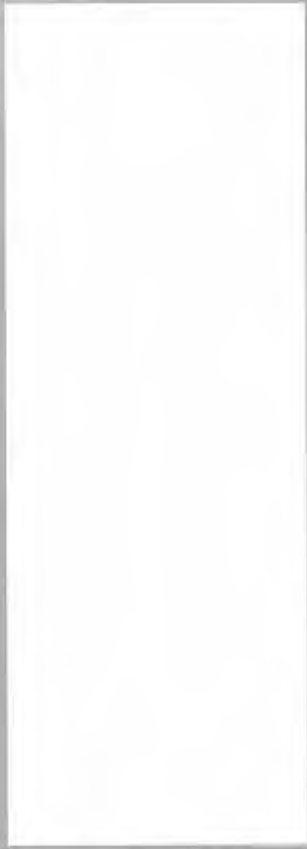


# WHISPERS OF THE WOOD



**GAME  
SYSTEMS  
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PSN

## WORDS FROM THE WOOD

You know, my first impetus to open this month's Editor's Column was to write about how I come up with a column--or rather, my staring at a blank screen with my mind screaming, "Deadline! You've got a DEADLINE!! START WRITING!! ANYTHING!!! WRITE ABOUT MARCH! YOU KNOW, IN LIKE A LION, OUT LIKE A PLATYPUS!! WRITE ABOUT STARCHED UNDERCLOTHES!! ABOUT CINDER BLOCK HANG GLIDING!! ABOUT NOSE FLUTES!!! ABOUT ROAD KILL!!!!" Then I thought, "Nah, too clichéd. They've all heard it before." So I thought I'd write about something totally new, something fresh, something not usually touched upon in these pages. And so here I am, ready to make a breakthrough in opening topics for the Editor's Column.

Hello, and welcome to this month's *Whispers*. Here's an interesting thing I was thinking about the other day. ROAD KILL!! . . .

Those of you perusing the Hall of Heroes will undoubtedly note there are two Earthwood announcements this month--and that ends the run for Earthwood: Original. We here at GSI want to bid a fond farewell to the game that launched a thousand ships . . . O.K., maybe not a thousand ships, but it did launch US, so we bid Earthwood a fond adieu and hope those of you who played the game have fond memories, just like we do.

We would like to announce the new, soon-to-be-implemented extra map reports. This new feature will produce a hex map, like those found in recon and scout areas, for all Major Towns and Cities with high loyalty. Essentially, the citizens are willing, if their morale is high enough, to report what goes on around that pop center. This will allow those who have pop centers outside their regular map to receive map reports from those pop centers. This opens a whole new aspect to the game, one which we're excited about, and it makes those pop centers in enemy territory much more valuable . . .

I'd like to take some time to address the topic of pop center and character names. As stated in the rulebook, GSI reserves the right to edit any name we deem inappropriate to the flavor of Middle-earth. This means exactly what it says. If someone wants to name their character Beavis or Butt-head, this is clearly not in the spirit of Middle-earth. We want to make the game as fun as possible for everyone who plays and names make up a large part of the game. Offensive or inappropriate names can and will be edited if it is deemed necessary.

O.K., new game needs--we have no Grudge Games currently pending, so if you're interested in a grudge game, you have your choice of sides. We are also currently filling a new 3 week game, so those of you interested in a slower game, let us know and we'll take care of you.

### NEW MERP II PRODUCTS AVAILABLE!!

Iron Crown Enterprises has just released its new line of Middle-earth products and we can get 'em for you! Below is a list of products, the stock numbers, and the stock numbers those products replace. If you're interested, contact us and we'll get you what you need.

MERP II Collector's Edition. Hardbound, 250+ pages. # 2000 (replaces 8000) \$30

MERP II Campaign Guide. Softbound, 125+ pages. #2003 (replaces 2200, 2210) \$20

MERP II Peoples - Valar/Maiar. Softbound, 125+ pages. #2006 (similar to 8002)

Well, that's all the fun for this month. See you in thirty.

*Stuart*



## ALONG THE PATHWAYS

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This Month's Cover: "Evil Eye" by Glen Godard

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## PERSONALS: BARBS & BRAGS

Every current GSI player is entitled to a free 40 word personal in this column each issue, for each game they're in. Submissions require a \$2.00 charge for each additional set of 40 words (41-80 is \$2.00 etc.). GSI reserves the right to edit or refuse material deemed unsuitable.

### GENERAL

Contest of Champions? Best of the Best? None of us are in it. Then again, we don't play amateur gigs.

Naurmegil  
Leader of

The Shades of Madness  
P.S. Well said Subedei. I called the neutrals a total of six times.

Middle-earth™ PBM

### GAME 21

War report to King Elatar:

Tol Burúth falls this turn. The Log Rider will not last much longer. With 10 cities and 12 major towns, as well as 10 million gold, we should end up in first place.

Baalroc

### GAME 27

Khamul,

While Goblin-gate becomes a killing field, Mirkwood is slowly surrounded. The noose is being tightened, will we do it slowly or end it quick?

El & the Vaders

### GAME 28

Assassins in my capital, armies in my towns. A plague of emissaries and agents have hit me. By Eru, I have them right where I want them!

Subedei Bahadur  
Gondor

### GAME 35

Harad now lies in ruins, the bodies of his troops litter the fields, his characters killed or captured. The

Blind Sorcerer, Cloud Lord and Dragon Lord should tremble in fear.

\*\*\*\*\*

Harad now lies in ruins--his pop centers destroyed or taken, his characters kidnapped or assassinated. Blind Sorcerer, Dragon Lord, Cloud Lord--your turn is next.

### GAME 43

Some have yet to learn their lessons. No shaman can predict where or when the storm will strike. Only that they can see the Dark Clouds on the horizon. But the wind blows west!

Ji Indur

### GAME 48

Beware Servants of Darkness,  
The sleeper awakens,  
The plains shall be free.

\*\*\*\*\*

As the dawn breaks the early morning light shines brightly and drives away the darkness. The Free has triumphed over the darkness. The Dark Servants were no match for the Cardolan Intelligence Agency (CIA) with 9 agents with minimum qualifications of rogues. Urzahil, Bolvag, Miruimor, Tormog, Leardinoth, Herumor and Monte were just a few that felt our sting. I stopped Gothmog at Angrenost and with the help of the Dunedain brothers we rolled back the Dark Lieutenants all the way to Mordor.

It was a team victory and it was an honor to serve with all of the talented Free nations. I offer my sincerest job well done!

General Imlach  
Ruler of Cardolan

### GAME 52

I, Hoarmurath, servant of Sauron, declare victory for my dark master. Elrond fell before my personal onslaught just this week. My minions have eliminated over 40 other Free People leaders. Once mighty nations like Northern Gondor, Southern Gondor, and now the Corsairs bow to serve my master, for their armies and characters are defeated, and their capitals are mine.

Rejoice peoples of Middle-earth, for you now belong to Sauron.

### GAME 60

To the Noldo:

Wave after wave of armies shall swarm thee. You are the last shred of light in the south. Both Gondors are on their knees, Eothraim vacates his capitol, Woodmen fight for his life, Rhudaur has loyalty problems, and you the Noldo lose characters one per turn.

Regent Ingar

### GAME 61

Dark Ones,

I am impressed, five Dark armies face me, alone. But the question is, will the Western Alliance arrive before or after my demise? If I can just hold out another 20 turns, alone . . .

Mahrcared

### GAME 62

Is there no challenge left? Will the Free Peoples come out of their hiding places to face the might of Cloud Lord, Ice King, Harad, and Corsairs? Noldo is bunkered down in his capital, fearing to tread but one hex away. Others have fled, defeated and forlorn.

### GAME 65

Elrond prepared himself well for the meeting that was to come. Bearing Aranrúth, the great broadsword of Elwë, and the ring that was given to Barahir during the Elder Days, he stepped forth and met Ando-Anca's gaze. The great cold Drake thought nothing of the creature in front of him until Elrond let loose with a barrage of attacks that caused him to roar in pain.

In a battle that would be sung about for ages to follow, Elrond defeated the great beast and claimed victory over one of Morgoth's mightiest Dragons. Searching the dragon's cave he discovered a great treasure that would be greatly needed in his homeland. This begins the story of Elrond, Dragon slayer of Imladris.

### GAME 66

You Freeps have been playing your cards pretty close to the vest as of late. I think it's time to kick the door in and see what you make of it.

The Cloud Lord

\*\*\*\*\*

Sheik Alaa's forces certainly don't lack courage, as they bravely march to Linhir where Camlin's navy can slaughter them. The garrison at Minas Anor, though, fled at our approach. May all our foes show such valor . . .

Celdrahil  
Lord of Gondor

### GAME 70

Bain, what is the problem? Found a little Smaug in your victory? That is why they call me the Dragon Lord and I shall continue to harry you!

Your neighbor,  
Khamul

\*\*\*\*\*

To Elrond, Sauron's gratitude!  
(What a swell claim to fame.)  
You've betrayed your own allies  
and nearly won us the game!

Ovatha II

"Boss, a poet you ain't."  
"Shut up, Nazrog."

#### GAME 71

Both sides can play at character wars.

#### GAME 72

24 turns and I've removed 35  
characters from play.

Start tuning your set to Ji T.V.  
(the station with extra-violence).

Naurmegil

Cloud Lord

P.S. Dunlendings, holding a grudge  
from 98? And after all the help I gave  
you. BAD move . . .

#### GAME 74

To All Evils,

The reason this game isn't over  
is because the Corsairs, Blind Sorcerer  
and Dark Lieutenants are worried  
more about points than they are about  
finishing this! Come on guys, get off  
your butts.

Selur Rodrom

#### GAME 78

Touring the ashes of Mirkwood, site of  
a ten month battle from Dil Guldur to  
Aradryndh to Romenost, grave of fifty  
thousand warriors, the youth of ten  
nations, Urzahil sheds a tear and  
wonders, "Will this madness ever  
end?"

NOT!!!

#### GAME 80

Due to some recent setbacks the odds  
of a Rhudaur win have been officially  
worsened to 3/2.

Nevertheless the stock is still a good  
buy.

Emperor of Rhudaur

\*\*\*\*\*

The Sea-wolves would like to  
thank the nations of South Gondor and  
Haradwaith for contributing to the  
fleet, especially the warships. Also, we  
note the passing of the warrior Haruth  
Ramam, who died in ritual combat. He  
will be missed (but not by us!).

Angamaitë

\*\*\*\*\*

This tub is getting a lot of leaks!  
Anywhere Ashderbuk sits his rump  
gets wet! And all these elves and  
dwarves moving in, Angmar used to  
be such a nice orc hang out.

The Crimson Toad

The Witchy Guy

\*\*\*\*\*

Dark Servants,

Now that the agent squads are  
organized, and my secret economic  
base is established we can begin the  
process of dismantling the loosely  
connected Free Coalition . . .

. . . March to the screaming lads!

Rhudaur Lives!

#### GAME 83

K-9 Prince and the rest:

Good job. Your alliance was much  
better organized and prepared for this  
game. Perhaps in my next alliance  
game I'll do better. I will still fight to  
the end however, so make sure I'm  
dead.

Baaltrac

#### GAME 85

Uvatha,

Do you know what happens  
when you visit a North Gondor town?

Bad things, man.

Do you know what would happen  
if Tarondor finds you in one of his  
towns?

Bad things, man, bad things.

#### GAME 86

Ha ha! Cower in fear, you insipid dolts!  
For I, Gascón, leader of the Mighty  
Eothraim, yet live! My soldiers will  
once again rule Rhovanion!

The good guy with 1300 points  
(who Mordor thought was dead)

\*\*\*\*\*

Athrad Sarn, winter

Elrohir, what have you found?

I have found a Fire King army  
and it bears the banner of Shogmog.  
Ren the Unclean and a bodyguard  
travels with the army as well.

I, Glorfindel, will challenge Ren  
on the morrow as our last statement.  
If I fail you must lead the attack. Then  
ride to Harlond and join Cirdan's fleet  
and set sail for the Undying Lands. The  
evacuation of the Grey Havens is  
almost complete.

I, too, weep for Middle-earth but  
the cards were stacked against us from  
the start. We offered sincere  
friendship to the Neutrals but it  
became clear that they had Darkness  
in their hearts from the start. They  
were foolish, they will always be  
slaves and puppets to the Nine.

#### GAME 89

Has anyone seen the mantle lying  
around . . . I appear to have misplaced  
it!

Ho, hum, nothing to do . . . and not  
enough characters to do it with!

The Sadistic Sage

\*\*\*\*\*

"And lo, the Groundhog reared its ugly  
head and foresaw 6 more months of  
winter."

Great! Let's make snowballs!  
Frosty the Snowman

#### GAME 91

The towers of the teeth have  
been rocked but have held. Dendra-  
Dwar has fallen. I may be licking my  
wounds, but I have also caught my  
breath, bring it on.

#### GAME 94

Argeleb III gazed out over the silent  
ramparts, a look of intense sorrow on  
his face. "Bring my armor and  
weapons," he commanded. "It is time  
to erase the shame of he who was once  
my Father!"

\*\*\*\*\*

Welcome Big All!

\*\*\*\*\*

Carrion of Rhudaur--prepare to die  
like whimpering dogs!

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Enion & Eribhen (The Beavis and  
Butt-head of Middle-earth),

How are things in Fennas  
Drunin? Send us your new address  
when you get to Mordor.

The Good Guys

#### GAME 95

Haruth Ramam:

Bad choice, little man. I'm on my  
way.

\*\*\*\*\*

For Sale:

1 Stumpy Regent

2 Cowering Captains

Look for faeries in the future.

## GAME 96

I will not send stupid bible quotes to the Northmen.  
I will not send stupid bible quotes to the Northmen.  
I will not send stupid bible quotes to the Northmen.

Ovatha II of the Southeasterlings

## GAME 97

Is it just Ozzymodo and I that noticed our characters have a learning disorder? It has some fundamental connection with the number 2. Maybe my mages will find a cure . . . if they manage to learn the spell.

The Sadistic Sage

\*\*\*\*\*

The Dunedain of Umbar have joined us in our Crusade to rid all Arda of the Slaves of Sauron: Faithless and Accursed!

Utulie'n aure! Aiya Eldalie ar Atanatari, utulie'n aure!

Arfanhil

Lord of the Dunedain of Rhudaur

\*\*\*\*\*

We of Umbar choose our Dunedain brethren over the Dogs of Sauron! Under the banner of lost Numenor, we shall cleanse Mordor by fire and sword, 'til no stone stands atop another . . .

Angamaite, Lord of Umbar

\*\*\*\*\*

Argeleb II has fallen. All of Arthedain grieves. All of Arthedain vows vengeance. Sarkar's Rangers have begun the job, but the flame they lit is but a candle to the inferno we shall make of Angmar.

Regent Marl Tarma

## GAME 99

### A REQUEST FROM MORDOR

Dear Free Peoples:

Please don't wimp out and drop like you did in #98. The game's getting interesting.

Cowards!

The Emperor of Gorgoroth  
Sauron's Sanest Shade  
(Though somewhat idiotic)

## GAME 100

Three little,  
Two little,  
One little Nazgûl,  
Um . . . er . . . What's next?  
We win silly!  
Oh

\*\*\*\*\*

To the Dark Lts.

Thanks for the memories.  
The Eothraim

\*\*\*\*\*

Congrats to everyone who made our victory possible:

The two hubby wife teams.  
The Council.

The Woodmen.

The stand-bys who came in and kicked butt.

And the Neutrals that sounded the death knell.

The Riders of Rohan

## GAME 101

Pitiful "Ice Cream King."  
Hoarmurath is dead. Hukor is dead.  
Baltab is dead. Your capital is fallen.  
Rejoice Free Peoples, for the Ice King joins his fallen allies--the Fire King and Quiet Avenger. Durthang, Barad Dur, and Barad Ungol all fly the flag of Northern Gondor! Meager Dark Servant armies tremble before the terrible onslaught of combined Corsairs, Eothraim, Dwarven, Dunlending and

Northern Gondor forces. Northwest Mordor has fallen, and the rest will surely follow.

King Tarondor

## GAME 102

Ex-neutral Dark Servants,

I thought neutrals were supposed to be cynical and self serving. You guys insist on martyring yourselves for the original DS's. They just continue to sell you down the river.

Free Peoples

\*\*\*\*\*

REN'S HOUSE OF ARMY SURPLUS!!

SALE SALE SALE

EVERYTHING MUST GO.

Thousands of Gondorian swords NEVER BEEN USED!!

REAL pieces of Minas Anor!!

Tarondor's boots, clothes and personal effects (Body parts Extra)

Free Gondor cavalry horse on a stick.

DELICIOUS!!!!

## GAME 103

Like water, the Dark Servants simply envelop what pushes them.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ovatha II,

Your intrusion into Mordor has not gone unnoticed. Alas--the army you have met was not the one you intended!

And when I have broken your armies, and your leaders are broken, what shall you do then?

Ren

\*\*\*\*\*

Everyone knows bears are slow in the winter, it's almost spring. Mordor Boyz, how about those travel brochures? I'm coming . . .

Grumpy Bear

\*\*\*\*\*

Nemo me impune lacessit.  
Sauron

## GAME 104

What do you mean, 10 turns and it is all over?

Quick, send out the emissaries!

Haruth Ramam  
El & The Vaders

## GAME 107

Mordor, your time has come. Prepare for the assault that has no end. The Dunedain are restored, the Eldar rekindled. Nothing can stand before their wrath. The game is done.

Icarus

## GAME 108

Evil is swept from Mirkwood. Hereafter, let Mirkwood again be named Greenwood the Great, and may all that dwell therein be fair and free. --That means, no schmendles allowed (Woodmen).

Council of Lorien

P.S. What's happening west of the Hithaeglir?

\*\*\*\*\*

Someone came to Minas Anor bearing gifts this past month. It was so kind of Celadring and Lomelinde to offer us their help after all this time--thinking them to be bad people.

Report from

North Gondorian Constable

\*\*\*\*\*

He looked up and studied his redrawn maps for perhaps the hundredth time. The tides of war were flowing against them now. The watch had fallen, the fleet lost, armies slaughtered and brave commanders

slain. There was concern on his face as he glanced down at the troops' disposition report. A clear and present danger now existed. The enemy grows bolder and more determined steps were needed. He issued strict orders. Gondor would never yield.

#### GAME 109

The Easterlings shall rue the day they decided for evil.

Bye Bye, Quiet Avenger. We hardly knew ya.

\*\*\*\*\*

The West is free! Soon enough so shall the East be free. My armies march east across the Misty Mountains to destroy those who serve their Dark Lord. There will be blood!

Hallas of Cardolan

\*\*\*\*\*

Uirdiks,

I am so sorry to hear that one of my associates missed you at Buhr Gedraught. I would like to make a reservation for 2000 and one large pet at Buhr Ailgra's finest inn. I am sending you the head of Gisulf as a down payment. When I visit I hope I can have you for dinner--Ooops! I mean, have you over for dinner.

In Darkness,  
Din Ohtar

\*\*\*\*\*

As the storm subsided, the people of Minas Ithil surveyed the damage to their fair city. Many brave soldiers have perished this day, but the voices of the city rejoice in the coming of the light!

\*\*\*\*\*

The Quiet Avenger was the first to fall--who of the Dark Servants will be next?

The Easterlings are now facing the consequences of their refusal to join the side that stands for the Light.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the year's beginning, the Five Tribes refused to bow to the men of Rhûn, and were unjustly attacked. I am honored that four nations feel threatened enough to seek my demise. It shall avail you naught. For as you travel down the long leagues to my home, the hot breath of Mordor shall scorch your backs. No quarter shall be given, and none asked.

Ovatha II

#### GAME 111

Please check milk carton packaging for missing Northmen characters. All but three seem to have disappeared. Reward offered!

#### GAME 112

The Free Peoples are totally coordinated, the Dark Servants seem petty and spiteful. Some Neutrals are desperately seeking a reason to go evil because the FPs seem too good to be true. My mind is made up, I think I'll like "Nazgûl Hunting."

#### GAME 114

Eothraim done in by his "teammates," North Gondor by incompetence, and Sinda fading fast. Who's going to be the next Freep to star in a "Have You Seen This Position" ad?

Gaurhoth

\*\*\*\*\*

At last, our mighty treasury is balanced. Our now mighty armies seek enemies to vanquish.--Corsairs, do your pirating elsewhere or face defeat many leagues away from fair Umbar.--

Mûrazôr, you have taken the bait that will cost you your nation.

#### GAME 115

The axes of the Dwarves shall fall upon orc necks like a hammer to the anvil and every cave throughout the Misty Mountains shall ring with their screams of terror. We will not rest till the head of Uvatha hangs for the sport of crows.

Thelor

#### GAME 116

Uvatha and Akhorahil poured over their maps, reviewing the situation.

"How ees goink?"

"Well, not so good. My pet hamster died, and the Easterlings went bankrupt."

"Vhass?! Dot ees terreeble!"

"Yeah, I know. Graygore was useless, of course, but that was a darn fine hamster."

#### GAME 117

Elves, Dwarves, and Woodmen too Just can't seem to get a clue Fools they are, the entire lot Doomed in Sauron's chains to rot.

Catch me if you can, lack-wits!

Khamul

\*\*\*\*\*

Free Person Morons!

I've made my decision. Gondor is mine. Rhudaur, Khand, Dunland and I will feast on your bones. The war has begun!

Angamaitë

Lord of the West

\*\*\*\*\*

Wow Dunland,

You really snowed me on that one. That was the best executed betrayal I have ever witnessed (or

been subject to). Enjoy your laurels, because you don't have any dignity to enjoy.

Rhudaur

#### GAME 118

Servants of Sauron,

Your Dark Lord has apparently taken up residence in our town of Barazôn. Please remove him, as he is starting to frighten our children.

Respectfully,

Mireädur,

Administrator of Umbar

#### GAME 119

The two-faced Free Peoples speak honeyed words while plotting treachery. May the fruits of victory turn to ashes in their mouths. The People of Dunland fight with honor. The People of Dunland fight with Sauron!

Unity! Honor! Strength!

#### GAME 120

Will somebody PLEASE topple Trotsky's touselled tonsure from his tremendous torso? Alliterations make us rural types somewhat queasy.

The Mighty Woodmen

\*\*\*\*\*

Gondorians:

Who's that knocking,  
knock, knock, knocking,  
knock, knock, knocking  
at my door?

Dark Servants:

Hello? Can we come through?  
This isn't a toll bridge, is it?  
We need a fast way through  
Southern Gondor.  
Can you give us directions?

\*\*\*\*\*

--Maybe we never win 'cause Hallas is so fat and old.

--Ya mean like Beoraborn?  
--Shaddup and keep recruiting them farmboys.  
--'Spouse we could trade him?  
--For what? Dale? The Dead Marshes?  
--How 'bout Elrond.  
--Why not Númenor.  
--O.K., Númenor!

#### GAME 121

With the Eothraim and Northmen rolled-up, Easterlings don't take too long to decide, you may find yourself in a bad situation. North Gondor is on death's door and the advance continues.

Zarendarger (13)

#### GAME 122

To the Neutrals that have chosen poorly and gone to the Dark Master:

FOOLS!

Better to die Free than live as a servant. Do you not see what he represents?

Then go.

Your blood shall taint the way to the future!

Grakius

\*\*\*\*\*

I'm going good! No, I'm going Evil! Wait, wait, Good! No, Evil, Evil! Good Evil Good Evil AHHHH! I'm so confused. "Arfanhil, be quiet, it's time for your medication."

Join us next month and we'll have a decision. Maybe.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have awoken from slumber and am ready to contribute to my Dark Lord's glorious victory. Trespass not on my demesnes lest you seek his dread audience.

Akhôrahil

\*\*\*\*\*

My hounds of war have grown fat on horse flesh. Who next shall I destroy??? Hmmmm . . . Elf sounds good, not much meat but a very nice flavour.  
The Crimson Toad  
Dog Lord

#### GAME 123

Well, Eoder, Ain't life Grand!  
King Darius the Great

\*\*\*\*\*

Cry Havoc! And let slip the Dogs of War!

I will bend the North to my rule!  
King Darius the Great

\*\*\*\*\*

The Witch-king is out!  
The Dragon Lord is crippled!  
Hmmmm . . . I guess the east is a good place to conquer now.

I AM COMING!

Lord Bain I  
(still alive)

Hail Rhudaur!

#### GAME 124

And when you kill a man, you're a Murderer  
Kill many, and you're a conqueror  
Kill them all . . . Ooh . . .  
Oh you're a god!

Er-Mûrazôr  
(My theme song, quoting Megadeth)

\*\*\*\*\*

Spewing forth death from blackened Mordor's depths rose a crimson wave, gushing forth like life's blood, sweeping the Free before it. Watch it approach, Gondor, 'cause it is your doom, set upon you by Sauron himself. None can hide; it is the time of the Reaper!

Anonymous

#### GAME 125 CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS

BAALTROC--So nice to meet you again. Unfortunately, we are opposites. Sauron's will shall prevail in the end.  
KURGAN--So nice to meet you again also. Now your Easterling hordes can subdue the Eothraim. Blood for blood, eh.

Zarendarger (15)

\*\*\*\*\*

Dark Servants present:  
\*\*\*Middle-earth's Most Wanted\*\*\*

Kurgan the Easterling, a traitor to both sides. In the Contest of Champions, he is a definite loser! He has already been sentenced to be eliminated, let's carry out that sentence.

\*\*\*\*\*

Champions game??? Are you sure this is it??? It's more like "Biddies Night Out"!!!

The Crimson Toad  
Fire Lord

(P.S. Dwarves are lame PPPTTTTHHH!!! Hey world, Uklurg killed Vinyaran in a personal challenge!! Ha Ha)

\*\*\*\*\*

To All:

The Eothraim and Dwarves have attacked my nation without provocation. I have had one army commander challenged (Tros whipped Gisulf), and two towns taken by these followers of "Good". For these reasons, they have forced my decision to join the Dark Lord's Nazgûl in their fight. Free Peoples, blame your brothers for this decision. They are at fault. This Contest of Champions just got interesting.

For Sauron!  
Kurgan the Easterling

#### GAME 126

Some friendly advice to the Witch-king:

NEVER ASSUME!

It makes an ass out of you and nine other guys.

Broggha

#### GAME 129

As the victories of the Free Peoples mount you have to ask yourself--Are you on the right side?

Hey guys, is anybody going to write back?

Tarondor  
Lord of Light

#### GAME 130

Take note Easterlings.

The Northmen are now slaves of Uvatha, and the Woodmen thralls of Khamûl. The ancient blood of the East has taken its toll on the defiers of the Just Lord. Ovatha, join us in this glorious crusade.

Icarus

#### GAME 131

Threats will get you nowhere, fool Easterlings! Despite your power in Mirkwood, none in Mordor will feel his wrath. Four of those dogs couldn't beat even one gateways.

The REAL Captain Invincible  
Lord of Rhudaur  
Master of the Morgul Pass

\*\*\*\*\*

Free Lords of the Free take heart!

The first of many great blows has fallen in Osgiliath: Citadel of the Stars. The Ice King has been crushed.

Utûl ie'n aurë! Aiya Eldalië ar Atanatári, utûl ie'n aurë!  
Tarondor, King of Gondor



Lackeys.

Ji Indur  
King of the Underworld

#### GAME 137

Urgubal hesitated. He had marched the whole Long Tooth tribe from the security of Goblin-Gate to the edge of Mirkwood. Celedhring was supposed to join them here and guide them to an elf town.

Moving cautiously, they advanced into the dark canopy of trees. The deserted forest was noisy and the ground was uncomfortably soft. Urgubal wished he was back in the mountains.

Beoraborn and Guntram waited until the whole column had moved into the forest before signaling the attack.

\*\*\*\*\*

Amroth,

Those who try to hide under logs often get squished, see?

Hallas,

Small boys who play with sticks can expect to get spanked.

This special message provided by Icarus, Master of Hindsight

#### GAME 138

Middle-earth shifts from sleep, and the light begins to grow.

\*\*\*\*\*

Be it known the Easterlings are a peaceful people and that we desire no conflict with either Sauron's servants or the Free Peoples.

#### GAME 140

The commanders file out of the tent, Ovatha II leading the way up the small hill behind it. Tros Hesnef signaled the messengers to prepare--they were to carry Ovatha's message to all neighboring lands.

Ovatha reached the top of the hill and looked out upon his captains and troops. They were restless. As he raised his arms, the warriors screamed, stomping the ground and pounding their shields. Ovatha let this continue for a few minutes, then lowered his arms for silence.

He spoke to his people, proud of their fierce blood. Told them of the glories soon to be theirs, and gave them the message to be carried through the land.

"Hail to all,

"We hear your horns of war, and our blood flows hot. The sound of your marching armies calls to us; the hearts of warriors cry out to join battle. We cannot be restrained.

"Soon we shall fly like a storm, striking like lightning, crushing those who stand before us. Those who would oppose us, rally yourselves, we come! Those who would fight by our sides, send your best and fastest, we do not wait for victory. We have no pity for the slow and the dead!"

The armies of the Easterlings sent up loud cheers, and began frenzied celebrations and contests. Yes, thought Ovatha. Soon their energies will have to be spent against a foe. But whom should we fell first? I must decide soon. Soon, but not in haste.

Grendel

#### GAME 141

Once more the Dark Lord has summoned his faithful servants. Come my Brothers and Sister, united we can sweep the Free Scum from our lands and deliver them unto our Master. Beware the Black Prince has once more Arisen

#### GAME 142

A new turn of the wheel is now upon us and for us, a time of choosing lies ahead. With our choices still unmade I recommend you speak for

your causes before acting . . . precipitously.

Helrazor  
of the East

#### GAME 143

Neutrals,

In the spirit of Ancient Numenor, I offer you God, gold and glory to help us free the land of the craven Servants of Darkness.

Let us hope they will at least humor us in their defeat.

Icarus  
#7

#### GAME 145

Earthwood, prepare to meet thy doo . . . wait a second, uh . . . nevermind. It's been a long time.  
Clyve

\*\*\*\*\*

Puny Free Peoples,

The earth trembles beneath the feet of the Mordor hordes. Angmar rises in the north. Dol Guldur in Mirkwood, Long Rider in Rhovanion and Quiet Avenger in Harondor. Evil shall triumph!

Draugonwath

### *More Personalities to Play By*

by  
*Chris Burrows*

**The Strategist-** A variation of the warrior, these players like to outmaneuver and outsmart their opponents. These players cover every angle twice, and then double check their orders again for mistakes. A strategist's armies often appear deep inside enemy territory, and then proceed to plunder and raze every camp and village within reach. A strategist tends to keep their armies well stocked. Woe to the fool who tries to assassinate their army commanders as they always have a host of agents prowling around their legions. A strategist's two worst nightmares are: 1. A dead turn, where nothing happens. 2. A turn where all his assumptions and guesses were correct, but they received a special service turn. A strategist is most likely to succeed in positions of constant military conflict such as Northern Gondor and/or the Witch King.

**The Brain-** An advanced life form, the 'BRAIN' is often a Ph.D. psychologist, mathematician, member of MENSA, owns two banks, and runs a chain of laundry-mats. This is the player who suffers the most migraines over the course of a game. Sadly, for all their intellect this is the guy who comes out of the can with a streamer of toilet paper hanging from his pants. Spider monkeys have greater tactical ability than the brain. The brain has the odds for any situation calculated, graphed, and programmed into their computers, but suffer hemorrhages when the luck (read 'luck') doesn't go their way. These players can't understand that twenty-four other players, plus X number of NPC's are all out to accomplish goals that may interfere with their plans and/or orders. These are among the worst players to be allied with because they spend most of the game moping or out right complaining about the system. 'Hey, join the disco (ugh!) movement and go underground'. If on your side, and they are running a truly vital position all you can hope for is a clean death.

**The Shadow-** This player enjoys being neither seen nor heard, but rather, felt. This is the player the 'is he still in the game' debate rages around. These players

enjoy creating back-up capitals that no-one else can see: 'What do you mean there is a city in hex 0224'. Yes, that is right, under the big M. These players cannot be reached by telephone or letters. They rarely respond to notes, and their own notes are encrypted in Khuzdul. Shadows worship secrets and often spend many orders hunting down vital pieces of information. Unlike the info-hog he puts these clues to his immediate use. Shadows are a great boon to an allegiance but their value to the individual players on their team is negligible. Shadows are extremely deadly when in control of the sneakier nations i.e.. Dragon Lord, Sinda, Cloud Lord, etc....

**The Idiot ('Eigit')**- These are the players who fork out twenty-five hard earned dollars to get involved in the ME-PBM experience but don't bother to read the rule book. These are the players who gave their army commanders rfspsers every turn even if no other armies are present, or alternatively forget to refuse when that 200+ challenge commander is attacking their capital. These players insist on placing camps in the mountains, and don't understand why their emissaries keep getting eaten by large lizard things. Peer pressure or weird lunar cycles is what must cause these players to join a game. Many husband and wife teams are composed of one idiot and no, it is not always the wife. These people aren't necessarily stupid, but are often just detached from the game and thus make easy prey.

**The Mercenary** - Usually a neutral this player does everything for profit. He is not likely to sell his total allegiance, but anything less than this can be bought. These players often hire out their agents and emissaries to cause havoc or uncover information. Mercenary players are also likely to sell population centers in exchange for powerful artifacts or heaps of gold. A Merc's armies are available for quick raids but are rarely available as expendable force. These players are masters of salvage and probably own dozens of old eight-track players. Mercenaries although attracted to neutral positions can also be found playing relatively safe nations such as Southern Gondor, the Blind Sorcerer, and the Cloud Lord. If you are dealing with a mercenary in your game, try to buy some immunity from their actions, even if they are on an opposing allegiance. A true mercenary is always honorable in their negotiations. Beware scoundrels, rogues and the like who use this guise to get something for nothing at your expense.

**THE GOBLER** - Unlike the mercenary this player type is unique to neutral positions. The first turn of the game they issue twenty 3x5's, each containing a list of demands. The list often looks something like: a City/Keep, and a 2000 pt sword, and a teleport and/or a hiding artifact, and 20,000 gold, and the execution of all characters listed as victory conditions.

They always refuse to change allegiance until after you have paid them off, and they will unscrupulously promise oaths of fealty to both sides. The best way to rid yourself of this burden is to contact your respective opposites and wipe the Gobbler out quick. Gobblers are easy prey for the wrath of an Avenger.

**THE QUITTER** - This is a player type with which nobody is familiar, as they are not in the game long enough to be noticed. This player drops games like little kids drop ice cream cones. This player doesn't just quit, but leaves their entire position in such disarray that the stand-by can't help but follow suit. These players if in truly important positions, i.e. Witch King or Northern Gondor, can destroy the game for everyone. If you suspect you are playing with a quitter,

try to keep a few good emissaries nearby to pick up the slack when they do quit. And no, this is not an excuse to go robbing your allies of pop-centers. "Honest Ed, I thought you quit."

**THE TOLKIENITE** - Shaved heads, white robes, and leather bound copies of the Hobbit are all clues that you may be dealing with a Tolkienite. Often confused with the Shriners and visiting Tibetan monks. Unlike the purist, who is a disbeliever in comparison, the Tolkienites play ME-PBM as a form of worship to the late J.R.R. Tolkien. These players must roll for frenzy whenever engaged in the "Tolkien loved the Elves best" argument. Their favorite elf is Feanor and they will out right refuse to play anything but the Noldo. If pressed, they will accept the weaker Sinda as penance. Anyone who enjoys playing the "lesser" positions of Men, Dwarves, or (Ack!), Orcs, and Trolls is looked down upon as pond scum from the primordial ooze. It is fun to play with these players, if only to smear a victory across their dainty Elven faces.

It is rumored that a small faction believe Tolkien was the actual fantasy and was in fact the mythical creation of Bilbo and Frodo, who created the Old Man while smoking pipe weed. Christopher Tolkien will neither confirm nor deny these allegations. Seems no one wants to discuss it.

Finally a word to the wise- NEVER, NEVER, EVER, "peg" your opponent. Anticipating an action and banking on it are two different things. If you underestimate your enemies it is you who are the weaker player. Even the most foolish player will someday learn to refuse a personal challenge. P.S. Hobbits and Orcs rule.

### Companies by Christopher Dexter

For all those Middle-earth PBM mediocrities out there that have not yet figured out all the ways to make their game more efficient and exciting, this article contains some information that could help any player become more respected or feared in the realms in which they roam, that is if they roam with a Company. Two to nine Characters can form a Company, providing one has some Command Skill, and different types of Companies can be created to perform special actions which would enhance the nation's ability to improve its situations in the game.

#### The Emissary Company

An Emissary with some Command skill leading a Company of eight other Emissaries can be used to build up population center loyalty more quickly than just one lowly Character on his own. The Commander of the Company of Emissaries at one of his or her own population centers can issue the 'Influence Your Own Population Center Loyalty' order and then a move order to another population center. The loyalty will go up between 1 and 5 points per character which becomes a range of improvement of 9-45 points in one turn, with the average being about 27 points of improved loyalty. Raising population center loyalty in this way is much more effective than having lone Emissaries at several population centers raising each only 1-5 points a turn.

With this increased loyalty the same Company can also improve the population center size more easily. A successful method that is presently in use in current games is that eight of the Emissaries issue the 'Influence' order while the highest ranking Emissary issues the 'Improve Population Center' order. If that 'Improve' order was successful, then the population center goes up in loyalty and increases in size all in the same turn. The recommended Emissary rank for the aforementioned "highest ranking Emissary" is about 50. Loyalties and revenues grow more quickly with this method, which in turn makes the nation stronger and capable of accomplishing more in the game.

As a result of repeated 'Influencing' and 'Improving,' the ranks of these nine Emissaries should rise to an adequate level which would allow the Emissary Company to become an offensive tool against an enemy nation. Arriving at an enemy population center, they could all issue the 'Influence Other's Population Center Loyalty' order. If all the characters were successful, the loyalty of that population center should come down 5-15 points per character. That range of decreased loyalty would be 45-135 points with the average being about 90 points of loyalty being drained away. Most population centers do not even have that many points of loyalty and are very likely to become the property of the nation who owns that Company.

Is it becoming clear just how much power a nation with a Company like this could wield in the course of a game? Yet, as powerful as all this sounds, power in one nation is often balanced by power in another. A Company of Emissaries can be completely or partially eliminated by a Company of another sort; a Company of Agents.

#### The Agent Company

An agent Company can spread ominous doom and creeping fear upon opposing nations. The threat of them can cause great armies to turn from their intended destinations and march elsewhere. Their sabotage can remove great fortifications in a single turn to allow their nation's armies to attack without too much resistance. Gobs of gold can be stolen from wealthy Capitals. Stealthy weapons can slip quietly between the unprotected ribs of targeted Characters leaving several dead every turn. In short, Agent Companies are just plain **NASTY!** Which is why every player should have one.

An Agent with some Command skill can form the Agent Company and begin their training by 'Guarding Location' at the Capital. If the Agent Company is not at a population center, then they can guard each other. Some players claim that when Agents reach the rank of 40 that they can easily steal gold from unguarded population centers. At the rank of 50, Agents become fairly successful at kidnapping, assassination, and sabotage. But it should be noted that there are too many factors in the game to make total success possible no matter how high the Agents' rank. Yet, the player that chooses his or her targets carefully can have success much of the time. When an enemy Army approaches, the Agent Company can attempt to obtain the same hex as that Army and 'Scout for Characters' to learn the names of all the Commanders. Then the Agent Company can attempt to assassinate or kidnap all those Commanders. If successful in eliminating all Commanders, the Army will disband. Any Agents that may be in the Army guarding those Commanders often will thwart these attempts, so if Agents are also discovered in the Army, have the better Agents in the Company target the Army's Agents. Quite often, the artifacts held by any of the target characters are picked up by the Agents in the Company during the successful execution of their orders. These same devastating tactics can be

performed on enemy Companies or at enemy Capitals where often lower skilled characters are doing the buying and selling for the enemy Nation.

As alluded to earlier, an Agent Company, if successful in issuing 'Sabotage Fortifications' order, can bring down all fortifications at an enemy population center in a turn. This would weaken the enemy population center's ability to defend itself against an attacking army. The Agent Company in Middle-earth PBM has offensive, defensive and economic advantages and is the ultimate disruptor, but can it handle those random encounters? Could they kidnap a Dragon? Or steal Galadriel's mirror from the Queen of Lorien? How about assassinate a Balrog? It is unknown if any player has ever tried any of these. It would seem that success would be more likely if the Company dealing with such encounters were made up of mixed character types.

#### The Multi-National Company

This Company can only be formed when all nations involved have 'Friendly' relations with one another. The players should have excellent communication between themselves so that all are aware of where the Company is going and what is to be done when it gets there. That is, unless one nation has its own ideas and follows their own selfish designs no matter where the Company goes like Boromir did in The Fellowship of The Ring.

This article contains only a hint of what is possible for Companies in Middle-earth PBM. Other possibilities could exist and exploring those possibilities, as G.S.I. ever expands the game, is what makes these PBM adventures into Middle-earth a continuously exciting experience for those Middle-earth PBM mediocrities who seek that excitement.

#### The Oracle Speaks

Got a question about your game you can't seem to find an answer to? Ask the Oracle!

#### MIDDLE-EARTH PBM

I recently tried to move an all cavalry army without food from 1614 to 0910, on the road. From my calculations, that's 9 movement points, well within the limit. I only got to 1312. What happened?

This is a misconception which many players have concerning moving armies without food. The truth of the matter is that moving without food costs  $\frac{4}{3}$  normal movement, rounded up, and is calculated hex by hex, rather than by total movement points. To take your example, you went from 1614 to 1613. Normally that's 1 point; but now, since you were traveling without food, it's multiplied by  $\frac{4}{3}$ , which equals 1.33; this is now rounded up to two. Thus, each hex now costs TWO movement points to travel through it. Using these calculations, you moved from 1614 to 1613, to 1513, to 1412 and then to 1312. This movement costs 8 points--trying to move to 1212 would exceed the number of points you can use and your movement was stopped. The points given under the 850 and 860 orders are a general guide as to the MAXIMUM number of points you can move--and the cost is calculated hex by hex.

Address any questions you may have about your game to "The Oracle Speaks". Printed inquiries may be signed or anonymous but please include your name and game number when submitting.

## The Hall Of Heroes

### Earthwood Game #228

The Allston-Houston Connection, consisting of player #6, the Forest Elves, player #13, the Rumonians, player #16, the Halflings, and player # 23, the Human Warrior, has driven the other upstart nations from the face of Earthwood and now claim sole dominance. Congratulations on a job well done.

### Game #229

In the last game of Original Earthwood remaining, The Cause has effected a triumphant victory in 50 turns, claiming all within the land as theirs. The Cause consists of player #2, the Hill Dwarves, and player #23, the Human Warrior. It is with a fond smile and a touch of sadness that we bid farewell to the game that launched Game Systems.

### Middle-earth Game #48 - The Free Peoples: #5, #4 & #22

Sauron screams eternal in the bowels of Mt Doom, now his eternal prison thanks to the valiant efforts of the Free in wiping his foul servants from the land. Final standings are as follows:

#5 Cardolan - 2025

#4 Arthedain - 1600

#22 Haradwaith - 1592

Top Dark Servant: #19 Long Rider - 1516

### Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 327

Highest Net Commander Rank - Argeleb II/Arthedain: 178

Highest Net Agent Rank - Talen/Southern Gondor: 145

Highest Net Emissary Rank - Chilperic/Woodmen: 92

Highest Net Mage Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 261

Most Mithril - Long Rider: 1256

Most Artifacts - Noldo Elves: 28

Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 21

Congratulations to the Free Peoples!

## The Hall Of Heroes

### Game #50 - The Dark Servants: #11, #17 & #19

The Lords of Mordor decorate their halls with the skulls of their enemies and bask in the knowledge that their Dark Lord now rules supreme in Middle-earth. Final standings are as follows.

#11 Witch-king - 2450

#17 Quiet Avenger - 2350

#19 Long Rider - 1733

Top Free People: #9 Sinda Elves - 1367

### Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Mûrazôr/Witch-king: 310

Highest Net Commander Rank - Thelór II/Dwarves: 133

Highest Net Agent Rank - Nyissa/Sinda Elves: 167

Highest Net Emissary Rank - Ulrac/Witch-king: 137

Highest Net Mage Rank - Mûrazôr/Witch-king: 242

Most Mithril - Quiet Avenger: 6204

Most Artifacts - Witch-king: 35

Most Kills - Ice King: 16

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

### Game #54 - The Dark Servants: #20, #14 & #23

With their enemies' people now filling their slave pits and the leaders of their foes their play things, the Dark Servants take their positions with Sauron as rulers of the Lightless land. Final standings are as follows:

#20 Dark Lieutenants - 2275

#14 Cloud Lord - 2233

#23 Dunlendings - 1984

Top Free People: #22 Haradwaith - 1108

### Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Akhôrahil/Blind Sorcerer: 255

Highest Net Commander Rank - Gothmog/Dark Lieutenants: 164

Highest Net Agent Rank - The Black Hand/Blind Sorcerer: 137

Highest Net Emissary Rank - Urzahil/Dark Lieutenants: 102

Highest Net Mage Rank - Akhôrahil/Blind Sorcerer

Most Mithril - Haradwaith: 2085

Most Artifacts - Dark Lieutenants: 31

Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 35

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!