

The journal of innovative
gaming

ENCOUNTER

Vol 1, no 4 July/Aug 1983



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Eon Products Inc, publisher Jack Kittredge, editor RFD:#2, Sheldon Rd, Barre MA 01005

Keeping the Homes Fires Burning

Those of you who have survived the mudslides and floods of this wettest spring on record (here in drizzly New England we've kept the woodstove that heats the office going full blast & it's never been cozier) will be pleased to know that C.E. Expansion Set 9 is done and off to the printer! Besides the Aristocrat Power (who's been waiting a long time to meet his public) it includes the complete rules for C.E. incorporating the game from A to Z and including rules for all Expansion Sets, and best of all — 6 new planet systems, and a new warp and cone. These last little gems (as always) created themselves by adding powerful new gloats to the game, and left us mortals with the task of resolving them against the 75 Aliens, 150 Flares, 100 Moons, and all the rest of the twists and turns in the box. By the time you read this the Set will be assembling itself in our warehouse & crying for a new home. Don't refuse it!

Along with the above birth announcement, as is the way of the world, goes the following obituary: "Dead & unavailable by book or by crook anymore, blank cards and purple and orange token sets for C.E." Yes, we've run out due to your unexpected demand and can't reprint them until our existing inventory of decks & other parts runs down. Thanks for your support and sorry our poor planning messed up on this one.

I'm somewhat overwhelmed by the number of letters and articles we're getting now. It's a real joy to see that much interest in our works, especially Cosmic Encounter. To help me in the task of editing, however, please try to type or very legibly write your ideas. I hate to get it wrong because I can't make out a few words, or I don't have space to write in a note to the typesetter (yes, your epistles often get sent, verbatim, to the printer). Lastly, to try and keep this journal balanced I usually give special consideration to thoughts on other games

than Cosmic, because we get so much good material on that already. Thanks again for your interest and work.

For those of you who are following our work on designing computer games, we're really very excited. We have come up with some intriguing themes and interaction ideas, and look forward to finishing them during the next year (yes, electronic games have an even longer gestation period than the card-board variety). But if you like that medium and can't wait, let me suggest a few I've tried which you might like. I've been very impressed with the work of a company called "Electronic Arts". They select games from many independent designers and as a result have a wide variety of offerings. Among their titles, "M.U.L.E." is the best computer game I've seen yet for real multi-player interactions. While much of the play is tame, the group bidding is great. "Worm" is an excellent abstract multi-player strategy game based on competitive programming of computer graphics — simple yet deep. Their "Pinball Construction Set", while essentially a single-player activity, is clever and fascinating to play with. And EPYX is marketing "Ricochet" by Bernie DeKoven. Another abstract strategy game, it has a great 2-player version with a solid gloat factor and yet clever handicapping which keeps you on the edge of your keyboard until the last moments.

Yes, friends, the future of gaming is wide open. But wait 'til our stuff hits!

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LETTERS

from Ted Schmeckpeper, Columbia, MD:

I've enjoyed greatly the first couple issues of your new journal. I was surprised (and pleased) to see the excerpts from the material I sent in issue #3. Just a word of clarification about my "Annals". It's not really true that my records include all the C.E. games I've played; in particular, I didn't start keeping the Annals until sometime shortly after the 3rd Expansion Set was issued, and received by me. Thus the results of probably over a hundred games with first the basic set only, and later the first two Expansion Sets, are not included. This explains why many of the earlier powers show a relatively few number of games played, and few or no wins. For example, the "powerful" Virus (1 win in 13 games) really was a stomper in the early days, but by the time the Annals were begun, there were many sophisticated Aliens populating the known Cosmos which could hold their own against the Virus — moreover, players had come to

have such a paranoia about the Virus from the early days that now everyone seems to gang up on it, despite its lousy showing over the last couple of millenia.

A few other items:

1) Congrats on the journal, particularly the editorial standards. The material of mine that you published was error-free, and so is everything else as far as I can tell. You've obviously put a lot of effort into editing, and it's much appreciated.

2) If you'd like to publish my name and address, I would be willing to serve as a clearing-house for C.E. results, along the lines of my Annals statistics, i.e., players could send to me brief records of their games, listing for each game winning Alien(s) and Alien(s) beaten in the game. (No multiple-power games, please!) I could forward results to you from time-to-time for publishing. If response was good, perhaps a top 10 (or 20) list could become a regular feature. As per the "Announcement" in issue #3, I'd like to have a similar "players wanted" placed with

my own name and address: Ted Schmeckpeper, 6305 Summercrest Dr., Columbia, MD 21045.

3) Good luck on all your endeavors, including the family and the gardening!

Editor: Thanks for the good wishes Ted. It's clear you know what's important in life: Quality in the small things. I hope people will write you with their C.E. results and that you'll report them periodically to us. I think it would make for fascinating reading.

from Charles Halberstadt, Westville, IN:

Congratulations on the article in GAMES magazine. May your enterprise flourish. I have some questions on Borderlands, which I just received, so I write as a novice:

1) When a boat is moved to assist in an attack: A player mistakenly calculates odds and moves his ship to attack. He is then told he blundered. The rules say that "if, after analyzing... you don't have more points... you may look elsewhere..." They also say: "You may not make more than one move on your attack." Does the player get to replace his ship and start from scratch, or does he get to "look elsewhere" for an attack with the ship staying as his one move?

2) In a 3 or 4 player game do the neighbors to an attacked country have to state their side, or neutrality, before the attacker makes his attack move?

Your rules of play manual is well organized and easy to understand. My brother throws a semi-annual "game weekend" Friday to Sunday where about 75 people show up to play anything from Pit to Diplomacy. Borderlands will be a welcome addition.

Editor: I'm proud that we're included among such luminaries as Pit and Diplomacy. They are both excellent games and I wish your brother lived a little closer to here!

On your questions:

1) Upon realizing his mistake the boat player replaces his boat where it was and looks for another attack instead. He has not "moved on his attack" since the attack was not possible. Hope this clears it up.

2) Along the same vein, the neighbors should state their side or neutrality when they are solicited, since their response may define whether the attack can be successful or not. If it can't be successful, then the attacker can make another one instead, withdrawing any move he made into the attack — as it was just to show how the move could be made and to enable the players to count forces.

from Jeff & Paula Boes, Hudsonville, MI:

My wife and I have thoroughly enjoyed the first two issues of your journal.

1) Does the Pirate count his Lucre when raiding other player's Lucre?

2) May the Doppelganger keep Kickers? Our house rule is that all rules that apply to Edicts as a class of cards also apply to Kickers (except that Kickers are immune to the Plague), thus he may keep them.

3) Does Anti-Matter add or subtract his Lucre from his total? We rule that both players subtract when Anti-Matter is a main player, since that allows Lucre to help both sides. If it adds to both sides, then Anti-Matter's Lucre is a disadvantage.

Thanks for a wonderful game!

Editor: 1) You bet, the Pirate gets to use his Lucre! That's what makes him so fierce. 2) Yes, the Doppelganger can keep Kickers since he is only instructed to throw away Challenge Cards.

3) Unfortunately, Lucre adds to the total even in an Anti-Matter challenge. Thus his best strategy is to buy cards or tokens with it, while his opponents are in the tough position of needing it for challenges with others, but wanting to get rid of it when facing the Anti-Matter.

from Bryan Stout, Urbana, IL:

First I want to thank you and the rest of the group at Eon for putting out the enjoyable games that you have. CE in particular has been a mania among a group of my friends to the point that I have to be careful that games don't distract from my graduate studies.

Thanks also for the fast response to the order. If I had known the response would be so fast, I would have ordered a long time ago.

I have a long list of questions and comments about CE that have been building up, and a couple of questions on Darkover that are longer than you would perhaps care to see. Anyway:

1) What happens if the Moonzap is used on the Vanish or Purity? Do the latter act like a continuous moon, needing zapping at each challenge they are occupied; or like immediate moons, taking effect again only when they are newly occupied? What if you Moonzap a moon that is discarded after use (moons 12, 38, 59, 69, 86, 88 & 93)? If they are not discarded when zapped, do they act like immediate or continuous?

2) In deal situations we allow the option of trading a base for cards and/or lucre, but when I look closely at the rules, they seem to imply that bases must be given by both sides, or none. Is this true? If so, we will probably play it the other way anyway, since it allows more flexibility to the dealing process; but I would like to know in case I'm in a tournament for example.

3) When we play we have a house rule that snap decisions are final, and timing is important. But when I played it with some other friends, they had a different feeling. As an example, with the usual group, if one player lays down a challenge card, his opponent can no longer play a kicker. But the other felt that the second player could play the kicker, but the first could take his card back and reconsider the one he wishes to play. Which is the intended spirit of play?

4) With all the varying factors in the game, the resolution of timing gets confusing. This is how I see it: kickers take effect first (if the conflict deals with the value of the card revealed); followed by moons; followed by powers, Edicts, and Flares, first from the non-main players going from the left of the offensive player, then the defensive player; and last of all, lucre is added in (if the conflict deals with the final total). However, if the conflict is only between Edicts and/or Flares, they are applied in the order in which they are played. If this is wrong, what should it be? We once had a lively time figuring out the order in which to apply the Calculator, Wild Calculator, and Excise moon.

5) The addition of moons seems to require a slight change in the challenge sequence, since now a player isn't sure who his opponent is until the cone is pointed, and he may not want to or be able to use his power until he knows. I would recommend pointing the cone before the offensive player puts tokens in it, not after (which is often how people do it). Also, the presence of moons would give a reason for having the destiny pile in a two-player game, since one may

wish to challenge a moon in his system. Each player could use two colors in the pile, to avoid a too frequent reshuffling.

6) With the Judge power, does the phrase "if an Attack card is played" mean that gains are received only if the recipient plays an Attack, or if either does? In other words, can a player get the loser's gains by playing a Compromise card?

7) If people are worried about wearing out their Alien Power Cards, they could cover them with clear contact paper. I used contact paper on the tokens, star disks, and (this is a must) on both sides of the moons and Lucre.

8) Is the Insect required to copy his opponent's power? I can see how he wouldn't want to discard all his challenge cards when going against the Doppelganger. When the Insect goes against a power like the Crystal, can the defensive player undo what the offensive player did, or can only one of the two use the power? If he goes against a power like the Calculator, can both use that power?

9) I find that most of the prohibitions against certain power combinations can be resolved, as follows:

Boomerang and Insect — the defensive player challenges the offensive player in the offensive player's system, who then does a normal challenge against the defensive player.

Boomerang and Changeling — the Boomerang power must be used before the Changeling power is used. It may not be used afterward.

Demon and Chronos — if the Chronos time travels after the Demon possesses, the Demon must go home, replaced by the original offensive player. He may possess on the replay.

Insect and Oracle — the defensive player lays his card face up, then the offensive player lays his face up.

Miser in a six-player game — the extra cards from expansion sets 3, 4, & 8 more than make up for the extra hand for the Miser.

Miser and Plant or Insect — when the latter first copy the Miser's power, they draw a hoard. They may only use the hoard when using his power.

Sorcerer and Oracle — the Sorcerer lays his card down face up. The Oracle lays his face down next, after which the Sorcerer may transpose them.

Sorcerer and Gambler — whether or not the Sorcerer switches the cards, the card the Gambler originally played is not revealed. The Gambler states its value, after which the Sorcerer can call his bluff if he wants.

Schizoid and Insect or Plant — this is the hardest to do. The first time one of the latter use the schizoid power, they make their own terms, which do not make an immediate winner. Each offensive player may ask a question of them as well as of the Schizoid. The Plant's terms have precedence over the schizoid's while he grafts the Schizoid power; the Insect's have precedence while he attacks the Schizoid.

10) In future tournaments you may want to try giving the finalists a set of new powers, thoroughly play-tested, to see how they fare with new material.

11) Since Flares are so strong, we find that one Flarezap isn't enough, even with consolation. We tend to have two in a three-player game, three with more.

12) What happens if the Skeptic uses his power as offensive player in a moon challenge, and his opponent agrees? I presume his opponent must vacate the moon.

13) What are the illegal challenges hinted at on the Dictator

a foreign planet he already had a base on, but I could find nothing in the rules forbidding that.

14) If the Wrack proposes a deal and his opponent accepts, do they then go on after the deal and play challenge cards, or does that end the matter?

15) Can the Moon Boon be put on the cone like normal tokens? If so, does it only count as one towards the maximum tokens allowed in the cone, or more?

16) If the Chronos time travels, what happens to a kicker his opponent played?

17) How does the Hertz lease moons? Since they vanish at the end of the challenge, there doesn't seem to be much point to it.

18) Does the Anti-matter add Lucre to his total, or subtract it?

19) I don't understand the last sentence of the Wild Bully, since it seems only to repeat what the Emotion Control does anyway.

20) Should there be any practical limit to what the Witch can do in a spell? I can think of some pretty awful spells, such as "If any of you plays an attack card, I decide who wins that challenge," or "the next time you move any of your tokens to a base, all of your tokens not in the warp are moved to that base," or "at the end of the next challenge you permanently lose your alien power."

21) I also have a question about Darkover. It seems vague in the most crucial time — the wars of succession. If a player decides to battle the one with the threshold number in Elhalyn, does he simply move tokens there and battle him; or does he do an entire normal turn — collecting power, clan tokens and peril, flipping the plot pile (though it is ignored), etc.? If so, can the player controlling Alton tower move one of the claimant's tokens out of Elhalyn tower, ending the wars if it reduces the number below threshold?

I don't mean to take up an entire letters column, but I did have a lot of questions, and I hope you can eventually get to all of them.

By the way, I think that "Politician" is a fine name for the power proposed by Dr. Minn. Here are some suggested Flares:

Wild Politician: Once per challenge you may look at the top four cards in the deck and hand them out to any combination of players, giving yourself 0 or 1. Each card is worth one vote from the player you give it to (who may look at it), whether to keep the cards or discard them. You break ties.

Super Politician: No vote is taken on the tokens — they automatically stay on the planet where you put them.

I liked the win record done by Ted Schmeckpeper. To be done right, this should be done with games recorded by people all across the country. Perhaps players could send in postcards with a list of powers appearing in each game, with the winners noted, like this:

Clone, Philanthropist, *Boomerang*, *Assessor*, 1—8

Doppelganger, *Aura*, *Seeker*, 1—8

which describes the last two games I was in (the numbers are the expansion sets used).

The new powers and moons were interesting. Mr. Baker's were especially good, almost as much as the ten listed in Encounter No.1 (an excellent set). I will probably want to add two of them to my collection — others have too much overlap with powers we already had.

Your response to one question raises a more general one. After a player has played a compromise but before he collects consolation, can the player who is about to lose some cards play any appropriate cards, or must he wait until after consolation?

Last weekend I was the Assessor, and when I attacked the Boomerang, we made a tax deal and were about to end the challenge. But another player said that actually the Boomerang should have attacked me first, before the deal. I said that as offensive player my power worked first. It was then said that the tax deal was not part of my power per se, since anyone could do it, so I conceded. As it turns out, the Boomerang and I won (as you can see above) by exchanging bases in both the Boomerang and normal challenge, but did we decide correctly?

Could you mention how and where we can register for Origins, and what you may be doing there?

Editor: That is quite a list, Bryan. I'll deal with the last ones first. A player who is about to lose some cards to another as consolation may play any cards which can be played right away (mainly the Plague). This encourages fast thinking in our view. I know this point is controversial, but we play it that if you can get it out fast, it counts. But you can't dawdle and read them all to see if anything applies. If you don't think your group can enforce this kind of distinction, then you might want to adopt house rules favoring the lien theory of the White Plains Encounter Group explained later in this column.

The Boomerang should have challenged you first, since your power did not come into play until you were in a challenge, and his prevented your challenge until he made one first. Not that it mattered much, since you could make the tax deal on his challenge, then on yours, instead of vice versa.

On your list of questions:

1) Moonzap overcomes Vanish or Purity, just as a Zap does a power. On the next challenge, as the player tries to use Vanish or Purity again, it can again be zapped. A Moon is not used if it is zapped, so it has its old characteristics (Immediate, Continuing, or Secret) until it is used. For Immediate Moons, this means that it cannot be used until it is occupied by the winner of a new challenge there.

2) No, it is not necessary that each side get a base in a deal. One can get a base and the other nothing, or only cards or Lucre.

3) My feeling about timing and decisions is that once something substantial has happened, a decision is final. Thus if I put in 2 tokens on an alliance, and then the guy to my left starts to put in tokens on the opposite side, I can't take any back or add more. This is because my action may have influenced his, and he has a right to expect I know what I'm doing and won't change it later. But when I play a challenge card down, and my opponent then selects one, I might change mine to fake him out, and he'll do the same, etc. for a few times. This is fun and it doesn't change anything since neither of us knows what the other selected anyway. It's just a kind of bluff. But on your situation, the rules are clear. Kickers are played before challenge cards, so the Kicker play invalidates the challenge card selection of the first player, and he has a right to change his mind on it (as well as the right to play a Kicker himself.)

4) Timing can be a thorny question — the general rule (to be

published with Set 9's booklet) is now: where it is a paradoxical situation, the play of the non-main players (starting to the left of the offensive and going left) takes place first, then the offensive player, then the defensive. This comes in to play very seldom, however, as most effects have their own logic which sets the priorities. Thus you have to look at the wording in the specific situation very carefully before deciding that it can't be resolved. In the situation you cite, the Wild Calculator and Excise precedence would be established by the general rule (position of player on Moon vs. player of the flare with respect to the order from the left of the offensive player) but the Calculator power would precede either, since it changes the value the card is "revealed as" and the others change a card's revealed value. This is the kind of distinction we spend a lot of time trying to make sure is in the text of the game, but is easy to overlook in heat of battle.

5) The complete rules have 3 steps for this, first deciding planet or Moon challenge, then gathering tokens, lastly pointing the cone. That seems to work best as a means of forcing offensive players to commit themselves first, before trying to cajol others into a joint venture. In the 2-player game, you can choose to challenge a Moon in your own system anytime, rather than challenging the other guy's Moon or planet, so I don't think the destiny pile is required there.

6) Yes, the wording on the Judge means if either player plays an attack, the fiat is in force.

7) Hey, if everybody took your advice, how would we sell any replacement sets? Some companies sell games you don't play, so you buy others from them hoping you'll like the next. We sell games you'll play til they wear out, then buy another copy. No more tips of this kind, please.

8) Yes, the Insect is a mandatory power. That means against the Doppelganger, it must discard & draw from another player, giving back the card now drawn. Thus it will get a new hand shortly thereafter. Against Crystal & Calculator, both use their powers, with offensive going first (which negates the first Crystal but makes for interesting math as both Calculators are in effect).

9) I think your suggestions for resolving some of the "do not play with . . ." situations are good. We didn't want to put such specific procedures on the general power cards, but for house rules they are fine. Sounds like they'll add to the fun.

10) Although we probably won't be doing new official powers, I do hope some of those published here will be picked up and the best make it into local tournaments around the country. For the world championship, however, I think we'll stick to the official ones everyone has had a chance to use.

11) Yes, Flares are strong, but they're temporary. I think players ought to get the fun of using them while they have them, so I'm happy with but one Flare Zap.

12) When the Skeptic is offensive player he cannot "doubt" on a Moon challenge. This is because the card only allows him to place his tokens on the "planet" in question, and gives him no similar access to a Moon.

13) Yes, a player can re-challenge a planet where he has a base. the "legitimate challenge" term on the Dictator was used to make sure that a player wasn't sent to his own system when no other player was there — in that case there

would be no one for him to challenge but himself, which is not a legitimate challenge by the rules.

14) If a Wrack deal is accepted, it is implemented and the challenge is over. No cards are then played.

15) Certainly the Moon Boon can be in the cone, and although only counting as one token towards the maximum of 4, it's value in a challenge attack is 5.

16) A Kicker invalidated by a Chronos is placed with the Attack card it was played with, to one side. After the replay (during which neither can be used unless the Attack card was the player's last Challenge card) both are returned to that player's hand. This is because the effect of a Kicker is to alter the card it is played with, and the Chronos replay goes back to the point before cards were selected, invalidating both the Kicker and the Attack card (or Compromise card, of course).

17) Planned obsolescence has always been a profitable marketing tool for the unscrupulous, and the Hurtz is no exception. However, Moons like the Quakes, Shifts, Affliction, Selection, Nova, etc. may be worth it just for a one-time use.

18) See the previous letter. The Anti-Matter adds Lucre in.

19) You're right, but we thought it needed stressing to stop arguments. This is a good example of a constant tension among us about rules: Do we assume people are smart and will read everything carefully and think logically, or do we try to anticipate what people might argue in the heat of the game out of self-interest. Generally we try to word everything carefully in the first place, then if we can do it quickly we will specify certain situations which are likely to happen and give an example there. I guess the number of questions we get about CE show we haven't done as well as we might, though.

20) Yes, the rules and the 2-challenge limit rein-in the Witch. The Witch couldn't make you lose your Alien Power permanently because the spell only lasts for 2 challenges, after which you pop up your power and she may sputter but is powerless. She can affect attack Cards by making them minus 100, etc. but not by giving herself the power to decide that a Compromise beats an Attack. And she could not override the rules to make you take all 20 of your tokens into a challenge, although she could tell you where to take your up to 4 from, or where to put tokens you have the option of placing on any base. Hope this makes it a little clearer.

21) Glad to get one about Darkover. The champion who moves to throw the claimant out of Elhalyn tower gets a full turn to do so, including collecting power, peril & people and flipping the plot pile. If that player has the Alton tower, he can move one of the claimant's tokens out of Elhalyn, but since the winning number is one less than the threshold, he must still battle in Elhalyn to further reduce the claimant if he is to prevent the win.

Glad you asked about Origins. It will be July 14 to 17 at Cobo Hall in Detroit. It is a magnificent gaming convention and thousands of great gamers come. We will be running tournaments in all our games, plus a seminar on game designing. There are nominal entry fees to the tourneys to finance the prizes and plaques. For full information on schedules, registration, etc. send a self-addressed stamped envelope to "Metro Detroit Gamers, O 83 INFO, P.O. Box 656, Wyandotte, MI 48192".

from Alan Shubert, Albany, NY:

ENCOUNTER is great, but here are some suggestions.

1) Include fewer new C.E. powers. Most of those submitted seem based just on the mechanics of the game (add one of these for each of that.) Also, the histories are pretty weak. I feel each power should be special enough to begin with "You have the power to . . ."

2) I like the idea of Runzles even though I don't play the game. How about something similar for the others.

3) You need more articles — the one on the history of C.E. was great.

4) Convert some of the older powers into Lucre-using ones. This would bring Lucre more into the game, since now it is used by so few Aliens.

5) Question: What are the first few Darkover novels? I've never played the game because I wanted to read the books, but didn't know where to start.

Editor: Thanks for writing, Alan. This kind of feed-back is very helpful. We meant it when we said Encounter would be mostly by the players. I try to get my 2-cents in each issue with a feature article and a lot of editorial comment, but if folks keeps sending in powers and not articles, and they're good ones, that's what we'll print. You wouldn't believe how many powers I don't print each issue, Alan. I'd be very interested in ideas similar to Runzles for other games. Ditto for ideas for converting other powers to Lucre-using ones. So get thinking! About Darkover, the books were specifically written to be able to be read independently of each other — you can start with any one and then any other one and you won't lose a thing. Among the best, in my opinion, are: Two to Conquer, The Shattered Chain, StormQueen, and The Spell Sword.

from Doug Schwarz & the White Plains Encounter Group:

The White Plains Encounter Group thanks you for the publication of our recent letter, and for your response. As soon as time permits, I will be getting together descriptions of our various powers, moons, etc. to send to you. All is forgiven. (See, we're not so unreasonable!)

In the meantime, though, I wish to express our surprise at your response to Friedrich Tichy's question No. 4 in that same issue. The situation described, you will recall, is as follows. Player A (who is the Mesmer) wins an attack vs. Player B, who compromises and loses 4 tokens to the Warp. You state that A may then use any edict cards he holds to Plague B, before B is entitled to take consolation.

Our legal staff (consisting of Mr. D Sumner Peck, Esq., Clerk of the Maine Supreme Court, ret.) has long insisted that as soon as a situation arises which entitles a player B to take cards from player A, player B must be considered to have a lien on A's hand. Therefore A cannot play any cards from his hand until B has collected his due — unless of course the card played cancels the lien, as Stellar Gas would in the situation described above.

The advantage to this interpretation of the rules (besides its consistency with well-established legal precedent, so we are told) is that it introduces the need for additional strategic-making. Under our house rules, the Mesmer in the situation outlined would have to play out his edicts *before* challenge cards were revealed in order to be certain of protecting them. Or he may elect to hold them against some future use,

gambling that B will not play a compromise. Under your rules, A may hold his cards without risk, since he knows that he will get to play them in any case.

Well . . . food for thought, perhaps. In any event, our thanks again. You'll be hearing from us soon.

Editor: Generally, I'd agree with the Peck/lein thesis. But surely your man, with his years of experience in litigation, realizes that a Plague, as an Act of God, is not subject to earthly law. Can a man facing bankruptcy be faulted for not pampering his health. And if some dire disease further decimates him during his time of trial, who would be so cruel as to file suit about it. Just so, if affliction can strike a man facing foreclosure, it can also strike the banker despite his vault of notes & mortgages. That's like saying I can't run you over with the car you're coming to repossess!

from Tim Shewchuk, Fred Bilsky & Mike Ross, Pinawa, Manitoba:

We enjoy your game "COSMIC ENCOUNTER" very much. As a matter of fact, we play regularly on a weekly basis, and often in between. However, we have noticed that the game was lacking in some aspects. Therefore we have created some new edicts to fill in the gaps. We thought you would like to see them, so we are including them with this letter along with explanations. They are as follows:

MIRROR — This enables a player to reflect any Power, Edict or Flare away from himself and onto another player. Or, from another player towards himself. NO such game function exists, thus far.

COSMIC GAS — There was no card to prevent successfully defending allies from taking rewards. **STELLAR GAS** just prevents consolation.

EDICT ZAP — Unless Flares are in the game (and then IF someone has **VOID WILD**), players have absolutely no defense against Edicts.

COPY — More of a spinoff of **VULCH**, but it does come in handy. (If **VULCH** is **ZAPPED**, even he can use the card to copy the **EDICT**.)

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EDICT

COPY

COPIES ANY EDICT.
COPIED EDICTS MAY
BE PLAYED IM-
MEDIATELY OR
TAKEN INTO YOUR
OWN HAND.

PLAY AT ANY TIME

● ●

EDICT

MIRROR

REFLECT EFFECT OF
ANY EDICT, FLARE,
OR POWER ONTO ANY
PLAYER.(OR PLAYERS
IF APPLICABLE)

PLAY AT ANY TIME.

⊙

EDICT

COSMIC GAS

NO REWARDS OR
CONSOLATION MAY
BE COLLECTED THIS
CHALLENGE.

PLAY WHEN SOMEONE
ATTEMPTS TO TAKE
CARDS OR TOKENS.

⊗

EDICT

EDICT ZAP

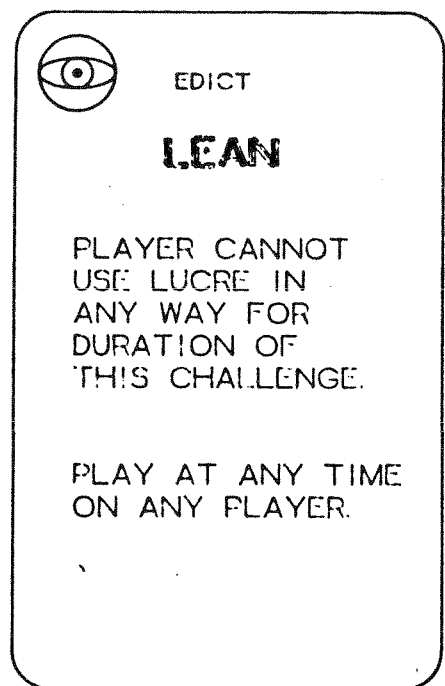
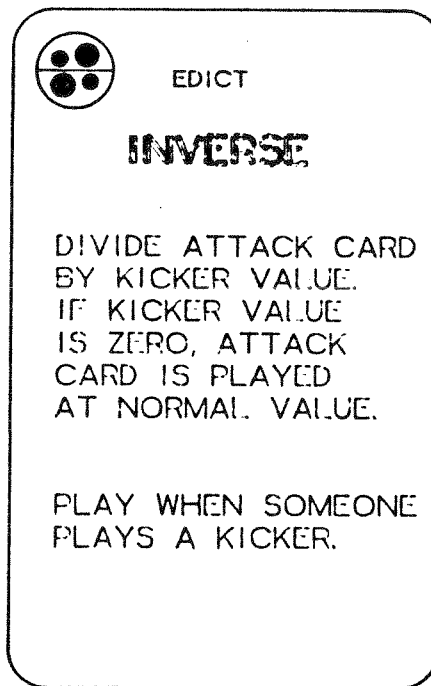
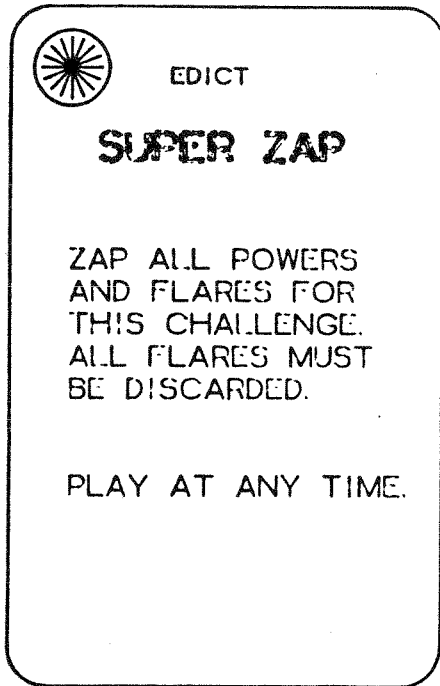
CANCEL EFFECT OF
AN EDICT UNLESS
STOPPED BY AN
UN-ZAP.

PLAY AT ANY TIME.

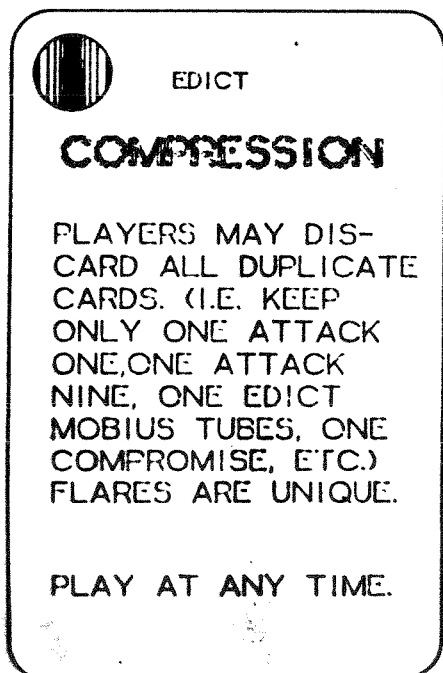
SUPER ZAP — An all-powerful card that ZAPS everything except other EDICTS. It can be stopped by using an UN-ZAP or EDICT ZAP, so it is not final.

INVERSE — Something to counteract KICKERS.

LEAN — This stops a player from buying cards or tokens with his LUCRE. It also prevents a player from adding his LUCRE onto his total



COMPRESSION — During the course of the game, a player(s) can get a hand that is vastly overcrowded. For instance, what good is it having six compromise cards in your hand if you don't have PACIFIST, EMPATH, or PHILANTHROPIST? This card allows all players to empty out their hands. However, if any duplicates are discarded, all duplicates *must* be discarded. But it is not mandatory to throw away any cards at all. This is what we call a friendly edict.



SUPER BREAK (Not shown) — We have noticed that tokens can be retrieved from everywhere except the VOID. (Unless the HEALER is in the game, of course). This edict is very similar to your WARP BREAK, except that it frees tokens from any form of captivity, which includes out of the WARP, from under FUNGUS tokens, off of ASSESSOR's Star Disc, away from SUPER ZOMBIE, and of course out of the VOID. Like the WARP BREAK, it works for only one player at a time at the beginning of his/her challenge.

So these are our ideas. But we now have a problem. Using a double deck, along with these new edicts, we will have a total of seven ZAP cards, but only one UN-ZAP card. We were wondering if we could get some more UN-ZAP's (at least four), or, better yet, the mini-deck of edicts and challenge cards from Expansion Set 8 without the flares.

Curiosity has the better of me. When I bought Expansion Set 8 there was a single flare card for Expansion Set 9 called ARISTOCRAT. Since then, I have been looking for set 9 at all the game stores in my area to find out what else it contained, aside from a super powerful power card. But I can't find it anywhere! Could you satisfy my curiosity by telling me what's in it? It would be greatly appreciated.

Editor: Thanks a lot, guys. I'll bet a lot of people will be cutting these out and trying them in the next few weeks. Sorry about the cards, tho. We print the decks as a unit and can't really open them and sell specific cards. Set 9 won't be on the shelves until July, but you can read about on page 2 of this issue. I'm not telling what the Aristocrat does, tho. Not til July.

from K. J. Redwood, Durban, South Africa:

COSMIC ENCOUNTER QUESTIONS

FLARE CARDS:

I realize that the flare cards relating to powers not used in a 2 player game aren't used in the initial deal to determine powers, but are these then dealt into the regular deck subsequently?

Editor: Yes, one for each player, plus the flares used to select powers.

May a player who is entitled to the Super Flare opt instead for the Wild Flare?

Editor: No.

VIRUS — SUPER.

If a player has three tokens plus an attack card of 20, what is his total?

Editor: 60

TERRORIST — WILD.

If I understand this correctly the player using this flare card can't lose. He either wins the challenge, in which case the hostages are free, or else he loses the challenge and the hostages go to the Warp. Is this correct?

Editor: Your facts are right, although I wouldn't agree with the characterization that "he can't lose". He certainly can. He just makes his opponent pay for it.

SCHIZOID — WILD.

What does "between challenges" mean? Is this between his first and second challenge or after any challenge made by any player?

Editor: After any challenge made by any player.

MOONS:

17 **Salvage.** This seems to be a misprint. I understand that the top card of the discard pile is obtained by the player whose token lands here. However, what should it read commencing from the word "Discarding . . ."? Also, what does "Occupy this moon only once per turn" mean?

Editor: It's not a misprint. It means that new cards do not land on the discard pile until the salvaging player gets his cards from it, and if the salvaging player attacked a compromising player to get there, that compromising player gets his consolation after the salvage. You can't land there on both your challenges on a turn.

21 **Stack.** In a 2 player game may a card be placed face down on top of the pack when it is the turn of one's other power, who doesn't occupy this moon?

Editor: Yes, whether you're using the double-system variant or not, you can do it on every player's turn — your's or another's.

General. I presume that unless stated the powers conferred on a player by occupying a particular moon don't just relate to challenges occurring in that system which contains the moon.

Editor: Right, they are good for you anywhere.

General. May a player in a 2-player game challenge a moon which is vacant or occupied by his opponent and is situated in his other power system?

Editor: You mean the double-system variant, right? Yes, he can do so.

60 **Mini Mac Moon.** Just which tokens are double? Is it the tokens occupying this moon or any tokens of the occupying player involved in challenges anywhere?

Editor: Your tokens anywhere.

EDICTS:

Rebirth. Can this be played by a player at the beginning of his own challenge to regain one of his own bases? Do the existing tokens on his base remain there?

Editor: Sure you can play it for yourself, and any other tokens there remain.

Keeper. Is this discarded when played?

Editor: Yes. All Edicts are discarded when played.

LUCRE:

Am I correct in thinking that a player may purchase cards in EACH challenge of his turn, i.e.: he could purchase 4 cards in each of his challenges.

Editor: Yes.

LOSING PLAYER:

In a 2 player game if one of the systems loses all of its bases, may it still continue by drawing a token from the warp on its turn and challenging a) on its home system? or b) on any system?

Editor: Yes, in the double-system variant, should you be off play it normally with the token from the warp. You can go to ur bases in one system, you can still any opposing system, or to an opponent's base on your home system

ALIEN POWER CARDS:

Wrack. I'm sorry, but I still don't understand this one. Player A attacks with 4 tokens and Player B, who has the Wrack, is defending with 4 tokens. If Player B tortures A 4 times by removing tokens to the Warp and Player A doesn't give in then Player B has lost, but also Player A hasn't got any tokens to put onto the base. What happens? Does this count as a successful challenge by Player A? If a deal was reached then may Player A have a second challenge?

Editor: If no deal was reached, Player A won but did not gain a base. He counts it as a successful challenge and Player B's tokens go to the warp. If a Deal was reached, it's a successful challenge and A can get his second challenge.

2. **LLOYD.** If an insured defensive player loses do the tokens on his base remain there, or do they get redistributed to other of his bases? I don't see why the fee shouldn't be paid in advance. After all, one can't wait to see whether an accident will happen before paying a premium. Is this a mistake on the card?

Editor: The tokens are "replaced on bases". Since he lost his base in the challenge, he must put them elsewhere. No mistake. When you collect on insurance it usually far outweighs what you paid in premiums. We just figured to

eliminate the book-work and get it down to its essence — if you live you pay, if you die you benefit.

Chronos. Would the DEUCE be forced to reveal both his challenge cards and leave them both face down?

Editor: No, the Chronos affects only the challenge card, not the extra one which is added to it (assuming both are Attacks.) Thus the deuce could take the extra one back and play it again, either as the challenge card or the extra one. (This is different from the situation with a Kicker, since there the Kicker combines with the Attack card to give it a new value and is a part of it for purposes of the Chronos.)

BORDERLANDS QUESTIONS

ATTACKS BY RIVERBOAT:

Can a player pick up a horse or a weapon token from different territories bordering the river and controlled by him when moving his riverboat further upriver to attack another player? Eg.: The riverboat is located between Slice and River's Bend. He moves the riverboat to pick up a horse situated in Northernmost and a weapon situated in Oceanview and attacks an opponent in Outer Harbor. His boat would obviously stay on the river between Outer Harbor and Stockton. Would the horse and weapon now be placed in Outer Harbor together with a warrior from off the board?

Editor: Yes, he could pick up the horse & weapon that way, and yes put them in Outer Harbor with a warrior from off the board. That's why boats are so useful — their mobility makes them very flexible.

ATTACKS:

Must the horse or weapon that is moved in an attack be moved actually into the attacked territory? I.e.: Could it be moved to a friendly adjacent territory if this would produce a victory for the attacker by having more points bearing onto the territory under attack? If it is possible, then could this also be done for attacks by horseback? If a horse and weapon are moved during an attack by a player into a defending area also containing a horse, must one of these horses be removed from the board when conflict has been decided?

Editor: Yes, the horse or weapon must be moved into the attacked territory and cannot stop next to it on the attack move. If this means either or both end up duplicated there, the duplicates must be removed from the board.

PRODUCTION:

Riverboats. If one player has already developed a riverboat on an earlier production phase, then am I right in assuming that the next player would need to develop 3 timber to build one? I.e.: The development rule of 2 timber to build the first riverboat only applies on the same development phase that the first one is built in the game.

Editor: That's right. Any players who develop during the first phase when a boat is developed get it for 2, but on any later phase anyone must pay 3.

SHIPMENT:

During the shipment phase, I assume that any number of shipments may take place 'By Foot,' by one player in his turn. Eg.: 3 shipments from 3 different areas to 3 other different areas.

Editor: No, no, no. Only one shipment (rule 4B and again emphasized in 5C1). If you earn an extra shipment (extra territories — 5C2) you can get more.

However, am I right in assuming that only 1 horse can be moved if shipment is being made by method 2 "By Horseback"?

Editor: Right, unless you get extra shipments as above.

Can any number of horsechains operate in one shipment if method 3 is chosen? I.e., 2 horsechains from 2 different areas to 2 other different areas.

Editor: No, just 1, as above.

Can only one boat be moved during the shipment phase if method 4 is selected "By Boat"?

Editor: Yes, again excepting the extra earned shipments.

When counting whether a player owns 3 or more territories than the lead player, is this done before any shipments actually take place?

Editor: The criterion for extra shipments is the possession of 3 territories more than the lead player started the game with, not that he has now. It shouldn't matter when during the shipment phase the count is done, as territories don't change hands during that phase. Am I missing something in your question?

Horsechain. does the token moved by horsechain finish up in an area that contains that player's horse? I.e.: It can't wind up in an adjacent area to a horse also occupied by the same player. Must the tokens wishing to move by horsechain actually start in an area occupied by a horse?

Editor: Yes, it must start and finish in an area occupied by that player's horse (rule 4B 3a).

MOVEMENT:

Riverboats. May they carry 2 horses and 2 weapons if desired? i.e.: no stacking limit.

Editor: They may carry more during a shipment, so long as at the end of the move any duplicates are removed from the board.

If a riverboat is between Slice and Rivers Bend and wishes to move to between Keystone and Falling Waters would the boat cross 5 borders? I.e.: 1. Land border between Slice and Vastland 2. riverborder between Vastland and The Nook 3. land border between Rivers Bend and Center 4. river border between Falling Waters and The Nook 5. land border between center and Keystone.

Editor: Yes, exactly right.

Barges. I presume that it is possible to move from say, Fjords to South Coast.

Editor: Right.

Could one move from Fullsome Pocket to Sea Strip as Right Point is passed twice on the southerly and easterly sides?

Editor: No, the count would be 6 territory boundaries passed, not 5. (Much as we Americans count presidencies, not Presidents — Cleveland had 2.)

If Dome Island is placed so that Slope is opposite South Coast and Dome Top is opposite Fullsome Pocket, could a barge move from Ham's Landing to Dome Tip?

Editor: Yep, no problem.

CITIES:

Must territories adjacent to cities have a resource production site in them in order to gain the 2 resource tokens which they are entitled to, or would they be able to receive 2 resource tokens identical to the type of resource production site situated in the territory which has the city? What happens if there is a resource token in an adjacent area? What type of resource is selected?

Editor: A territory, to produce resources at all, must have a resource production site in it. Thus being next to a city with one does nothing for it. If both the city and the territory next to it each have production sites, and both are owned by the same player, then the city produces 2 of its type and the territory produces 2 of its type. Resource tokens in an area which should produce 2 means that if one token is already present, only one more is produced. If 2 are present, no new ones are produced. I sense some confusion from your question, and hope this is helpful in answering it. If not, please write again.

from David Woodcock, Ann Arbor, MI:

Re: the Wild Worm: Mike Bernson tried to use it to move other players tokens to one of his home planets where he had no tokens. Can he do this? Can he move all other tokens to that planet?

Editor: No, the Wild Worm lets you move only your own tokens. We thought by now everyone knew our shorthand "move tokens from/to bases" meant your own tokens.

Re: a player with the Negator & the Wild Filch — can he negate someone's deciding to state that they saw him in the act of filching? Can the extortionist get half the cards that the Filch filched? Can the Super Silencer use the Wild Filch with impunity simply by silencing all the other players before he Filches?

Editor: Yes, the Negator is a good candidate for the Wild Filch (as is the Silencer) as he can prevent at least one player from catching him. The Extortionist, however, while eligible for cards from the Wild Filch, by catching him makes him put them back & gets nothing. He can't even snare the real Filch since he rounds down.

Does the Wild Boomerang lose a base if the Wild Terrorist is played on her and she wins the relevant challenge?

Editor: Yes, she keeps her tokens, but loses the base.

When the Wild Reincarnator forces all to change powers, are they considered as having lost their powers for the purposes of the Wild Parasite? If one has no home bases but holds the Wild Witch, has he lost his powers for the purpose of the Parasite?

Editor: No, the Wild Reincarnator forces one to discard a power and gain a new one, while losing a power is going without one. Thus the Wild Witch has not lost hers, and the Wild Parasite gets no base.

from Kevin Sean O'Brien, Columbus, Ohio:

I would like to congratulate you on your new box (I got mine about a week ago). The cover looks very nice and the added depth is wonderful. One small request/tip for the next edition (if you redo the box again): Make the box about 1/2 to 1 inch longer so that we can lay our copies of

ENCOUNTER flat in the box. They're handy things to keep with the game.

Please, please, please keep us informed on the details of the Second Annual World Championship Cosmic Encounter Tournament! I'm really excited about participating in it.

Another plea: Please consider making a tenth expansion set for Cosmic Encounter. I know you wanted to make the number of aliens an "even" 75, but the game virtually SCREAMS for an even 10 expansion sets which include 100 aliens! Thus the tenth expansion set would contain 25 more alien powers and their appropriate flares. Before you pull all of your hair out, please understand that I realize this would require cross-checking about 30,000 to 40,000 relationships, a very long and tedious task. But, it would (probably!) be the last expansion set you did and a lot of us players would certainly be pleased.

Also, if the work of your company were to become too much, I feel reasonably sure that there are several devoted and enthusiastic players, including myself, out here who would be willing to help out in volunteer or paid positions. I don't know how realistic or desirable this is to you, but I thought I would mention the idea.

Finally, a question: When using the Wild Demon, can a player attack a planet with his tokens on it? If so, can the player choose himself as the defensive player?

Along "similar" lines, if a player turns over his color in the destiny pile, can he attack an empty planet on his system (similar to attacking an unoccupied Moon)? If so, can he do this even if other players have bases on his other planets?

Can the Negator make a player change his mind about whether or not to attack his own system if that player turns over his own color in the destiny pile (assuming an attack on the player's system is possible)? Also, can the Negator make a player change his mind about which player to attack if he attacks his own system, or only which planet?

Sorry about that. I only meant to ask one or two questions, but the others just popped into my mind.

Editor: Thanks for the ideas and suggestions, Kevin. I don't think we'll change our box size, because too many things are based on it, but if you trim a 1/4 inch off the top and bottom of ENCOUNTER, it'll fit in! Glad you like the box.

On the 2nd CE Tournament, it will be at the World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore from September 1 to 5. It's free (although there's a hefty registration fee to the convention sponsors to get in at all) and there will be prizes, a trophy, etc. To find out more, write "Constellation, Box 1046, Baltimore, MD 21203." It's the CE World Championship, so come if you can.

You betcha if we did Expansion Set No. 10 it would be the last one we did! We almost fritzed out doing No. 9. The darn thing gets to the point where the exceptions take more space than the rules! No, I think this is the vehicle through which CE will grow from now on.

On your questions: Yes, the Wild Demon could choose a planet on which he already had tokens, but he couldn't pick himself as the defensive player (that you can't be both main players is one of the few CE rules still unbroken.) No, a player cannot challenge an empty planet on his own system. Again, there must be another defensive player. Yes, the Negator could make a player decide not to challenge in his own system, or change which player to challenge if he does so.

from David J. Wilson, Allston, MA:

Jack, here is a quote of yours from a COSMIC correspondence (one of several) dated November 4, 1979: "The real fun is in trying to present your case as convincingly as possible All that stretches the mind, reveals people's characters, and keeps the pot boiling." We agree wholeheartedly with this assessment of an exciting aspect of COSMIC ENCOUNTER, but feel there are some areas where the rules are nebulous enough to confuse or even scare off new players. To deal with this, we have adopted the following as the sequence of events which occurs in a challenge. It's basically an extension of the "Steps in a Challenge" on page 6 of the original rules.

You've made it clear that the token is removed from the warp (or Warp Break or Mobius Tubes played) BEFORE the disk is flipped. Similarly, the sequence on page 6 is augmented by the procedure for alliances on page 4; as far as it goes the sequence is relatively clear. But it implies that turning up the cards is the last action of a challenge, when in fact there's much more.

Next to be determined is the outcome of the challenge, incorporating such entitles as Virus, Calculator (reg. and wild for both of these), Anti-Matter, Warrior, and a variety of Moons. After the totals are computed and compared is the correct time for such items as Emotion Control, Wilds Judge and Mesmer, and Reversal Moon. Loser's power, if previously invoked, takes effect (and can be zapped) at this time.

As soon as it is determined who has won the challenge, the following steps are taken, in this order:

- 1) Losing tokens to to the warp.
- 2) Winning tokens move onto base (defensive allies back to bases).
- 3) Cards played are placed onto discard pile.
- 4) Consolation, if earned, is collected.
- 5) Defensive allies' reward is collected, in same clockwise order as players committed their tokens. Whoever plays Victory Boon determines when defensive player takes reward with respect to allies (this could be important if Wild Mind or Aura have been used).

In all the above stages, the clockwise offensive-defensive rule (No. 5 in flare rules) applies. If a deal situation is the outcome, the time limit is set and the deal made (or 3 tokens to warp) before anything else happens. Then remaining tokens in the cone go home and cards are discarded.

Several petty squabbles can be resolved using this timing sequence. The Clone or Filch, for example, must decide if he is using his power before his opponent collects consolation. Stellar Gas is always played before Victory Boon. If a player loses his power as his tokens are removed, that is the first thing to happen in the sequence (thus the Zombie is the first possible power to be nullified).

Originally, we played that any flares etc. which are contingent upon the outcome of the challenge should be played as No. 6 in the above sequence, after the direct effects of the challenge are completed (this conclusion was probably reached by adopting the timing explicitly stated on the Judge power to those similar events not stating time of action.) But after thinking about it, I tend to agree with Mark Goodwin's viewpoint that flares, being optional, can be played anytime after the win is determined, at the discretion of the player (obviously before the challenge is determined to have ended).

Therefore, as Siren, and Wilds Insect, Vulch, and Mutant have more flexibility (as do Flares or powers which state "anytime before cards are played"). Does the wording of the Filch power imply that he has more flexibility than described in the above paragraph?

I could have asked you several small questions about timing of consolation vs. discarding, etc., but it seemed important to me to establish some kind of code here. This standardization has been tested several times, and we find the game is still exciting, has plenty of opportunity for pot boiling discussions, and doesn't bog down as often. The main basis for timing conflict resolution seems to be the clockwise-offensive-defensive rule, but it does not adequately answer all questions (e.g. When purchasing Lucre, do the main players adhere to the off-def rules, purchasing all their Lucre in one block, or can a player buy a card first, wait while his opponent buys a few, and then buy a couple more?) In settling this type of argument, we find that some players will often argue in their own interest rather than adhere to a precedent long forgotten by those now on the opposite side of the fence. This causes inconsistent interpretation of the rules and could lead to big trouble when veteran COSMIC players from different clans meet.

Presumably, this area was left nebulous because it didn't seem to matter in what order these events occurred. But then why was it made definite that the token is removed from the warp before the disk is flipped? The Assassin now makes a difference, just as several other powers and flares make the above sequence more important. Did you have the Butler or Super-Dictator in mind when you placed "Gather 1 to 4 tokens, place in cone" before "Point cone at a planet in defensive system" or was it an arbitrary decision? I realized recently that we've traditionally pointed the cone before placing men in; but I also remember my original rules being slightly different (how, I can't say) from the replacement you sent me.

Here's another small, but important point I'd like to make. When playing with moons, the offensive player should point the cone before the defensive player uses "main player" powers or flares (or takes a new hand) for he may not be entitled if the offensive player goes for a moon. In our games, it has been witnessed that a player will take a worthless moon, in order to avoid the defensive player with, say, the Wild Assassin. As a corollary to this, the Mind may not retreat to an unoccupied moon after using his power, for that act establishes the other player as defensive player.

It seems that players should be allowed to pull out flares, exercise powers, or reveal moons when appropriate within the framework of the game, but that framework needs a little tightening, most notably in the area discussed above. The sequence I have presented conforms with, and is in the spirit of, all established rules of the game. If more tournament play is imminent, we should establish guidelines for these mechanical aspects of the game, and save the "mind-stretching discussions" for those events worthy of them. We find this algorithm to be the optimal blend of structure and flexibility.

Editor: Thanks for a very succinct, well-written explication of your thoughts, David. I think your system makes a lot of sense, and I agree with the general structure and flow. My only point, having played CE for some 12 years now, is that I don't think any hard & fast overall organization of timing can always be right. I guess I'd compare it to jurisprudence.

Mostly, we know what's right and wrong in life, and write laws to define what's wrong. But sometimes someone can come in conflict with those laws, having violated it to the letter, but with a spirit and intent so novel and unexpected that many people would say: "Well, we didn't mean to say that was wrong." So, in our wisdom, we've set up a system where men and women, as judges, have final say.

I think Cosmic has developed to the point where there is so much chance for creativity in play, and so many possible interactions (enough so that everyone on earth, playing full time, could not encounter them all in their lifetimes) that it begins to parallel the situation in law. I'm all for rules and structures which help us all sort out the commonplace, but I'd resist making them so important that they overpower the outraged cry: "But I Can do this. I've been planning it for 3 turns, and it's oh, so elegant." For this, only judges will work. And that has to be fellow players, not too enamored of a flow chart to say: "Wait, beyond all that partisan advantage which motivates him, he's got a point. Let up on the hammerlock. I've never thought of it before, but he should be able to do this to us. It's clever and it's apt."

That's the spirit I'd like to keep alive in Cosmic, with your help. I hope the new integrated rules book that comes with Set No. 9 will help fill in some of the grey areas in the game as it has developed over these years. But I doubt if we've covered everything. I know you'll be working to fill in some of the gaps, and I appreciate your diligence and your concern. I'm glad we now have a forum to bring our viewpoints to a wider audience which, after all we say and do is past, will decide how the game is really played.

from Allen Varney, Stanford, CA:

ENCOUNTER is nice enough, but still a little short on size and production values for the price. If it's just supposed to be a chatty "fan-club" newsletter it's twice too expensive, whereas if it's supposed to be a full-fledged house organ it's too skinny and low-budget by half. Also, where is the BORDERLANDS material? That is a brilliant, intensely involving, exhausting, inspiring, brilliant game. I admit I can't think of any likely article topics for it (aside from general strategy hints), but at the very least all of your devoted COSMIC ENCOUNTER fans should be alerted that you have another game just as good (even it is horrendously expensive).

If you're going to run "player wanted" announcements regularly, please include this one:

"Players wanted in PaloAlto/Stanford University area.
C.E., Borderlands, Quirks. Write to Allen Varney, 664
College Avenue, Stanford, CA 94306."

Editor: Thanks for the kind words about Borderlands. I blush to say I agree with every one. (And you'll be pleased to know that it is now \$15 so all your friends can afford one!) I hope this issue changes your mind about Encounter. The Borderlands feature and the expanded size are both portends of things to come.

from Randy Dow, Dover-Foxcroft, ME:

I've enjoyed reading the Encounter Journal and having just finished the third issue, decided it was time to write in my compliments and criticisms. I also have a few questions, ones that have caused us endless arguments.

I thought your first two issues were excellent little overviews of what is to come. The letter section is extremely enjoyable, particularly because it settles so many CE disputes once and for all. I did have a small gripe with the third issue, however. While it's nice to hear from other interested players across the globe, I think the readers would be interested in seeing a little more written by the creators at Eon. After all, you guys are the pros — the rest of us are merely the critics and commentators. Articles like "the history of CE" and your work on video design I find extremely interesting. Also, there seems to be little attention paid to what I think are your two finest creations next to CE — Dune and Borderlands. All kinds of articles could be written on strategies and variations for these two games. It might be very helpful if you could write a piece on "what makes a good CE power." There have been some excellent ideas sent in but many definitely need refinement (i.e. some would be good ideas for a flare but wouldn't stand alone as a power). A few good guidelines on how you guys create and test a power would be appreciated.

A quick word to Doug Schwarz and his merry little band of White Plains Grifters. What's with the glory trip, Doug? Do you realize that on the original set of rules for CE it never once mentions the designers' names. It simply says created by Future Pastimes. We would love to hear about your 20 new powers and ideas for edicts but please don't expect a standing ovation afterwards.

Now for some questions. In a challenge with the Anti-Matter, do both sides add or subtract their lucre? If the Void wins a challenge against the Zombie as offensive player, do the Zombie tokens go to the Void, since offense uses his power first? In a conflict of timing between a power and a flare, which goes first (eg. the Fungus Wild vs. the Fungus)? Can the Stellar Gas be used against the Ethic when he draws consolation due to his power? Finally, are you considering the possibility of coming out with more powers in the future or is the stable as full as you want it?

Here's one readers might like to try. Forger: you have the power to duplicate. As a main player in a challenge, after playing down your challenge card, you may play down any other matching cards on top of it (eg. two Attack 10's, three Attack 8's, etc. . .). Matching attack cards are added to your total in a challenge. At the end of the challenge all cards are discarded. If you play matching Compromises it has the effect of one, but all are discarded. Also, whenever another player discards a card that matches one in your hand you may show him your duplicate and take his card into your hand. (Do not play in games with the Filch).

Thanks for your time and keep up the good work.

Editor: Glad you like Encounter, Randy. I can see I'll have to keep slaving over this hot typewriter to keep you satisfied, tho. The idea for a "What makes a good C.E. power" piece sounds good. Anybody out there interested in reading one on that?

In defense of Doug and other players who write in ideas, I know how much work they put into it, and they certainly do deserve credit. Instead of just sitting on their ideas, they volunteer to share them with the playing world. That is a gift (ever read Lewis Hyde's "The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property" — it's a fascinating work on the nature of creative endeavor, highly recommended) and it deserves thanks.

On your questions: Yes, both sides add Lucre in an Anti-Matter challenge. The Zombie is exempt from the Void since its tokens never go to the Warp and the Void takes one that should have gone to the Warp. For our timing rules, see Bryan Stout's letter in this issue. Sure, Stellar Gas stops the Ethic's consolation — that's why we called it consolation for him.

The Forger sounds like it would be fun to play. Any Flares for it?

from Robert Bazemore, Stow, MA:

For those who like playing Hoax and Cosmic Encounter we of the UMASS Science Fiction Society devised a combination called Cosmic Hoax. It uses 2 basic sets of Cosmic Encounter powers so there is a possibility that 2 people have the same power. It is played normally except the players can claim to be any of the 15 powers and use that power for the whole challenge. The 15 flares for these powers are used as suspicion cards. To question someone a player foregoes his second challenge, and throws his tokens on a foreign base into the warp, gaining the right to pass the suspicion deck to another player. The same rules for answering questions, hoaxing as any power, and for individual and group accusations apply as in Hoax. Once a player is out, his tokens go to the warp and if his color comes up, the player may challenge another's base on that system or flip again if there are no such bases there. To win, either get 5 bases or be the last player in. It's fun and definitely different, and should only be played by people who know their powers by heart.

Editor: Cosmic Hoax! That's tremendous. I can't wait to play it. Virtually the same idea was also sent in by Bryan Bowe, of Tamaqua, PA. His variation is that a number of powers are drawn randomly equal to twice the number of players. These are listed and are available to anyone. The undealt-out ones are placed face down. In a case of conflict (e.g. the Vulch) the player claiming the power last has priority. You cannot use 2 powers simultaneously, but you can use them in quick succession. Survivors of individual accusations get all the other's cards & Lucre. Highly recommended!

from Bill Wordelmann, Palos Hills, IL:

Congratulations on your national exposure (finally) in the May issue of *Games*. The Story of the company's "success" was a good one, even though it was a repeat for me, since I had read it in *Encounter* a couple of weeks earlier!

A couple of questions for *Encounter*:

- 1) Is the victory Boon played before or after consolation is taken?
- 2) Can Sanity be played after the Destiny plie is flipped, or should it be before?
- 3) Does the Laser choose both of the Deuces' Cards?
- 4) Are Allies in Cosmic Encounter allowed to openly communicate with each other and the main player they are allied with? Example: I'm the Seeker, and I have allied offensively. Can I ask the offensive player for a yes or no question to ask the defensive player? I have played CE without allies communicating. Am I doing it wrong?

I would like to close with a couple of requests:

- 1) The rules for Satellites and Space Stations seem a bit confusing. Maybe you could explain the difference between

launching and deployment (if there is one). Examples of their use would be most appreciated.

2) I would like to see how other readers have used the "imaginative" powers such as Force, Negator and Witch. Maybe you could make a request to your other readers and have them send in their ideas.

Thank you for enlightening my life with Cosmic Encounter.

Editor: Thanks for the praise, Bill. We love it! On your questions, the Victory Boon can be played before or after consolation, at the player's choice. Sanity should be played before the destiny pile is flipped, as that is already in to the challenge. The Laser does not select both of the Deuce's cards, just one. Allies can communicate with each other generally, but not disclose specific cards they have or will play. Only more general comments and posturing is considered good form in our games.

I think the Satellites and Space Stations article was a little confusing. As I see it, you can launch them for the Lucre cost by foregoing a challenge. Later you can use it to add the extra points it bears to an attack on a planet there. You can use it on your side, whether defending, playing as offensive player, or allied to either of these. They stay there until destroyed or recovered by the player owning them. Is this any help?

I'd be glad to print imaginative uses of the Force, Negator & Witch. I'll bet there are a lot out there!

from Harry Andruschak, La Canada-Flintridge, CA:

Having received the first 2 issues of *Encounter*, I need to ask a question. In a game with both Macron and Crystal can Crystal force Macron to bring more than one token, as allowed by his power, to a challenge?

Editor: It sure looks that way when I read it. How else will it achieve Crystalline order?

from Bill Haga, Rochester, MI:

I really enjoy all of Eon Products games, and am very interested to see if you can bring your innovation to computer games. My absolute favorite Eon game is Cosmic Encounter. I am amazed at the general appeal this game has; everyone who plays it likes it. I first purchased it after reading about it, coaxed others to play it, and now many of them have their own sets! When a couple I know got married recently, they wanted to know if we were going to play Cosmic that night! Perhaps they were just joking, though.

Of course I have some questions about Cosmic; hopefully you will be able to clarify a few points.

A.) I feel that the Gambler power should be allowed to see his opponent's card revealed before he has to bluff about his own. This makes the Gambler a more strategic power and more fun too, since he can then bluff just enough to win and make a tougher decision for his opponent to call his bluff; but others think the Gambler has to bluff before his opponent reveals his card. What are your comments?

B.) If a player has the Insect Wild Flare card and the Keeper Edict, can she play the Insect Flares to get a new hand and play the Keeper Edict to keep the Insect Flare (as well as her other Flares) or is she required to discard the Insect Flare?

C.) How should a Cosmic Zap affect the Terrorist power? The Power card mentions that if the Terrorist loses his power, he can't plant new bombs but his already planted bombs still explode. But if a Zap can be played against the Terrorist only when he is planting new bombs we've found he probably won't be Zapped at all. I think it is best to let a Zap prevent a bomb from exploding. Your comments?

D.) Can the Mind see the Miser's hoard as well as the Miser's regular hand?

E.) If Aura and Miser are in a game together, should the Miser have both his hands revealed, or just the regular hand?

Again, thanks for all the great games.

Editor: Bill, tell your couple friends I definitely don't suggest taking CE on a honeymoon. You might forget too many important things to do. On your points, Yes, the Gambler should be able to see the other card before his declaration. We meant it this way, but the wording is ambiguous, at least. Our mistake. The Wild Insect/Keeper player must discard the Wild Insect to use it, as that is specified on the Flare. Yes, the Zap should prevent the Terrorist's bomb from going off, and that is not clear on the power card. Our mistake again. Yes, since the Mind can look at the entire hand of a player, that includes the hoard. The hoard is not subject to loss because of other powers, but a look, yes. However, the Aura specifies that only the "regular" hand is exposed, so in this case the hoard is still kept secret. These were all good questions, Bill. I can tell you play the game with a lot of attention to detail.

from Alexander Wilson, 4635 N. Paulina, Chicago, IL:

I would like to find other C.E. players in Chicago. Can you help?

Editor: I sure hope so, Alexander. Will Chicago players write this fellow a note and cheer him up?

from Joanna Beatty, Clayton, MO:

Your game Cosmic Encounter is just the tops with us. We play it all the time. Since we play it so often we have come across some problems, some you should have thought over and some you might not have seen.

The Vulch flare against the Vulch power gets (or can get) into an endless loop. The Vulch gives an Edict that the card player does not want (i.e. Mobius Tubes for the Zombie) and so the player discards it and the Vulch picks it back up and gives it again. *Editor: Yes, we've encountered it too. One of them has to give up first. And strange are the ways Vulches have devised to save face.*

The Witch flare. If the Witch has it and has only 2 bases she flip-flops between having the Super and the Wild. *Editor: Great, eh? First she's the Wild, using it to get her power back, and now she's the Super. She can use it that way every challenge.*

If the Loser has the Loser flare and is Cosmic Zapped or otherwise loses the power does the Wild come into play? Otherwise it is bad for everyone else and has no chance to be bad for the Loser. Can it work more than once (2 Cosmic Zaps)? *Editor: No, the Wild says that only when the card enters the hand does it apply. Thus if the Loser already had it and was then zapped, it would do no harm. But if the Loser was zapped upon getting it, then it would enter his hand as Wild, and apply.*

When playing with Binary powers, do you get another if your temporary power was Boomerang? At the end of a Time Gash? *Editor: Yes, you would get a new power at the end of the Boomerang challenge, as at the end of a Time Gash challenge.*

Can the Siren lure if the color flipped was her own? *Editor: Yes, she can. Where's the fun of being beautiful if you can't lure someone your way, even if he's headed that way anyway?*

Does Lucre count for the Antimatter? How? Can the Filch flare owner take Lucre too, now? Does the Lloyd flare owner have to have the Lucre in the first place or can one give out more than one has? *Editor: Lucre adds in for the Anti-Matter, as others. No, the Wild Filch can't take Lucre. Not in my house, at least. The Wild Lloyd is good for any debts, and doesn't have to have that much Lucre to start with.*

When does a challenge officially begin? *Editor: When you do your first act authorized as offensive player — usually getting a token out of the Warp.*

Can you use the same flare twice in one challenge? *Editor: Yes, unless otherwise restricted by the Flare.*

If 2 attack cards are played against each other, does the Vacuum flare holder get one or two tokens (it's unclear on the card)?

Editor: Two. Sorry, we thought it was clear.

If all of your tokens (all 20) are in the warp and the Assessor is in the game how can you attack on your turn?

Editor: Since the token must come from a base, and you have none, you don't have to pay.

Does the Oracle flare get shuffled in, too? *Editor: Sure, that's the fun of it.*

Can the Pirate Wild flare holder hint? What if one loses the card to someone else? To the discard pile? Does one have to announce it when one is hiding the Lucre? *Editor: Sure you can hint. That's like a pirate's map being discovered, right? But if you lose it to another or to the discard pile, you may no longer have the authority to assure* If the Fungus has a Fungus flare or Schizoid flare played against is there, and it isn't. You can hide it publicly or the Fungus what happens to the Fungoid stacks? *Editor: If the Fungus as you like. Flare is played, the stack counts as one token. When the Flare is lost, the stack returns to the Fungus. If the Schizoid Flare is played, the stack counts as one token for the new player of the Fungus color, and the stack remains until separated by the Warp.*

The Negator. What is a "game action"? Can you say don't ask for that many allies" or any allies, or both, or what? And if cards are being bought can the person then say "you stopped me from buying 3 cards so I'll buy 2", etc? *Editor: We left the Negator consciously open to player's creativity. Thus a game action is anything a player does in accordance with the game rules. When a player does something, the Negator can say "No, you decided not to do that" and enforce it. Thus if I say "Everyone is invited to ally" and am Negated, then I cannot invite everyone eligible and must limit it to fewer allies. But if I said "I'm inviting allies" and was Negated, then I couldn't invite allies. Same with cards. If I said "I'm buying cards" and was Negated, then I couldn't buy cards. But if I mentioned a specific number, then I could change it to another.*

Some of these we have found our own answers to but if there is ever a tournament or we play against people who have been playing elsewhere we'll be hard put to find the answers. Since you made the game you should find the answers and keep them somewhere. Perhaps print them up sometime. Oh, and one idea for a flare card someday is "lose one flare, play once per challenge" and an idea for an Edict is "lose 2 Flares". Flares sometimes stay around too long so we made the Edict with the blank cards and the title card is the "Flare". Thanks for all the fun. *Editor: Thanks for all the questions. Keep getting ENCOUNTER and you'll get all the answers.*

from Bob Trezise, Nashville, TN:

1. It states in the rules that if you play a compromise while your opponent plays an attack, you would "take at random from his hand one card for each token you lost", BUT the Zombie does not lose tokens so does this mean he does not get consolation?
2. Is the Zombie immune to the Void?
3. When the Dictator and the Butler are in the game, can the Dictator change the color of the destiny pile even though it's being flipped for the Dictator?
4. Does the reincarnator get a power at the start of the game?
5. Can the OFFENSIVE player, through a power or a flare, remove all of his tokens from the challenge and still follow through with the outcome?
6. What constitutes "a new token" when the Terrorist power is in the game?
7. What effect does a cosmic zap have on the Terrorist?
8. If a zap will disarm one of the Terrorist's bombs, will it do so even if the Terrorist power has been replaced, i.e. using the reincarnator flare?
9. Can a player who is currently occupying an immediate moon leave that moon and re-challenge it with the same tokens in order to gain the benefit of that same moon again?
10. When Visionary and Chronos are challenging each other, can the Visionary tell the Chronos what to play on the second challenge?
11. Can we assume that the Negator can not have "negatives" in his reversal i.e. "I reverse your decision NOT to play a compromise?"
12. What penalty can be inflicted on a player who lies to the seeker?
13. Does the Oracle "look" at a kicker, if one is played?
14. Magnet flare- Can you specify a non-challenge card that can not be played during the challenge?
15. When the Super Mesmer is in the game is there a precedence between the natural flare and the altered flare?
16. When there is a 3 way conflict between powers, i.e. the offense, the defense, and an ally, is there an order in which they should be used.
17. In a multi-power game does the Sorcerer and the Reincarnator flare switch all powers or 1 power, and who gets to choose which power it changes?
18. Can the Wrack flare "turn off" a power that is always on if the owner of that power refuses to pay the token cost?
19. Can the user of the Aura flare shuffle the deck as often as he likes in order to get a card he likes on top?
20. Can a player with the Parasite flare use it when he loses his own power?
21. Chronos flare- is the first physical flip considered to be the first flip or is it the first flip that the player elects to challenge?
22. Can chronos affect a kicker?
23. How does Deuce use kickers?
24. What penalty is there for communicating while Silenced?
25. With the Moon Boon moon and the Mini Mac Moon, what effects do they have on the Macron?, also can the value that goes into the cone, using these moons, exceed 4?
26. Can the Worm move the cone to a moon in his system, providing he has a base there?
27. On the Challenge in which you lose your powers, can you use them for the complete challenge? i.e. If the Vaccum just loses his 3rd home base can he take some tokens with him at the end of that challenge?
28. Can Negator affect a group of things? i.e. Somebody takes consolation from the negator, can he negate all of the cards drawn or just one?
29. Can you sell information about: another players hand, the next cards in the deck, what somebody just bought from the deck etc., for lucre?
30. In a multi-power game with Amoeba & Macron, can this player take more than 1 token to the offensive end of the cone?

The answers to the questions will be appreciated.

Editor:

- 1) *The Zombie does get consolation since he lost the tokens. He just didn't send them to the Warp.*
- 2) *Yes.*
- 3) *You bet. The Butler is "any other player".*
- 4) *No, he has to lose first.*
- 5) *Yes, in special circumstances like being tortured out by the Wrack.*
- 6) *Any token entering the planet, such as coming back from the Warp, landing in a deal, etc.*
- 7) *The Zap stops the bombs from exploding or the Terrorist from planting new ones that challenge.*
- 8) *Yes.*
- 9) *Yes. Often a smart strategy.*
- 10) *You bet. That's why we said "at the appropriate time(s)".*
- 11) *He can only reverse a decision the player makes, either by communication or by action. Thus only if a player said "I won't play a Compromise" or some such could the Negator reverse that and force the play (if the player had one).*
- 12) *Tar, feather, and throw out of the game. Seeker wins immediately.*
- 13) *Yes, it's revealed along with the challenge card.*
- 14) *Yes, if you are specific (e.g. "Cosmic Zap").*
- 15) *Just the normal order of precedence when there is a conflict, i.e. other players starting to the left of the offense, then the offense, then the defense.*
- 16) *Same as no.15 answer.*
- 17) *In a multi-power game, house rules prevail.*
- 18) *It sure can. It's like a ransomable Zap.*
- 19) *No, the order is first shuffle, then reverse, so he shuffles until he is content, but only then can he see what is coming up next.*

- 20) Sure.
 21) The first physical flip.
 22) Yes, see letter from Bryan Stout in this issue.
 23) He plays one normally, and it alters the value of his Challenge card. The extra card is added to his total, afterwards.
 24) You are tarred, feathered, and thrown out of the game. Silencer wins immediately.
 25) Moon Boon is worth 5 to the Macron, and Mini Mac Moon makes his tokens worth 2 (that's why it is a Mini Mac). Yes, the value in the cone is not limited, just the number of tokens (whatever their value).
 26) No, it says "home planets".
 27) No.
 28) It depends on how it is presented in the game. See letter from Joanna Beatty in this issue.
 29) No. What kind of man are you, anyway.
 30) Like I sez: "Multi-power games, play at your own risk. I can't figure them out".

from James V. Beach, Costa Mesa, CA:

Part of the description of Visionary reads "If your opponent does not have such a card, he may play any challenge card he wishes. If he does have the card, however, at the appropriate time(s) he must play it." Does this statement mean that if a player has the challenge card at the appropriate time, then he must play it or does it mean that

if the player has the card when Visionary named it, then he must play it at the appropriate time? In other words, if Visionary told Philanthropist to play an attack six, could Philanthropist then give this card away?

I would also like to express my disapproval of the article "Satellites and Space Stations" that appeared in your second issue of ENCOUNTER. I don't know how the author gets away with saying that Cosmic Encounter isn't strategic. I have been playing the game for over three years and have found it to be full of strategies. Granted, there is a great deal of the chance element in C.E. but, then again, so is there in many war games. For the most part, the strategies in C.E. are not clean cut and must be radically altered from one game to the next. This presents the player with a real challenge—developing strategies on the spur of the moment. I don't know how long Mr. Forres has been playing C.E. but I do know that he has overlooked what may be the most important aspect of the game.

Editor: Thanks for the sterling defense of Cosmic. I still feel it's plenty strategic (having kept my winning average well above that of my partners) and the best strategic challenge in it is parlaying your weaknesses bestowed by chance into strengths. On the Visionary, the wording is ambiguous. We meant that if you have the card at the appropriate time, then you must play it. There are too many things which can you to lose the card (purposeful and not) to require you to play it when you don't have it any more.

Massachusetts Mutations

Editor: Matt Stone of Framingham, MA has submitted some exciting powers for all to test. I've had to select only a few to present here, sad to say. Several Edicts mentioned in the Flare descriptions also had to be omitted. All here are by Matt, save the Mentor and the Superhero, by Ben Berman. Happy playing.

CHEAPSKATE

You have the power to owe. You need not pay out Lucre. Instead, you may write out IOU's for each Lucre you want to spend. You may also borrow up to four Lucre from your opponent in a challenge, in exchange for IOU's. You may never have more than 15 IOU's outstanding at a time. You may offer to repay other players in exchange for cards or a base at any time. When you have reached your limit, you must pay off the bag first. Only then can you write out more IOU's or pay off others. **DO NOT USE WITH PLANT OR INSECT.**

WILD: You are immune to the Bankruptcy Edict.

SUPER: You may offer to pay off IOU's as part of a deal.

COLLECTOR

You have the power to tax Edicts. You collect a Lucre from any player who plays an edict. If he can't pay you, he may not play it. This power can not be cosmic zapped.

WILD: You need not pay taxes or fees of Lucre or tokens.

SUPER: Collect 2 Lucre per edict.

COP

You have the power to be bribed. At the start of the game, declare an attack limit (similar to a speed limit). You are to enforce the law, but can be bought off. If another player reveals an attack card above your limit, he must pay



playable card, it is as if he is out of challenge cards. If you play a card above your limit and win a challenge, you must pay the loser a Lucre. You must have Lucre to play a card above the limit.

WILD: You may discard your compromise cards and take a Lucre for each. Discard after use.

SUPER: You need not have or pay Lucre to play a card above the limit.

COUNT

You have the power of numbers. Keep a running total of the sum of all attack cards played. When it passes a multiple of 25, take a card from the deck. When it passes a multiple of 200, take a base on any system. **DO NOT USE WITH PLANT INSECT OR MENTOR.**

WILD: If the sum of the attack cards in your hand is above 50, turn in this card for a base anywhere.

SUPER: Take a base at multiples of 50.

DOUBLEHEADER

You have the power of double attack. You may attack two planets in one challenge. Put a number of tokens, 1-4, on each side of the cone. (These numbers need not be equal.) Specify which base you are attacking with each set of tokens. Allies may ally on either attack, but not both. You and your opponent each play one challenge card which counts for both challenges. If you win both attacks, you get a second challenge; if you lose one or both, your turn ends.

WILD: You may double the value of any attack card you play.

SUPER: You may place one set of tokens on the cone. It counts for both attacks. If you lose one, you lose no tokens. If you win both, place a set of tokens from home bases onto the second base.

GOLEM

You have the power over moons. On each of your turns you may add a moon to your system and you may occupy it as well in addition to your normal challenges.

WILD: You may look at an unexposed moon before deciding whether to challenge it.

SUPER: You may add a moon on any challenge you are involved in.

INVADER

You have the power to overrun. Whenever a base becomes vacant on any system, regardless of the reason, you may place a token on it.

WILD: Whenever a base in your home system becomes vacant, you may place a token on it. Invader may not.

SUPER: You may invite another player onto the base you invade and try to make a deal involving this offer. Deal rules apply.

LUCRETIA

You have the power over Lucre. When you win an attack, you take all of the defender's Lucre.

WILD: Your opponent may not add his Lucre in a challenge.

SUPER: You may use up to four of the Lucre you win to immediately buy cards or tokens.

MENTOR

You have the power to teach. As a main player, you may teach one of your powers one of your opponent's power's. For this challenge, the two powers are exchanged. At the end of the challenge, the powers are returned to their original owners. **USE ONLY IN MULTIPLE POWER GAME.**

WILD: You may take the Mentor power in exchange for your own power.

SUPER: On each challenge, you may make the two main players exchange a power. At the end of the challenge, their original powers are returned.

MIMIC

You have the power to copy. If you are not a main player

the challenge. You replace the original attacker, placing the same number of tokens he used on the cone. Allies must ally again on the same side with the same number of tokens. After this challenge, normal order of play resumes. Tokens lost to the warp in both challenges remain there.

WILD: You may repeat the use of a Plague or Revolt used by another player. It must be used against the same player as the first.

SUPER: You may copy your own challenge.

MIRROR

You have the power to invert. As a main player, you may reverse the digits of both attack cards played. For example a 15 would become a 51, a 20 would become a 02, etc. One digit cards are reversed as if there were a 0 in front. A 4 would be a 04, and thus would become a 40 when reversed. To reverse the cards, after you and your opponent play cards face down, call out "reverse." Totals are figured normally with the values of the cards being the reversed numbers.

WILD: When you play a compromise card, you win the challenge. Your opponent gets consolation from you as if he had played the card.

SUPER: You may reverse the digits of either or both cards. Call "reverse" and specify which card(s) you desire to invert.

MYSTIC

You have the power to see. Whenever another player obtains an edict or flare, he must show it to you. As a main player, you may ask your opponent for a specific edict or flare. If he has it he must give it to you. If you forget what you have been shown, you may not ask to see the cards again.

WILD: You may look at the flare deck.

SUPER: You may ask for both an edict and a flare.

**RAIDER**

You have the power to steal. As the defensive player, before cards are played, you may steal the cone and ransom it off to your attacker. You may demand a base, cards, or

the cone and complete the challenge. If he does not agree, you both lose three tokens to the warp and play passes.

WILD: You may take tokens from the warp when not entitled. If caught, you lose a card, picked at random by the person who catches you.

SUPER: If the attacker does not meet your demand, you win the challenge.

SUPERHERO

You have the power of powers. At the start of the game, after all other powers are determined, you may choose any power not in the game (so long as it does not conflict with any that are in the game.) This power becomes yours for the game. This power is still the Superhero for determining a Super Flare.

WILD: You may exchange this Flare for any wild flare not in the game.

SUPER: You may exchange any other player's power for one not in the game. Discard after use.

UNDERDOG

You have the power to save yourself. If as the defensive player you believe that you will lose, you may buy off your attacker. Give him one Lucre for each token he has in the cone. He must take them back to bases and play passes. If

you do not have enough Lucre to buy him off and are forced to play the challenge, you may collect one Lucre from the bag for each token you lose to the warp. You start the game with 10 Lucre.

WILD: Use this card as a Safety. Discard after use.

SUPER: Use Lucre from the bag to buy off the attacker.

UNDERTAKER

You have the power to bury. Whenever another player loses tokens to the warp, you take them. He must pay you a Lucre to put them in the warp. If he can't or won't pay you, keep the tokens. As part of a deal, you may later free them to the warp. If you lose your power (except to a cosmic zap), tokens go to the warp. **DO NOT USE WITH VOID.**

WILD: Your tokens can never be held on another player's star disc. Any currently there go to the warp.

SUPER: Charge one Lucre per token.

VACCINE

You have the power of Immunity, As the defensive player, none may ally against you.

WILD: You are immune to the plague and Revolt edicts.

SUPER: No one may ally against you when you are a main player.

Cosmic Tournament at ConFusion

by David M. Woodcock, Ann Arbom, MI

The first "Cosmic Tournament at ConFusion", was the creation of Ed Kleban a/k/a the Cosmic Advisor. During much of the weekend the Cosmic Suite was alive with from one to four simultaneous CE games.

The early climax of this activity was the Tournament itself. Twenty participants struggled for the opportunity to advance beyond the two elimination rounds to the 5-player finals. During the elimination rounds each participant played two 4-player one power games for points. Powers were selected at random from the Basic set and the first two expansion sets. Four players and the absence of flares favored but did not guarantee a short game; some ran up to the 1 hour time limit. The nature of the point system — the same used in the elimination rounds at the 1st World Cosmic Encounter Tournament — favored both finished games and joint wins. Four of the five finalists put together their winning totals from two shared wins.

The final contest was a one power game with flares and kickers but without lucre or moons. Selection at random was from the full set of powers with the lucre powers deleted. The finalists selected the Demon, the Delegator, the Fungus, the Changeling, and the Filth. The corresponding flares plus five more were shuffled into the deck and the game began. Winning conditions were standard with one exception — at least one player had to have more points than any other at the games ending. Otherwise the game would continue until that condition was met. This was added to prevent the possibility of a joint win.

As the game progressed the crowd of onlookers in the suite noted that the atmosphere differed from that of the usual Cosmic game. A certain tension pervaded the table, the sort of tension usually limited to the Seminar on the Redistribution of Economic Resources through the Laws of Psychology and Statistics. This may have been attributable

to the prizes gathered for the finals by the energies of Ed Kleban and the cooperation of Eon, Rider's, Campus Bike and Toy, and Joe's Hobby Shops. Each finalist was guaranteed a basic CE set but the tournament winner would receive a full set of Expansion sets and a subscription to Encounter as well.

A measure of the changed atmosphere may be the failure of the Wild Filch to wreak the usual havoc it does in our casual games. Ever since Alex Tons discovered that stealing the entire deck was easier than stealing a single card (as well as more gratifying) the Wild Filch has gained a terrible reputation in our circle. Since that time the diabolical invidiousness of the Wild Empath, Tongues, Mindblank and arguments over power interactions have become clear to us all. Happily in this game Ted LeCoutier caught the Filch (Marcus Watts) on his first attempt and I kept a close watch on him thereafter, indeed I continued to watch him long after he had lost the Filch in consolation to Ken . . . But Marcus watched Ken . . .

At the end, Marcus, David, and I had four bases. I drew Ted as my adversary and put in 4 tokens. Everyone chose to come to Ted's defense. Thus the odds on the table were 13 to 4 (Marcus, short of tokens, had only contributed 2). I played a 2 kicker and a 15; Ted played a 12. It was enough.

David was second with 12; Marcus third with 11; Ken fourth with 10; and Ted fifth with 6.

At the Tournament's conclusion participants, onlookers, and Committee shared a Cosmic Cake (Chocolate in the shape of a hex) contributed by Naomi Reynolds, worthy opponent and excellent baker and . . . (but that's another story or perhaps two or three).

The next day having occupied an appendage of the consuite we settled down to two more games — with everything but moons. This was the day we played the 5-player game with 5 winners . . . but that too is another story.

MICHIGAN MOONS

Editor: Jeff & Paula Boes, of Hudsonville, MI have sent in a list of new Moons for a little variety in Cosmic Encounter. Herewith are some of the best.

CHALLENGE EXTENSION (C)

While this Moon is occupied, the normal limit of two challenges per turn is extended to three. Normal rules apply to the third challenge.

CHALLENGE LIMITATION (C)

While this Moon is occupied, the normal limit of two challenges per turn is reduced to one. Normal rules apply to the lone challenge.

CHRONOMOON (S, I)

Upon revealing this Moon, the occupying player may immediately force the replay of his previous challenge, all players retrieving their lost tokens from the Warp. All cards or Moons played and discarded are not retrieved. Can be played at any time. Discard this Moon once revealed.

COMPENSATION (C)

While this Moon is occupied, losing allies (offensive or defensive) are paid by their side's main player. The fee is either 1 Lucre or (at the ally's choice or if the defeated main player has no Lucre) 1 card at random from the main player's hand. If the main player has no cards or Lucre, then he owes nothing.

CONE SIZE I (C)

While this Moon is occupied, the limit on the number of tokens a player may put in the Cone is 5 instead of 4.

CONE SIZE II (C)

As with Cone Size I, but the limit is 3 tokens per player. Macron still puts one token in the Cone.

CONE SIZE III (C)

As with Cone Size I, but the limit is the number of tokens currently occupying the Cone Size III Moon at the beginning of the challenge. Macron may put in one token for every 4 tokens on the Moon.

FLARE TRADE (S)

The player who occupies this Moon may reveal it just as his opponent is attempting to use a Flare against him. The Flare played has no effect and the occupying player must exchange one of his own Flares for the Flare played. If the occupying player has no Flare, he cannot reveal this Moon. Discard this Moon after revealing.

FLARE TRAP (S)

As with the Flare Trade, but the occupying player takes the played Flare and does not give the other player one of his own. This Moon may be played regardless of whether the occupying player holds any Flares.

LIMITATION (I)

While this Moon is occupied, players may draw only 5 cards from the deck to replace their hand. This affects all Powers and Flares which are dependent on the size of a regular hand (e.g., the Miser's horde has only 5 cards).

ROLE PLAY (C)

While this Moon is occupied, each player must play and speak in character with his Alien Power or pay a penalty of 1 token to the Warp (maximum penalty: 1 token per game-turn). The "character" of a particular Power is left to each player to interpret. If a player has no Power, he may speak

and act normally.

Examples of role-playing:

Deuce: Speak double or act two-faced
 Wrack: Laugh hysterically when others lose
 Pirate: Do pirate imitations
 Anti-Matter: Speak backwards or say the opposite of what you mean

SUPERNOVA (not for use in a 2-player game) (S)

When this Moon is revealed, the occupying player may place each system's star disk over a planet as with the Nova Moon. The planet and tokens affected are out of the game. The planets chosen must all be in corresponding positions, e.g. all central planets or all rightmost, etc. Discard this Moon after revealing.

Cosmic Encounter: The Motion Picture

by John C. McKeivitt, Philadelphia, PA

When Voyager 17 was launched from Earth in a now unclear past, a hearty sample of Hollywood's Science Fiction blockbusters were included, among the artifacts representing Earth's culture. At the time it did not seem terribly significant. But then, it could never have been anticipated that a damaged and lame Voyager 17 would be discovered by a race of celluloid based beings who, quite naturally, believed filmdom's famous monsters to be biological organisms in need of repair. Thus Hollywood's greatest aberrations were unleashed on an unsuspecting universe. Always reaching out, searching for their true identities; they enter new galaxies, destroying all who stand in their way. One can only be certain that they will be great box office in each new world they conquer.

WEREWOLF

Power of the Moon

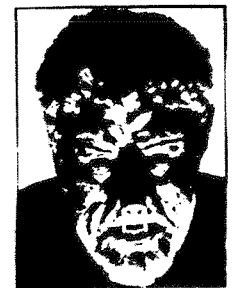
When you are a major player in a challenge and you occupy any Moon in the system where the challenge is occurring; your attack value (cards and tokens) doubles. (Use only when the Moons from expansion set no.5 are being used).



THE MUMMY

Power to Mummify

After playing an attack card in a Challenge, instead of discarding the card, you may mummify it by placing it on a planet on which you have a base. When that planet is subsequently attacked, you may play the mummified card in addition to an attack card from your hand. Sorry, only one mummified card per planet.



DRACULA *VAMPIRE*

Power to Enslave

When you are a major player in a challenge and you win the challenge, instead of your opponent's and opponent's allies tokens going to warp, they are placed on your star disc and can be used, by you, in any subsequent challenge in addition to the tokens you can normally commit. The tokens are not removed from the star disc regardless of the result of the challenge. The star disc may, however, be attacked as if it were a planet in your system. If a successful challenge is made against the star disc, no bases on the star disc are established. Instead, all tokens on the star disc and on the Hyper-Space cone are returned to all players respective bases.



FRANKENSTEIN
Power to Revive Life

Resurrectionist

When you are a major player in a challenge, you may take any number of tokens, of any color, excluding your own, from warp and use them as allies. The tokens are affected by the outcome the same as normal allies.

THE INVISIBLE MAN
Power of Invisibility

When you commit tokens to the cone as either a major player or an ally, you do not place the tokens on the cone. Instead, you record the number being committed (0-4) on a sheet of paper and reveal it after the challenge cards have been played.

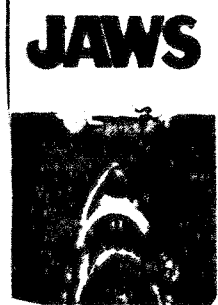


SUPERMAN
Power of Invulnerability

When you play an attack card in a challenge, you cannot lose the challenge unless your opponent plays an attack card which has previously been in your hand. (This can easily be kept track of by lightly marking the cards in your hand with a K for Kryptonite. A good eraser and the card is as good as new). When your opponent plays an attack card marked with a K or a compromise card, challenges are resolved normally.

JAWS
Power to Sever

When you are the offensive player in a challenge, you may attack your opponent's tokens one at a time. With each token you attack, you play a separate attack card. The committed tokens (yours plus allies) are added to the card on each separate attack. Your opponent plays just one card. The value of your opponent's card plus the value of his allied tokens are divided equally among each of your opponent's tokens being attacked (fractions are rounded down). You must win all your attacks on the individual tokens in order to establish a base. You may also attack your opponent normally if you wish.



E.T.
Power to Love

Before play begins, select one player whom you want to win and record it. If this player does win, you reveal your selection and you win instead of the selected player. The selected player can win himself, only if he wins while you have lost your alien power. You may also win through normal means of course.

Destro's Dire Four

Editor: Dr. Robert Destro is a long-time friend of Cosmic Encounter and has thought up some doozies in the past. But perhaps this time he has outdone himself. Read on.

COMPUTER- power to process- Once it is determined that you are a main player, you may make all other players give you their cards (except the MISER's hoard) which you may look at and then must separate into two piles of challenge and non-challenge cards. Both stacks are then placed face down and shuffled independently. Then, starting with yourself deal out whichever stack you prefer and then continue with the other stack where you left off. Play then continues. **NOT FOR TWO PLAYERS!**

WILD: You may take one edict card from every player that has one, then one flare, then one kicker, then one attack, and then redistribute them as you wish as long as no player gets two of any type. Opponents pick which card to give you. Do this once and then discard this flare.

SUPER: You may arrange your 2 stacks as you wish but must deal them out in the usual way.

ILLUMINATI- power of conspiracy (with apologies to Steve Jackson)-Once it is determined that you are a main player in a challenge, you may write down in secret the name of one player other than your opponent to be your "secret" ally. Play then proceeds but just before cards are revealed you reveal who your ally is. If your "secret" ally is already allied with you normally then all his tokens on the

cone are considered to be worth double and you may count his lucre as part of your challenge total (if lucre is in the game). If your secret ally had allied with your opponent, then his tokens do not count (but remain on the cone with usual gains and losses) in the challenge and in addition you may look at his hand and take any one card from him. You may use this card in the challenge if appropriate, replacing your face down card if necessary. If your secret ally did not ally at all, then he loses his next turn. **USE WITH FOUR OR MORE PLAYERS!**

WILD: You may use this flare as a FINDER edict and then discard.

SUPER: You may use your secret ally's power in the challenge, if appropriate.

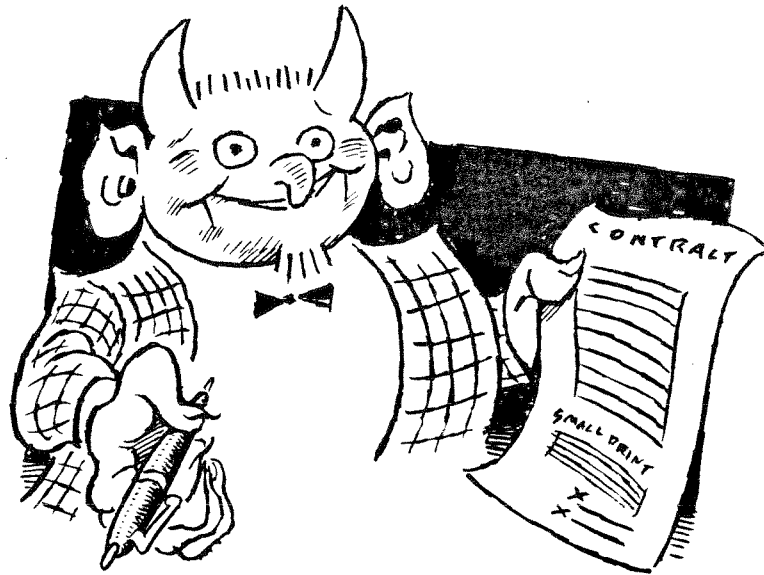
GOD- power of the almighty- You win every challenge in which you play an attack card. You can lose with a compromise or if for some reason you decide to play out a challenge normally. You can't be zapped, silenced or lose your power and are immune to the DEMON, WITCH, or PACIFIST. The SORCERER, EMPATH, VISIONARY, and LASER play normally. Since you are so powerful your victory conditions are different. To win, every other player must lose their power and not be able to use it at the end of the game (i.e. you don't win if a player regains use of his power at the same time the last player has lost his). A moon win or the SCHIZOID's terms cannot be used by you. Do not use with the PLANT, INSECT, or CHANGELING! Use only with 4 or more players.

WILD: Place this card on a face down challenge card. When played, unless it was a compromise, the player it was played on automatically wins the challenge. This card is discarded after use and is powerless against a challenge win by GOD.

SUPER: You may use your power as an ally.

Note: Unlike GOD, this card, wild or super, can be zapped.

SATAN- power of evil- After a player has gained his second foreign base, you may offer to guarantee a future challenge victory sometime before the end of his next offensive turn. If he refuses, he must immediately give you two lucre (or must accept) and each time he gains a new foreign base you may again offer. If he accepts, you can



declare him the winner in a challenge after allies have been chosen but before cards are played (allies get usual gains or losses) and your declaration is the official result. If you allow him to win an offensive challenge, you get a base on one of his home worlds; if a defensive challenge, you get all his lucre or a base as per above if he has less than 4 lucre. If for some reason you can't or don't fulfill your guarantee, you must give your opponent all your lucre or a base on your system. You may be zapped when making the offer or attempting to fulfill it but in the latter case you can still fulfill it in a later challenge. Once you fulfill your part of the contract or it is voided you may offer the same player a similar guarantee the next time he gains a foreign base. You can make yourself lose a challenge.

WILD: Each time a player gains a third or higher base they must pay you 1 lucre or give you a base.

SUPER: Your contract with a player remains open as long as you have this card and your power, not just until the end of his turn.

USE ONLY WITH LUCRE. NOT FOR TWO PLAYERS!

BORDERLANDS: The Rise of Religion, Knowledge, and Blimps

Editor: The small but very dedicated group of gamers who have discovered Borderlands have been rightfully clamoring for equal time in this journal. With the publication of Expansion Set no.2 for Borderlands, I thought that this would be a good opportunity to discuss the game, its origins, and some of the strategic questions the new Expansion Set introduces. Bear with me as I expound hereunder:

Borderlands is our version of a true war-game. Long enamored of the simplicity and yet the depth of the player interactions in Diplomacy, we wanted to create something with the same positive features, but without the necessity for writing complex and often tedious "orders" (which one of us always seemed to botch by forgetting a key support order and thus losing the game in a bad humor.)

Stung by "real war-gamers" who thought Darkover was silly and Cosmic was a beer-and-pretzles game, we decided to meet them head-on with a game in which they couldn't hide behind "bad" die rolls or "inaccurate" simulations.

far-sighted strategies, and yes (we can't help it!) glibness of tongue in diplomacy.

Well, history will tell whether we succeeded. But right now, judging from reviews and player reaction, the answer looks pretty good. And most importantly, it's a game we can't stop playing ourselves. It's not a soft game, where you can lie back and let fate play your hand. And it's not an obvious game, in which a single clear path to the win presents itself. But it sure is a powerful game! Already (and it's been out less than a year) we nurse more grudges and harbor more cravings for a replay - in which, of course, we will show our clear mastery - of Borderlands than all our other games put together.

Borderlands was one of those rare games which came together rather quickly. Once the basic framework was laid out - territories, attack by adjacency, production of resources combinable in various ways - the particulars just jumped out by themselves. Alliances, trade, the specific resources, the goal, etc. came in a few months of spare-time testing. Even Expansion Set no.1, adding a new player set, new territories, and oceanic navigation and warfare was pretty easy.

We had a number of good ideas for further expanding the

fall, when a sudden unease possessed us. Every time we played *Borderlands* we came away (after the throttling died down) with the sense that we understood, fundamentally, how human history has come to the sorry state it has. There we were, all peaceful nomadic clans, trying to wrest a simple living from the land. Oaths of eternal friendship and non-aggression were rife at the start of each game. But success brought with it excess, which could not be wasted. So a couple tokens were heaped together in an out-of-the-way spot for safe-keeping. But to a neighbor, this looked very much like a potential riverboat. Or, horrors, maybe even a weapon. Of course, each neighbor had to respond in kind.

Thus threatening fronts arose, with each player swearing that nothing would ever be developed there. Add to this a touch of human greed and the rationale "If I don't take his storehouse, someone else will and for sure turn it against me". Productivity, parity, paranoia. There you have it. The arms race writ large over the last several million years.

"Can we continue this?" we asked. Isn't there something greater about humankind than productivity and war? How about art, philosophy, science, and the sense of worship? Can't we open this thing up to culture and real progress for the mind and soul? Thus, out of our nobler halves, was born the *Borderlands Expansion Set no. 2*.

How, we asked ourselves, can these sorts of elements be introduced into play? Historically, religions have arisen around some prophetic figure and swept outward to other regions and countries. Political and military power have been helpless against this force of conversion and must reach an accommodation with it or be swept away.

Thus, in the game, we introduced two temples, each with its own fanatic followers. If you control a temple on each turn you produce 2 followers who are then assigned to convert an adjacent territory (and may spread out further and further in a way similar to the horse-chain move.) If a territory is converted, it may not stage, support, or be a conduit for forces making an attack on the temple-holding player. That territory may not even count its points in a defense against an attack by the player holding the temple. You might say converting a territory can turn all its swords into welcome mats for you. Since this is obviously so destabilizing in a game based on military operations, we wanted to make sure temples didn't fall into the wrong hands. Thus only the most unselfish players can develop a temple - as evidenced by being willing to forego all of your own production gains during one phase.

Since there are only 2 temples, and only one may be developed each cycle, this presents a neat little quandry at the outset. The first lead player has had the last pick for placement and badly needs to produce right away to stay even. Especially since he will get the first attack and needs to consolidate his position. But the temptations of taking up the cloth are powerful. By doing so he can immediately protect himself against invasion from 2 adjacent territories and perhaps, if he can buy enough time, convert a protective ring around his territories which will later provide easy pickings for secular expansion.

If the lead player decides against the religious life, it is almost certain one of the other players will soon opt for it. While they have more to lose immediately by foregoing production, they also feel more exposed since their attacks come later and defensive concerns are thus heightened.

So the temples usually make it quickly into play. And once somebody has a temple, you'd better have one too or pretty soon all your territories will be incapacitated by conversion. This leads to a lively struggle around temples, in counterpoint to the basic goal of cities.

But with such an effective new weapon in the game, surely there must be some antidote, you say. Well, yes. Generally as the level of learning in a country has increased, fanaticism has declined. We represent this in *Borderlands* by Universities. One player per cycle may endow a University, which will then start producing one Book of Knowledge for him each cycle. These books may be placed in a territory to eliminate a Temple follower there, and will prevent a new follower from going there. Unfortunately, to endow a university a player must pay 2 resource tokens to the box, and forego his Attacks during one cycle.

Once someone has opened a temple, there is sure to be someone quickly following with a university to keep the faith out, despite the high costs of gaining an education. Even so, the pace of conversion is only slowed, as the temple produces double the rate of the university.

But one extra advantage to the scholarly life is that scientific knowledge has great practical applications. In this case knowledge and knowledge alone (plus a few resource tokens) can bring you to the ultimate in *Borderlands* play: The Blimp.

Blimps can go anywhere, carry anything, and are virtually impregnable from the ground. If you can keep your driver from being converted, possession of the first blimp will give you a strong likelihood of winning within a few turns.

Thus the stage is set for some challenging strategic play. How should one proceed? Generally, you want to have both a temple and a university. How you get them depends a lot on your position. If you are lead player now, better to get the temple right away and hold off opponents long enough to produce some resources (or better yet, steal them from a converted territory on your attack) and then endow a university with them. With this approach you won't have both right away, but at least you'll have them.

Perhaps better (if you will be lead player next turn) is to forego the temple and instead to endow a university the first turn. Then on the next development phase you can forego production and grab a temple, thus starting your second turn with both a temple and a university operational.

While these moves will greatly impede your early economic and military position, and you should be very careful not to place your prizes in vulnerable locations, in the long run your strategic abilities will be greatly enhanced. Others may come to wealth and power earlier, but you will have the capacity of seizing their hard-earned position when it counts - for the win.

If others scoff the temples before you have a chance, however, you'll have to be a bit more cagy. I'd advise going for a university early and using the knowledge it produces to keep your territories securely anti-clerical. When you have produced the resources to buy and arm a blimp, strike suddenly with force on an enemy's temple and the chances are that he will have been so busy with his other duties you can take the temple itself and turn his network of converts to your own purposes.

It is still possible in this day and age to try the "Island Strategy" developed by aficionados of *Expansion Set 1*

(stake out a strong position on a gold-bearing island and go like hell to develop the gold into cities before anyone shows up with an armed oceanboat to take your paradise away) but the speed of blimp development plus the diabolical nature of conversion makes that a far less appealing strategy in the modern Borderlands world.

Better to fight it out on the continent, where access to

others is easy, trading partners are available, and riches and power go to the most daring. You'll have to watch your flanks constantly now, and administer something much more akin to a great power - subject to subversion, mindful of educating your people widely, even sending out your own agents of pacification and destabilization - but the glory and gloat in the end is all the greater. Let us know how you like it.

RUNZLES

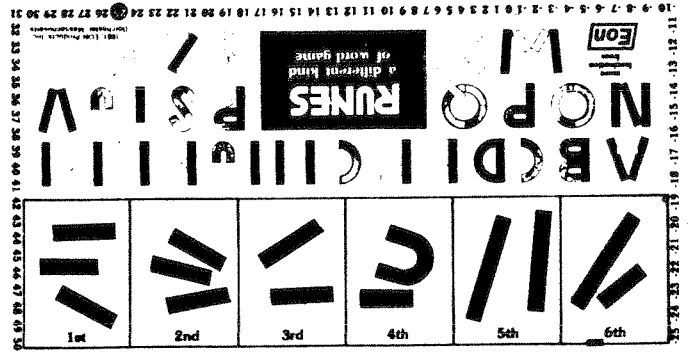
Editor: Here again are 4 RUNE PUZZLES, based on the method of forming letters in the game RUNES. These are submitted by Allen Varney, who thereby also wins a one-year extension to his ENCOUNTER subscription (congratulations, Allen.) Allen also solved all four presented last issue (along with Lowell Cunningham of Knoxville, TN who solved no.3.) Those solutions are: no.1) ROSIER, no.2) RUDDER, no.3) CIVIC, and no.4) MEWER (actually, I had EMERY and WEENY, but we'll let mewer, ("one who mews", slip by.) For this issue:

Runzle no.1) What 6-letter word is made up of 13 long and 2 short straight segments?

Runzle no.2) What 5-letter word uses 6 large curves?

Runzle no.3) What two 5-letter words use 7 small curves each?

Runzle no.4) What is this word (not all the pieces are there yet)?



Runzle solutions should be sent to ENCOUNTER and we will print the name of the solver with the earliest postmark.

Win a free subscription (or a one-year extension) to this rag by submitting a set of Runzles (4 or more) suitable for publication. If we use them, you win! All submissions become the property of ENCOUNTER, and please include solutions so I don't have to figure them out.

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