

# LORD OF HOSTS

LORD OF HOSTS is the official publication of the Miller Number Custodian, John Leeder, 121 19th Ave. NE, Calgary, Alta., Canada T2E 1N9.

## Policy Statements and General Chat:

As incoming MNC, I suppose I'd better say some things about the directions this zine will take (as much as I can head it in any particular direction, or want to). RUNESTONE readers, please bear with me; you've read some of this already, but not all.

The basic function of the MNC is to assign Miller Numbers to postal (or quasi-postal) games of variant Diplomacy, and to publish a zine listing these, as well as complete (or as complete as possible) statistics on such games when they finish. Period. If I perform this function satisfactorily, I will consider my tenure as Custodian to be a successful one.

Nevertheless, I would prefer it if LORD OF HOSTS were more than a dry statistics zine. I'd like it to be interesting; I'd like people to get LOH out of more than a sense of duty and tradition (more about that later). I don't delude myself that I can do it all myself; Diplomacy is my second-ranking hobby (folk music having first call on my leisure time), and my commitments to the hobby are already somewhat high.

I need help! In addition to the statistical content of this issue, and the "housekeeping" (including picking up lots of pieces after a desultory latter tenure of Greg Costikyan), I hope to write some stuff of interest to variant enthusiasts in general. After that, it's up to the readers, in large measure. I'd like letters of comment, either on what I've written or events in the variant world, or variants themselves (nothing like healthy disagreement in the letter column to make interesting reading - and I do mean "healthy. No vendettas, please!). I'd like articles. I'd even like newly-designed variants themselves (although I can't promise to spend hours drawing maps or typing rules).

Robert Sacks, by his own account, "burned himself out" trying to make LORD OF HOSTS into an interesting readers' zine. I'm not going to do that. If the variant hobby doesn't respond to reasonable efforts to stimulate contributions, so be it; I'll quite happily perform the basic MNC functions, and LOH will quite happily continue as a dry statszine. It'd be nice, though.

Methods of Receiving LORD OF HOSTS: It has been traditional for publishers who include variant Diplomacy games in their zine to trade all-for-all, as it is an official hobby publication performing a valuable hobby function. I don't know whether or not this tradition is being carried on at present (I did not receive a subscription list from Greg Costikyan). I would like to encourage all-for-all trades with any publisher who can see his way clear.

However, I recognize that it would be easy for a publisher who is not public-spirited or not in touch with hobby tradition (or poor) to reason that LORD OF HOSTS is a bad deal for his money. It is published less frequently than most zines (I expect it to be quarterly, if the material allows; in the past couple of years it has come out even less frequently); and in its

basic form it's not very entertaining. I expect that the entertainment value and punctuality of LOH will improve over what it's been lately; nevertheless, for publishers who absolutely cannot trade all-for-all with what admittedly will never be an equivalent dollar value to a mainstream zine, I offer an alternative: I am willing to include LOH in a mutual-subscriptions trade for RUNESTONE, my major zine (as well as BATOCHÉ, my French-language warehouse zine, for those who want it). Publishers of variants who already get RUNESTONE will already get this deal; it's available to others as well.

(Note that I expect to publish LORD OF HOSTS at a slight loss, as I do RUNESTONE; I will therefore be assuming this loss myself rather than robbing the MNC treasury by using this method.)

(Note also that I will not trade on a mutual subscription basis for only LORD OF HOSTS. This would have the potential of being financially ruinous.)

A third, vastly less desirable, alternative, is for publishers to send me complete information on gamestarts (type of variant, zine, GM, player list - I'd appreciate players' first names as well as surnames) and game completions (all zines and GMs, including season when changeovers took place, all players for all countries, including season when changeovers took place, supply centre chart). If you send me the issues of your zine when gamestarts and game completions took place, I will send you the issues of LOH which list them. If you just send me the information, I'll just send you the appropriate information.

Theoretically, LORD OF HOSTS should document the entire variant hobby. I would like to approach this standard as closely as possible. I can't do it without the help of all GMs and publishers of variant postal games.

Minor Financial Matters: The subscription rate for LOH will be 2¢/page plus postage, same as for all my other zines. Non-trade subscribers should send a couple of dollars and I'll keep track of your credit. Mutual-subscription traders, credit me with a reasonable amount of sub credit to your zine and I'll credit you with an equivalent amount.

(I credit non-Canadian funds at current exchange rates from the most recent newspaper I have on hand.)

Note that the non-mandatory \$1 donation requested by the Boardman Number Custodian for each number assigned does not apply to the Miller Numbers. Please don't send money; it embarrasses me... Requests for Miller Numbers will be more rapidly filled if you send a self-addressed envelope and Canadian postage or equivalent. (Note that Canadian postage rates are expected to take a drastic hike come January. The airmail letter rate to the U.S. will probably be 35¢ (= 42¢US at current exchange).)

I received Robert Sacks' cheque the other day; the MNC treasury contains \$105US. I plan to stick this in a daily interest account and absorb minor cost of day-to-day operation myself.

"Politics": I guess it should be said. The variant hobby over the past few years has been strongly influenced by the fact that two of its major figures, Robert Sacks and Rod Walker, both former MNCs and strong hobby workers, don't like each other much and find it difficult to agree on things (although, to give them credit, they've tried...)

I have had many dealings with both Rod and Robert over the years. On some occasions I've agreed with one or the other, on some occasions disagreed. I have tried to stay out of disagreements between them unless I strongly felt that one or the other was right and that it mattered strongly. I flatter myself that both Robert and Rod count me as a friend (or at least as a non-enemy) and that I can continue to work with them while maintaining my inde-

pendence of factionalism. I will not lend the weight of the MNC office to internecine squabbles; I will follow what I believe to be rational courses and trust that both Robert and Rod will respect my views even when they don't agree with them.

Financial Update: On October 7th I opened a daily interest savings account (in my name, but containing only the MNC Treasury). The balance was \$124.87 Canadian; the interest rate at the time was 16 3/4 per cent. Just thought you'd like to know...

What's Been Going On: Greg Costikyan, outgoing MNC, and Rod Walker, head of the North American Variant Bank, carried on discussions (albeit desultory) and reached certain agreements. In some cases agreement in principle only was reached and no formal document was signed. Nevertheless, where agreement in principle was reached I consider myself bound by the agreement (in no case do I disagree strongly, in any event). Furthermore, my experiences with CDO (which existed quite happily without a written constitution) and as a resident of Canada (most of whose constitution is unwritten), as well as my personal preferences, lead me to feel that an informal agreement is preferable to a legalistic written one. In any event, the following arrangements may be considered to be a reality:

-1. The Miller Numbers will henceforth convert to the system used for identifying variants in the North American Variant Bank. The designators are assigned to variants by the head of the NAVB and published in ARDA; the designators for postal games are appended thereto by the MNC.

-2. The head of the NAVB and the MNC have the right to veto each other's choice of successor. (In the current situation, this means that I will seek Rod's agreement before filling the post of Vice-Custodian which I have vacated).

-3. If either the MNC or NAVB head becomes inactive without appointing a successor, the other may temporarily assume the other's functions on an emergency basis and hand them over to a successor as soon as one is found. (Note that again no formal definition of "inactive" has been arrived at; I am not sure that one is needed.)

Greg informs me that he "never formally agreed to" item 3. Nevertheless his agreement in principle is good enough for me. Rod Walker's action in deciding that Greg had become "inactive" is, to my mind, consistent with item 3 above; as well, Greg implicitly approved the action, subject to Rod's acceding to my assumption of the MNC post (which he has done), in a letter to me. I am going to confirm the Miller Numbers which Rod assigned (where possible, and subject to any assignments Greg made - I have not yet gone over the material in detail). In the light of the above agreement, I do not see Rod's action as a "usurpation" (as it has been described in some quarters) but rather as a legitimate emergency measure, justified in the circumstances and implicitly approved after the fact by Greg.

Date Lines: The masthead date of this issue is October 13. As it is now October 12 and I have yet to research and type up the MNs assigned during the hiatus and game completions therein, plus do whatever "extra" writing I can, I hardly expect this to be mailed on that date; and it looks like a busy week shaping up thereafter. However, I do not plan to let deadlines become a

Miller Number Designators (Old Style) Assigned Since Last Issue:

jo - Deadman Diplomacy  
jp - Vacation Diplomacy  
jq - World War IIIb  
jr - German Politomacy

Miller Numbers Assigned Since Last Issue:

This listing consists of games which have been brought to my attention, plus numbers assigned by Rod Walker during the hiatus. I have not yet gotten to the point of seeking out games which have not yet been assigned a number (be they old or current games). That comes next; and of course I'd appreciate any information anyone could supply.

1977AUco (Abstraction II). STABSANZEIGER (for lineup see Game Completions).

1977AVco (Abstraction II). STABSANZEIGER (for lineup see Game Completions).

1978Vco (Abstraction II). STABSANZEIGER. Starting lineup not yet received.

1978Wjr (German Politomacy). STABSANZEIGER (for lineup see Game Completions.)

1979Sjh (Holocaust). ST. GEORGE & THE DRAGON (Bob Sargeant). Africa, Glenn Ledder; Australia, Dennis Sulaberger; Canada, John Sokol; China, Fred Hyatt; Europe, David Hooton; Japan, Chuck Price; Russia, Eugene Paulson; South America, Steve McLendon; U.S.A., George Pyfrom.

1979Tbb (Multiplicity). STABSANZEIGER (for lineup see Game Completions).

1980Pjo (Deadman). VOLKERWANDERUNG (Bob Arnett). Austria, Eric Ozog; England, Wade Dudley; France, Al Ronderos; Germany, David Carter; Italy, Keith Mercer; Russia, David Arnett; Turkey, Tony Strickland.

1980Qjo (Deadman). VOLKERWANDERUNG (Bob Arnett). Austria, George Leritte; England, Freeman Gilbert; France, Paul Goodrich; Germany, Dave Barker; Italy, Dennis Walker; Russia, John Kador; Turkey, D.S. Palter.

1980Rjo (Deadman). VOLKERWANDERUNG (Roy Henricks). Austria, Mark Lew; England, Nick Russon; France, Stephen Kiser; Germany, Kevin Kozlowski; Italy, Kirby Garrett; Russia, Clark Reynolds; Turkey, John Vielmann.

1980Sjb (Machiavelli, ? scenario). ENVOY (Roy Henricks). Austria, Glenn Overby; Florence, ? McConnell; France, ? Pelliccia; Milan, ? Swider; Naples, ? Horn; Papacy, ? Goodrich; Turkey, ? Scott; Venice, L. Boudon.

1980Tjp (Vacation Diplomacy). BIGTIMER MAGAZINE (subzine of MURD'RING MINISTERS) (? GM). Austria, Al Rodriguez; England, Ron Brown; France, ? Williams; Germany, Bob Arnett; Italy, Jack Masters; Russia, ? Grabar; Turkey, Jim Bumpass.

1980Ujb (Machiavelli, 1453 scenario). SHOGUN'S SWORD (Tom Swider). Austria, Keith Kendall; Florence, Peter Ansoff; France, Dan Palter; Milan, Don Schwartz; Naples, Kevin Welsh; Papacy, Ben Schilling; Turkey, Paul Goodrich; Venice, Scott Smith.

1980Vig (Blind Diplomacy). WHY ME? (Lee Kendter). Austria, Vern Schaller; England, John Kador; France, Karl Schuetz; Germany, Art Schleinkofer; Italy, Phil Cooper; Russia, Jerry Nuto; Turkey, Li. McGrawaghan.

1980Wig (Blind Diplomacy). WHY ME? (Lee Kendter). Austria, Walt Aucott; England, Robert Stimmel; France, Steve McLendon; Germany, Jack Brawmer; Italy, John Michalski; Russia, Jack Fleming; Turkey, Ed Tucker.

1980Xig (Blind Diplomacy). WHY ME? (Karl Schuetz). Austria, Phil Cooper; England, Bill Hart; France, Daniel Loewenstern; Germany, David Pierce; Italy, Fred Townsend; Russia, Steve Cartier; Turkey, Lee Kendter.

1980Yig (World War IIIb). ST. GEORGE & THE DRAGON (Bob Sergeant) (Gamestart was in FLYING DUTCHMAN (Jack Brawmer) but first season was in above.) Argentina, Bill LaFosse; Australia, Bill Thompson; Brazil, Michael Mills; Canada, Stephen d'Alessandro; China, J. Remillard; Egypt, Bern Sampson; European Common Market, Mark Stevens; India, Dale Kemper; Japan, Vern Schaller; Peru, Charles Miller; U.S.A., Tom Thorsen; U.S.S.R., Bill Buck; U.S.A. (that previous "U.S.A." is Union of South Africa), Jim Yerkey; Warsaw Pact, George Pyfrom; W.A.F., Roscoe McPherrren.

1980Zdy (Atlantica II). STABSANZEIGER (for lineup see Game Completions).

1981Agf08 (formerly 1981Aja; see last issue).

1981Bpw02 (formerly 1981Bjb; see last issue).

1981Cna02 (formerly 1981Cjl; see last issue).

1981Djn05 (formerly 1981Djm; see last issue).

1981Erm22 (formerly 1981Ejn; see last issue).

1981Ffn02 (Song of the Night). JIHAD! (Glenn Overby). A: Mark Larzelere; B: Dan Palter; C: David Anderson; D: Michael Crane; E: Richard Carlson; F: Debbie Osborne.

1981Ggh03 (Colonia V). SWORD AND SCIMITAR (subzine of WHITESTONIA) (Bob Kluge) Austria, Don Ditter; China, Eugene Prosniz; England, ? Zipper; France, Karl Schuetz; Netherlands, ? Burden; Ottoman Empire, ? Wilson; Portugal, Fred Hyatt; Spain, ? Mathias.

1981Hej01 (Jimmu). EMHAIN MACHA (Michael Mills); Aomori, Keith Mercer; Fukui, Dan Palter; Hakodate, Eric Bram; Kobe, Chuck Scott; Nagasaki, Jack Masters; Tokyo, Glenn Overby.

1981Igp09 (Mercator III). JIHAD! (Glenn Overby). Argentina, John Marsden;

Austria, Dan Wilson; Brazil, Tom Monaghan; China, Debbie Osborne; England, Peter McDonald; France, Steven Davies-Morris; Germany, Fred Winter; India, Tom Butcher; Italy, David Anderson; Japan, Marion Bates; Russia, Don Del Grande; Turkey, Dan Palter.

1981Jpe02 (Excalibur). OUTPOSTS (Dave Dart). British, Ian Wright; Picts, An-



drew Poole; Scots, Graham Mason; Saxons, Andy Murby; Angles, Steve Harvey; Jutes, Chris Barrows; Frisians, Steve Rawson.

1981Kts01 (Downfall, etc.). OUTPOSTS (Andy Murby). Elves, Steve Harvey; Dwarves, Nigel Rushton; Gondor, Graham Mason; Rohan, Andrew Poole; Sauron, David McClure; Saruman, Chris Barrows; Umbar, Andy Ellison; Gandalf, Kevan Day

1981Lgf08 (Small World II-R). OUTPOSTS (Chris Barrows). Africa, David McClure; China, Graham Mason; Islam, David Swann; North America, Steve Harvey; Russia, Kevan Day; South America, David Dart; Western Europe, Barry Twycross.

1981Mcn05 (Cline 9-player IV). OUTPOSTS (Steve Harvey). Austria, Barry Twycross; Barbary States, Andrew Poole; England, Dave Dart; France, Kevan Day; Germany, Dave Swann; Italy, Graham Mason; Persia, Andy Ellison; Russia, Andy Murby; Turkey, Steve Rawson.

1981Nrd07 (Kriegsplomacy). No zine (computer network) (Don Woods). Austria, Chuck Feinstein; England, Ed Baines; France, Steve Quarterman; Germany, Allen Wells; Italy, Mary Beck; Russia, Doug Lenat; Turkey, Andy Daniels.

1981Ope04 (Gesta Danorum, 4-player "historic" scenario). RUNESTONE (John Leader). Danes, Dan R. Wilson; Mercians, Fred Weidemeyer; Northumbrians, Hugh Polley; West Saxons, Dave Pengelly.

1981Prb21 (Second Chance). LIFE OF MONTY (Don Del Grande). Austria, Mike Barno; England, Mike Rollin; France, Mark Lew; Germany, Dick Martin; Italy, Richard Carlson; Russia, Jeff Noto; Turkey, David J. Carter.

1981Qwc02 (Conquest of the New World II). SNAFU! (Ronald J. Brown). England, Fred Davis; France, George Mills; Indians, Chip Charnley; Portugal, Steve Hutton; Spain, Dan R. Wilson.

Addenda and Corrigenda:

19800jk (Proxy Plomacy). VOICE OF DOOM (Bruce Linsey). Austria, David J. Carter; England, Mark Larzelere; France, Kevan Turner; Germany, Paul Rauterberg; Italy, Kerry Blant; Russia, Scott Haiber; Turkey, Robert Olsen.

Game Completions Since Last Issue:

1977AUco (Abstraction II). STABSANZEIGER (Axel and Hartmut Halfmeier). Austria, Christopher Schunck (out Nov 16); England, Wilfried Dingel (dro? Mar 17), c.d. (out Sep 17); France, Horst John (won Mar 18); Germany, Karlheinz Müller; Italy, Ulf Beyersdorff; Russia, Willy Christensen (dro? Jul 17), c.d.; Turkey, Helmut Vogel.

	Aug 14	Nov 14	Feb 15	May 15	Aug 15	Nov 15	Feb 16	May 16	Aug 16	Nov 16	Feb 17	May 17	Aug 17	Nov 17	Feb 18
Austria	7	6	7	8	5	3	3	1	1	-					
England	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	8	6	5	3	1	-		
France	5	5	6	8	9	9	10	10	12	14	16	19	20	21	23 won Mar 18
Germany	6	6	6	5	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	8	11	10

Italy	5	6	5	5	6	7	5	5	5	5	7	8	9	10	9
Russia	6	7	7	8	11	12	13	16	16	16	14	12	7	1	1
Turkey	6	7	7	4	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	3

Began August 1977; ended May 1981.

1977AVco (Abstraction II). STABSANZEIGER (Axel and Hartmut Halfmeier). Austria, Werner Vogel (out Mar 15); England, Rainer Müller (out Aug 15); France, Wilfried Dingel (drew Sep 15); Germany, Dietmar Pfohl (drew Sep 15); Italy, Matthias John (drew Sep 15); Russia, Ulrich Hausmann (drew Sep 15); Turkey, Horst John (drew Sep 15).

	Aug 14	Nov 14	Feb 15	May 15	Aug 15	
Austria	5	1	-	-	-	
England	7	6	3	1	-	
France	5	5	6	7	8	drew
Germany	6	9	10	11	12	drew
Italy	6	8	8	8	7	drew
Russia	8	9	10	10	10	drew
Turkey	5	6	8	9	9	drew

Drawn by player vote.

Began October 1977; ended March 1979.

1978Wir (German Politomacy). STABSANZEIGER (Axel and Hartmut Halfmeier). CDU: Dietmar Pfohl (won W87); FDP: Knut Michael Wolf (out F86); NPD: Helmut Vogel; SED: Uli Hausmann (out W82); SPD: Joachim Hagenguth.

	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	
CDU	6	7	8	10	12	11	11	11	12	13	won
FDP	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	
NPD	5	5	6	7	11	12	12	12	12	10	
SED	5	6	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SPD	5	4	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	

Began May 1978; ended May 1980.

1979Tbb (Multiplicity). STABSANZEIGER (Axel and Hartmut Halfmeier). Austria, Konrad Baumeister (dro? FO4), c.d. (out WO5); England, Horst John; France, Christoph Schunck; Germany, Harald Voigt; Italy, Dietmar Pfohl (won WO5); Russia, Helmut Vogel; Turkey, Andreas Steding (dro? FO3), c.d. (out WO5).

	01	02	03	04	05	
Austria	3	4	1	1	-	
England	5	4	3	2	2	
France	5	5	5	6	7	
Germany	6	7	9	8	4	
Italy	5	7	11	13	20	won
Russia	5	5	2	1	1	
Turkey	3	3	3	3	-	

Began August 1979; ended May 1981.

1980Vig (Blind Diplomacy). WHY ME? (Lee Kendter). Austria, Vern Schaller (drew S08); England, John Kador (out WO4); France, Karl Schuetz (drew S08); Germany, Art Schleinkofor (drew S08); Italy, Phil Cooper; Russia, Jerry Muto (out WO4); Turkey, M. McGranaghan (res S03), Dave Arnott.

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	
Austria	5	6	8	9	8	9	8	-	drew
England	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	
France	5	5	7	8	9	9	9	-	drew

Drawn by player vote, S08.

Germany	5	7	8	10	11	11	13	drew
Italy	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	
Russia	6	4	2	-				
Turkey	4	4	4	3	2	1	1	

1980Wjg (Blind Diplomacy), WHY ME? (Lee Kendter). Austria, Walt Aucott (out WO3); England, Robert Stimmel (out WO6); France, Steve McLendon (drew WO6?); Germany, Jack Brawner (dro FO4), c.d.; Italy, John Michalski; Russia, Jack Fleming (drew WO6?); Turkey, Ed Tucker.

	<u>01</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>06</u>	
Austria	3	1	-				Drawn by player vote (?), WO6(?).
England	4	3	3	2	1	-	
France	4	6	6	7	9	10	drew
Germany	5	7	6	4	4	2	
Italy	4	4	6	6	7	8	
Russia	7	7	8	10	10	12	drew
Turkey	4	6	5	5	3x	2	

1981Nrd07 (Kriegsplomacy), No zine (computer network) (Don Woods); Austria, Chuck Feinstein (drew WO5); England, Ed Baines; France, Steve Quarterman; Germany, Allen Wells; Italy, Mary Beck (out WO5); Russia, Doug Lenat; Turkey, Andy Daniels (drew WO5).

	<u>01</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	
Austria	4	5	7	8	10	drew
England	3	4	5	4	3	
France	5	5	4	5	2	
Germany	3	4	4	5	3	
Italy	5	5	3	1	-	
Russia	4	5	4	3	4	
Turkey	5	6	7	8	12	drew

Drawn "by player concession".

Any information on completed games would be vastly appreciated, especially if the statistics are digested in the format used above.

Well, that's done! It took me much longer than I expected to bring the statistics up to date (including retyping of a great deal of the pages), but from here on I expect the job to be simpler, now that I've got more of a handle on things.

Meanwhile, now I can get to what I hope will be a regular feature of LOH. I hope other variant GMs will see fit to contribute. I'd like to see this feature written by GMs (current or former) and slanted towards GMs trying to decide what variants to GM and, to some extent, towards players trying to decide what variants to play in.

In this and future issues I plan to cover all variants which I have GMed, of my own design and others. Some games which look good at first glance turn out to be not so good in play, and vice versa. This sort of information, based on direct personal experience, should be valuable for GMs and players.



The Lowdown (being an informal look at the characteristics of certain variants in postal play)

Youngstown VIII (designed by Dick Vedder). This is the only one of the popular Youngstown series which I've GMed; it's an expanded version, bringing in an extra continent (Africa), an extra combatant (Transvaal) and an extra-complicated set of fleet rules.

On the whole, I like the game. It does have definite drawbacks both intrinsically and postally, but I like it. There's lots of action, and lots of room for strategy; I can't put my finger on specific reasons other than that; it's just a good mix, for the most part.

On the debit side, from the players' point of view, is that Transvaal has little to do other than expand, for quite a while; it starts small and has little contact with neighbours, thus there's not much to negotiate for (of course, this means also that Transvaal likely will never be eliminated early, either). Germany doesn't have much to do, either; it takes no part in the colonial races and plays basically its traditional role, likely a drawback to the variant fan who seeks variety.

From a GM's point of view, consider: the game I'm GMing has been running for over 3½ years, real time. 23 players have been involved in the game so far. There are 92 units on the board. It takes me at least two hours to GM and type up a season; even then, because of the vast number of units and (especially) the off-board-box fleet rules, there's rarely a season without a GMing or typographical error, often causing game delays.

Any GM considering running Youngstown VII (or any large-scale game, for that matter) should be prepared to stick at it for years, and to spend a lot of time in adjudicating. He must be strong on the tactical adjudication end (anyone who makes lots of GMEs in simpler games should forget Youngstown). He must have a healthy standby list, as there's lots of attrition in a game that lasts so long.

But, as I said, I like the game...

Dalarna II (designed by John Leeder). This is the first variant I created. It's based on Fletcher Pratt's fantasy novel *The Well of the Unicorn* (itself loosely based on medieval Scandinavia). As far as I'm concerned, it's a loser, although one other GM, Michel Liesnard, has (against my advice) run at least one postal section. I myself have GMed it twice postally.

The problems are that it's deficient in both strategy and tactics. The number of supply centres is small compared to the number of powers, so no power has a chance to grow fast and to command many units. The strategic end is governed by the relationship between the Emperor and Loyal powers; the powers which rebel are chosen randomly at intervals throughout the game. Only the rebels and the Emperor have a chance to have fun; the Loyalists are governed by pretty rigid constraints.

If you really like the novel, you might enjoy the game as a simulation; but it's not a good game in itself, as far as I'm concerned.

Diadochi V/Triumvirate/Imperator (designed by Dick Vedder). This trio of variants uses the same board, with different rules for different eras in ancient Mediterranean history.

I've GMed *Imperator* twice. In both cases, the Emperor won overwhelmingly in two game-years. The only way for the Emperor to lose would be due to an immediate all-out assault from all the other players. Thus the diplomatic element of the game is non-existent. This scenario is not worth playing with-

(continued on p. 10)

(continued from p. 3) strait jacket; if that were the case, I would never have taken on the job.

(Much later) You'll note that the masthead date is October 13; I'm typing this October 25, and hope to finish the issue today. Shows you what can happen...

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KNOWN GAME OPENINGS: Currently we have the anomalous situation of two publications, both listing current game openings, with special emphasis on variants, both available for a stamped self-addressed envelope from their respective keepers, both called KNOWN GAME OPENINGS. No point in going into how this schism arose; take your choice of either Rod Walker, Alcalá, 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024, USA, or Robert E. Sacks, 4861 Broadway, 5-V, New York, NY 10034, USA.

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The Lowdown (continued from p. 10) out major revisions.

The other two scenarios were both GMed once and turned out to be competitive. I enjoyed them (mind you, this is a favourite period of history for me). The special rules simulated the period well and spiced up the game as well, I thought. (For example, in Triumvirate one player went from 7 to 23 units overnight and won the game)

A couple of drawbacks: both scenarios start slowly, as the players are not in immediate contact, and spend a couple of gameyears just building up forces; also, the game tends toward large numbers of units (in Triumvirate, for example, at gameend 55 units were divided between four players), which can make for slow adjudications and lots of errors if the GM is not strong tactically.

Within these limits, I found the Diadochi V and Triumvirate scenarios fun to GM.

I'm sure many GMs out there are well qualified to assess various variants they've GMed. Please be objective; please contribute! Anyone with ideas for other LOH features, please let me know! Articles, letters of comment, etc., are welcome.

Publishers sending me issues containing gamestarts, gameends, etc., please make a note on the outside to draw my attention to the fact, to make sure that nothing is overlooked.

CHILMO!

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Printed Matter.