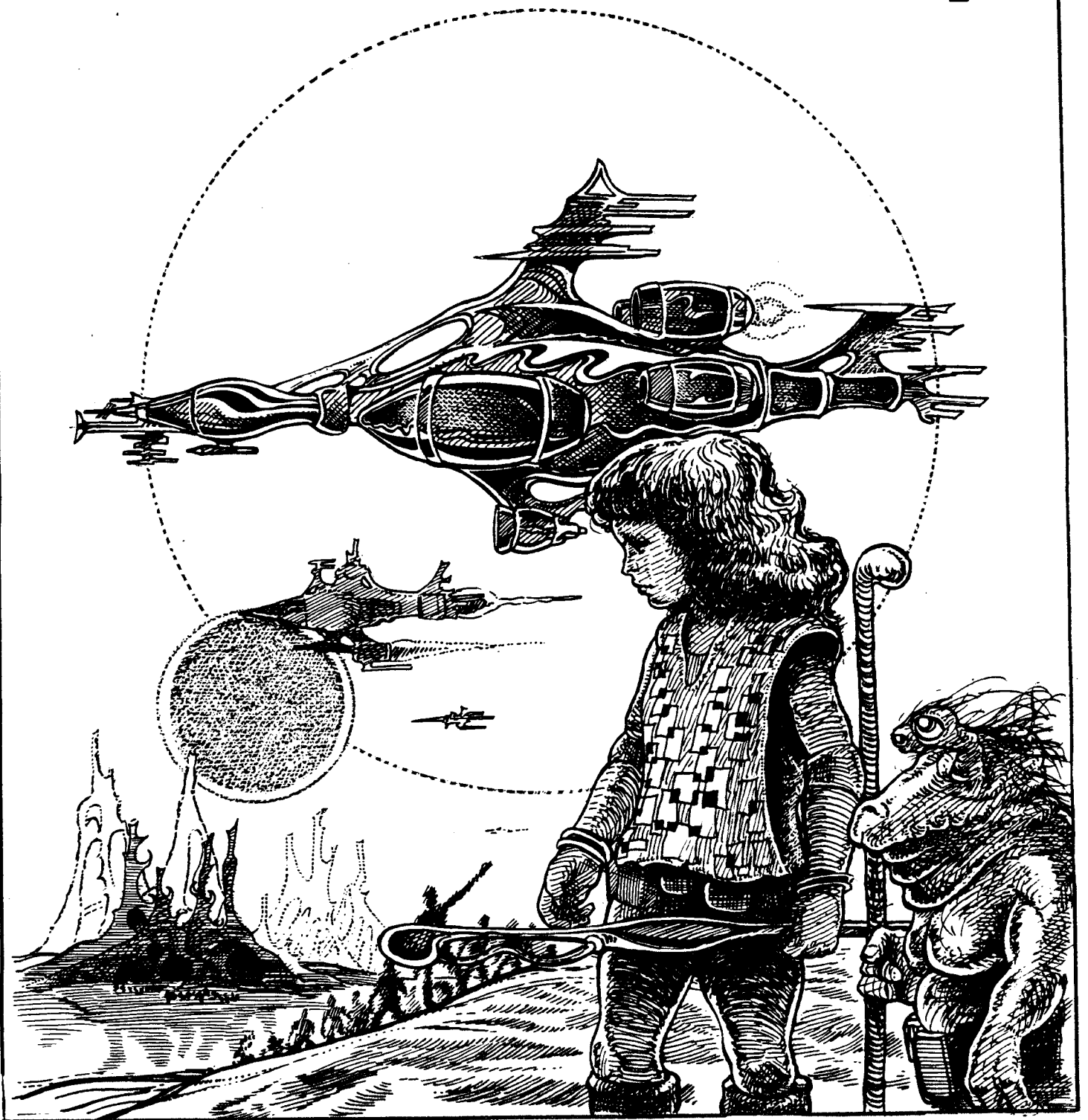


PENGUIN DIP

#6

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Welcome to PENGUIN DIP #6. PENGUIN DIP is a science fiction and fantasy fanzine, an artzine, a general gaming and role playing game fanzine, and a Dipzine, running postal Diplomacy games. It is edited, published and copyrighted (except where noted) by Stephen H. Dorneman, 95 Federal St. #2, Lynn, MA 01905, and a 10 issue (1 year) subscription is available for \$10.00. There are currently no game openings.

5:30 AM Thursday morning – what's the matter with the alarm?!? Oh, that's right, 7 AM Piedmont flight to Baltimore. Get dressed, glad I laid the clothes out the night before. Fumble around in the hanging files for the pre-registration packet and those extra PDs . . . and knock out one of the support rods! Zines, letters, manuscripts all crashing in a heap on the floor!! Swear profusely, waking up Penny (again). She settles me down, helps clean up the mess, kisses me goodbye and gets to go back to bed. I take a bus to the subway to the shuttle bus to Logan Airport. I'm running a few minutes late, but so is the flight. Finally we take off, breakfast is served, and with the arrival of my coffee comes the realization that I'm finally on my way to:

ORIGINS '87: PENGUINS AT PLAY

After the 'limousine' (read 'van') ride from Baltimore-Washington International airport, I checked into the Lord Baltimore hotel and checked out my room – Wow! The woman at the front desk had said my room was very nice, but getting a suite when you expected a single . . . well, I wasn't about to ask them if they'd made a mistake. Anyway, I had to hurry – registration was scheduled to start at 12:00, with my first event starting soon thereafter.

The Baltimore Convention Center is a big, relatively new building in the midst of Baltimore's Inner Harbor complex, with a lot of entrances and room inside to run two or three major conventions at a time.

Of course, only one of those entrances was opened for ORIGINS registration, without any signs directing you to it. But eventually I found my way inside, along with a pack of other peripatetic gamers, to stand in what I hoped was the right line for preregistered members. Of course, it was the one moving slower than the non-preregistered membership line. But eventually I collected my badge, event tickets, discount coupons and program book (with a beautiful David Martin cover painting) and headed back to the Lord Baltimore, where my RPGA-sponsored Paranoia game was to take place.

Paranoia gamemasters could do well by emulating Atlanticon's set-up procedures to get players into the spirit of the game. For example: list the event as starting at 13:00 hours in one part of the program, at 14:00 in another. Give the name of the room the event is to start in, but don't mention that it's on the 19th floor of the hotel, with most of the other RPGA events taking place on the first three floors. Make sure that the meeting room is the only room on the floor without a table to play on. But the would-be troubleshooters prevailed, and eventually the moderators showed up, too, and the gaming got underway.

Our pre-generated characters were distributed, introductions were made, and the briefing began. We were headed outside of Alpha Complex, to the site of the ancient city of Milwaukee. Our mission? To recover a fabled Book of History for the Computer. No team leader was appointed by the Computer, so I being a member of the power-seeking Illuminati secret society, took control of the party.



After distributing equipment (cone rifle with high explosive and tac nuke shells, slug throwers with napalm bullets, laser rifles, hand grenades, the usual), we marched off to the waiting Vulture 940 at Bay 950 (or was it a Vulture 950 at Bay 940?), where the Vulture squadron guards took our Boarding Pass, which was also our only map, and dropped us off in the ruins of Old Milwaukee.

Our first contact with indigent native life forms was with a pair of youths who referred to each other as Lenny and Squiggy. I greeted the locals with the jovial cry "Eat dirt or die, Commie Mutant Scum!", and when they failed to comply, my zealous crew reduced them to an extremely greasy spot on the asphalt.

But further encounters, with Laverne and Shirley, sonic-rifle toting Fonzie clones, and the Library Police did not go nearly so well. Replacement clones had to be flown in for all but two of our initial party of six, but after my plan to have one of our number imitate a Fonzie had gotten us various books with the word 'History' in the titles, things were looking up as we camped out at our pickup point. Until . . .

It happened at night. My character was asleep. A roaring noise was followed by a pair of bright lights, reminiscent of the headlamps on the two-wheeled vehicles that some of the Fonzies had been riding earlier. One of our party fired a clip of napalm at the lights.

And blew up the Vulture 940's, that had come to pick us up, fuel tanks, killing us all instantly just about at the end of round one. Although truly paranoid, the player who had fired on our ride back to Alpha Complex was not one of those who advanced from our group to the second round. All in all, an enjoyable session, even with the gamemaster's lack of preparation (although he had played the scenario before, he hadn't expected to be GMing it).

Heading back to the Convention Center, I found **Fred Borden** and **Bob Pylor**, old friends from my Penn State Wargamers days, and a friend of theirs, **Mike Brown**. Fred and Bob are officers in the Navy and Army respectively, and Mike is in the Marines, so I was breveted an Air Force officer to cover all the Armed Forces, and headed off to dinner in the Inner Harbour complex. (Designed by the same team that did Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace, I felt right at home.) Then off on a tour of Baltimore's pubs, looking for a bar that Fred remembered back from when he was stationed in Baltimore. We never found it, but had a good time searching for it. I began to pay for my early start on the day and retired, while Fred and Bob went back to their room with Mike to review the rules for Victory in the Pacific.

Friday morning I divided my time between the dealer's room, the game demonstrations, and the TSR Hobbies seminars. The best game demo I saw was for a soon-to-be-released boardgame from Chaosium, a bastard child of their Call of Cthulhu role playing game, called Arkham Horror. In it you roll dice to move around a Candyland-type board, visiting places like the town library, and the university -- but here you're moving in a desperate race against time to close the mystical Gates opening up all over Arkham, spewing forth unspeakable monsters, searching for the spells and weapons you'll need to defeat the other-worldly invaders without losing your Sanity. And it's possible for everyone to lose.

New releases are the ORIGINS dealer room stock-in-trade, and this year was no exception. TSR's new AD&D hardcover, The Manual of the Planes, Paranoia Second Edition from West End Games, Platoon from Avalon Hill, the first offerings from Gary Gygax's New Infinities company, and many, many other products (even a computer diskette version of TSR's AD&D Monster Manual was on display) were available. There was a strong presence from the professional PBM industry as well, and I was talked into signing up for a Midguard game start by one of the game's designers. After all, they do all their work on Macintoshes. (In fact the Mac was the computer-of-choice for the con, stocking the game rooms, creating signs for the Atlanticon con committee, demonstrating Air Warrior to sell GE's GENie computer network.)

The TSR seminars were very interesting, with a special emphasis on the plans for a second edition of AD&D that will have many major changes from the current edition. Just a few include: The elimination of the Assassin, Monk, Thief-Acrobat, Cavalier, and Barbarian character classes, along with all of the 'half-breed' character races. Illusionists will now be normal Magic-Users who happen to specialize in Illusion magic. Clerics will be restricted in weapons and armor according to what deity they worship. Alignment restrictions still exist, but Alignment Languages are gone. Most of the changes look to be for the better, but after playtests and rewrites, the new books (in whatever, still to be decided, format) won't be available until Spring 1989 at the earliest.

Later that day I played in the Talisman tournament, as the Dwarf. Another enjoyable session, although I was eliminated in the first round after making my move for the Crown of Command too soon. GDW's Tournament Rules for Talisman are an improvement for regular play as well, including removal of the Prophetess, the Monk, and the Assassin characters, limiting spellcasting to one per player per player turn, and making the winner just the first person to reach the Crown of Command. If you play the game, try it with these rules for a faster, fairer competition.

So far, though, the only friends I'd met at the con were old ones I'd recognized by sight -- with the tiny print on the con badges, how was I going to find any of the people I've only met through correspondence? But thanks to the Washington Area Retinue of (Tacitly) Highly Organized Gamesters (WARTHOG), my problem was solved that afternoon. Because at one of the open gaming sessions I spotted a bright red Warthog T shirt being worn by **Ed Wrobel** (editor emeritus of POLITESSE), who led me to **Ken Peel, Brad Wilson, Dick** and **Julie Martin** . . . and the weekend really started. Dinner with Ken and Brad at Burke's, an excellent restaurant with fine beer on tap, back to watch Dick and Julie playing Civilization and Ed's excellent place in Warlock of Firetop Mountain (five places winning prizes, five people entering), and picking up a copy of Titan from Ed's hotel roommate to take back to my suite, designated open gaming area for the evening.

After telling everybody that we in Massachusetts could finish a Titan game in under four hours, I felt compelled to demonstrate an aggressive style of play. Dick, Julie and I were able to finish in under three hours after I jumped on Dick's Titan stack early, arresting my development to eliminate him, and later hoisted by my own petard when I successfully encouraged Julie to play more aggressively -- which she did, attacking my Titan stack with her own to win the game. Meanwhile Brad, **Brady Richter, Tom Swider** and Ken and Dick at various times played Junta, some strange game of Hares and Hedgerows (?), and ate pizza delivered by Two Crazy Greeks. Eventually Dick, Julie and Ken collapsed in my spare room, to waken sometime Saturday after I had gone on to the second round of the Paranoia game (a distinctly unmemorable round, compared to the previous one). Dick and Ken came in to kibitz just in time to see one of my party kill the man holding the deadman's switch, causing all of Milwaukee to go up in a nuclear blast.

Running on fumes, the rest of the con blurs together in my memory. The hotel finally taking back my extra room. Stopping in at the Dip tournament, where I got to meet **Fred Hyatt, Bob Sacks, John Boardman, Richard Wheat, Perry Thompson**, and many other correspondents. A Famous Writer we met in the Hyatt elevator. The late-night poker game with Fred, Bob and Mike that Dick came in to kibitz just in time to see me lose the biggest pot of the night. Fireworks over the harbor, viewed in preference to the Diplomacy Hobby Meeting fireworks. Sleeping through my AD&D tournament on Sunday morning. Another fine dinner at Burke's. And all too soon, it was checkout time, and the plane trip back home to Boston and Lynn. Thanks for a good time to all, especially Dick, Julie, Ken, Brad, and Fred (congratulations on the upcoming nuptials, Fred!) See you all next year!



CREDITS this issue for artwork go to Steven Fox (cover, page 14), Jim Tozzi (2,12), Scott Washburn (9), and Rick Kohman (11). Sub credits and everlasting fame to all!

LETTERS

BRUCE GERYK: "I was somewhat surprised by your Back Page comments regarding the prices of houses in Boston. What I found surprising was the fact that *you* found this surprising. My family lives in the Detroit area, and although Detroit is not as desirable a location as Boston, I don't think you could find a house within five miles of ours that is less than \$200,000. Here in Chicago, the University is building a set of small condominiums. The price is \$330,000 *each*, yet three of them combined are barely as large as our family house. \$170,000 certainly seems reasonable, especially as a median price.

Furthermore, this doesn't seem particularly unattainable for anyone with a moderately good income, especially if both spouses work. I have some friends who just moved to Massachusetts because he got a position at M.I.T., and they are looking for a house -- and they are barely 25. I would expect that by the time someone is thirty, most houses shouldn't be out of reach." *[According to Sylvia Porter, and other financial planners, the rule of thumb is that you can afford to buy a house costing roughly two and one half times your gross yearly income. We don't make \$68,000 a year (yet), and neither does the median Boston family.]*

RICK KOHMAN: "I can certainly sympathize with your plight. I'm a Southern California native of the Baby Boom generation. I've watched 'furriners' invade my back yard, driving up prices until I was forced out. Now I can just afford my mobile home. Ah, well. . ."

CRAIG LEDBETTER: "Look at us poor former boomers down here in Texas. At one time a 2000 square foot home went for \$120,000. Now you can buy a 3000 sq. ft. home for \$90,000."

MARK WESEMAN: "I agree that housing prices have skyrocketed, but think about this. I spent 1977-1985 in the Army. When I got out I had kids working for me who were on food stamps, WIC, etc. because they were below the poverty line. These are people who work for our government 12-14 hours a day. And members of Congress say the military personnel are paid too much. I think it is a national disgrace that our soldiers can't make it on their paychecks."

CRAIG LEDBETTER: "One thing I really liked was the artwork by Steve Fox. Here's a guy who consistently turns out excellent work, gets nominated for a Hugo, but never wins. I also enjoyed the book review section. You and the other reviewers gave each book review enough space to get across just what about the book you did and did not enjoy." *[Maybe this year for Steven, who I'd like to congratulate here for his Hugo Award Nomination for Best Fan Artist again this year, and wish him the very best of luck.]*

BRUCE GERYK: "Have you read any Stanislaw Lem? *[Only Solaris.]* I would suggest Glos Pana (His Master's Voice), as it is the one work of his which sounds better in English than in Polish -- it seems to have been written in English and then translated into Polish, rather than the other way around. The rest of his stuff is good in translation, but the full effect can only be achieved in Polish. Quite a remarkable man. A genius, to be certain."

BERNIE OAKLYN: "Thanks for printing my press as an article. It would have been nice to see some mention in the game press, as I did want to convey some messages to the co-players acting out their roles in this game. Perhaps you could give a hint to the player, this coming game season, to read the article." *[Sorry about the oversight, and Notice to All Magellan Cotillion Players, consider this your hint. But I do hope that all my players are reading the articles as a matter of course. . .]*



THE ESTABLISHMENT STRIKES BACK

Editorial Reply by **Ron Cameron**

Stephen; I found your comments about the Boston real estate market very interesting. As a Vice President of a small independent bank in downtown Los Angeles, I find many of the same similarities in the Southern California real estate market. Young couples, singles, first time buyers, etc. Indeed have a difficult time purchasing or even loan qualifying for that first house. There are, however, a few ways to get into that first home.

One is to find an assumable loan. Simply put, the new buyer picks up or continues mortgage payment on the current note or mortgage. Another is to shop closely for a foreclosure -- sometimes a fixer upper -- which the present lender may let go for a much cheaper price, allow the new buyer to assume the payments and, at the same time, get into that house with a very small down payment. If this sounds too good to be true, there are many houses in foreclosure which the lender might be pleased to talk the above terms with new prospective buyers.

Another way to get into that dream home with as little as possible is to negotiate with the seller to carry back a second or even third mortgage, thus financing more of the purchase price and therefore creating less of a \$\$\$\$ down payment. Unfortunately, even though the down payment is low, the monthly house payments end up very high.

Rather than flee the area, as you indicated in your article, consider the following. There is no better investment than real estate. Those enormous house payments may seem staggering, but if you can at all cope with them, you'll get it all back (and more) when you decide to sell. If prices now in Boston are up 16.8% over last year, that is a very nice profit for those that own homes, or purchased them a year or two ago. Those big house payments also are a nice tax advantage, one that will continue -- as Congress can change many incentives, but most experts agree they'll never play with the owner-occupied home-owners exemption. What other investments do you know that are yielding 15-20% ??? The trick is living with that whopping house payment every month. Still, most people don't realize that if they can afford that payment (and keep enough left over for taxes, contingencies, food, etc.), no greater investment can be found today.

So don't feel 'closed out' of the market. Save those dollars, sacrifice some of the other luxuries and determine the maximum amount you can safely put into that house payment. Also, like anything else, SHOP AROUND for the best deal. Buying a home in your type of rapidly appreciating area is an opportunity, not a drawback. And who wants to live in Buffalo anyhow? I was born there (although I don't admit it to many), and it's the old story -- you get what you pay for.

I would rather own (or be buying) one house in an appreciating area, then ten which are all decreasing in value in another area. If you can't scrimp and save, deal with the pressure of that monstrous monthly 'monkey on your back' then maybe you should vacate the area. Just don't move to California. We tell our tourists -- temporary visitors -- "WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA----NOW GO HOME".



PLAY BY MAIL & FANTASY ROLE PLAYING

Editorial Response by **John Schlosser**

I read Cathy Ozog's article on Play By Mail and Fantasy Role Playing in issue #5 of PENGUIN DIP, but remain unconvinced that you can successfully reproduce in a PBM game the essential aspects of a traditional face to face fantasy role playing game. I don't deny that you can probably successfully create a fantasy game that allows its players to role play, but in every case this has necessitated the need to remove one or more of the basic aspects of the game. Let me start out by outlining what I consider to be some of the more important aspects of fantasy role playing: 1) The ability to uniquely create and develop a character over time. 2) The ability for your character to interact with other players' characters in a way that mirrors, to as great an extent as possible, real life. 3) The ability for your character to interact with their environment (non-player characters, monsters, terrain, political, economic and social forces, etc.) in a way that mirrors, to as great an extent as possible, real life. 4) The existence of a realistic complete world (or other setting) for all the above to take place.

I'm not convinced that these aspects of fantasy role playing can be duplicated in play by mail gaming. The biggest barrier to achieving the above is the lack of immediacy in PBM gaming. By this I mean that while executing your action you are limited in your ability to react to what else is happening around you. This works well in games that aren't played in "real time", like Diplomacy, but greatly affects fantasy role playing games which must tackle the problem of performing real time actions in non-real time.

PBM FRP games try to tackle this problem in two ways. The first and most popular method is to remove the real time aspect of the game. Characters are thereby restricted in what they can do. For example, in Hyborian War (Reality Simulations, Inc.) characters can perform a wide variety of actions such as spying, leading armies, making peace treaties, rescuing captured characters, and casting spells. However, the actions themselves are not played out by the character. This, to me, is not role playing.

The second method is often used by PBM moderators who wish to give a more "real time" feel to their games. They rely on conditional orders and a slower, more serial approach. Say, for example, that you wanted your character to sneak into a store at night. You would list what precautions he is going to take and what skills or abilities he is going to use. The moderator then tells you in a narrative form what happened. This works alright in the "one player at a time" games such as Cathy runs. However, the player is limited in his ability to react to the situation as it develops. He has to hope that he remembered everything in his conditional orders or that the moderator will get back to him if anything that might change his approach occurs.

But even if you accept that this approach can work if carefully played and moderated, you still have the problem that this approach doesn't meet my second criteria. Once you throw in a half dozen players all trying to work together to get into the shop (or to stop them), I think even Cathy will admit you have a nightmare on your hands. So many different variables are introduced by this scenario that in order to allow each character to react to the developing situation in a realistic way, you are almost forced into real time. When it gets to this stage you might as well just set up a conference call.

Well, there's my argument. I contend that you can not reproduce in an effective manner all the vital aspects of face to face fantasy role playing. Does that mean that we should relegate play by mail fantasy role playing to the scrap heap? Definitely not. I think that you can still have an enjoyable PBM game in spite of the limitations placed upon it by the very nature of PBM gaming. Although I don't think it will ever be possible to recreate all of the vital aspects of face-to-face role playing, I commend those PBM moderators who endeavor to create games which come as close as possible.



Fantasy Role Playing Article by **Steve Langley**

Most Role Playing games have books and books of rules and charts and tables, records to keep and statistics to compile to the point where one needs a computer to keep track. Some of the players truly enjoy memorizing all those rules, keeping all those records, and compiling all those statistics. Some of us don't.

A friend and I once went into a stranger's dungeon. My friend took his Magic-User, Cedgewick, while I took my constant companion, the Fighter, Fuls. At the start, the Dungeon Master (DM) asked us for our character sheets. He sat for half an hour making notes in a huge three ring binder. Finally, we got to play, too. The scenario was an empty castle with room after room full of debris.

"Are you searching the room?" The DM would invariably ask. "Yes." We would invariably answer. The DM would then roll dice and consult charts, occasionally rolling more dice. "You found nothing." He'd invariably tell us, and we'd plod wearily into the next room. "Are you searching the room?"

"No, I'm shoving trash up against the wall and setting fire to it." Cedgewick answered.

A horrified silence was followed by a bit of spluttering, and then finally the DM stammered, "You can't do that. I don't have any charts for fires." We looked at each other in sad resignation and searched the room, finding nothing. We finally ran into some monsters. Fuls drew his trusty blade and I prepared to roll my trusty dice.

"I'll roll for your characters. I know which spells you have." The DM announced, and proceeded to roll his dice. Finally, he told us that we had won the battle. "Are you searching the bodies?" The DM asked. "Why bother?" Cedgewick asked Fuls, "This is all just a bad dream. Come on, let's get out of here!"

"Wait, I haven't calculated your experience. . ."

We collected our character sheets and went off to regale each other with stories of daring do and perils bested by hair's breadth action. The afternoon wasn't a total loss.

The rules and charts are all very well, so long as they don't usurp the actual play. In Fantasy Role Playing, the stress should be on the Role Playing, not on the rules. The best DM I've ever played with used only two rules: 1) The DM is always right. 2) If the DM is wrong, refer to rule # 1.

He made it up as he went along, helped by a lot of planning and imagination. Rather, we made it up as we went along. He'd describe a situation and we'd pick some actions. If the actions fit but were chancy he'd tell us to roll some dice and tell us what we needed to roll to succeed. He only looked at the books between adventures, and with him, they were adventures.

We became our characters and felt the rush of adrenaline when we took a wound, and true horror when the wound was a death blow. We felt the satisfaction of a job well done when a particularly nasty creature was finally subdued and a ticklish problem solved. We worked together as a team to destroy the evil guardians of the treasure, while playing against each other to gain that special magic item.

Even then, a few brought the rules into the game, demanding special consideration because of this rule or that. If their case was well founded, they frequently got an extra bit of edge. If they became a nuisance about it, a god would step down from a higher plane and destroy them on the spot.

"But I made my saving roll, a 20 saves against everything!"

"Oh, pardon me, you only took 500,000 points of damage."

Have you ever come across the character whose characteristics are all 18s? He's got -10 armor and a +10 sword that lets him strike at double speed. You have played with this guy, or his cousin, haven't you?

There are also the players with 125th level Magic-Users who can create and destroy worlds (to hear them tell it). They spend all of their time telling you how powerful their characters are and no time at all playing the role.

There was a guy I played with once who had a Cleric with superhuman characteristics (his lowest characteristic was his Charisma which was only 26), and a little magic box that followed him around. The box held everything, cross indexed, so that literally anything could be to hand for only the asking. He was totally unbeatable in a fight, of course, and could slay dragons at great distance with no more effort than muttering a couple of words and a wave of the hand.

I only played with him the once, and totally enjoyed the experience. He played his Cleric to the hilt. It was a role, nothing more, but such a well played role that his godlike powers were acceptable attributes.

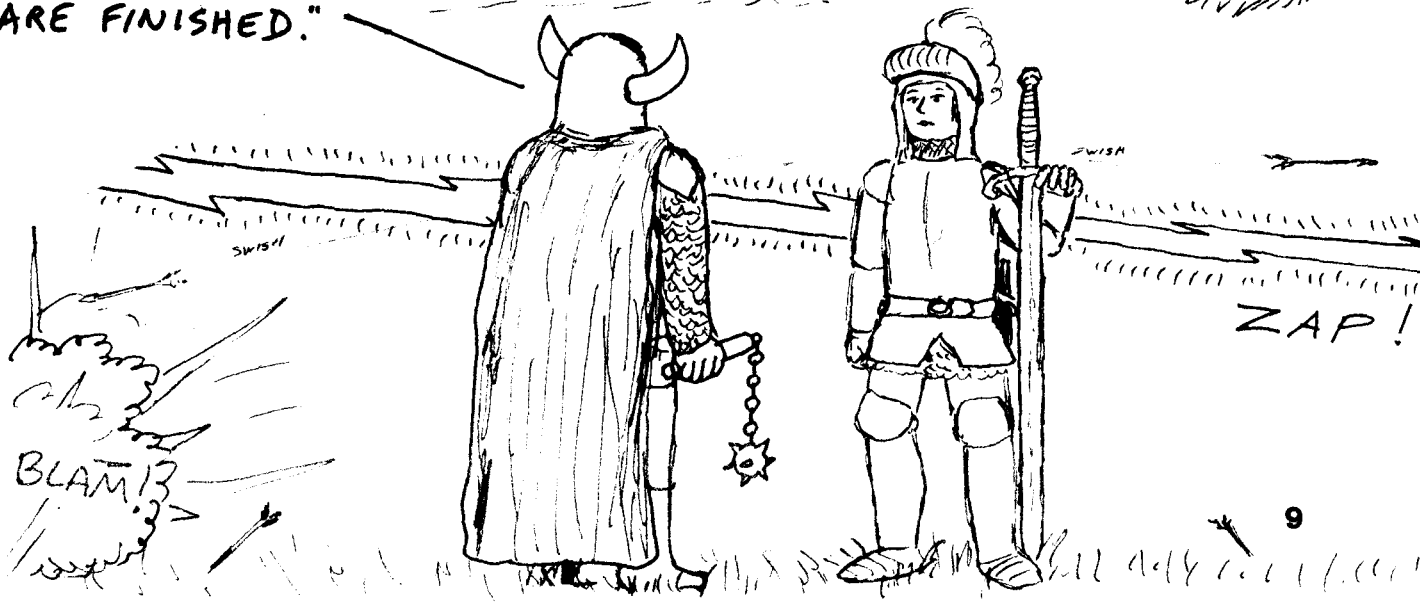
After a while, even being superhuman can be pretty boring. I'd rather play Fuls with his Wisdom of 5. He never could back away from a fight with evil. Or Lazifang, my cowardly Elf, who hangs around with Tenuki, a Bushido Fighter with a death wish. Perhaps my favorite is Diedre, a female Magic-User with a Charisma of 4. She always manages to insult everyone else in the party before the adventure is half started.

In all of this, after some eighteen years of FRP, I've come to the conclusion that the numbers and the charts and the powers are not important. What is important is to get into a role and bring the character to life. You do that by playing and talking and occasionally rolling the dice. If you also enjoy keeping records and memorizing charts, do it, but don't do it at the expense of playing the role.

I'm sure you have some favorite characters of your own. Think about what they have done, the adventures they have shared with you. Are any of them the type to memorize charts?

"LET ME KNOW
WHEN THE MAGIC-USERS
ARE FINISHED."

VROOSH!



AFTER MAN: A ZOOLOGY OF THE FUTURE/DOUGAL DIXON

Book Review by Rod Walker

After Man was first published in 1981, and I first saw a copy in 1982. I lusted for the book, but didn't buy it right then. That almost turned out to be a huge mistake. Copies quickly disappeared from shelves, and when I knew I had decided it was time to buy, it was almost too late. I finally ran down a copy in a small store in the May Company Mall that was going out of business. That was in 1984 and I haven't seen a copy in any store since. But now a new paperback edition is out, from St. Martin's Press, for \$10.95.

This is a rare and wonderful book, lavishly illustrated, intelligently written, artistically composed. It is nothing less than a handbook of life on Earth 50,000,000 years from now!

Our present age is the way it is because, about 65,000,000 years ago, most of this planet's life-forms became extinct in an ecological disaster which is still only dimly understood. Dixon's book was written before it had been discovered that these extinction events occur (with greater or lesser severity) every 26,000,000 years or so. The one that wiped out the dinosaurs was particularly severe, and ushered in the Age of Mammals. (Don't worry, the next one isn't due for about 13,000,000 years.)

Dixon's book, however, has a different premise. A new and different ecological disaster is shaping up now. The cause (and one of the victims) is Man, who in manipulating the world's ecology, destroys it. In his own extinction, Man takes with him a lot of other species: elephants, dogs, horses, whales, cows, sheep, rhinos, hippos, gorillas, camels, pandas -- a long list. There's a long list of survivors, too: baboons, anteaters, penguins, squirrels, beavers, and so on. But the new rulers of the world will be . . . rats and rabbits. It is the Age of Rodents.

A long, illustrated essay showing how evolution fills ecological niches and creates appropriate forms and behaviors leads into an illustrated handbook on some of the new forms of life which have come to populate the forests, jungles, mountains, deserts, and other habitats of an Earth healed of the hurts ancient Man inflicted on it. It is a world at once familiar and strange.

The grazers of the forests and plains, deer and horses, have been replaced by the rabbucks, whose long ears and white tails betray their lagomorphic ancestry. In Africa, the zebra and the giraffe have vanished and have been replaced by other rabbucks, the strank and the watoo. (The names Dixon gives his new animals are as clever and inventive as the beasts themselves!) Gone is the polar bear, but instead we have the bardelot, which looks like a bear but is really a giant, white, wooly rat. Indeed, the world's carnivores have been largely replaced by predator rats: the leopard by the rapide, the weasel by the janiset, the mountain lion by the ravene, the wolf by the falanx. Rats! In the ocean, aquatic mammals are gone, but aquatic birds have evolved to replace them. They are the descendents of the penguin: the giant vortex and the smaller porpin. If there's no walrus in the polar seas, there's the distarterops, a tusked, ocean-going (you guessed it) rat. Another swimming rat, the pytheron, stands in for the ancient seal.

The dozens of species described and illustrated live in a world whose geography has changed, too. The Mediterranean has vanished as Africa continues to smash into Europe; in its place, a giant mountain range, higher than the ancient Himalayas, stretches from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. The Persian Gulf is gone, and the Himalayas have eroded into low hills. Eastern Africa is now a small continent, slowly swimming toward India. Australia is a subcontinent of Asia, separated by another gigantic mountain range. Alaska and Siberia have come together, but South America is once again an island continent. New islands have risen up in the Pacific, but Hawaii is gone forever. A great chunk of California is now a large island lying off ancient Canada, moving toward Alaska.

The book is endlessly fascinating. I find myself going back to it periodically, enjoying the interesting text as much as the vivid illustrations. It's a very thought-provoking book, too; it is a more-than-usually entertaining textbook in how evolution operates (that is, when somebody's not tampering with it). Scientifically sound, even so it's as inventive as any fantasy.

One could quibble with the book, of course. It's hard to believe that the dog (at least the coyote) and the common cat (superb survivalists) would have no descendants. It's even hard to believe that *homo sapiens* could not survive at least in some form. Dixon's book also seems to have the premise of continuous and gradual evolution for all of his 50 million years, but there will have been at least two mass extinctions in that period. They need not have been of high intensity, of course, but one of them will have been only 8-11 million years before the date of his survey. Only a quibble, and, of course, anything of this sort is only speculation -- but regardless, what an almost endlessly interesting speculation!

(If you like this book, also try to get a copy of the November 1982 OMNI. Dixon has an illustrated article in that issue. In it, he speculates about the world 50 million years from now in the circumstance that Man did not become extinct. His vision is far more controversial here, and far more difficult to believe or justify.

His view is that Man takes charge of his own evolution and botches it. He acquires the powers of telepathy and telekinesis, and uses them to resume a life perching in trees and subsisting on a sort of meatless hunter-gatherer mode of existence. He becomes huge-brained and physically feeble, building a biologically-cloned shell for his preposterous body. Birds, insects, and bizarre hybrids fill the other ecological niches. This world of our biologically crippled descendants is far more terrifying (and improbable) than the Manless world of the original book. Pessimistic it is, and almost vindictively so. But try to get the article just for its intrinsic interest, even if you don't buy Dixon's view that we are going to botch our own future one way or another.)



PROSTHO PLUS/PIERS ANTHONY

Book Review by **Vincent Lutterbie, D.D.S.**

Now, I don't usually write D.D.S. after my name, or Dr. in front of it either, when dealing with the Diplomacy hobby. It's not that I'm unduly modest, or afraid of what people will say about me when they discover my chosen occupation. I just don't feel that prefixes and suffixes have any part in trying to conquer the world. I have to make an exception in this case, though, as I'm sure you will agree.

Prostho Plus is a 216 page paperback available through a TOR printing since 1986. The book was first published in 1973 and how it ever escaped me and my dental colleagues was beyond me, until I read it.

Prostho is short for Prosthodontist, a specialty in dentistry meaning using a prosthesis to replace missing teeth or parts of teeth. Dr. Dillingham seems to be a somewhat superior specimen of this type, and perhaps even of humankind in general. He really should have a halo around his head on the cover, which is an example of good artwork and faithful to the storyline.

It seems that Dr. Dillingham gets whisked off by aliens, leaving his faithful assistant, Miss Galland, behind. The remainder of the story is about how Dr. Dillingham deals with aliens, their teeth, and various other pitfalls.

Of course, Dr. Dillingham tries to enter the galactic Dental University of Prosthodontics and after a wearying round of trials does not just get accepted. Instead, our antiquated Earthman is so good, he will become the next Director of the University, just like that.

There is nothing original in the story. Yes, the good doc eventually reunites with Miss Galland and saves various creatures and planets from their problems. Yes, one Earthman is every bit as good as, and more courageous and moral than, any other life form. In short, this is a formula for science fiction, and Mr. Anthony just plugs in the numbers.

The fun part for me was his dealing with the technical side of dentistry and the handling of patients (yes, dear reader, this means you). Unfortunately, the terms were quite technical, though very correct. This would turn off just about any layman who wasn't turned off by the unoriginal plot, characters, and conclusion.

Therefore, while I think Mr. Anthony deserves credit for biting off more than a plotline can chew, this fare is basically undigestable until the plot is sweetened (imagine, a dentist saying that). Brush the book regularly and it may go away.

60



THE GREAT WAR OF MARN0/GERALD F. LAMPREY

Freeware Computer Game Review by **Garret Schenck**

As some of you readers may know, I have overnight become a huge fan of the fiction of Ermine de Havillard, a popular French fantasy writer (see my review in the last issue of PENGUIN DIP). You can imagine my surprise and anticipation when I came across a file called WARMARNO.ARC in the GAMES area of my favorite local bulletin board. I eagerly began the download of the 157K file. In my overagitated state I had to suffer through what seemed to be a larger number of "Bad CRCs" than usual, but finally I had the file on my hard disk (an IBM PC-XT clone, sorry all you Macintosh fans). I exited my com program and de-arc'd the file. A quick glance at the .DOC file assured me that it was indeed a wargame based on de Havillard's novel Battle for Marno. Without delay I started up the program. I was surprised, first by the apparent quality of this public domain game, and then by its total lack of any "historical" reality.

The actual game is fairly good, and if I didn't know anything about Battle for Marno I'd probably enjoy it better. It's for an IBM PC or compatible and requires at least a color graphics adapter and 256K of memory. The author claims it will run on any "true" compatible, and I had no trouble running it at the 8 MHz speed available on my "Bentley Turbo" clone. You can switch back and forth between a MAP and an ORDERS mode, although the screen refresh is just slow enough (about 5 seconds going back to the MAP mode -- and that at the 8 MHz speed) to quickly become annoying. Those with access to AT-style machines will have a better time of it here. You play against the computer, which can take either side, but there is no capacity for two-player games. The map itself is a CGA resolution map, on which you move various colored symbols representing divisions or in some cases army corps across the map. Each pixel represents about 5 miles across, meaning the map is over 3000 miles wide.

This is enough to fit most of the Continent, but not all, and unfortunately Mr. Lamprey has chosen to lop off the northern third of Marno. This is in many ways the most interesting area of Marno, including both the Chigar Republic and the Islands Confederation (the two naval powers that are covered in more detail in the new Fitzin-Khalia and the Fourth Naval War), as well as the fascinating area of the Gasp and Foopoi peninsulas. By excising these northern areas Lamprey eliminates the main naval antagonists of Marno, and is therefore able to disregard the highly important naval aspects to be found in de Havillard's books. The Chigarbite Islands become nothing more than "window dressing" in the north west corner of the MAP display. Worst of all, there's nothing about airships!

You play either Roshalia or Tribian, and the purpose is to militarily take over the entire Continent. Right away this goes against de Havillard's "history". While no one will question Roshalia's right to be one of the superpowers, Tribian (according to de Havillard) was nothing more than the leader of a coalition of smaller states opposed to Roshal-Polan hegemony of Marno. With the elimination of naval power from the game it's obvious that Pola becomes a second-rate power, but one should remember that in the book Pola is practically an equal partner with Roshalia. On the other hand, making Tribian the second "player" in the game is simply inexcusable. Lamprey's need to force the multipolar world of Marno into the bipolar world of this game is perhaps his most fundamental failing.

From the opening title screen, which splashes the lurid title The Great War of Marno in dripping red across the irresolute face of what I can only believe is meant to be a Polan Death Commando preparing to assault Tribian trenches at Royal Marno City, to the final flashing of "your division under attack, your division bloodied, your division utterly destroyed" (believe me, it gets worse), Lamprey focuses on the gory and inconsequential aspects of Battle for Marno. Granted, de Havillard doesn't spare us the grisly details of modern states at war, but her purpose here is clearly not to glorify the leaders of these states, and their bloody crimes, but by using irony and black humor to expose the empty hideousness of the modern state. Is it possible Lamprey has missed the whole point of de Havillard's moving and important work?

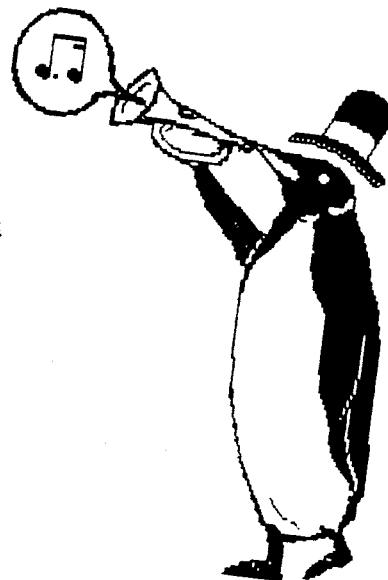
Gerald F. Lamprey (I truly doubt he is reading this, but I'd likely not moderate my harsh words even if he were) has taken Ermine de Havillard's beautiful and moving plea for sanity and peace in the modern world, stripped it of all meaning and life, and with its dry dusty bones has constructed its opposite in a kind of anti-dialectical manifesto of death and degradation. While you may find The Great War of Marno to be a slow but fairly interesting and tense computer wargame, don't let it influence you negatively about de Havillard's fiction. This game bears about as much relation to its "history" as did Avalon Hill's Stalingrad to the Russian Front in World War II. But Stalingrad was fun to play, as is The Great War of Marno, and I will grudgingly admit I ended up sending the author/programmer the requested \$10.00 gratuity (de Havillard fans have to stick together). If you have an IBM or clone and like to cruise the bulletin boards, give this game a try. But as far as its relation to Ermine de Havillard and her fiction, it's CAVEAT EMPTOR.



BLACK TIE AFFAIRS

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ROCKHOPPER'S SOCKHOP WINTER 01 1987AU

Austria (**Howorth**): BUILD A BUD, A VIE. Has A Tri, A Ser, A Bud, A Vie, F Gre

England (**Hall**): BUILD A EDI, F LON. Has A Nwy, A Edi, F Nwg, F Hol, F Lon

France (**Quirk**): BUILD F BRE, A PAR. Has A Por, A Mar, A Par, F Spa(sc), F Bre

Germany (**Kohman**): BUILD A MUN, A KIE. Has A War, A Sil, A Mun, A Kie, F Swe

Italy (**Ozog**): BUILD F NAP. Has A Pie, A Tyr, F Tun, F Nap

Russia (**Hakey**): Has A Ukr, A Sev, F Bot, F Rum

Turkey (**Nickel**): BUILD A CON. Has A Bul, A Arm, A Con, F Bla

Ernest Hakey replaces Tal Seaman as Russia.

[Temporary COA for **Mark Howorth: 521 55th St., Oakland, CA 94609.]*

SHOUTED OUT THE WINDOW (Press)

Germany-Austria: "Oh! So the Turk is your life-long ally, eh? (Snicker.) Excuse me while I (Chortle... Guffaw) try to assimilate that (Snuck!)... kee-haw-haw-haw!) information. (And you talk to me about 'wet dreams'?)

Kaiser Red to Kaiser Black: "Hey, I like my East European women. They've got more cushion for the pushin' "

Russian Emergency Peace Council-World: "Gulp! Why do I have a bad feeling about this?"

England-Italy: "Nice move, too bad it won't work. And Yes, Germany knows what He's doing."

Germany-Italy: "Of course I know what I'm doing. I'm living on the fringes to get my adrenaline pumping - which Dr. von Artichoke assures me is an excellent preventive measure against dying of boredom in a silly game! By the same token, you obviously know what you're doing . . . shunning that verdammt French wine to attend our Oktoberfest. Willkommen! Can you schlugg a half-keg of Boch, and still find your way back to Venice?"

Russia-Italy, Austria, Turkey: "Hey folks - the three western powers seem to be (1) cooperating, (2) grabbing the majority of the dots, and (3) headed our way in a hurray! I'll defer to any strong leader who can come up with a defense plan - and soon."

Italy-Russia: "Please stick around! We need you! Really we do!"

England-Russia: "?"

Austria-Italy: "Now why would you want to be in Tyrolia?"

Italy-Austria: "So where to next? Russia, Turkey, or Germany?"

England-Germany: "Leave those thin Scandinavian blondes to me!"

Russia-Western World: "If the Southeast doesn't reply, you guys interested in a trained bear for your act?"

England-Austria: "Did she answer your question about the picnic?"

Italy-Austria: "Hey wait, that's not part of the deal!"

Germany-Austria: "Wrong! You don't have to trust anybody. As the Unknown Scholar once told me. . . 'ya rolls yer dice and ya moves yer mice'."

England-France+Germany: "Hope you guys don't mind if I slide into Belgium too."

Italy-GM: "Did I really request this country? Can I have England instead? I play England much better."

Austria-Turkey: "I got your letter when I was in New York. I agree to everything."

England-Turkey: "How are things in the East? Still considering cards and vodka in you know where?"

THE MAGELLAN COTILLION SPRING 02 1987AV

Austria (**Smith**): A Vie-Gal, A Ser-Rum, A Bud SUPPORT A Vie-Gal, A Tri SUPPORT A Bud, F Gre SUPPORT TURKISH A Bul

England (**Rush**): A Lon-Wal, F Nwy-Ska, F Nth-Bel, F Edi-Nth

France (**Oaklyn**): A Pic-Bur, A Spa-Por, A Par SUPPORT A Pic-Bur, F Bel-Hol, F Mar-Spa(sc)

Germany (**Hauser**): A Kie-Den, A Bur-Bel(dislodged; retreat MAR, GAS, RUH, or Off), F Hol-Nth

Italy (**J. Sabol**): **NMR!** A Mun, A Ven, A Rom, F Tun, F Nap all HOLD

Russia (**Bowen**): A Rum-Bul (destroyed), A Gal-Ukr, A Mos-Stp, F Stp(nc)-Nwy, F Swe SUPPORT F Stp(nc)-Nwy, F Bla-Sev (destroyed) *[Note that neither unit can retreat to SEV as SEV is vacant due to standoff]*

Turkey (**Carli**): A Bul SUPPORT AUS A Ser-Rum, A Arm-Sev, F Con SUPPORT F Ank-Bla, F Ank-Bla

Underlined moves do not succeed. But did they ever?

Would **MICHAEL GONSALVES**, 1401 Haven Rd., #T6, Hagerstown, MD 21740-3071 please Stand By for **ITALY**?

WHISPERED IN THE HALLS (Press):

Russia-Germany: "What in the world is a 'Kaiser Willbo'?"

Austria-Germany: "Hang in there, everyone is sending units to help you."

Dateline: London: "Prime Minister 'Larry Bud' Rush announced today that a state of war exists between this country and France and Russia. When asked why the country would engage in a two front war the P.M. replied: 'I'm sick of that dumb French plane flying overhead and Russia tells bigger lies than Oliver North.'

Russia-Germany: "Is your revenge on England going as scheduled?"

Russia-England: "Yeah, I know, I'm a bad boy. But you sure aren't Little Lord Fauntelroy yourself."

Austria-England: "Race you to the Hayride in Moscow?"

London-St. Pete: "I never did like Max Headroom, now I know why."

Austria-Germany: "Where is that Wild Italian going now?"

St. Petersburg-Berlin: "Are you trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored? Is that in Burgundy?"

Germany-Board: "Playing Diplomacy with Oaklyn reminds me of the movie Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Do you recall in the movie that the knights keep running into a troop of Frenchmen? The knights challenge them to battle, but the French just insult them and throw garbage down on them. I have the same experience. Ever since I attacked Oaklyn he has been bombarding me with letters berating me for the incompetence with which I play this game and crowing over his victories. The Frenchies fool me again!"

Russia-Turkey: "Fall '01 and Winter '01 sure looked funny for a Russian ally. Now tell me it was all just a big mistake."

Austria-Turkey: "Raw Raw Ree kick him in the knee, Raw Raw Ras kick him in the other knee."

St. Petersburg-London: "Not only are we three it for the press, the letters are only slightly better."

France: (Holly Loch, Ireland) The sound of that small plane that seems to ill-lude the minds of Englishmen everywhere has also set off the birds of this tiny fishing channel, someday to become the port of nuclear submarines that venture under the polar caps. The birds took flight overhead in fear of the reverberating noises from the engine of the tiny Cessna. Fighting through the crowd of winged and webbed creatures, the pilot scared so many birds that, of those who were not de-feathered by the props, birds became de-empted of their inner contents. Colors of green were now a shade of black, brown, and off-white, mostly brown. The entire countryside began reeking with a foul odor of old eggshells. When asked what the smell actually was, a small girl replied, 'Gee dad, I didn't know Germans had landed here.' With that reply, the old man who asked the question in the first place hobbled away to laugh in private. As he limped his way along the cobblestone stoneway, **a small plane was heard flying north by northeast.**"

Russia-Italy: "Whattsamatta U? You no lika to writa to me?"

Russia-Germany: "I ain't looking forward to hearing no fat penguin sing!"

Dateline St. Petersburg: "Tsar Slim Bowen today had a pot-bellied stove installed in the royal palace today, so he'd have a place to sit and play checkers."

England-All Players: "I want to make a fact clear: Russia is a liar. If anyone is interested, I will provide you with several of Russia's letters indicating that he had peaceful intentions in the north. Good taste prevents me from saying what I think of his lies; let's just say I needed a very large shovel to dig out of them. You might say aren't you being a hypocrite because of your attack on Germany? I am not; ask Germany, we had a communication breakdown over orders and I was forced to work with France. As you can see by my moves now, I intend to keep my word. Beware, 'allies' of Russia."

Tsar Bowen-Board: "I went to the store the other day and bought some 'Cotillion' flavored Jello. I raced home, whipped up a batch, and put it in the 'fridge. An hour later I had My gellin' Cotillion. Wierd, huh."

THE EMPEROR'S BALL FALL 02 1987AK

Austria (**Caruso**): A Bud-Vie (destroyed), A Ser-Tri, F Alb SUPPORT A Ser-Tri
England (**Plachta**): A Nwy-Swe, F Ska SUPPORT A Nwy-Swe, F Eng SUPPORT F Nth
(dislodged; retreat PIC, LON, WAL, IRI, or Off), F Nth-Hel (dislodged; retreat LON,
YOR, EDI, NWG, NWY, or Off)

France (**Sargent**): A Bur-Mun, A Mar-Spa, F Bre-Eng, F MAO SUPPORT F Bre-Eng

Germany (**Schenck**): A Hol SUPPORT A Bel, A Bel SUPPORT A Hol, A Sil-Mun, F
Den-Nth, F Hel SUPPORT F Den-Nth, F Bal-Den

Italy (F. **Anderson**): A Tyl-Vie, A Tri SUPPORT A Tyl-Vie (dislodged; retreat VEN
or Off), F Ion-Adr, F Tun-Ion

Russia (**Holley**): A Rum-Bud, A Gal SUPPORT A Rum-Bud, A Mos-War, F Bot-Swe, F
Sev-Rum

Turkey (E. **Anderson**): A Bul-Ser, A Con-Bul, F Gre SUPPORT A Con-Bul, F Aeg
SUPPORT F Gre

Underlined moves do not succeed. Nothing succeeds like success.

AUSTRIA (VIE, TRI) **2** EVEN

ENGLAND (EDI, LPL, LON, NWY, SWE) **5** BUILD 1

FRANCE (BRE, PAR, MAR, POR, SPA) **5** BUILD 1

GERMANY (KIE, BER, MUN, HOL, BEL, DEN) **6** EVEN

ITALY (VEN, ROM, NAP, TUN) **4** EVEN

RUSSIA (STP, SEV, WAR, MOS, RUM, BUD) **6** BUILD 1

TURKEY (CON, ANK, SMY, BUL, GRE, SER) **6** BUILD 2

WINTER 1902 AND

SPRING 1903 ORDERS

DUE NEXT TIME!

OVERHEARD AT THE BALL (Press):

Paris-Rome: "Engineers at the Imperial compass works are gratified to see our recent exports have aided your cause."

Austria-Italy: "If I have anything to say (i.e.: my last words) before I die, then Turkey will be out of the corner before I meet my maker!"

England-Russia: "O! Tsarett! Are you nuts! The evil Schenck, Kaiser and mad doggie, is attacking. Has my aid been scorned?"

Austria-Germany: "This is another fine mess you've gotten us into!"

German Kaiser-French Premier: "The waters of Lourdes are said to cure the sleeping sickness you apparently picked up on your recent trek in Africa. It is time to wake up, oui? Your silence is beginning to aggravate me, and we certainly don't want that."

Paris-Berlin: "Sorry, but the open Munich was just too tempting."

Austria-Turkey: "What can I say, I always feel sorry for the guy stuck with Turkey!"

Austria-Russia: "No wonder the South lost the war, they probably built their fleets in Mississippi!"

England-France: "What fine moves! I think we can now help Herr Schenck into well deserved retirement."

Paris-London: "A letter might help; certainly wouldn't hurt."

Austria-France: "Okay, so I'm a dead duck in this one - but can't you even write me in Rommel? You antisocial or something?"

Austria-GM: "Keep me on the Gatecrasher list - I really do like to be kicked around!" *[I like to keep players in one game at a time if possible, but as soon as you take care of this game in your own inimitable style, I'll have you back on the list.]*

GERMANY (Wilhelmshavener Navalische Recorde of September 12, 1902; "Great North Sea Naval Battle Under Way") --**World**: "Today the German High Seas Fleet, in cooperation with the Allied navies of Denmark, Belgium, and Holland began its historic task of sweeping all hostile shipping from the turbulent waters of the North Sea. 'This will not be an easy job, nor will it be a short one,' proclaimed Admiral of the Fleet Reinhard Scheer in an early morning telegraph to the Kaiser, 'for our enemy is known to be wily and tenacious. However, I have faith that German (and Allied) might will inevitably prove superior to the forces of the degenerate English King. Deutschland Uber Alles!'"

GERMANY (Hamburger-Schlemmer Zeitung of October 3, 1902; "Press Moratorium to Continue") --**World**: "Kaiser Schtupidshitz, the youthful and energetic ruler of the German Empire, today extended the prohibitions against 'boring Golden Age Press' for another four months. 'I am trying to please the Austrain Kaiserin, and I know for a fact she finds the product of the German pen to be monotonous, toneless, and annoyingly boring. We have sent some of our best correspondents to visit Vienna during their enforced vacation, and we hope they will be able to pick up some tips from the Austrian editors, said to be far and away the wittiest and most acerbic of the world's correspondents, when they take the time to write. We can only hope that some good results from this 'people-to-people' exchange,' said Schtupidshitz as he puffed contentedly on several expensive hand-rolled cigars, 'certainly we Germans have a lot to learn.'"

KING BASH

SPRING 01

1987CP

Austria (**Addison**): A Vie-Tri, A Bud-Ser, F Tri-Alb
England (**Schlosser**): A Lpl-Yor, F Edi-Nwg, F Lon-Nth
France (**Rigley**): A Mar-Spa, A Par-Bur, F Bre-MAO
Germany (**S. Sabol**): A Ber-Kie, A Mun-Ruh, F Kie-Den
Italy (**Carroll**): A Ven HOLD, A Rom-Apu, F Nap-Ion
Russia (**Lutterbie**): A War-Ukr, A Mos-Sev, F Stp(sc)-Bot, F Sev-Rum
Turkey (**Sabnis**): A Con-Bul, A Smy HOLD, F Ank-Con
Underlined moves do not succeed, even when there aren't any. Is that understood?

Thanks, & one issue's sub credit, to **Pete Gaughan** for unnecessary standby orders.

NATTERINGS OF THE COURT (Press)

Russia-World: "Would everyone keep writing - there's nothing to do in the wastelands but read and chase would-be Tsarinas. I've only got so much energy - so I'd like to hear more from all.

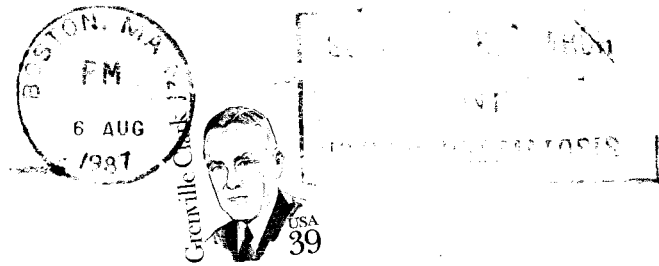
England-Germany: "In case you haven't noticed, we're not playing Gunboat."

German Standby-GM: "Actually, I hope I don't get this game." [*Your wish is my command...*]

Deadline for all games is **SEPTEMBER 5.**

GATECRASHERS (Mark Weseman, Michael Hopcroft, Dave Ditter, Bruce Geryk, Jack McHugh*, Pete Gaughan*). Remember, a standby pays no game fees, receives an issue's sub credit for submitting moves when called upon, and gains 2 issues sub credit upon playing a position to completion. So let me know that you want on (or off) the list! Gatecrashers always welcome at these parties!

Stephen H. Dorneman
95 Federal Street #2
Lynn, MA 01905-2230



FIRST CLASS

Rod Walker
1273 Crest Dr.
Encinitas, CA 92024

Sub Ends #: 17

Includes credit for your review of After Man. Thank's!!

THE BACK PAGE

I had narrowed it down to one of two possible subjects for this issue's Back Page (the murder/suicide of Alice Sheldon, better known as James Tiptree, Jr., and her husband; or a psychic who demonstrated do-it-yourself spoon bending on Regis Philbin's Lifetime show) when a third topic arrived in my mailbox and pushed the others aside. I always get worked up when a good magazine dies.

FANTASY REVIEW's current issue, #103, will be the last issue of this semiprozine. (At least, in a magazine format. Apparently Robert Collins, the editor and founding publisher, will now edit a hardcover annual of science fiction and fantasy criticism that will use the FR name. What I call going out with a whimper . . .) For those not familiar with this monthly journal, FR was for most of its life a Florida Atlantic University-sponsored literary magazine specializing in fantastic literature, with dozens of reviews each issue by such excellent reviewers as Charles de Lint, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Michael R. Collings, etc., regular columns by such engaging authors as Jack L. Chalker and Somtow Sucharitkul among others, even in its later issues as a Meckler Publishing publication a column by Matthew Costello that covered fantastic trends in movies, comics, and even games.

Sound familiar? PENGUIN DIP owes a lot to FR, and I personally owe a lot to Robert Collins and his columnists for showing me that science fiction and fantasy can be important without losing the ability to be Entertainment. What killed FANTASY REVIEW? The usual things that kill magazines - low circulation, poor advertising revenues, inappropriate display and distribution. Once Meckler took on the burden of FR, removing it from non-profit status, its demise may have been a foregone conclusion. But it doesn't make it any easier. I, for one, will miss FANTASY REVIEW.