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Some News (Good and Bad) from Home

Things have been popping around the home front lately. Aside from getting in hundreds of melons, pumpkins, and squash just ahead of the early frosts hereabouts and cutting about 5 cords of wood to keep us warm & cozy for the winter's gaming, that is.

DUNE fans, especially, will be pleased to know that we're designing 2 Expansion Sets for that game. As most science fiction fans know, a major motion picture based on Frank Herbert's classic novel is due for release next Christmas. Herbert himself is allegedly playing a major role in writing and consulting for the film. Solid Herbert fans ourselves, we were very excited to do the game for Avalon Hill in 1978. Now Avalon Hill has graciously asked us to expand the game in preparation for the movie's release. We are very excited about what we've worked up so far.

Additionally, we've been asked to contribute to a book on game design for publication next year. Flattered is too tame a word for it! The only problem is now we'll actually have to think out and write down what has been heretofore a decidedly chaotic process. Observers watching us brainstorm up a new game idea have likened it to our trying to run a methane economy by sitting around in a bog with wide-mouth jars and lunging for the swamp gas as it bubbles up. But now that we're going to be immortalized in print, I guess we'll be able to find some high-sounding words to describe it all. Just you watch!

Players of Cosmic Encounter, Quirks and Borderlands will be somewhat bemused to know that all three games have just been licensed for publication in Japan. Yes, we're doing our part to restore the balance of trade and show that good ideas aren't on an exclusively one-way street. In fact, we've noticed over the years that the farther one is from our home office, the better our games sell. If that still holds, you might think about starting to save your pocket change for the 1985 World Cosmic Encounter Championship Tournament - in Tokyo.

Lastly (in the good news department) we are very enthusiastic about the computer games we are currently working on. Four are scheduled for release next year. Although we are sworn to secrecy about them until then, it's our fervent hope that they will show the world of maze and solo adventure gamers that the computer is far more exciting when used for true multi-player games. Besides these games which we're doing under contract, our own operation - Eon Software - has finished it's first group game and is now showing it to some potential licensors for manufacture and distribution.

Like I said, things have been pretty busy here considering we're only 3 guys trying to make an honest living playing games.

Which leads me to the bad news. This will be the last issue of ENCOUNTER. We have finished our first year and I hope you have enjoyed it. I certainly have, very much. But the truth is that I just can't handle it anymore. Your response has been overwhelming in both enthusiasm and content, and I think I can say it has enlivened me and your fellow readers beyond what any of us expected a year ago. But the numbers are not there to make it anywhere near self-supporting. Thus it is a serious drain on Eon. Additionally, I've had to ask myself whether it is more important to reach a few dedicated, intelligent gamers through this medium where we can discuss our common fascination, or to spend the time required to design new games which will reach more people and hopefully bring them into our fold. Since I'm a better game designer than a writer, and I can't continue to do both in fairness to my family and my partners, I am very regretfully ending ENCOUNTER and hoping we can stay in touch through the new games I'll have a hand in and I hope we'll both enjoy.

Practically, people who have already renewed will have their money returned, and those who subscribed during the year will get a pro-rata refund. I won't be able to answer or deal with correspondence or ideas which come in after the deadline for this issue (October 1) but I will hold on to them and in the event ENCOUNTER or something similar can continue later I will pass them on to whoever edits it. It may well be that some reader or fan of innovative games may want to restart the journal, and if such a person is sincere, qualified, and financially sound I will be glad to turn over the subscription list and any accumulated material in the hopes that this exchange we've had can continue. I, for one, have found it fascinating.

Jack

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LETTERS

From Bryan Stout, Urbana, Ill.

Thanks for printing some of the powers I sent in. I am curious to see if they are well-received; but at any rate I noticed some errors or ambiguities in my descriptions that need some clearing up:

— Every time I described what happened when a player lost his power, I meant that to include the effect of being Zapped as well.

— The Shaman can only summon a maggot when he wins a challenge in which he played a challenge card; this does not count moving onto a vacant moon (the idea is that after a win enough blood has been shed to enable the summoning.)

— If the Bookie bets when no one else does, he pays his Lucre to the box, not the warp.

The ideas for new Edicts shown in issue # 4 are very good, and I will make them up when I get more blank cards (by the way, I hope you print enough up the next time around to fulfill all the desires of the ravenous fans you have.) This brings up something I have pondered on. In the basic deck only about one card in 7 is a non-challenge card; in the complete game this increases to almost one in three, counting Flares. This is what I believe to be the greatest difference between the two levels: in the complete game, the hands include many varying types of cards with their own abilities, which are more easily replenished. In the basic game, the cards are nearly all challenge cards, are harder to replace, and must be conserved for the right time to use them. Adding about ten or so more Edicts could raise the ratio to about two non-challenge cards out of five. Here are various ways of coping with this:

1. Ignore it and enjoy the extra non-challenge cards.
2. Add extra challenge cards, perhaps from extra decks, to preserve the ratio.
3. Decide on the number of Edicts wanted in the game, and either
 - a. draw that many at random from the group of Edicts (perhaps separating out the Mobius Tubes and Cosmic Zaps first, to be definitely included), or
 - b. lay the Edicts face up, and all the players take turns choosing one at a time to add to the Edicts used in the game, until the limit is reached.

(By the way, it is surprising how much stronger the Mesmer gets when new kinds of Edicts are added.) What are your thoughts on the matter?

ed: It usually seems that there are an awful lot of non-challenge cards available in the complete set, Bryan, but the numbers don't make it seem like too much of a problem. In the basic game, an average hand will contain 6 challenge cards (5.95 really) and in the complete game, assuming 4 players, the average hand will be 5 challenge cards (4.83 really). I'm not sure going from 6 to 5 really tips the scales too much. Of course if people add a lot more non-challenge cards in on their own, then the situation could get pretty bad. In that case I guess I'd recommend your proposal 3a. It begins to treat Edicts the way the game treats powers — sometimes they're in your universe, sometimes not. This ought to put a crimp in the Mesmer's growing reputation as well.

I pretty much agree with your feelings on multi-power games. I find I prefer the single-power much more, since I can have a dedicated strategy; with more than one power, I feel a little schizophrenic and usually end up favoring one of the powers over others. I guess it's because I see cards, Lucre, moons, etc. as temporary assets, while one's power determines what one "truly" is, and is the main factor in overall strategy. However, since the initial hype for Encounter said it would answer such questions as "What if I'm both the Virus and the Anti-Matter?" it would be fair for you to outline a few different general approaches to the problem of multi-power conflicts, and leave the details to the readers to figure out.

ed: Well, being as how this is our editorial swan song and I won't have to answer all the perplexing questions multiple powers raise, I'll have a go at it. Of course in many cases the joint powers don't raise any questions and can work harmoniously together. But when this is not the situation, I can see several options. You could simply count on the players, when getting conflicting powers, to turn in one or both for replacements. Clear, but not very imaginative. Alternatively, house rules could decide which power has sway in a conflict: Alphabetical order, the prettier one, the earlier one, alternating precedence, player's option, etc. A bit more confusing. Or one could let the player getting such powers describe how they should be used together at the beginning of the game.

"Virus/Anti-Matter means I'll always divide my card by the amount of tokens on my side." If at least one other player thinks its a fair merger, that's how it will be. This can be quite divisive, but would certainly encourage creatively using the powers. I'm sure there are many other ways, but here are some for mulling over.

Hurrah and congratulations for CE expansion set 9! It adds new twists and dimensions to the play. The Aristocrat is a worthy addition to the line, the complete rules are a blessing, and the new planet systems, cone, and warp are great. At first I was a little leery of the new system features, fearing that they would eclipse the powers in importance since they cannot be lost like powers can (more of the same idea from the last paragraph). However, I find that the powers and system features complement each other nicely.

I guess that it is inevitable that questions should arise, though, and I am joining the race to be among the first to have them cleared up:

PULSAR: If the Anti-Matter is here, can he not pulse high? If he can, would his tokens still subtract from the total?

ed: No, the Anti-Matter may not "pulse high", nor may the owner "pulse high" against the Anti-Matter. The Pulsar description forbids it.

If the Doppleganger is here and pulses low, can he ask for a player's lowest attack? Or does he just suffer the consequences of his power? *ed: The latter.*

SIX-PACT: Must the player here announce at the start of a challenge that he wants to use a planet power when not challenged, or can he wait til the right opportunity before he commits himself?

ed: When he is not the defensive player, he can wait until the right moment to use a planet power.

If the Plant grafts from a planet in this system, I presume he doesn't graft the planet power unless it is actually being used. Correct?

ed: Correct. He grafts the power that the player has the use of. Of course if the Six-Pact player decides, after grafting, to use a planet power, the Plant now has that one for the challenge instead and the Six-Pact player does not, but loses it at the end of the turn, nonetheless.

If the Dragon is one of the planet powers, can the player take 8 Lucre at the start of the game?

ed: Yes, as they are "beginning of the game effects". But they can only be used when the Six-Pact is using the Dragon power.

RINGS: What does the Anti-Matter do in this system? Here the power and system effects are at cross purposes. *ed: tough, isn't it. I guess he wrings his hands.*

WARP/PRAW: At first I thought that the Warpish set up around the new Warp should only use his power as stated on the card, and so the PRAW would have the effect of weakening him, which I thought he could stand. But Steve Craven pointed out that not only would he be weakened, but he wouldn't have the benefit of any system abilities that all the others would have. So I've flip-flopped my opinion and made up a possible way he could work with the new warp, which I submit for your approval:

WARPISH with Expansion Set 9: Put your sun disk on the border between the Warp and the PRAW. Your nine planets are the five free sides of the Warp, and the four free sides of the PRAW. At the start of the game set up your tokens as you wish, except that you should have 1 token at 6 of your planets. When a player does

a planet challenge in your system, you specify which planet he must challenge, unless superceded by another power, Flare, etc. If you are challenged by the PRAW, add the number in the PRAW. As offensive player, you may add the number of tokens in the Warp, or the PRAW, or both, or neither, to your total. Announce which of these possibilities you choose before cards are played. If you are Zapped or lose your power, you lose your offensive ability, but not your defensive one.

ed: Nice idea, Bryan, but I think it makes him far too powerful. The Set 9 planet hexes are very strong defensively, and thus the number of tokens in the Warp is already higher than the normal game (even given the PRAW's drain) so I'd stick with the way we left it (which you interpreted correctly at first.)

Finally, I have a power inspired by the new Expansion Set. I couldn't think of a name for it in time to send it in, but here it is:

You have the power to reverse. Once per challenge, before challenge cards are played, you may flip the cone so that the normal cone becomes the reverse cone or vice versa, changing allies' benefits accordingly. Do not use in a 2-player game. Use only in games with the reverse cone.

Wild: Just before cards are played you may exchange all allies in a challenge, so that allying tokens in the offensive end of the cone are moved to the defensive ring, and vice versa.

Super: You may flip the cone after challenge cards are revealed, if you have not done so earlier in the challenge.

from Ken Redwood, Durban, South Africa:

On Borderlands, many thanks for the rules queries that were answered by you recently. We have now found this to be an excellent game and have ordered Expansion Set #2 from you as a result. I am taking advantage of your offer to clarify further the rule concerning cities together with a few other queries that have occurred from frequent games.

CITIES: If a territory has a city in it but has no production site, then would an adjacent territory which does have a production site in it be able to produce 2 of its resource tokens? *ed: Yes, so long as the city and the producing territory are owned by the same player.*

LOGISTICS SHIPMENT: Is it permissible on a logistics shipment to move either a horse or weapon into one of your own territories by one of the regular shipment methods, then, for the first attack phase move this horse or weapon into your opponent's territory? *ed: You bet. That's part of the winning strategy.*

MAP: If making a shipment by riverboat from between The Anvil and The Nook and intending to move to Lakeside does one pass, 1) the red borderline between Falling Waters and The Anvil? *ed: Yes.* 2) Is the easterly promontory between Falling Waters and The Nook counted as a second border? *ed: If you mean the river border between Center and Falling Waters, yes.* 3) Is the lake promontory on Falling Waters nearest to Keystone counted as the third border? *ed: No, the third is the passage from Center to Keystone on the river.*

BRIDGES: If a player owns both the bridge plus the territories on either side of the bridge, may resource tokens be shipped from the island to the continent or vice versa by way of the bridge? *ed: Sure.*

If so, do they move straight from the island to the continent by foot or do they have to stop on the bridge? *ed: The bridge counts as a territory and by foot they have to stop there.*

HORSES ON ISLANDS: Supposing there is a horse resource production site on Long Island and each territory on it now contains a horse token.

A. A bridge is built eventually from the continent to the island. Would this enable a horse to be developed from a territory on Long Island onto the bridge? *ed: Yes, a horse could be produced on the bridge if the "horse" player owned the bridge.*

B. Could horses move from the island to the continent via horseback? *ed: Horseback, yes. Horsechain, no (of course).*

C. If no bridge is built, but a player develops 2 timber on a territory on the continent then can he ship by barge one of these timber resource tokens and would he then only be able to barge back to the continent with just one horse? *ed: Barge shipments are one-way. But if he had a second shipment and cashed the second timber in for a barge on the island he could ship back a horse (and anything else in the same territory with the horse.)*

D. If so, then I presume that he would be unable to subsequently produce horses in the territory adjacent to the territory that his barge ships to. *ed: Yes, if you mean the one on the continent. That could only get a horse by the bridge scheme in A. The Long Island horse player should probably get into trading his excess away unless he has a bridge.*

from Jeremy Fletcher, Mountain View, CA:

I have a few questins. If 2 powers drawn cannot be used together (say the Schizoid and the Plant) which is discarded? *Ed: The one which has the little yellow prohibition on it. If the Loser uses his power and the Insect mimics it, is the Loser allowed to use his power again (and start a loop?) ed: No, the normal Offense/Defense rule of the Insect allows each only one chance to use his power. If the Insect mimics the Butler, who does the jobs? ed: The only case where it can arise is if one is offensive and the other defensive player. In that case the defensive performs for the offensive player, according to the Insect wording. Much like life itself. And could you explain the Philanthropist? ed: Ah, one of my favorites. Of course. He gives away things of little value to him to those who are obliged to accept. They get a questionable asset and he gets a handsome deduction from his hand. If you still don't understand, ask a tax lawyer.*

When our group plays, we usually put in the title card from Expansion Set 4 or 8. When someone plays this, he can throw out one power in the game. The person who had that power draws another and the title card is out of the game. *ed: I like it! Finally we don't add Lucre to the totals in a challenge because that makes us hoard it into piles of 15 or more, making it very complicated. ed: You obviously play quite differently from many others who write complaining that they buy cards with it so quickly that they can never save any up and want more brought in*

every turn. I suspect this has more to do with temperament than with rules. So if it suits you folks, by all means play it that way.

from Joe Golton, Springfield, PA:

After playing more than 100 games of Cosmic Encounter in the last month and a half I have many comments, questions, and suggestions. First of all, I commend you and your partners for creating such an interesting game (and its accompanying journal!) I met 2 of you at East Con this summer, where I also met Ted Schmeckpeper. I was so inspired by open games with Ted, the C.E. tournament in which I got to play Expansion 9, and C.E. in general, that I have been on a C.E. rampage ever since; recording every game my friends and I have played. I have also written a program on my Commodore 64 to collate game statistics just as Ted did in issue 3, only in more detail.

Questions: 1) If the Loser declares an upset and a tie results, who wins? (Many arguments over this one!) *Ed: In a tie the defense wins, so of course in an upset tie, the defense would lose.*

2) Can the Mesmer Cosmic Zap itself with a different Edict? Or would this cause the game to stop as Sanity is played as a Zap, which he therefore must retrieve, but then hasn't yet played a Zap, so could then play it as a Zap again . . .! *Ed: You guys have some pretty far-fetched imaginations, I'd say. This one is simple. Mesmer must of course try to use his power before he can be Zapped. So say he tries to play Emotion Control as a Plague. Thinking better of it just as it hits the table, he Zaps himself with Sanity. The Plague is nullified but the Mesmer is Zapped and cannot hypnotize again that challenge. He does, however, retrieve the Emotion Control. The Sanity is discarded. A piece of cake!*

3) How does the Warpish play when the Prawn is used? *Ed: The Warpish is used normally around the Warp, and disregards the Prawn. If you don't like that, however, checkout Bryan Stout's letter in this issue. He has a variant you may want to try.*

4) May a Finder be used just as a Kicker is being played (this is still before challenge cards are down) to obtain the Kicker? *Ed: The Finder can be played at any time, but only can find cards in the hand, not ones already played. So if the Kicker is played, it is not findable.*

5) If a player uses the Finder to obtain the Clone Flare, does he get to pick up the Finder he just played? *Ed: No, the Finder is discarded upon being played, and he hasn't at that instant the means of keeping it (Wild Clone). He has to name the card, the player he is searching, and find it yet.*

from Bill Wordelmann, Palos Hills, Ill:

I purchased Cosmic Encounter Expansion Set #9 last week. I have a major gripe with it. You threw me for a loop when I found out that the new power hexes had to be "moistened" in order to be placed on the back of the regular hexes. After moistening the first power hex with a damp sponge a few times, my worries were confirmed: this was no easy task. The power hex dried too quickly. So I became desperate and soaked the back of it. I placed it on the back of the hex, but too late. Half of it had already dried, and it looked terrible. I managed to peel it

off and straighten it out. But some of the back of the original hex remained on it, holding fast to the wrinkles in it. Cursing to myself, I took out my glue stick and used it to put all the power hexes on the backs of the original hexes. Then I used an X-ACTO knife to cut the excess off the edges, which frayed them. The stick glue seems to hold them on, but the corners peel up and I end up having to moisten them with a wet finger and push them down again. The hexes also have to be handled with extra care to keep the edges from coming up (even the ones which I didn't trim.)

What I'm leading up to is this question: Can you place the whole hex in a pan of water, sponge it off, and place it on the back of the hex? I didn't know if the front part of the power hex could get wet or not. I would appreciate it if you could tell me the method you used to do it.

Ed: Several other players have written that they have had trouble with this, Bill. I found that very light moistening is best. Too much water tends to develop wrinkles and bubbles which are difficult to get rid of. My method is to lightly moisten a swath of the hex back from one point to the opposite point. The swath is maybe 2 inches wide. Then I apply that to the back of the cardboard hex, lining up the points with each other and smoothing the swath down. Then I lift up one section of the unmoistened paper hex, moisten it, and smooth it down from the swath out to the edges. Lastly, I do the same with the other unmoistened part. Sorry you had troubles. We originally thought of using self-sticking paper with a peel-off backing. That proved to be too sticky, however, and if you made a mistake putting it down, you couldn't try again.

As long as I'm on the subject of #9, I'd like to relate to you my first experience with it. The power hexes are great! I had the chance to play four 4-player games with them, with each player winning one each! One of the more memorable games was with the Calculator, Zombie, Aristocrat, and the Insect. I had the Insect, but my only opportunity to copy the Aristocrat (and draw a flare) was Cosmically Zapped by him. In that game I had the Six-Pact hex, so I wasn't able to use the Insect defensively, but I did have such notables as Mind, Oracle, and Amoeba among others as defensive powers. The Aristocrat won that game, having the Spiral hex helping him to keep a healthy hand. In all our games we found the Praw becoming much fuller than the Warp. What do you think of having "critical mass" being defined as four tokens times the number of players instead of three? Did your testing indicate three over four? *Ed: Yes, but I guess we play more cautiously than you. I'd keep it at three to keep the tension there.*

The particular game that I mentioned did bring up a question. The new rules say that timing conflicts, whether by an alien power, moon, flare, hex, etc. Should be resolved in allies clockwise from offensive player, offensive player, defensive player order. What about within a player? I will cite the classic mathematically mind-boggling example:

The Insect vs. the Calculator with the Insect holding the Calculator flare! Yes, we both called "equalize", and I displayed the flare and called "odd". Being offensive player, and having played a 7 while my opponent played an 8, I demonstrated that I would win the challenge

(tokens were even) using any combination of the possible ways to determine the value of the cards. What I would like to know is if the flare is exercised before my use of the power, or do I use the power before the flare?

Ed: It depends on in what order you used the power and flare. You used the power first, so it's effect precedes that of the flare. Why do you think we pictured him so deep in thought? He was trying to figure this all out.

Thank you for publishing my letter in the July/August issue of ENCOUNTER. I have a couple of more short questions for your wonderful publication.

1) Does the Sorcerer "switch" Kicker(s) along with the challenge cards? *Ed: No.*

2) Does the Pacifist or the Loser collect consolation when winning a challenge by playing a Compromise card? *Ed: No.*

You mentioned in the May/June issue of ENCOUNTER that you were working on plastic trait holders for Quirks. Are they done yet? If so, please send me a set. If not, and if you are keeping a list of Quirks owners who desire holders, please include my name. *Ed: We have designed some trait holders which greatly aid in keeping your cards organized. But they are cardboard, not plastic. And we haven't produced them yet. They will be done when we run the next edition of the game. You have greater faith in our ability to keep things organized here than I do! Since it may be up to a year or so before we run them (depending on game sales) I'd rather not try to keep a list of those wanting them that long. We'll notify everyone on our mailing list when they are available. O.K.?*

I realize that the World Science Fiction Convention is the ultimate time and place to hold the world Cosmic Encounter Championship, but the entry fee to get into the convention is, to put it in one word, exorbitant. I had full intentions to show off my Cosmic prowess at the first CE championship in Chicago (a half hour drive from where I live), but when I found the entry fee to get in on the fun for the last day (\$55), my excitement turned to disappointment. At that time, I was still in college and didn't have much money. Now that I have graduated with a degree in computer science (and a minor in mathematics, which comes in handy when the Insect attacks the Calculator with the Calculator flare in the Insect's hand!) and hold a programming position in Chicago, the money is less of a problem. The problem is that I'm not a science fiction fanatic — I'm a gaming buff. It's not worth the entry fee to a convention that I'm not interested in (not to mention, for this year, plane fare and accommodations) to just play CE. I'm sure that there are many other people who like CE and fall into the same categories that I fall into. An idea that just popped into my head is to hold the World CE Championship at a major gaming event — and what other but the one that has been your "life" — Origins. After all, Cosmic Encounter is a game (and, if I may add, the best game on the market, and I do have Monopoly!) *Ed: Thanks, Bill. A lot of other people feel that way about the tournament and we may well change it.*

I'd like to close my letter-turned-manuscript with my submission of the answers to RUNZLES #2. They are: 1) TANNIN, 2) GOODS, 3) BURPS or SPURS, and 4) EXEUNT. *Ed: Nicely done, Sherlock.*

from Harris Rotman, Elkins Park, PA:

Well, now I'm hooked on ENCOUNTER for life! Until issue 4 arrived, I had seriously considered giving ENCOUNTER up (Cosmic forbid!) due to its high price and low number of pages. But now that it's double sized its like a whole new magazine! Whoever was responsible for this welcome change should be knighted.

Ed: That was me, Harris, Sir Jack! Unfortunately, going to that length was part of what killed it. You see, given our limited circulation we couldn't afford to hire anyone to do this, even the menial part. So it was just too many nights of me up past the wee hours alternately typing madly and sorting through all the games trying to figure out the thorny issues all you folks seem able to dream up without end. I hope the year has been worth it for you, tho.

Anyway, the questions I have deal with Cosmic Encounter's 9th Expansion Set. I received it in the mail about a week ago, and love it. The complete CE rulebook was excellent and solved many of my CE problems. The Aristocrat power is fine, but I have discovered that it does not work out well in the 2-player game, because it is almost always involved in a challenge as a main player and must discard flares and then get new ones so quickly that the poor Aristocrat player does not have a chance to use any of the good flares he might get. Any solutions?

Ed: Yeah, I'd grab a few flares in the initial hand and then oblige the noble to grab up cards in consolation a few times to get a large hand. Then you have several flares to use and protect your good ones with, and a hand large enough that you won't have to discard the whole thing soon. Rather than count on high Attack cards for the win, I'd then use my strategic advantage to slowly whittle away my opponent. Try it, anyway.

The Warpish, once one of my favorite powers, cannot be used with the new Warp/Praw system. It only gets to add a few tokens to its total (because if a lot of tokens are sent to the Warp they get trapped in the Praw, and the Warpish power card specifically states that only tokens in the Warp are added to its total.) This limits his power by a large margin. The Warpish also does not get any helpful planet systems because it places its tokens around the Warp. My conclusion is that the Warpish just can't be used with Expansion Set 9. *Ed: You make a good point about the Warpish in the 2-player game. I think it works fine in larger games, but in the small ones you might think about raising the "critical mass" to a higher number, as has been suggested in this issue elsewhere.*

By the way, I would love to see an article on how you design an alien. I try to make my own but they never seem to mesh well with the game. Keep up the great work. *Ed: I guess I'll never get to write the alien designing article. But a few things to think about are that it should not diminish other parts of the game for the player (like be able to double-cross allies, because then you just wouldn't get any allies and that's no fun), it should have a strength that does something new and different, rather than just getting more points in the challenge, say, and it should have a hidden weakness which it has to worry about each time it gains by use of the power - such as the Calculator's chance of being wrong or the fact that the Virus, when stretched for tokens close to the end of the game may have to multiply by one. We didn't really think them up so much as discover them when we looked at the game and asked ourselves what would be fun to do.*

from Bob Kloepper, Rock Hill, MO:

I was pleased to see the price of Borderlands decrease from \$20 to \$15. I always thought that the price was too high for the quality of the components. Perhaps now more individuals will be tempted to purchase the game and enjoy its unique gaming system. However, I was sorry to know that I paid the original \$20. I guess that's the reward of being a loyal consumer buying new products sight unseen and unreviewed when it's first released. And, like a faithful dog who always returns home no matter how badly beaten, I find myself ordering from you again. What one endures for enjoyment! Hangovers from alcohol, bad nerves from coffee, venereal disease from sex, shipping charges from game companies. I fail to understand the need for a shipping charge when you're receiving retail price for mail order rather than the dealer's wholesale price. Economic theory always has escaped me. You might consider coupons in ENCOUNTER negating shipping charges such as Avalon Hill's General includes. I've complained enough and shall now leave you in peace. I hope I haven't started your day on a bad note.

Ed: Heck no, Bob. We love to hear how hooked our fans are, and what indignities they will endure for another shot of our brand of gaming. It's about our only compensation for this work, seeing as how we haven't learned much of use about economic theory either.

from Lowell Cunningham, Knoxville, TN:

This time around I've figured out all four of the RUNZLES (with help from Dorothy Tompkins) in issue #4. They are: 1) TANNIN, 2) COCOA, 3) BUSES or STUBS or BUSTS, and 4) EXEUNT.

Ed: What! A second solver! I don't know about you folks. I had to peek at the answers Allen sent in with them.

from Tom Demarco, Riverside, NJ:

The fourth edition of ENCOUNTER is the best yet! Not only is it the heftiest yet, but finally there's a BORDERLANDS article! I enjoyed "The Rise of Religion, Knowledge and Blimps", and the strategy tips will soon be put to extensive and (I hope) fruitful testing. When you are up against the devious minds that I must oppose, you need all the info you can get your hands on. Please, more BORDERLANDS articles!

ENCOUNTER #5 was good, although not as good as #4. I've just recently received the latest issue of GAMES Magazine with the 1983 "GAMES 100" listing. Cosmic Encounter and Borderlands both made the list, CE for the 4th time, and Borderlands for the 2nd. DUNE was also included for the 2nd time. Congratulations.

Mike Richards brought up a good point in his letter. Where should the World Championship CE Tournament be held? Certainly at Origins or East Con there will be a higher number of contestants and a higher average amount of experience among contestants. I would think it much less likely that a novice could make it to the finals at a game convention. But is this necessarily desired? CE is a very social, exciting, and fun game. (That's why its a classic in its own time.) All types of players should be encouraged to compete. Also, the words "World Championship" are overused. This is hardly a competition with a worldwide following, with national champions being sent out from each country to

compete, or even with much attention and/or interest outside our own science fiction and/or gaming circles. Even in our own country "top" players can't make each championship if it's across the country from their home. I guess what I'm trying to say is perhaps there should be two championships each year, one at the science fiction world con and one at Origins. Both conventions move around the country every year, giving different areas of the country one or two chances at the title. Were the prizes given at Constellation very much more those given at Origins? Keep a top tournament at the SF World Con. Don't disenfranchise a loyal group of fans because of more people and bigger bucks elsewhere. Of course, you can't ignore the people and bucks either, so spread the fun around! We'll all end up benefitting.

Also, I was very indignant at the phrase ". . . and Nazi artifact oriented," in reference to SF World Con attendees. I cannot recall ever seeing any Nazi artifacts at any SF con I have attended (and there have been quite a few), and I doubt if there are more than a handful of science fiction fans who have an interest in, let alone an orientation towards, Nazi artifacts. Sorry, I just had to get that off my chest.

The RUNZLES in issue #5 didn't cause too many problems. Luckily I have a large vocabulary and an even larger dictionary. 1) HEAVEN, 2) BURROS, 3) HUBBUB, and 4) COSMIC (I spent all of 15 seconds on this one. The answer almost leapt off the page.)

Whew! As if I haven't taken up enough space already, I now have some questions on CE.

1) If the Six Pact player is defending a planet where she has lost her planet power, can she use her main power to defend, or must she defend with no power? *Ed: She certainly can use her main power.*

2) Can the Wild Pacifist end the Machine's turn after his first challenge? *Ed: Yes, if the Machine won or made a deal on that challenge. If so, the Machine is not even using his power to get the second challenge and is affected normally by the Wild Pacifist.*

3) Can the Worm move the cone to the Gas Giant player's withdrawn force after cards are revealed, or must he attack the committed force?

Ed: He must attack the committed force. The other tokens are not considered on the planet at all.

Finally, is it true that you are going to be creating an Expansion Kit for DUNE? What's in it and when might we expect it? Thanks once again for all the great times.

Ed: You make some good points, Tom, about the "world championship" issue. It may well be that 2 tourneys would be more appropriate, and fairer. They are not, in reality, world-class events as you point out. And I certainly agree that Nazi artifacts are not big among sf fans. I've never seen any at conventions (in fact, the only ones I've seen were a few at gaming cons, and they were shunned by most attendees.) On the DUNE expansion kits, see the lead editorial this issue. Can't say more than that, but we're certainly enjoying them.

from Clinton Branscombe, Port William, Nova Scotia:

I enjoy your game immensely, and read your journal from cover to cover. I would like to suggest two ideas

concerning ENCOUNTER. 1) Would it be possible to answer each question immediately following where it is asked (as you did with Joanna Beatty's in issue #4) instead of having a list of questions then a list of answers? This would make reading much easier. *Ed: Sure. Good idea which I adopted for this issue. It was harder previously because I did it all on my typewriter and inserted pages as needed. But now I'm into the wonderful world of word processing and can butt in anywhere I feel like it. Wonderful!*

2) I would like to see a new column in which Darkover players could share their most imaginative Ghost Winds. Thanks for your time and keep up the good work. *Ed: I'm afraid this will never see the light of day, now. But given a few I've seen (and a few I concocted myself - ahem) I'm not sure this is an altogether bad thing.*

from Mark Gilston, Johnson City, NY:

Here are my solutions to the July/August RUNZLES. 1) TANNIN, 2) COCOA or DODOS, 3) BRASS, BURRS, SPURS, and BURPS, and 4) EXUNT. *Ed: Wait a minute! Three solvers, now? I'm in the wrong league.*

Okay, now on to CE. Firstly, there are two clarifications I would like to make on the powers I submitted. Loan Shark may not lend a card to any player who still has an outstanding debt or who is out of cards. Glitch, like the Witch, has a series of game operations he may affect (i.e. take back), and he must go through the entire list before he repeats himself. My version of this list consist of: Challenge cards played, Edicts played, number of tokens brought into the cone, location from which tokens were taken, decision to ask certain allies, decision to ally, planet at which the cone was pointed, number of tokens with which Glitch allied, decision to buy one or more cards (he gets to take back his decision after he sees the cards, of course), and decision to take or not take his second challenge.

Seeker has long been my favorite power, but two of our players refuse to play with it anymore because of its overwhelming manipulative force. The question which precipitated this action was: "Are you going to win (the game) with a solo victory?". It is usually played as a power to force people to make decisions they can't possibly have enough knowledge to make. This makes it much stronger than questions about the immediate challenge at hand where it usually functions to equalize other functions (e.g. "Are you - the Sorcerer - going to switch cards?"). I am curious to know just how powerful it was intended to be. Up till now the only powers we have unilaterally discarded are Silencer (because it negates so many other powers) and Pacifist (because it makes the game pure guesswork - with the Pacifist able to do no wrong.) *Ed: On that Seeker question, it's a little dangerous for the questioner to probe so far into the future. The answerer must answer truthfully, true. But he does so with the knowledge at hand. He cannot know if he will be forced into or out of an alliance by the Magnet, or have only one legal card to play later and thereby win unintentionally, etc. If you folks are clever enough to come up with questions like that, I'm sure you are also clever enough to find ways to force a situation your way against your declared intentions. Yes? As for the Silencer, I think it's great fun. Especially against my partners whom it galls no end. And there are plenty of ways to out-psyche a Pacifist, trusting little devils.*

Individual players dislike individual powers because they think they are too strong (Judge) or too weak (Lloyd) or because everyone hates you (Void) or you are too easily manipulated (Doppleganger). Generally, house rules can be devised to overcome these problems. I like Silencer being allowed to prevent either the use of your power or your game actions, but not both. One idea we have tried involves dissatisfaction with the powers dealt. If two thirds or more of the players agree, the powers are redealt. If all the players agree a second time, a third set is dealt. If everyone is still unhappy we probably should be playing some other game instead!

(Later) Congratulations on improving my writing habits. I have just received by third journal, and here I am writing a third letter. I enjoy reading the questions and answers about the various games as they often clarify murky points or even open up new insights into powers which we have been using incorrectly, though sometimes we prefer to stick with the old familiar rulings.

Can Vulch use Edicts in the same challenge in which he picks them up, and if so can they be used an indefinite number of times in one challenge? *Ed: Vulch can surely use them immediately, but once doing so he must discard them and cannot thus use them indefinitely. Of course if his opponent is the Insect right then. . .*

If Vulch is mandatory, can Trader discard all his Edicts (Vulch must now pick them up) and Trader trades with Vulch getting all his old Edicts back? This is leading up to this unfortunate scenario. Trader has flipped up Vulch's color. Trader now Plagues Machine. Vulch picks up the Plague. Trader now plays Finder and retrieves the Plague which he again plays on the Machine. Vulch again picks up the Plague and the Finder. Trader now trades hands with Vulch and again Plagues Machine. Vulch picks up the Plague and Trader Finds it again. He now Plagues Machine for the fourth time. Now Vulch picks it up and Plagues Machine who now becomes ex-Machine. *Ed: Yep, that's fine and dandy. Except from the Machine's point of view. I'd think if you guys hate the poor Machine that much, I wouldn't want to play him any more than the much maligned Void.*

Can Trader trade more than once per challenge? The last sentence on Trader seems to imply that he cannot, but it is not completely clear. If he can, then with Vulch and a Plague he can knock every other player out of the game. *Ed: No, Trader can't trade twice. We thought that was clear. But even if it could, it would be a sorry Vulch who didn't wise up and play the Plague on the Trader (or somebody) to get it out of circulation, quick.*

Schizoid is tricky. I mentioned in the last letter that our group requires at least three outside bases so that wins don't become trivial (e.g. Schizoid looks at his hand, sees two Edicts, and writes the following terms: "The winner must have exactly zero outside bases and discard two Edicts.") *Ed: I think maybe you guys aren't reading carefully enough. First, Schizoid writes his terms before cards are dealt. Two, he can't just discard Edicts at will. The situation has to be appropriate and they would both have to be discarded during the same challenge to avoid "remembering past events".*

My favorite winning condition occurred in a game with the following powers: Butler, Filth, Fungus, and

Schizoid. My condition was "the winner must share exactly three outside bases with tokens of exactly two other colors." The Fungus stacks enable Filth to be present in the win without losing his power!

The biggest problem with Schizoid is that even though all players may be "able to meet" the victory condition, it may be necessary for a player to lose his power in order to do so. I have noticed a definite tendency of Schizoid to require situations which are directly opposed to players' powers. For example, if Zombie is in the game the extra condition might be 12 tokens in the Warp. With Mutant it might be 20 cards in your hand. With Macron, 5 tokens on each of three outside bases, etc. All are valid winning conditions which require extreme manipulation or loss of other powers. Schizoid tends not to work well with conditions requiring occupancy or use of Moons. We had one game which we called quits after 4 hours because no one had more than one base left! The winning condition was occupy two outside bases and the left hand Moon in each system where you had a base. The problem was one left hand Moon was a Warp Worm and another was the Moon Wraith! So the left hand Moons kept changing as the Moon bounced around the systems! No other players ever discovered the winning condition anyway, and Schizoid's bases were gone long before it mattered. *Ed: If Schizoid had only one base and therefore no power, who cares. Sounds like you guys were in a tough spot anyway. No sense blaming it on Schizoid. He's got enough troubles already!*

from Bryan Bowe, Acton, MA:

Several prawblems I've ENCOUNTERed with the last Expansion Set prawmpted me to write you — to seek prawvidence from the prawverbial Master:

1) Is the Healer prawhibited from healing tokens after they've fallen into the Prow? If not, would these healed tokens return to bases or merely be prawmoted to the Warp? *Ed: Of course the Healer may not heal tokens from the Prow! Quite imprawper!*

2) Does the Sniveler whine over a prawfusion of his tokens in the Warp and Prow combined, or is his power limited to the Warp prawper? *Ed: Just the Warp.*

3) Tokens lost to the Void can still prawcipitate a collapse into the Prow, even though they aren't going to stay there, right? *Ed: Quite right. Voided tokens are lost to the Warp first, and all tokens go there simultaneously when lost as the result of an outcome of a challenge, so they count toward critical mass for a critical instant.*

4) Does the Warpish add tokens in the Prow, too? He prawbably should — this would make the Warpish prawdigious, indeed. *Ed: Right. That's why he doesn't. See other letters in this issue.*

5) How does one prawcure tokens from the Warp/Prow in the event of a Quantum or Mobius Moon? I prawpose that Quantum releases tokens from both, whereas Mobius Moon prawvides release from one or the other, but not both (in line with Mobius Tubes.) *Ed: Sorry. Just from the Warp, for both.*

6) By strict interprawtation, nobody can prawfit from Warp Factor. How about adding a prawvision allowing tokens in the Prow to count towards the win? Please? *Ed: For you, Bryan, anything. Sure. It's now official:*

Praw tokens now count towards Warp Factor. Beware the consequences!

from Dr. Robert Destro, Willingboro, NJ:

What's this about no more blank cards? How are we avid CE players supposed to incorporate the new powers, flares, and Edicts without them? I hope you can correct this problem soon. Also, you might consider publishing a sheet with 10-20 new Moons on it for those players who wish to add some of the Moons described in ENCOUNTER. *Ed: Times is tough, Bob. As soon as we can justify the outlay, you can bet you'll get all the blank cards you can use. But it might take a few months till our current stocks of decks runs down. On the Moons, it's a great idea, and it'll find its time.*

To change the subject, a while back you mentioned either in ENCOUNTER or at a Con that you would have some new holders for Quirks (by the way, how come QUIRKS never comes up in ENCOUNTER? It's one of your best games and provides an interesting demonstration of the theory of "punctuated evolution" as per Stephen Gould). What ever happened to them? I actually delayed ordering new cards for CE until the new QUIRKS holders came out. Now I'm waiting for both. *Ed: On the holders, see the letter elsewhere in this issue. I agree, QUIRKS is a masterpiece. We never deal with it here because players don't write about it. I assume that means some of them aren't familiar with Gould's trenchant remarks. I of course am, but I would appreciate it if you would expound on your views concerning them, so that I might enlighten more people at cons, etc. Ahem.*

I have a question about the Wrack. Can he change his deal between token removal? It seems to me that once a player refuses a deal there is no reason to change his mind if the conditions remain the same. For example, suppose the Wrack proposes a deal of a base for him in exchange for his lowest attack card. If a player refuses that immediately, why should he accept it after he loses two or three tokens? If the Wrack is allowed to change his terms, however, a deal might be acceptable and the

Wrack would still get a few tokens removed to the warp. *Ed: And I thought you were a healer, Doctor! "... a few tokens removed to the" indeed! No, the Wrack can't change his deal because if he could he would propose something horrendous the first few tortures, and then become more reasonable toward the end. It is up to him to come up with something reasonable to start with. Rationally, the victim should consider it and accept or reject it right away and live with the decision. But there is a certain pressure once you actually lose a token or two that is hard to take. You do want the torture to stop. So I've seen a few deals at first rejected but then accepted after a torture or two.*

Finally, one question on BORDERLANDS. When you make a logistics shipment before an attack, can your ship end its move off-shore to an enemy territory? We had a heated argument on this question. The controversy revolves around several conflicting points. One is that it states in the rules that an attack follows shipment rules except that a shipment is the movement of tokens, etc. from one of your territories to another of your territories. Since an enemy territory is by definition not your territory it would seem that your ship cannot just move there in the logistics move and then proceed from there to attack, essentially doubling its 10 space movement allowance. Of course, if its own territory was there then it would have that 20 space move. On the other hand a ship is a territory by the rules. I believe that you shouldn't be allowed to have a ship or boat end its shipping move adjacent only to an enemy territory but if you interpret the rule differently, that's the way I'll play it. *Ed: Sorry, Bob. We definitely meant the logistics shipment to enable boats or ships to move into position for an attack. In fact, you can move them this way on the shipment move itself. While it is true the general definition of shipping is as you stated, the boat itself is a territory. We tried to make this clearer in the wording under Rules of Shipment 4) By Boat: "... you may simply move your boat without shipping any extra tokens." Hope this makes it clear, even if not palatable.*

A Potpourri of Powers

Ed: Herewith is a clutch of gems for your study and judicious use. Some touch on ideas you've seen here before, but each has something unique and interesting to offer.

from James Collier, Georgetown, Ontario:

VAPOR: Power of Tenaciousness

In any game situation where you must lose tokens, only one is lost.

Wild: If you fail to make a deal, lose 1 token, not 3.

Super: Your allies in a challenge only lose 1 token in a loss.

History: Envolving on a gas giant, the Vapors learned that their ability to cut their losses lets them outlast their competitors in Cosmic Conquest.

SWASHBUCKLER: Power of Audacity

In a challenge, you multiply your attack card by the number of tokens (player and allies) facing you. Then add in your tokens and play normally.

Wild: If a player with more bases than you has a base in your system, throw his tokens from the base into the Warp.

Super: If the game is won by other than the 5 foreign bases rule (e.g. Moon Win, Wild Miser), restart the game from the beginning.

History: The Swashbucklers learned long ago that surprise and audacity pay off, and they are at their best fighting against high odds.

RENEGADE: Power of Doubledealing

In a challenge you may choose to ally with both the offensive and the defensive player, with 1 to 4 tokens each.

Wild: You may lie to the Seeker if you choose.

Super: You may ally with your opponent against yourself.

History: The two-faced Renegades' habit of aiding both sides of a conflict insures their profit no matter who wins.

from Mark Gilston, Johnson City, NY:

Inspired by the pair of "Moon-Powers" I have seen (Wolfman and Golem) in the journal I have come up with a pair which might be fun to try.

LYCANTHROPE: Power of Lunar Change

Whenever you occupy a moon, you may draw another moon and place it face down beneath the moon you are occupying. On any subsequent challenge while you occupy the moon, you may flip it over discarding the top moon and using the power of the moon on the bottom. Once the moon has been flipped you may repeat the process. If you leave a moon unflipped, the present moon is discarded and the unflipped bottom moon is treated as though it had never been occupied.

Wild: Upon playing this flare you may replace any moon in the game for a new one randomly drawn from the stack. Anyone currently occupying the moon must return to bases.

Super: You may change a moon occupied by another player to one randomly picked from the stack. You may do this once per challenge instead of changing your own moon.

LUNATIC: Power of Moon Madness

You begin the game with 5 moons in your system instead of two. Each moon is associated with one of your bases and you may occupy any of these moons if you desire but you may not reveal them until the associated planet is attacked — even if they are immediate moons. Each time you land on an outside base, that base acquires the properties of a new random moon. If it is an immediate moon, use it and discard it. If it is a continuing moon it is operational for everyone occupying that base (normal sequential priorities apply [Ed: *Whew!*]). If it is a secret moon, anyone occupying the base may use it on a first come, first served basis. (Note: Many secret moons must be discarded after the first use.)

Wild: You may trade this flare for the moon of your choice to be put in the system of your choice.

Super: When you bring more tokens to a base, you bring more moon powers as well. The old moon powers are not discarded, they accumulate!

Here are four new power suggestions all basically inspired by powers in the first 3 ENCOUNTERS.

CARVER: Power to Grind

When you are a main player in a challenge your opponent's attack card value is halved (rounded up). This works after all other card value manipulations such as Calculating and Gambling. (Against Anti-matter, his card is doubled.)

Wild: You may randomly draw one card from your opponent for each token he puts into the cone against you.

Super: Your opponent's total is halved, not just his attack card.

History: The persistent Carvers learned long ago how to whittle down opposing forces. Now as they travel through the Cosmos all opposition comes grinding to a halt.



JONAH: Power of Misfortune

If you lose as a main player in a challenge, you must either discard one card from your hand for each token you lost in the challenge, or if you are unwilling or unable to do that, you must give your opponent your alien power card in return for which he must give you his! (Do not use in games with Boomerang.)

Wild: Upon receiving this card, you must discard your entire hand. If you are the offensive main player, your turn ends immediately and play passes.

Super: Instead of taking your opponent's power, you may discard it and draw a new one at random from the unused alien powers.

History: Disdained by the other races of their native world, the Jonahs were forced to flee due to dwindling resources. As they sail in ever greater circles across the Cosmos, few are sorry to see them go.

FEINT: Power to Mislead

When you attack another player, you point the cone between two planets where you may make a legal challenge. The defensive player must defend each of the attacked bases with the tokens on the base and a separate challenge card. (If he has only one card left, treat it as though he were out of challenge cards.) After both possible challenge outcomes are revealed, you choose which of the two is to be considered the actual challenge. The defender must discard both of his challenge cards.

If you make a challenge in your own system (because you flipped your own color or were ordered by Dictator) you may challenge two separate defenders provided they are on adjacent planets. Both players may use their powers in defense. (Do not use in games with Sorcerer, Chronos, Demon, or Wrack.)

Wild: You do not have to point the cone until after alliance have been made.

Super: The two planets you attack need not be adjacent.

History: Cleverly touting their battle skills, the Feints have become adept at causing their foes to extend defenses far beyond their means. The Feints then slither through the weakest link in the chain.

GORGON: Power to Petrify

If you have tokens on the same planet as any other player(s), those player(s) may not remove any tokens from that planet for any reason except to put them in the warp. If you desert the planet or are forced off, the other tokens on the planet are freed. (Do not use in games with the Filth.)

Wild: No player may ally against you in a challenge if you are a main player.

Super: When you win a challenge as a main defensive player you may place one or more tokens on any base where your opponent has tokens.

History: The presence of the Gorgon is so horrible to others that they become powerless. Even Crystalline structure can't pry them from their paralyzed shock. Soon the entire Cosmos will come to a halt as they slowly turn their gaze towards the stars.

from Robert Destro, Willingboro, NJ:

DOG: Power to Follow

After another player wins an offensive challenge you may immediately challenge the player who lost, taking a new hand if necessary. Not for two players!

History: Content at first to scavenge for some spoils of victory, the DOGS have learned to follow victorious races and attack vanquished foes before they have time to recover.

Wild: Use this card as a Time Gash Edict and then discard.

Super: You may follow and attack the defending player even if he won the challenge.

DUMMY: Power of Ventriloquism

In a challenge you may speak for any one player beside yourself (except GOD) and he may not. You may even speak for your opponent. Anything you say, such as deals, allied arrangements, or even powers (i.e. Gambler, Visionary, Seeker) is treated as if that player said it until the next challenge. You cannot affect token movement so that while a player must ally if you commit him, he decides the number of tokens. Also, a player like the Parasite is still free to place tokens as he wishes. A player also may play any card he wants to but must play a Kicker if you declare it and he has one and must play an Edict or Flare if he has the one you say he is playing. If Lucre is in the game he must use it as you wish but it automatically becomes part of the challenge total



as usual. If the Silencer is in the game precedence rules prevail so you may be able to have the Silencer silence another player. If you are silenced you may still speak for another player or the Silencer may silence a player you try to speak for. Not for 2 players!

History: Once mere inanimate objects, the Dummies turned the tables on their former masters through a freak cosmic storm. Now masters of throwing voices themselves, they hope their talent brings them to universal dominance.

Wild: Use this card as an Un-Zap anytime by showing it.

Super: You may speak for any or all other players in each challenge.

QUIZ: Power to Test

In a challenge in which you are a main player you may test your opponent by asking him one question about the game in progress. Before asking, he (and you) is allowed 20 seconds to survey the game area. The answer must be obtainable by visibly looking at the board and surrounding area and must pertain to you or your opponent. Examples: How many tokens do I have in the warp? How many bases do you and I have total?, or How many tokens do you have in red's star system? A disallowed question would be something like "How many attack cards do I have?" If your opponent answers correctly, you lose 3 tokens to the warp, but if he can't or doesn't wish to do the above, he must give you a base on his system.

History: Originally from a world where teachers were exalted and the surprise quiz was the highest art form, the Quizzes were surprised themselves when other races didn't believe as they did. They therefore set out to teach the galaxy and lead it to their ways.

Wild: If you are a main player, your opponent must either give you a Lucre or lose 2 tokens to the Warp.

Super: You may ask a question without allowing your opponent any time to study the board.

King: Power of Edict

In order for any player to play an Edict, he must first pay you one Lucre. When you play an Edict, a player of your choice must also give you a Lucre or else you may send a token of his of your choice to the Warp. You are also immune to all Edicts except Zaps and Un-Zaps. Use only with Lucre!

Wild: If a player plays an Edict on you he must also give you a Lucre or lose a token of your choice to the Warp.

Super: You may use your power on Flares except that you do not get Lucre when you use a Flare (only when someone else does) and you are not immune to Flares.

UNDERGROUND: Power to Revolt

Besides your normal challenge(s), you may make one extra challenge against a player on one of your home planets, just as if you had turned over your color. This challenge is modified however as follows: neither side may have allies, except the Magnet; 5 points are added to your final challenge total (these are your underground forces); should you challenge an opponent on a planet where you have tokens, then each token adds another 5 points to your total; and before the challenge you are allowed to try to make a deal — if you cannot the challenge proceeds. Other tokens of different players are not involved, of course. Your opponent may use his power, if appropriate. You may make a regular challenge on your home system during your turn with normal challenge rules applying.

Wild: If you decide to challenge a player on your home system, you may add 10 points to your final challenge total.

Super: If you win your extra challenge, you may take another extra challenge and you may continue challenges on your home system until you lose, are Zapped, or clear your system of opponent tokens.

from Bryan Bowe, Acton, MA:

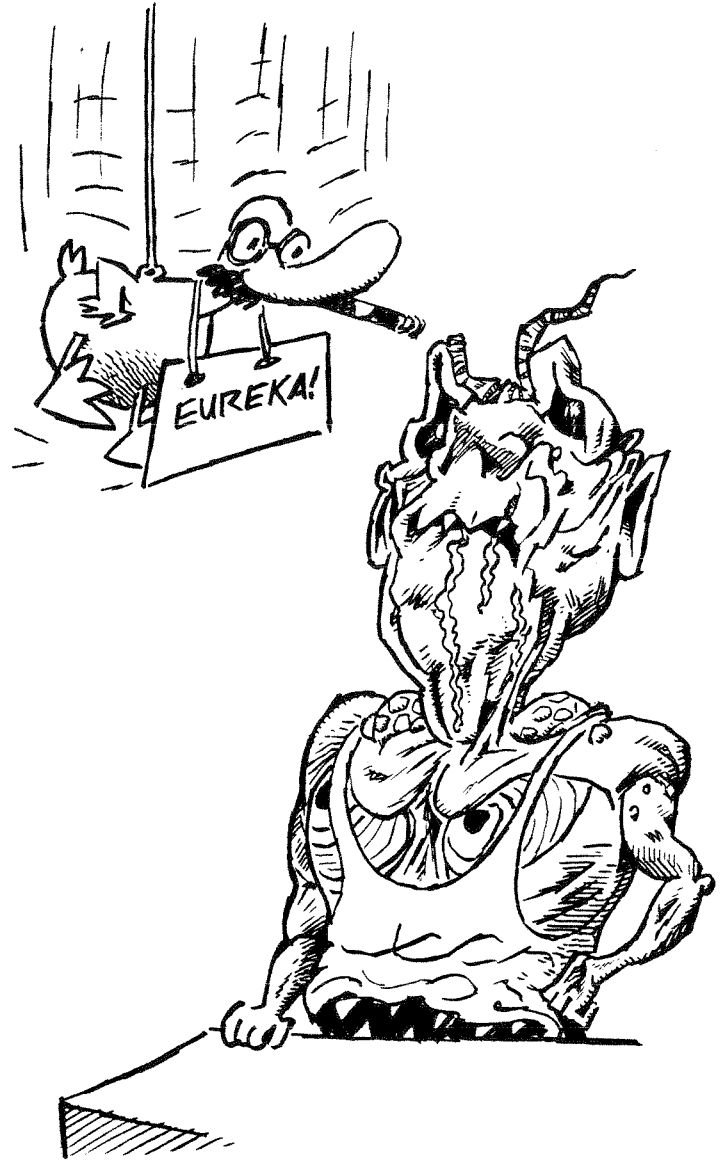
ABYSS: Power of Bottomlessness

Whenever the Warp reaches critical mass and collapses into the Praw, your tokens 'fall through' and are returned to bases. (Use only with Set #9.)

History: After eons of struggling against the intense gravitational forces of a nearby black hole, the Abysses discovered the only way out was to fall in and hope to come out the other side — wherever that was. Now they revel in plumbing the unfathomable depths of the Cosmos, sinking to new lows, ignoring the cries of their unwitting, less fortunate neighbors.

Wild: If you have tokens in the Warp, you can count it as a planet base toward the win.

Super: Whenever you are entitled to make a challenge, you may elect to forgo it and instead throw any number of your tokens from bases into the Warp.



FIEND: Power of Invocation

At the beginning of the game, you secretly write down three words on a piece of paper. Once play begins, if any other player says one of these words, you may reveal it as one of your secret words and immediately establish a base on one of his home planets. You then replace the used word with a new one (you cannot use the same word twice in the same game), and you cannot reveal another word for the remainder of that challenge. (Note: a player is considered to have 'said' a word even if it is written, signaled in code, etc.)

History: Locked in Hyperspace, the Fiends are able to escape only when summoned forth by some unsuspecting alien. By disguising themselves as innocuous thoughts in the minds of others, the Fiends are ever ready to suddenly spring into material form at any opportunity and overrun the real Universe!

Wild: Whenever any other player says 'Lucre', 'token(s)', or 'card(s)', you may say 'Don't mind if I do!'

and take one from the box, Warp, or deck, as appropriate.

Super: You may reveal any number of words during a single challenge, as they are said.

CREATOR: Power of Genesis

You start the game with 5 'prefab' planets on your stardisc. As the offensive player, once the defensive system has been determined, you may either place a planet in that system (from your stardisc) or retrieve one of your previously created planets located there (tokens return to bases, planets return to your stardisc.) Created planets are like normal planets in all other respects, and remain in play if you lose your power. (Note: 'Prefab' planets can be made by cutting planet-sized circles from white paper.)

History: Why fight over crummy old used planets when you can make your own shiny, new ones? Then, when they get cluttered with uninvited guests — whoosh — it's off to a new neighborhood. If the Creators can't rule the Universe as it is, they'll design one they can.

Wild: As the offensive player, once the defensive system has been determined, you may either place a new (randomly selected) moon in that system or discard one unoccupied moon located there. If you choose to create a moon, you must attack (occupy) that moon.

Super: When you retrieve a planet, you may relocate your tokens on that planet to any other planet in the same system. Other players' tokens still return to bases.

RUNES VARIANTS

Ed: Bryan Bowe of Acton, MA has suggested some homemade rules to throw a delightful twist into an occasional RUNES game. If you play the game a lot you might want to give these a try for a real change of pace.

"Broken" 5-letter Words

At the start of the game, secretly write down a 5-letter word and place a star at either end of the word, or between two letters, so your word now fills 6 letter boxes. Then write a combination of runesticks (or 'none') that cannot form a letter — these are the runesticks that may occupy the starred box. You can refer to the different shapes as LS, SS, LC, and SC for 'long and straight', 'short and straight', 'long and curved', and 'short and curved' respectively. Players may also agree at the start of the game to allow regular 6-letter words in a broken 5-letter game.

"Negative" Play

You have the option of placing a runestick under a letter box of another player's board. He then responds:

"no" if the runestick belongs in the box. The runestick is placed in the box, the player who told you 'no' loses one point, and play passes to the left, or

"yes" if the runestick does not belong in the box. You lose one point and may continue your turn.

"Ambiguous" Play

You have the option of placing a runestick in a letter box of another player's board white side up. He then examines the two letter boxes adjacent to the box you played in (the first and last boxes are considered adjacent) and responds:

"no" if that runestick 1) does not belong in either of the two boxes, or 2) belongs in both of the two boxes. (He does not indicate which of these conditions holds.) The incorrect runestick is returned to the center of the table, the player who told you 'no' scores two points, and play passes to the left, or

"yes" if that runestick belongs in exactly one of the two boxes. (He does not indicate which.) You score two points and continue your turn.

Though an 'ambiguous' (white) runestick remains in the box where it was played, it is treated exactly as if it were an 'unambiguous' (red) runestick located in the proper letter box (only the owner of the word knows which box that is!) Ambiguous runesticks cannot be 'arranged'.

"Resolving" an Ambiguous Runestick

Instead of selecting a new runestick, you may resolve an ambiguous one already in play by handing it to the owner of the word in which it appears and stating which box (left or right, with the first and last boxes considered adjacent) you think it belongs in. The owner then places the runestick (red side up) in the proper box and an identical runestick under the other (incorrect) box. No points are scored for resolving an ambiguity, but if you were correct, your turn continues, and if you were wrong, it ends.

An Example

The secret word is CLO*UD (3LS,2SS). The only runesticks on the board are a LS in the 2nd box and an ambiguous SC in the 6th box.

1) Playing an SS in the 4th box (as a normal play) would result in a 'Yes' response. Playing a second SS in the same box would also get a 'YES'. A third attempt at placing an SS there, though, would fail, since it can have only 2.

2) Playing an SC under any box (as a negative play) would result in a 'YES' answer, since the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th letters do not need SCs, and the 5th box already contains its one SC (the ambiguous one in the 6th box is effectively in the 5th box!)

3) Playing any ambiguous runestick in the 2nd box (as an ambiguous play) would get a 'NO' response, since neither the 1st or 3rd letter needs an LS, SS, or SC, and both need an LC.

4) Playing an ambiguous LS in the 1st box is OK, because the 6th letter needs one and the 2nd does not.

5) Resolving the ambiguous SC in the 6th box would result in a (red) SC being placed in the 5th box and another SC under the 1st.

Game Review

Riddle of the Ring, for 2-8 players, by Fellowship Games, P.O. Box 12634, Columbia, SC 29211, \$20

If you hold a fond place in your heart for Tolkein and the world he created in the Lord of the Rings trilogy, I think you'll have a good time playing this with your friends. Obviously a labor of love, the game features a giant playing board (almost 2 feet square) 80 oversize cards, plastic playing tokens and die, and very clear and complete rules plus some interesting variations.

All the components are done in full color and make play easy and appealing.

Each player can choose to be either a hobbit or a Black Rider. All start at the Shire and proceed to travel about the map by die roll. Various terrain features can slow or stop your journey unless you are equipped with the right cards to allow passage. Players try to pick up cards at various spots and use them to travel or interact with other players. The goal of the game is to get the Ring card and take it to the Cracks of Doom or Barad-Dur

Most of the fun stems from the active interactions between players. Each time 2 players are near each other a "Friendly Exchange" occurs, with each drawing a card at random from the other. Players may also attempt not-so-friendly "Power Plays" to see other's cards, guess (and if correct, take) cards from another, use specific cards to grab off cards, and lastly battle each other using card and locational values, again to grab off cards and dispose of an opponent who is too troublesome.

It doesn't make much difference whether a player is a Hobbit or a Black Rider, as generally any player can do pretty much the same thing to any other player. But some cards are usable only by Hobbits and others only by Black Riders, and the flow between these balances nicely. At the end someone has the Ring and is making a mad dash for the mountains to destroy it whereupon Eagles, Dragon Birds, and even Gollum himself get into the act and the Ring is likely to change hands several times in quick succession before someone finally gets the win.

Although not authorized by the Tolkein estate, Fellowship Games maintains the game is no rip-off as the rights are in the public domain in this country and they have offered to pay royalties to the Tolkein people in return for their moral support.

The game plays in an hour or so, and would have to be described as light and very social compared to the ponderous product SPI published on this theme several years ago. One limitation is that the game is hard to store given its size and the fact that it comes without a box. You should be prepared to have a wide shelf to lay it on, or a very tall spot in a bookcase.

Fellowship games is really a couple of guys working out of their homes (sound familiar?) who have created a very nice game and are now trying to learn about the wonderful world of marketing and distribution. It's highly unlikely given what I know about that condition that you will see this game in your local hobby store or game shop soon. They have neither the advertising dollars or the connections to get national penetration. But they do operate a mail order service and if you (as I do) have a special affection for this theme and think a good game can be done on it, give it a whirl. I think you'll be pleased at how close they have come.

White Plains Lives!

Those faithful Cosmic Encounter loyalists from White Plains, NY have done it again. Yes, Roy and Ginny Hardin, Larry Kominz, Malcolm McLaughlin, D. Sumner Peck, Esq. (torts & liens), Doug Schwarz, and Scott S. Smith have submitted a veritable volume of ideas for powers, Edicts, and Moons. A treasure of reading and testing to keep you warm all winter. Have fun.



ADVISOR — Power of Suggestion

In any challenge, you may tell one of the two main players how to conduct any one aspect of that challenge (choice of allies, play of cards, use of powers, etc). If he does not follow your advice, you may assassinate any one of his tokens. In a game with lucre, he must pay you one lucre (if he can) if he takes your advice.

Super Flare: You may replace any token you assassinate with one of your own.

Wild Flare: In any challenge, you may advise one player who is not a main player how to (or not to) ally. If your advice is refused, you may take one card at random from the player, or one lucre.

History: Believing that the key to conquest lies in being the power behind the throne, the crafty Advisors have infiltrated the councils of all important cosmic contenders. The advice they offer is always slanted to achieve their own race's ends — but woe betide the ruler who does not follow it, and risks his Advisor's traitorous revenge!

AESTHETE — Power to Order

Whenever the population of a planet changes, leaving two or more players' tokens thereon, you may organize those tokens in a symmetrical pattern of shape and color (if possible). Other players cannot disrupt such patterns (unless they have no choice), except by process which introduce tokens of one or more new colors to the planet (e.g. most attacks).

Super Flare: The patterns you create may never be disrupted in any way by any other player.

Wild Flare: Once per challenge you may declare that the sight of one power in the game offends your delicate sensibilities. That power must be turned down and not used during that challenge.

History: No race in the galaxy has a sense of beauty so highly developed as that of the Aesthete. Such is the compelling grandure of the artistic masterpieces created by these beings that no sentient entity can resist being overwhelmed by them. The subtle power of these works has proven to be a great asset to the Aesthetes in their attempt to reorganize the cosmos into a form that will not offend their delicate sensibilities.

CANCER — Power to Spread

At the end of every challenge:

- If you have foreign bases which are shared with other players, you may eradicate (to the warp) one enemy token from each such base, AND . . .
- If you have foreign bases which are **not** shared with other players, and on which you have two or more tokens, you may **spread** from each such base by moving one token to an adjacent planet in that system.

When the destiny pile (or other process) directs an attack against a system in which Cancer is present, the attacking player may choose to attack Cancer in that system.

If hidden, this power must be revealed as soon as you obtain your first foreign base.

Super Flare — You do not need to kill off cohabiting tokens before you spread.

Wild Flare — At the end of each challenge, you may eradicate one cohabiting token on each of your foreign bases.

History: Tenacious and prolific, the insidious Cancers require only the smallest of pseudopod-holds to eventually choke out an entire solar system! Other species, uniting in terror, have developed extreme techniques for eradicating this horror before it is too late. Undaunted, the Cancers continue their quest for universal infection, and the spaceways echo their eerie war-whisper: "The Cancer Spreads!"

CAT — Power to Opt

On each of your challenges, two discs from the destiny pile are revealed (or the Dictator designates two colors, etc). You mount two attacks simultaneously as directed. Allies may join either side of either or both attacks, if asked. (Separate requests must be made for each attack, and all requests are made before potential allies make decisions.) However, allies are limited to using only the number of tokens they would ordinarily be able to commit in **one** challenge. Cards are now played for both attacks, and you then determine which attack you will actually make.

Use only with five or more players.

Super Flare: You choose between your attacks after cards are revealed. (All cards played in both attacks are discarded.)

Wild Flare: As the defensive main player, you may act as an ally for yourself.

History: Shy and cautious, yet swift and agile, the highly-intelligent Cat never fully commits itself to a course of action until the last possible moment. Other species scramble in the costly and often vain attempt to prepare for all contingencies, never knowing which of its options the Cat will finally choose. (And how could they, when even the Cat seldom knows?)

FILTH — Power to Pollute

Whenever you establish a base, **all** other tokens on that planet immediately go to the warp. (Exception: The Filth must provide its own offensive allies with protective filters.)

You may be attacked and defeated, but conquering forces cannot occupy the planet; they simply go home. (By the start of the next challenge the planet cleanses itself, and any inhabitants discard their protective filters.)

Super Flare: You may take protective filters away from any or all former allies now sharing planets with you. DISCARD AFTER SUCCESSFUL USE.

Wild Flare: You may create filthy conditions on any one planet or moon for one challenge, deadly to any inhabitants (including the Filth). DISCARD AFTER SUCCESSFUL USE.

History: "Gifted" with a metabolism based on the combustion of Hydrocarbons, the heavily-industrialized Filths can endure levels of pollution which no other species can abide. Having stripped their home system of the raw materials needed to fuel their numberless foundries, the Filths now seek fresh, clean planets to poison and exploit.

GARBAGE COLLECTOR — Power to Recycle



You have no permanent hand. When you are involved in a challenge, you draw up to 7 cards at random from the discard pile. (If not enough cards available, draw the balance from the deck.) When the challenge is ended, keep any edicts and flares (if you wish) and discard the remaining cards. You may never have more than seven cards in your hand at one time.

Super Flare: You may fill out your hand from the deck instead of the discard pile.

Wild Flare: At the start of your challenge, you may take the top card on the discard pile.

History: Envolving late on a world harboring many industrialized species, the Garbage Collectors fought for survival in an environment all but drained of its natural resources. During this arduous racial infancy, they developed a superlative technology enabling them to reuse almost anything. Now the Collectors are applying this talent on a cosmic scale, employing the supposedly-useless castoffs of other races in their manic quest for resources which — for once in their lives — will not be hand-me-downs.

GESTALT — Power to See the Big Picture

On your challenges, you may attack the player whose color comes up in the destiny pile (or is otherwise designated) on any planet or moon which that player occupies.

Super Flare: Whenever you must lose tokens to the warp, you choose which ones you lose. (Other outcomes of the loss are not affected.)

Wild Flare: At the start of each challenge, you may move one of your tokens from any base to any of your other bases.

History: Arising as a colonial, single-celled life-form, the Gestalt evolved physically distinct individuals who retained their primitive interdependence. Thus, today, each "member" of the species is simply one functional fragment of a single, system-spanning being. Unable to conceive that other races are not similarly constituted, the Gestalt makes no distinctions between individuals, perceiving them all as identical parts of a whole. This trait makes the Gestalt uniquely adept at recognizing and thwarting schemes on a cosmic scale.

GODFATHER — Power to Make an Offer That Cannot Be Refused

When you play a compromise card, it beats any attack card played against it. If your opponent also plays a compromise, proceed as usual.

Super Flare: You may opt to play a normal compromise.

Wild Flare: In place of one of your challenges, you can put out a contract on any one token in the game, choosing another player (not the owner of that token) as hit man. Hit man and owner of the target token each play a card. (Powers affecting card play can be used.) Highest card wins, defender winning ties. If the defender loses, his token goes to the warp. If the hit man loses, you may assassinate any one of his tokens. If the hit man compromises, he automatically loses (even if the defender also compromises), and cannot get consolation. The defender can get consolation.

History: One of the most powerful races in the galaxy, the Godfathers always deal from a position of strength. Thus it has become known throughout the universe: when a Godfather offers to negotiate, one had better go along!

LAWYER — Power to Represent

Whenever a deal is to be made, you may offer your services to any player involved in the deal. If he accepts your services, you draw two random cards from him (or two lucre), and negotiate the deal for him. (He must accept the outcome you obtain.) If he refuses your offer, you may attach his property by removing all of his tokens from any one base to your solar disc, replacing them with up to an equal number of your own tokens if you wish. He may negotiate with you for return of the lost tokens (but not for return of the base) as part of a deal.

Super Flare: You may use compromise cards as Emotion Control edicts when you are not a main player.

Wild Flare: If you lose a challenge as defensive player, you may sue your opponent. Other players vote on the outcome of the suit. (on a tie, you lose.) If you win the suit, your opponent must lose as many tokens to the warp as you lost as a result of his attack, and if he gained a base during the attack, he must give you a base as in a deal. If you lose the suit, you must discard one of your cards at random, or one lucre.

History: Perhaps the most infamous species in the cosmos, the Lawyers are said to be self-serving and unscrupulous, caring nothing for ethical considerations so long as their cause triumphs. (All this, of course, is hearsay.) Despite their reputation, other races do employ the Lawyers' talents, though whether out of respect or fear is difficult to say. For bitter experience has shown it to be one of the abiding truths of the universe: the Lawyer gets his fee.

LEECH — Power to Drain

Whenever you are involved in a challenge (as a main player or ally), you may take one card at random (or one lucre) from any and/or all players involved in that challenge.

Do not use in a two-player game.

Super Flare: You may leech one extra card or lucre from each involved player.

Wild Flare: You May force any player to discard his entire hand. DISCARD AFTER SUCCESSFUL USE.

History: Born the weakest species on their watery homeworld, the spineless Leeches learned to assume the guise of friendship so as to siphon off the strength of others. Though their treacherous nature is now known to other races, many of them — greedy for planets and power — will risk alliance with the Leeches, gambling that the resultant drain on their resources will not do them too much damage.

LOKINGLAS — Power to Reflect

Whenever another player uses an alien power in such a way as to directly affect you, that aspect of the power instead reflects back upon him. If he would ordinarily control how the power affected you, you control how it affects him.

Super Flare: You may reflect the effects of powers directly affecting you back toward any player in the game.

Wild Flare: You may reflect the effects of any edicts and/or flares whose use directly affects you back at the players who play those cards.

History: Cosmic controversy rages as to whether the vitreous Lokinglas truly qualifies as a life-form. Though capable of reproduction by fracturing, it is immobile and utterly lacking in personality. Mysteriously, however, it seems to mirror the characteristics of whatever beings impinge upon it. Other species find this disconcerting, and tend to avoid contact with the Lokinglas whenever possible.

LUNATIK — Power to Cohabit Moons

When attacking an inhabited moon you need not challenge the occupant, but may simply move in. (You are then considered to have won the challenge.) Effects of continuous moons continue; new effects may also oc-

cur. Immediate moons take effect as if unoccupied. Secret moons take effect when either occupant chooses to reveal them. Conflicts arising from cohabitation of moons are resolved in your favor.

You may offer players who attack you on moons the right to cohabit. If they accept, they simply join you, and are considered to have won a challenge. You may also grant cohabitation rights as part of deals.

Players attacking cohabited moons must declare which inhabitant they are attacking. If they attack and defeat a cohabitant other than yourself, you must grant them the right to cohabit.

Only moons which you occupy may be cohabited. If at any time two or more players find themselves cohabiting a moon not occupied by you, they must immediately engage in a moon-challenge to see who gets to stay. If more than two players are involved, challenges are made in clockwise order proceeding from your left. The effects of the disputed moon are suspended until ownership is settled.

You have this power if and only if you inhabit at least one moon. You may start the game with tokens on any moon(s) in your own system.

Use only in a game with moons.

Super Flare: As a main player in a moon challenge, you may have allies. You may also act as an ally in other moon challenges.

Wild Flare: At the start of your turn, you may use this card as a Gravity Control edict. DISCARD AFTER SUCCESSFUL USE.

History: Forced to flee a crumbling home planet, the Lunatiks took refuge on a nearby moon. Evolving over the eons, the race became superbly adapted for functioning in the unique lunar environment, and now leaps blithely from system to system, far ahead of its planet-lubber competitors. The Lunatik's motto: "Today the moons; tomorrow the cosmos!"

MANIPULATOR — Power to Shape Destiny

Once the destiny pile (or Will, Dictator, etc) has revealed which system is to be attacked on a given challenge, you may choose which planet in that system will be attacked. (If the Gestalt is in the game, you may direct it to attack any planet which its power permits it to attack.) In games with moons, the attacking player may choose whether to attack a moon or a planet, but you then choose which moon or planet he attacks.

Super Flare: When the option exists, you may direct the attacker to attack a given base on the planet of your choice.

Wild Flare: You may rebirth any player at the start of each challenge.

History: A race of mystics, the Manipulators believe that while one cannot overcome destiny, one can "fine tune" it. Working always in harmony with the universal forces, yet subtly warping them to their own advantage, the Manipulators are certain they can out maneuver their grosser competitors in the quest for cosmic dominion.

MOLE — Power to Dig In

As the losing main defensive player in a planet challenge, if you had 2 or more tokens on the base you were defending, one token survives and remains on the base. Attacking tokens still gain the base.

Super Flare: Immediately after using your normal power, the surviving token may challenge the tokens which just took the planet. (You may challenge the tokens of any one player who just took the planet, not just the main player.) No allies are allowed, but appropriate powers, etc, may be used.

Wild Flare: As losing main defensive player defending a home planet, if you had two or more tokens thereon, one survives.

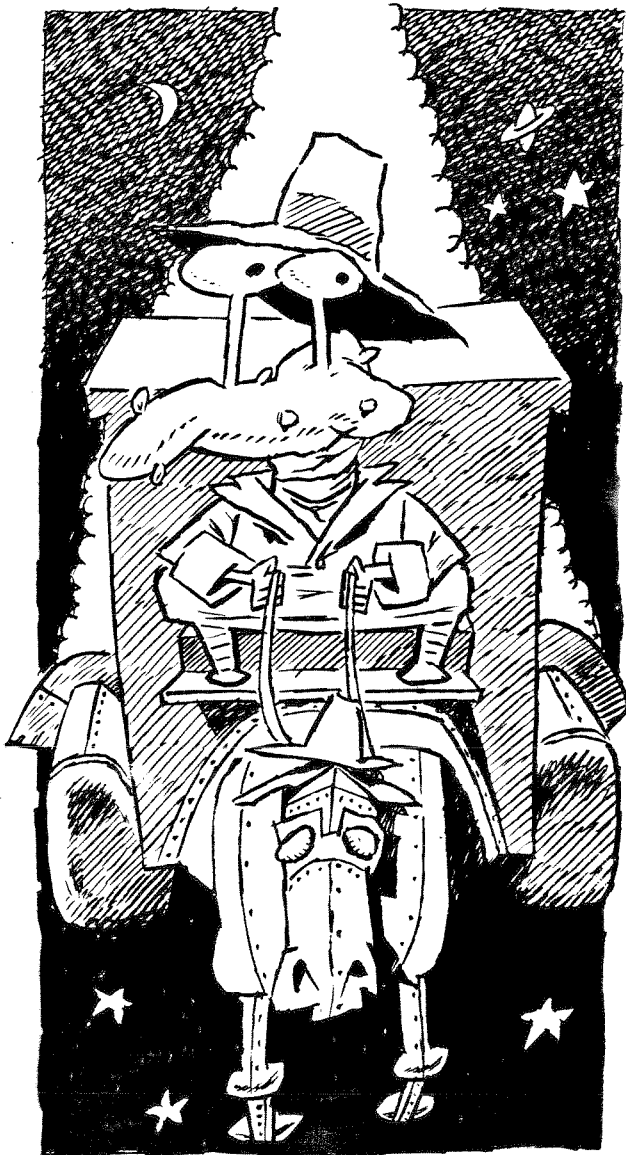
History: Once the subterranean Moles have dug in on a planet, they are extremely difficult to uproot. Only multiple "treatments" hold any hope of eradicating this perfidious pest.

NOMAD — Power to Rove

You have no home system. At the start of the game, place your star disc in one of the other players' systems at random to represent the Nomad Ship. All your tokens start the game on the Ship. At the end of each challenge (except your own), you may rearrange your tokens between your bases in that system (if any) and the Ship in any way you choose. The Ship will then travel in a counter-clockwise direction to the next adjacent system.

Also at the start of the game, you secretly designate one of your opponent's systems as your Target System. You win the game (despite the Schizoid) if and only if you succeed in establishing at least three bases in that system.

You do not have a place in the ordinary progression of turns. Instead, you may make one challenge whenever play passes to a player in whose system you have tokens (except on moons). You may challenge any home planet or moon in any system where Nomad tokens exist, but using only tokens from that system in the attack — but you may use as many of those tokens as you wish.



No discs of your color are placed in the destiny pile. On any challenge, the offensive player may attack the Ship if it is in the designated defensive system. If you lose such an attack, your losing tokens go to the warp and the winners occupy the Ship, but derive no special benefits from doing so. When you lose the Ship, you lose all your alien powers. To regain your powers you must retake the Ship (by challenge, Rebirth, etc).

When the Nomad power is zapped or lost: you may not rearrange your tokens, you can win the game only in the ordinary manner, and you cannot make challenges except against the Ship. The Ship still moves, and the timing and targeting of your challenges is still determined as if you had your power. If the Ship is unoccupied when logistics permit you to attack it, you may simply retake it in place of a challenge.

If all your tokens ever end up in the warp, you are stuck until something happens which frees one or more of your tokens. You may then use the freed tokens to immediately make one challenge against the Ship, wherever it may be.

Use only in a game with five or more players.

Super Flare: You win the game as soon as you have three bases in any one system.

Wild Flare: As the offensive main player, you may place as many of your tokens from bases in the system you are attacking into the cone as you wish.

History: Long ago driven from their native system by more aggressive races, the peace-loving Nomads escaped extinction by fleeing in a vast, virtually-undetectable Ship. Since then, the Nomad Ship has roved the cosmos, staging sporadic raids to establish Nomad colonies on new planets. (Such colonies may remain for years, mysteriously fluctuating in population, or suddenly disappear overnight!) The presence of Nomads in a system tends to lower property values, for it has been noted that the frequency of Nomad raids often increases once the first foothold is gained. And it is whispered that the Nomads have selected one planetary system to eventually become their own. Their most closely-guarded secret is: which one?

THE NOSE — Power to Disrupt

Whenever you are the main player in a challenge, you immediately draw half (rounding down) of the cards from your opponent's normal hand. (Do not look at them.) These cards cannot be played during the challenge. If this leaves your opponent without challenge cards, and he is on offense, his turn ends. If he is on defense, he draws new cards from the deck one at a time until he draws a challenge card, which he must play. After the challenge, he retrieves the cards which you "disrupted" away.

Super Flare: Cards lost to your disruption power are added to your hand.

Wild Flare: Once per challenge you may cancel one flip of the destiny pile which reveals your color.

History: The Noses are a candid race possessed of an unusually high bioenergetic potential. Radiating this excess energy in an unpredictable pattern, Noses tend to disrupt their immediate environments, partially stunning any other beings within range. This trait comes in handy in the Noses' quest to create a chaotic cosmos in which they will feel quite at home.

QUANTAS — Power of Probability

During any challenge, before cards are revealed, you may call out a Quantum Number (=Q). If the difference (=D) between Q and the sum of the cards played in a challenge is between 0 and 3, you may move one token from anywhere you have one (e.g. bases, the warp, Assessor's star disc, but not Void or Fungoid Stack) according to the table below.

If D= Move to:

- 0 Any location
- 1 Any home planet, OR . . .
- 2 Any unoccupied moon, OR . . .
- 3 Any of your bases

In computing D, compromise cards = 0. Powers, etc, that change card value (e.g. Empath) affect D, but kickers, etc, do not.

Super Flare: As the losing main defensive player, if you called Q and D was between 0 and 3, you may move those of your tokens which would ordinarily go to the warp to another planet (if you were defending a planet) or unoccupied moon (if you were defending a moon) in the same system. This replaces whatever move your normal power would allow.

Wild Flare: Once per challenge, you may declare any one voluntary action of any player to be improbable. Then flip a coin; if he calls it wrong, he cannot take that action.

History: The only known subatomic intelligence in the cosmos, Quantas can exist either in particle form or as self-perpetuating wave phenomena. Well-acquainted with Einsteinian physics and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Quantas knows that while they probably are where they appear to be, there is a small but definite possibility that they may actually be somewhere else.

SOBSISTER — Power to Commiserate

Whenever any other player loses a challenge, you may call "commiserate" and take random cards from him up to the number of tokens he lost in the challenge. He may pay you 2 lucre to refrain.

Use only in a game with lucre.

Super Flare: When another player loses a power you may take all his cards unless he pays you all his lucre (and you may refuse a payment of less than 4 lucre).

Wild Flare: You may take one card at random from any player each time you lose a challenge.

History: Possessed of a neurotic attraction for pain and suffering, the Sobsister thrives by vicariously feeding off others' difficulties. Many races consider this practice indecent, but none has the heart to deny the pathetic sobsister its due. To fulfill their bizarre psychological needs, the Sobsisters have found it necessary to undertake a campaign of conquest, the better to promote the distresses on which they feed.

SPAWN — Power to Enthrall

When you win a challenge as a main player, you may place one of your tokens on the loser's star disc, entralling him. While he is so entralled:

— He may not attack you. (If he draws your color in the destiny pile, he must draw another.)

— When he gains a planet, you gain it with him (with up to as many tokens as he has there).

— When he gets cards, you may take them from him.

— You may enthrall any player he defeats in a challenge.

A player may escape thralldom by losing a challenge. (In a game with lucre, he may also escape by paying you 3 lucre.) You then remove your token from his star disc to any of your bases. A Cosmic Zap will prevent you from entralling someone, and/or free all your thralls for that challenge, but not permanently.

Do not use in a two-player game.

Super Flare: Thralls escape you only when they lose an alien power.

Wild Flare: When you win a challenge as a main player, you may immediately give the loser one order which he must obey unless it would give you an instant win. (Your order can only control his actions once, and must take effect before the end of the next challenge, or not at all.)

History: The Spawn multiplies by using a combination of genetic engineering and hypnosis to turn its defeated enemies into helpless thralls. For these pitiful slaves of the Spawn's will, there is no escape save death... or bribery.

SPIRIT — Power of Incorporeality

This power is not tied to the number of home planets you possess; instead, you have this power at any time when you have at least one token in the warp/praw. So long as you have this power, you win the game if and only if **all** of your existing tokens are in the warp/praw.

Super Flare: As a main player in a challenge, subtract from your total the number of tokens you have in the warp/praw.

Wild Flare: As a main player in a challenge, add to your total the number of tokens you have in the warp/praw.

History: Once corporeal beings like you and me, the Spirits have recently evolved to a state of total insubstantiality. Distaining the planets on which they once thrived, the Spirits now desire only to flee **en masse** into the warp, where alone they feel at home.

TRAITOR — Power to Betray

As an ally in any challenge — after cards are played, but before they are revealed — you may withdraw from the alliance you have joined. If the other side had asked you to ally (or if you are the Parasite) you may join that side with up to your usual number of tokens. In a game with lucre, players may bribe you to use this power.

Do not use in a two-player game.

Super Flare: You may use your power after cards are revealed.

Wild Flare: You may ally with both sides of a challenge (if asked by both sides), though the total number of tokens you commit may not exceed the number you could ordinarily use in one challenge.

History: The code of the intensely-competitive Traitors ridicules honesty and fair play, promoting duplicity and wanton self-interest as the highest virtues. So highly are the arts of betrayal developed among members of this race that no Traitor will trust another on any matter whatsoever. Thus, no longer able to practice their wiles on each other, the Traitors have entered the cosmic arena in search of unsuspecting victims.

✓ WARLORD — Power to Incite

Once per challenge you may do any **one** of the following (under appropriate conditions):

- Forbid deals
- Nullify any action which has the affect of changing a compromise card to an attack card
- Force one player involved in a challenge (main or ally) to commit his maximum number of tokens to that challenge
- Forbid attacks on unoccupied planets or moons
- Forbid consolation

Super Flare: During each challenge, you may do any or all of the various things your power permits you to do, if conditions permit (but you may do each particular thing only once per challenge).

Wild Flare: As a main player, you may remove one token from any base to the warp from each player who does not say "Bozo" or "Turkey" (whichever is appropriate) each time he speaks during that challenge.

History: Fired by a tradition of reckless militancy, the Warlords disdain negotiation as the last refuge of the incompetent. Other species find themselves goaded to rash and irrational behavior by the mere presence of the arrogant Warlords, who have learned to use their natural insufferability to their own best advantage.

EDICTS

GRAVITY CONTROL

Play at any time. Has one of the following effects (your choice):

- Destroys any one moon (and any inhabitants are removed from the game), OR . . .
- Moves any one moon (along with any inhabitants thereof) to a different system, OR . . .
- Sends any one moon to the Warp. Inhabitants are dislodged in the Warp. The moon will reappear in the system of the next player to play Mobius Tubes.

NULLIFIER (2)

Negates the effect of any Edict or Flare. Play just after the card to be nullified is revealed. (Nullified Edicts are discarded; Flares are not.)

TIME WARP

Play just before a challenge begins. The player about to begin the challenge loses his turn. Proceed to next player's turn.

NEW MOONS

ATTRITION (C) — While this moon is occupied, winning players and their allies in any challenge lose all but one of the tokens they committed to that challenge to the warp.

COUP DE LUNE (S) — At any time, you may oust the inhabitants of any occupied moon in the same system as this one. Those tokens go to others of their bases, and all your tokens on this moon transfer to that one.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH (C) — While occupying this moon, your freedom of speech (incl. gestures, expressions, etc) may not be restricted in any way, nor may you be penalized for exercising (or not exercising) that freedom.

MAGNETIC MOON (C) — While this moon is occupied, all attacks against this system are made against this moon.

MOON MELD (S) — Upon revealing this moon, you may meld any two moons in the game by placing them so that they touch one another. (You may move an unoccupied moon in order to meld it with a moon in a different system. If both moons are occupied at the time of melding, occupants must immediately make a moon-challenge to see which one will stay.) Once melded, they are treated as one moon for the duration of the game, except that the effects of both take place whenever the melded moon is occupied.

NOMAD MOON (C) — Just before every challenge during which you occupy it, this moon moves one system counter-clockwise. When you are the main offensive player in a challenge, you may attack the system in which this moon is located instead of the one indicated by destiny, etc, but you must use as many tokens from this moon as possible in the attack.

SPY SATELLITE (C) — The player in whose system this moon is located must show you everything he has hidden **except** his normal hand (e.g. secret powers, unrevealed moons, Schizoid's terms).

TAR BABY (C) — Tokens landing on this moon are stuck here. They cannot be removed by the player to whom they belong.

RUNZLES

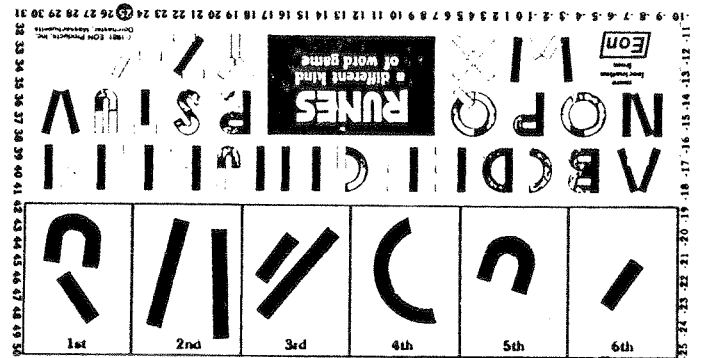
For a parting shot, try solving these puzzles based on the method of forming letters in the game RUNES. These were submitted by Runesmith Bill Wordelmann who, although cheated out of his subscription extension earns our undying gratitude. Especially for also submitting the solutions to these stumbers which are printed upside down elsewhere on this page.

1) Identify the 5-letter word which contains six short curves.

2) Identify five 5-letter words in which each letter contains only one type of runestick.

3) Identify the 6-letter word which contains nine short curves.

4) Identify this word.



Answers: 1) Usurp, 2) Sonic, Coins, Sony, Conic, Noisy, 3) Suburb, 4) Jalopy.

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