

News From Bree

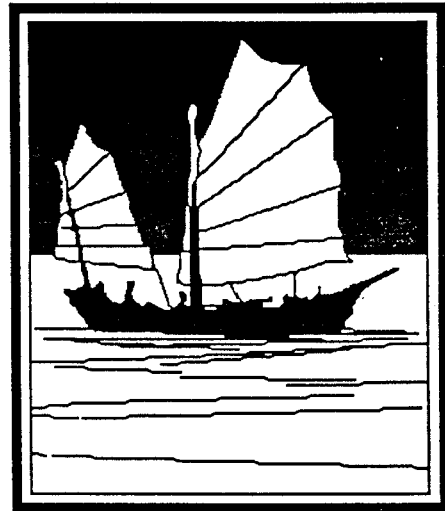
ISSUE #1 11/4/88

Welcome !

Welcome to News From Bree! I've only been in the PBM hobby for about a year - although I've played Dip for about 9 years - but it didn't take long to make the decision to publish.

Why? Well, I love Diplomacy and enjoy writing. I have lots of opinions and like to express them. Hopefully, many of you will, too. The aim of this zine will be simple - have fun playing Diplomacy. The letter column - "Thrust & Parry" - is going to get a lot of emphasis. Let's talk - about issues, baseball, politics, religion - you name it. Controversial or trivial - we'll take a shot at anything. Submission of articles is strongly encouraged. Topics can be game-related or based on letter column discussions. If in doubt, send me a letter of inquiry

and I'll let you know if it would be of interest.



Who Is This Guy?

My name is Chris Gabel. I have been an avid gamer all my life, and find the PBM Dip hobby to be just what I've been looking for. Living in a small town (pop. 2300) in the Central Oregon High Desert, there aren't too many game fanatics around. We do have a small Strat-o-matic baseball league

that has run several short seasons in the last couple of years. I like A-H wargames, but, again, competition is hard to come by.

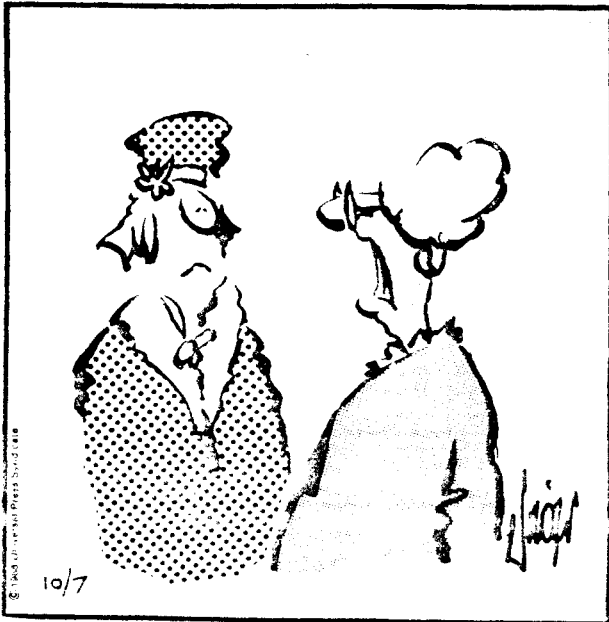
My vocation is accounting - I have been in the Public Accounting profession for about 8 and one half years and have my own office here. My

cntd. from pg 1

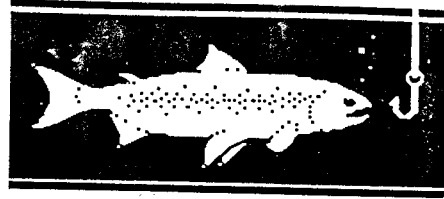
religion is evangelical Protestant - if you want to give it a label (I don't care much about denominations) and my politics are quite Republican, but I enjoy hearing all points of view. Everyone's opinions will be treated with respect (at least by me). After all, we're in this for fun, aren't we?

I read a lot (probably too much - just ask my wife). A well-told story worth telling is my criterion for a good novel and right now my all-time favorites are The Lord of the Rings trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien and The Winds of War / War and Rememberance by Herman Wouk. Other good tales are Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry, The Cain Mutiny also by Wouk, Anne McCaffery's "dragon" books, Roger Zelazny's "Amber" series and anything by Robert Ludlum. In non-fiction, I dabble in laymen's theology - my favorites are probably Loving God by Charles Colson and The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer. If you have any good books to suggest, please do.

HERMAN

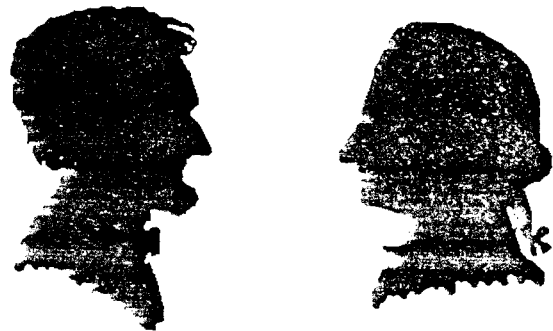


"I'm only really happy when I'm miserable."



A Gaming Philosophy

Gaming, like any other hobby, is for personal enjoyment. We want to have fun. When a hobby involves other people, then courtesy is an important factor. These simple principles will underly this zine. Good natured ribbing is great. Personal attacks are not. We can all agree that regularity in the games is desirable. NMR's and dropouts are mostly out of my control, but for my part I will do my best to assure consistent and prompt GMing and publishing. Black press is out, as this all too often seems to lead to problems. I realize that personality conflicts are probably inevitable. This being my first issue, I'm filled with starry-eyed idealism. Nonetheless, my goal will be to keep the emphasis on fun games and enjoyable banter in the letter column. Feuds and factions exist, but I prefer the hobby - I hope you do, too.

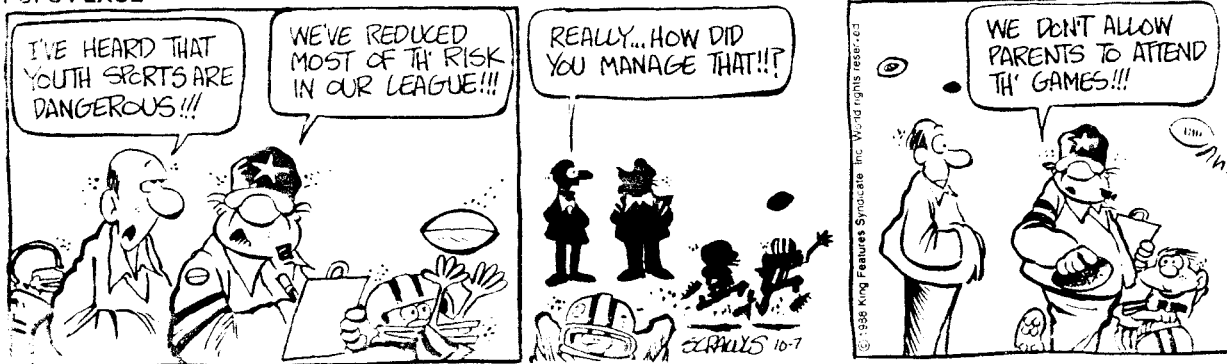


House Rules

You know what they say: you can't live with 'em and you can't live without 'em. In the spirit of the above "philosophy," here they are:

1. The GM is not perfect and will listen to any complaint, but afterward his decision is final.
2. In the event of an adjudication error, the GM must be notified before the next deadline or no change will be made.
3. Moves not received by deadline will not be considered. One of the misfortunes of war...
4. Absolutely no deception of the GM. This always results in expulsion from all games in the zine.
5. Orders may be conditional on anything (use your imagination).
6. Standbys. A standby will be asked to submit orders in the event of any NMR.
7. No black press. The publisher reserves the right to edit press that is unduly slanderous or vulgar.
8. Two consecutive NMRs results in the player being dropped with no refund of game fee.
9. Draws do not have to include all survivors. Any player may propose a draw at any time. NVR = yes. Votes must be unanimous.
10. Current sub is required to play in any game.
11. Abbreviations. Just make sure they're clear.
12. Winter/Spring and Fall divisions are used. Winter '01 & Spring '02 are always separated. If 2 or more players request, following Winter & Spring turns will be separated, otherwise not.
13. Deadlines will be every fifth Friday unless stated otherwise by the GM.
14. Any situation not covered in the above will be dealt with by the common sense (such as it is) of the GM.

POPS PLACE



Where is Bree?

As I prepared for this issue and wrote to various fellow diplomats to beg - I mean encourage - them to give it a look, one of the most frequent questions asked was: WHERE IS BREE???? For some reason, I took it for granted that most gamers would be familiar with The Lord of the Rings, by JRR Tolkien. Well, I should have known better - even for a Tolkien fan, it was a rather obscure reference. OK then, here's the story. You may recall that after Frodo and friends left the Shire through the Old Forest and over the Barrow Downs, they arrived in a town called Bree. Bree was considered by Shirefolk to be a very odd place - why, Hobbits and "big folk" actually lived together in the same town! Due to this reputation, many Shire Hobbits would refer to unusual tidings as being "stranger than NEWS FROM BREE" - hence the name.

You can read into that whatever you will. If you think that means the zine will be a little strange, you're probably right. Then again, most people I know think that a hobby of war games played by mail is a little strange, anyway. After I decided on the name, I noticed a Tolkien variant called "Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King" (thankfully abbreviated as "Downfall III"), which is being introduced into Cathy's Ramblings. The game looks great, and very appropriate, so I am opening a game here, as well, and also encouraging articles (or even fiction) from any interested parties on Tolkien or similar themes.

Also in keeping with the LOTR theme, the games will be given names mentioned in the trilogy, such as Gilthoniel, Anorien, Belfalas - and so forth. If you've ever perused through the appendices and index, you'll know I won't be in any danger of running out of names for a long, long while.

The letter column name (Thrust & Parry) is also a derivative of the general Sword & Sorcery genre. One person asked me if the name implied a "feud" type letter column. As you must know from my earlier comments, that would not be my preference. The direction of the column will be primarily decided by the readers, although I will write some editorials, such as the one that follows, to try and spark a few ideas.

Believe me, your suggestions and comments along the way will be very appreciated. This is my first attempt at publishing of any sort (unless you count my stint as Sports Editor at my college newspaper), so I don't have any ego hangup. Ultimately, this thing will only be worthwhile if you, the reader, are enjoying it. So keep those cards & letters coming!

(Downfall III)

DOWNFALL OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS
AND THE RETURN OF THE KING

By Hartely Patterson with Pete Lindsey and Glover Rogerson.

1. The Standard rules for Diplomacy apply, except where noted below.
2. Initial Placement:

| | |
|---------|--|
| ELVES | A Rivendell, A Lorien, A North Mirkwood, F Grey Havens |
| DWARVES | A Vale, A Iron Hills, A Blue Mountains |
| GONDOR | 2A Minas Tirith, A Belfalas, A Lamedon, A Lebinnin |
| ROHAN | A Helm's Deep, A Edoras, A Eastfold |
| MORDOR | 3A Barad-Dur, 2A Minas Morgul, 2A Udun, 2A Nurn, A Dol Guldor A Carnen, 3xA Easterlings (off the board) |
| SARUMAN | 2A Isengard, A Dunland, A Moria |
| UMBAR | F City of the Corsairs, A Harad, A Havens of Umbar |

3. Multiple Armies

Multiple armies may not split their strength into multiple supports or attacks. A single attack on a multiple cuts all it's support. Once lost multiple armies may not be rebuilt.

4. Builds

Build or 'home' supply centers are marked by *, or if a fortress. Note that a Dwarf army starts in Vale, but the supply center is Erebor.

a) Mordor has three off board centers. These Easterling units may move to the following spaces: Nurn, Ash Mts, N Rhun, S Ruhn. No unit may move off board, and no units may be built off board.

b) The maximum number of fleets allowed on the board is four.

GONDOR 1, ELVES 1, UMBAR 2

c) Notwithstanding the above, whichever power controls the City of the Corsairs may build up to 2 fleets. (With the exception of Umbar). These fleets are in addition to the initial allocation above, and must be built in the City of the Corsairs.

5. Alignment

Players are defined as Good, Evil or Neutral. A Good player may not support or be supported by an Evil player, nor may they convoy each other's pieces.

Good : ELVES, GONDOR, ROHAN

Neutral : DWARVES, UMBAR, SARUMAN

Evil : MORDOR

6. Saruman's Choice

Saruman is a neutral only until:-

a) he takes possession and puts on the Ring, or

b) he takes a Good players 'home' center.

If either of these conditions occur, SARUMAN is redesignated Evil.

7. The Nazgul and the Ring

- a) The Nazgul starts in Barad-Dur, and is initially controlled by MORDOR. This unit moves as a normal unit, and may enter sea spaces and cross mountain ranges with no penalty. Its whereabouts are not revealed to other players unless it is involved in combat, when both location and action are reported. The Nazgul's combat strength is equal to a single unit, but it may only be used to support other units, and may not attack on it's own account. The Nazgul may occupy the same space as any unit, and may attack that unit. An attack upon the space occupied by the Nazgul cuts it's support in the same manner as a normal unit.
- b) The Ring starts in a province north and west of the 'Ring line' chosen at random by the GM. It's presence is only revealed to a player whose unit is in the province it occupies. The Ring has no movement ability, but may be transported by a unit ordered to do so. If a unit and the Nazgul enter a space containing the Ring, the Nazgul claims the Ring. (The unit is, however, informed). A successful supported attack on a space containing a unit or the Nazgul carrying the Ring deprives either of the Ring, though neither is dislodged.

8. Putting on the Ring

- a) No Good unit may put on the Ring.
- b) Neutral (excl. Saruman). A Neutral player may put on the Ring by ordering the unit carrying it to do so. The army wearing the Ring becomes a 2A.
- c) SARUMAN. Only the 2A may put on the Ring, if it is still in play. The 2A becomes a 3A, and the other original units (Moria, Dunland) become 2A, if still in play.
- d) MORDOR. Only the 3A may put on the Ring. The 3A becomes a 4A, any 2As become 3A, and any As become 2A. Any subsequent builds are 2As.

If any player other than MORDOR puts on the Ring, the following occurs:-

- i) The 3A becomes a 2A.
- ii) The 2As become As.
- iii) The tree Easterling (off board) centers are lost. These centers are regained if the Ring is taken off or taken by MORDOR.
- iv) The Nazgul is controlled by the Ring wearer until they are eliminated, when it reverts to MORDOR.

If any player puts on the Ring and subsequently loses it, he is eliminated and his units all stand in civil disorder.

9. Special Areas

- a) Fangorn & Shire. These areas have an intrinsic strength of 1 against Evil units attempting to occupy them, which they will add to Good units occupying them. Fangorn acts in this manner against SARUMAN (even as a neutral) as well.
- b) Moria. Initially only SARUMAN or MORDOR may enter Moria due to the Balrog, or Neutral units with SARUMAN's specific agreement. Any unit other than these which enters Moria is destroyed, but also destroys the Balrog.

10. Mountains:

Areas marked a mountain on the map are impassable to all units, except the Nazgul.

11. Fortresses:

Areas marked with ■ are fortresses. These areas add 1 to the strength any unit occupying them. A fortress may not so support a unit moving out. The following are fortresses:- Barad-Dur, Minas Morgul, Minas Tirith, Helm's Deep, Isengard, Erebor, Rivendell & Lorien (elves only), and Moria.

12. Sauron:

If the 3A of MORDOR (Sauron) is eliminated, then MORDOR is eliminated. All of that player's units are reduced to single armies and stand in civil disorder.

13. Victory:

- a) A player controlling all supply centers on the board, except for opposing units besieged in fortresses, is the winner. In this case fortress may be interpreted as any small locked up position, e.g. MORDOR (the three spaces around Barad-Dur).
- b) A Good player may win by destroying the Ring. A Unit reaching Mt. Doom may destroy the Ring by ordering this.



Thrust & Parry

An Editorial: Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad ACLU?

By the time you receive this, the Presidential election results will be in. Regardless of the outcome, one result of the campaign was to give a lot of attention to an outfit we know as the ACLU - the American Civil Liberties Union. It was, for me, one of the more surprising campaign issues I've seen in a while - and surprisingly effective. Why surprising? Well, personal associations with organizations haven't been much of an issue (in my memory) since the old McCarthy days. Yet the ACLU carries a pretty negative connotation with many, many folks these days.

In their defense, the ACLU has barraged the public with propoganda about how they have defended civil liberties for all Americans - conservatives, liberals, Nazis, communists, Ollie North, journalists, and so forth. What's wrong with that, they ask? If that were all there were to it, the answer would be simple - nothing at all. But the ACLU does not simply defend "civil liberties" - they push a particular concept of civil liberties which is extreme in nature. For example, they believe that obscenity laws - including laws against child pornography - are unconstitutional. They currently have the Catholic Church in federal court in an

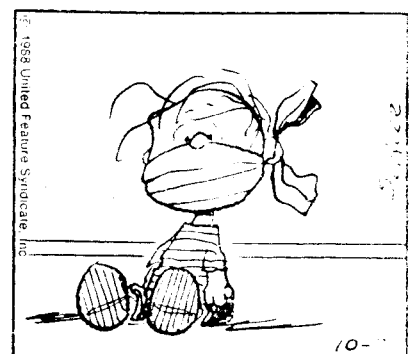
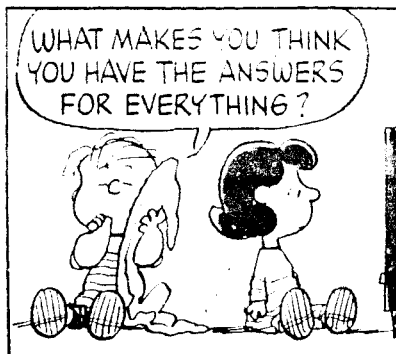
attempt to have their tax exemption revoked. Why? Because they actively try to influence their parishoner's views on abortion. A very strange and frightening concept of freedom of religion! I think it's fair to say that the ACLU is not a "mainstream" organization.

Does this mean that ACLU members are subversives? Should they not be allowed to run for office? Of course they should! But a politician's associations tell the voters something of his/her priorities and values. What bothers me more is Michael Dukakis' determination to hide his record and ideology from the voters. It strikes me as fundamentally dishonest. George Bush has made no bones about his conservatism. Why can't Dukakis be himself as well? Gosh, can you tell how I voted in this election?

Miscellany

Now that I've driven away any Democrats (I really hope not), take a look at the column that follows concerning bioethics. Your comments will be very welcome. After all, issue #2 definitely will be boring if all you get are my opinions.

PEANUTS



Science, ethics battle for role in life, death debate

Bioethicist (defensive) in defining own role

By MELVIN MADDOCKS

Certain debates go on and on, like badly staged sword fights in grade B movies: Environmentalists, for instance, make a career these days out of arguing how the United States can become "competitive" with Japan. The answer may be nowhere in sight, but we sure recognize all the thrusts and parries.

So, too, with the campaign of '88 shipping up between George Bush and Michael Dukakis, otherwise known as "I am not a wimp" vs. "I am not a robot" — an endless thumping of nicked blades that nobody can figure out how to stop.

By contrast, significant decisions are made by default on topics where, for one reason or another, there occurs little or no discussion. Even to bring the subject up, one has to invent a dialogue. Here is an imaginary life-and-death (no less) debate between a bioethicist and what shall we call him? — a layman.

Layman: What is a bioethicist?

Bioethicist: I think the term, and the role, are self-explanatory.

Layman: Not at all. The term implies that you function as a kind of middleman between the "two cultures," bringing traditional humanistic values to bear upon the new frontiers of science — genetic engineering, in vitro conception, and so on.

Bioethicist: That's not a bad definition —

for a layman.

Layman: So you're sort of an ombudsman — an in-house representative of the interests of the ordinary citizens?

Bioethicist: Right.

Layman: Wrong. If the Pentagon created a Department for Humane Warfare to prove they "cared" about civilians, you'd be comparable to the general placed in charge — chest covered with battle stars. In your heart of hearts, you're a member of the scientific establishment, dedicated to the credo of ever-more knowledge, ever-more capability.

OK — that's the scientist's vocation, that's the scientist's destiny. But you're pretending to be a brake-man when you're really one of the hands on the throttle. You're the latest in lab smocks, pretending it's a layman's Palm Beach linen suit.

Bioethicist: That's not fair. I really am a philosopher and a moralist. It's just that life and death aren't the simple terms they used to be . . .

Layman: Aha! Now we're getting down to it. When is an embryo human? When is the brain dead? Call in the specialist. By making

life-and-death technical questions requiring sophisticated laboratory equipment to define and measure, you not-so-subtly take the matter out of the layman's hands.

Bioethicist: Now wait a minute! I'm sensitive to how the revolution in biological capability disturbs the layman — that's why I'm here, acting as mediator.

Layman: I don't doubt your sincerity. But I do worry about your self-awareness. You don't see your own prejudices because you don't think you have any — being a scientist. You play at saying, "Now wait a minute, what would Plato think?" But all your impulses say, "Go for it — all the way."

Bioethicist: Not true. I really do agonize over the moral questions of consequence and responsibility.

Layman: Maybe. But Hamlet you're not. You're too efficient at getting on with the job — and towing us along with you. The layman, to you, is a confused, ignorant child, scared of learning "The Truth." He's too lazy or dumb to become scientifically "literate," so you have to take him by the hand and lead him out of

his superstitions into the 21st century, and the way you do this is by "speaking his language" — sort of moralistic baby talk.

Bioethicist: Now you're really being outrageous. I and my children live on Space-ship Earth, too, and I'm just as concerned as you are about the quality of life. Who's being patronizing to whom here?

Layman: Oh yes. The "quality of life." How you nudge the little phrase around — not very scientifically, if I may say so. You seem to want both the right to legislate compulsory health care to perpetuate the "quality of life" and the right to pull the plug when you decide the "quality of life" is not up to standards. You have this dialogue — really a bioethicist's monologue — so well under control that Nat Hentoff, writing in the Village Voice from the perspective of constitutional rights, is about the only layman to challenge consistently your inconsistency.

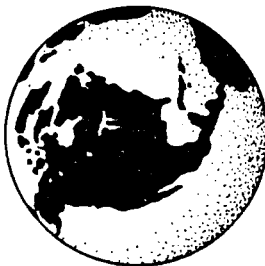
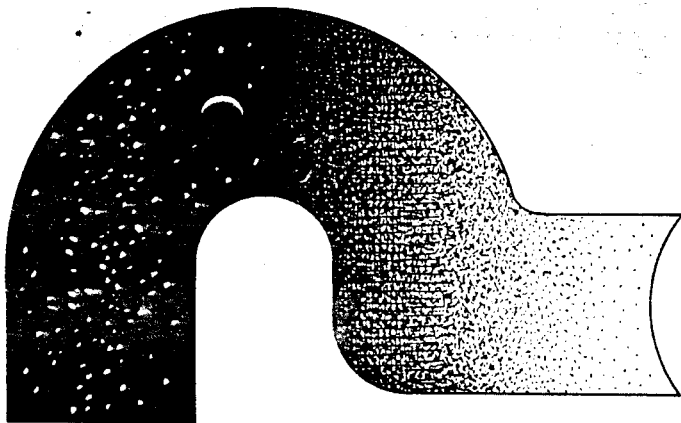
Bioethicist: We're dealing in difficult areas where nothing is clear cut — abortion, babies with AIDS, old folks on life-support systems. Give us a break.

Layman: Give us a break. Unless life is sacred — as poets, philosophers, and saints have assumed — it becomes a brain wave, a pulse beat. Without a "sense of the sacred," the philosopher and historian Theodore Roszak has noted, "there can be no ethical commitment that is anything more than superficial humanist rhetoric . . . which therefore collapses into embarrassed confusion as soon as a more hardheaded inquirer comes along and asks, 'But why not?'" This, I take it, is where bioethics — or just plain ethics — can be found today, pretending to a judicious balance without really practicing it.

Bioethicist: I protest. Whoever is writing this dialogue is giving you all the long speeches.

Layman: Maybe that's because in the real world you're the one having the last word.

© 1988, The Christian Science Monitor News Service



PAUL KOLSTI

Smeagolian Correspondence

Surely one of the most beloved of Tolkien's characters was the wretched creature known as Gollum - or Smeagol if you want to use his given name. In keeping with this rather perverse attempt at a dipzine with a LOTR twist, I thought I would put my imagination to work at the following proposition: What kind of Diplomacy letters would Smeagol write? Here is my effort - please feel free to try your hand. The winning entry will receive 2 free issues of Bree.

Preciousss Massster:

Poor, poor Smeagol wonders, yes we wonders, why nasty Italian fleets are in the Regean Ssseeea. We promised, yes - good Smeagol promised - to be good to master, to protect him from Russtrian treachery. Poor Smeagol keeps his promise! Nice master! Master has good reasons - yes - to swim east? To help poor Smeagol? Gollum! Poor Smeagol only wants cold, dark waters to find fish - yes - and other good things - nice food! Nice master! We wants to serve nice master - doesn't want to hurt anyone. Gollum! Gollum! Gollum! Good Smeagol will ssstab cruel Austrian - yesss - support nice masster to Ssserbia! But please, - gollum! - take away nasty fleets sssso wretched Smeagol can ssserve massster again tomorrow. Yes, precious masster...

Well, you get the idea. Let's see what you folks can come up with.

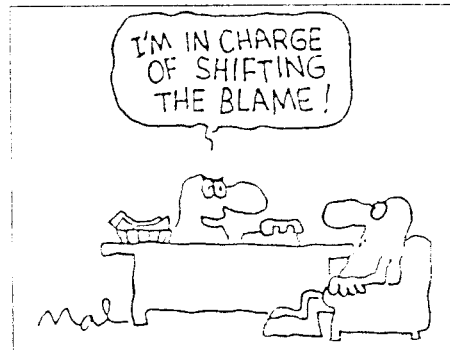
Finally...

All good things must come to an end, so why not this, too? Again, your comments, suggestions, contributions, etc. will be very much appreciated. Until next time...(Dec 9th)...

GAME OPENINGS - Regular Dip - 1 game
Downfall III - 1 game
(Game fee is \$5)

SUBSCRIPTIONS - 50 cents per issue

Published by: Chris Gabel
P.O. Box 92
Madras, OR 97741



News From Bree

P.O. Box 92

Madras, OR 97741