudice, but if you're at all familiar with the work of Greg Vander Leun, I think you'll agree the wait is probably worth it (I hope!)

For extra bootleggers (a good idea, since Sf wargaming, practically by definition, is a protracted field), may I suggest a collection of Chung's spacecraft diagrams? Also, one of the great beauties of SC is that it's adaptable to many scenarios---Foundation & Empire, the Lensmen, and lots more, which could be made into a whole series of books.

Come to think of it, the whole war gaming is somewhat fictional—the Germans beating the allies at Bastogne, for example, is hardly an occurrence that fits into our present universe, nor is having Xeros wipe out the Greeks. If gaming is actually a natural extension—rather than changing history, it's possible to change current events with close-to-equal realism and the same game concepts, yet without causing any conflicts with reality... as well as creating the complex and fantastic scenarios games like SORCEROR (lesee: green over yellow, but blue over green...)

Surprises? My guess is a fantasy game, on else pretty away in the far, far beyond games into the zine... Rich Bartucci's "MY" being the kind of game I mean. No special map necessary, only the counters... am I right?

I wonder just how much trouble AMC & SPI could cause for you, actually... it took AMC more than two years to produce UFFTAFFE, and to create original scenarios of games of professional quality requires not only the basics of game design, but also extra creative effort in the direction of building up the world-system to be used and making sure it isn't just a copy of some other game...

Well, the letter is awful short, but the high was 99 degrees today and the den, wherein resides my typewriter, is probably the hottest part of the whole house, and I just don't take it anymore... but at least now you know what's happening to the zine you so generously contributed and plugged...

Sincerely,
K. Allen Bjorke, Esq.

If I may, let me say that your editorial judgement has been excellent so far, as I have enjoyed every article so far. Everything like the laser piece last time are excellent additions to game reviews.

However, it is something of a pity there are no more strategy articles a la the recent contribution on SC concerning escorts vs attacks, bonus IU allocation, etc. Something like that on say, STARFORCE or STRANDERS in STARLETTER would be useful.

Of course, in a system I expect to see in the future, I would use a more clear but a little less realistic movement system (I always plot movement so as to get a ship a little off hexside directions only. For the actual velocity I simply count hexes actually traveled through),... would have subtle changes combat. In any case...

Do you ever get much chance to play SF games? Though it's fun to read and write about them, the real pleasure is the play, don't you think? I'm engaging in a "fictionalized" solitaire game of TRIPLANETARY at the moment. It's a bastard mix of the interstellar, intergalactic war, and prospecting scenarios. I say fictionalized, because rather than just fight a set price battle, I'm playing the sides more like in "real life". The reasons for war are more than attempting to fulfill the victory conditions. So far I've found it fascinating, as well as being a marvelously fictional-like way similar to an old Heinlein novel.

You expressed a fear of SPI doing a S-F zine. I doubt it, citing the following:

1) Of the staff of SPI, only Simonsen is into S-F with both SORTROM and STARFORCE as design credits.

2) Simonsen already handles the bulk of the art work for all of SPI.

3) Simonsen already does a lot of S-F. Not to me it looks like Simonsen is the fun, but doesn't have the time. Also consider:

4) SPI has never been much on S-F. I believe STARFORCE was done to appease popular clamor and because of S-F games, and to create original titles for "straight" games.

Despite claims to the contrary, S-F and Moves are pretty much the same thing, the bulk of wargame titles and is the acknowledged design leader, but not so with Space games. You and TSR (Fantasy) are top dogs. They'd soon run out of SORCEROR & STARFORCE pieces.

Hope I haven't crossed your fears some. (Watch SPI announce SPACEWAR a magazine of tactical conflict next month!)

August should be a big month OUTREACH & STANDARDS with the latter (for at least 10 years.)

Somewhere will be enclosed an order.

Take care and I hope to hear from you.

Scott Rusch
Augusta, Maine