

WHISPERS OF THE WOOD



JOHN WOODY

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forwarding & address correction requested



WORDS FROM THE WOOD

Well, gentle readers, greetings once again from the Wood, home of the ever lovable Ollie the Orc. I'd just like to take this time to let you all know about the myriad number of Ollie products we have for sale. We have cute little Ollie helmets, complete with horns and dents; we have official Ollie the Orc morning stars, his weapon of choice; there's the Ollie the Orc mail shirt, complete with the Ollie logo on the chest; Ollie the Orc manacles, good for keeping those prisoners of war and assisting in their torture; and, of course, burlap Ollie the Orc Underroos!! Just how do I get all of this fantastic merchandise, you ask yourself? That's simple--send a check or money order made out to . . . me. My name is Stuart Taft--that's S-T-U-A-R-T T-A-F-T. So get those pens a-scribblin' and send those requests in now--they won't last long!

For those of you interested in our email turns, we are working to get all of the details ready to be able to get those turns out to you. Please be aware, however, that we are still working out all the bugs. For more detailed information, please see the announcement printed in this issue.

The next order of business is to announce that we will now be accepting *Whispers* submissions via fax and email. That's right, we will now take personals, articles and stories over the fax machine and/or through the Net. There are several guidelines which we ask that you follow, however. The first and foremost is that you include your game # and player # with EACH PERSONAL you submit. We also ask that a security code is included with the personal, especially if the personal is over 60 words. If a personal is to be charged to an account and there is no security code, we will not run that personal. We will be hesitant to run ANY personal without a security code. We also ask that you send the personals separately from your turn. This will ease the processing on our end and will decrease the likelihood that the personal will be missed. Please do not tack on the personal to the end of your turnsheet, as this increases the chances that we will not see the personal. This applies only to faxes and email--we will not accept personals over the phone-in machine.

Now that we will be sending out turns via email, this opens up the possibility for one week games. Some players have asked about sending notes for these games, as there will be very little time or opportunity to send out notes through the normal channels. For this reason, we will allow players IN ONE WEEK EMAIL GAMES ONLY to submit notes with their email addresses with their set up requests. Please note that this applies to one week email games ONLY. All other communications will be handled normally.

This past month, we had our first ever on-line conference on America On Line. We are hoping to make this a regular event. Right now it is scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month at 9 PM and we welcome all of you to come on down for a chat! This is an excellent opportunity to talk to us here at GSI as well as other players. For those of you on AOL, GoTo Keywords and type "OGF"; click on Conference Center, click on Antechambers and you are in. I would check the conference schedule just to make sure we are in the same spot, however. We had a nice discussion last time with John Hull, the first ever to talk to GSI live on the net, and others. We would like to hear from all of you on AOL, so mark it on your calendars for May 8th. We'll talk to you there!

I'd like to take this opportunity to announce that the cartoon which appeared in last month's issue was drawn by Edward A Dimmick. Our apologies to Edward for leaving out that pertinent little detail--it's nice to get credit for



ALONG THE PATHWAYS

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This Month's Cover: "Ambush" by John Woody

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PERSONALS: BARBS & BRAGS

Every current GSI player is entitled to a free 60 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 (61-100 is \$2.00 etc.). GSI reserves the right to edit or refuse material deemed unsuitable.

GENERAL

Internet Players Wanted!

Now forming a 1650 game for players with Internet addresses. Harness the mysterious powers of the "Net" to coordinate with your allies, persuade the neutrals, and taunt your foes. E-mail me at mikewag@seattleu.edu with your allegiance and your three rank ordered nation preferences. I will e-mail you to confirm your nation before submitting the list to GSI. I will also provide each player with a listing of each nation's e-mail address.

Let us battle together in cyber-space.
Grimtooth

Middle-earth™ PBM circa 1650

GAME 29

Finally! After three long years of war, I wait to meet my Master Sauron. With rings 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 on my fingers, I will give him the ONE and rule at his side for eternity. I have a large realm (32 cities, 106 population centers), many artifacts, wealth so great the caravans cannot afford to buy a single item (155 million gold), great armies that have hundreds of war machines and tens of thousands of mithril laden heavy cavalry, mages that slay Istari at will, and agents that have resorted to capturing balrogs and dragons to amuse themselves. Together with my brother the Cloud Lord, we have slayed scores of opponents both enemy and ally alike. We have subjugated the elves of the wood and even rule the open sea. But alas, is there no challenge left? Will not

Manwë and the Lords of Valar even come to challenge us? Are we doomed to rule a world of mindless subjects who would kill themselves at our feet to please us?

Herumor! Prepare your ships!
Gargal, Kantu! Assemble your armies!
Sasha! Recall the mages and heralds!
Thergor! Summon your guild and have them bring those balrog and dragon slaves with them! Rhukska! Contact Jf Indûr and advise him to do the same!
Forgive me, my Master, but I must keep my Precious a little while longer.
We sail to the West! On to Valinor!!!!

Malezar

The Lord of the Rings

GAME 94

It seems wherever I go I find another pesky little Cardolan pop center. Invariably there is no gold but at least one eager Cardolanian bares his throat. If nothing else, I admire your fortitude. As for the One Ring, mon ami, just because you took the easy way out of #61 doesn't mean we will. Or does it?

Ûvatha

GAME 103

Zelagor Mar hissed in frustration as she crept away from the battlefield. How was I supposed to know that boot-licking cretin Meneldir would show up with a dragon for reinforcements? Her eyes flashed heavenward. What is a great worm of darkness doing helping the Dunadan anyway?

The Free are being crushed into powder....albeit with glacial speed.

Rhys (18)

GAME 105

As hillmen from Rhudaur and trolls and orcs from Mirkwood ravage South Gondor, the populace fades away; Corsair leadership loses several heads, gives up fight. Only Éothraim and Northmen fight on . . . but for how long? Meanwhile, in a personal vendetta, Khamûl sticks Hoarmûrath (long inactive) in back, takes his weapons . . .

Raugwath (#12)

GAME 125 CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS

Where are the Northmen? A navy has appeared and emissaries. The battle is on. Baaltroc himself is the first victim--or is he? Morannon has been leveled but at what cost? Yet another Free People offensive has been cast back.

Zarendarger (15)

GAME 141

To my Dearest Enemies:

Da Gondors

First off to North Gondor; with two agents I managed to kill all four of your emissaries in one turn (I know that hurt) at Metriath. Let it be known that I will kill you (or anyone else) if you trespass on my lands again . . . thank you.

South Gondor, your gold has served me well, thank you. Almost single-handedly you have funded my war efforts. I know, I know, you wish to keep these gifts a secret. So you just keep leaving that gold on your back doorstep and I'll keep sneaking up to take it.

To my Dearest Allies:

Da Bad Guys

I just wanted you to know that I have enjoyed this game immensely (that goes to everyone as well) so let's keep having a blood spilling, bone chilling, nerve-wracking game.

Thank you and Elvis has left the building.

Berserker #16

GAME 151

The exterminators took care of all those elves! Please come back to Tol Boruth, it makes it so much easier to pick up kills! Éothraim, you hide behind your allies then have the nerve to boast! You, sir, are the worst kind of coward! South Gondor and the Woodmen are all that stand between you and a serious butt kicking.

Selur Rodrom

GAME 154

The war in the east ends. Though the realms of Mahrcared and Eoder have fought brilliantly, They are overwhelmed at last. The Long Rider grows on Rhûn's shores, the Easterlings approach, And you cannot hold us back. The star of the East wanes, and her light will be quenched . . . FINALLY!

My compliments for a war well fought.

Rhys (15)

Our nation, as the phoenix, once again rises from the ashes of destruction. We stand poised to strike a decisive blow against our enemies. To the victor go the laurels, to the loser--the marshmallows.

Sir Staypuff

GAME 156

It's sad. It's turn 23 and the only two battles I have won were taking Minas Ithil twice. I haven't met the army yet who couldn't lick me.

Ren

GAME 158

Servants of Sauron,
All I see is Free armies on the move.
All I smell is the remains of your
armies.
All I hear is Baltab's whining (his
tongue grew back).
All I know is that you only own your
"FEW" miserable mountain fortresses.

Lords of the Sinda
El & the Vaders

The future is so bright you will soon
be shades.

Let's see. 14 FP with none
dropping any time soon. 10 DS (11, if
you think of Haradwaith as any kind
of threat) with at least 4 already
dropped. You don't have to be a Herald
to read the writing on the wall. Long
live the FP.

C. Vik
(The one and only)

Silly little ex-men,
Brave talk to throw at ex-neutrals,
How long before Ren is talking to
himself?
Why not insult the Dwarves, Gondor
Lords or proud Woodmen?
All you have to do is open the door,
they wait outside, practicing on your
pitiful armies.

El & the Vaders
Sinda Lords

Hoarmûrath,

Once again, you've missed the
point. You claim that my "little
incursion into Mordor will not be
tolerated?" Wake up. I've already
marched from Adûndaphêl's land to
Ren's capitol, capturing Jî Indûr's
capitol, Ren's back-up major town, and
several miscellaneous minor
population centers along the way. I've

destroyed every army that stepped
into my path. Now, with
reinforcements and the help of my
allies, I'm about to march back into the
heart of Mordor. I suggest that you
find some skirt to cower behind,
because your fortifications will not
protect you.

#7 Celdrahil

GAME 159

Hoormarath,

There is still time for you to take
advantage of my generous offer.
Headstones can be very expensive,
especially in the quantity you will be
needing. Act quickly! My offer will not
last forever and neither will your
army at 2213.

Bain I
Warrior Stone Cutter

Darkness is flooding Green Wood! We
better build some dams.

Overlord of Shadows

GAME 161

In a noble attempt to save
northern Harad from domination by
the Dark, nearly 2400 poorly-
equipped elves managed to defeat
Grasty's army and recapture Barad
Harn—at the cost of two-thirds of their
force. Grasty remarked, "Hey! It wasn't
my fault! I tried to get rid of the
harbor . . ." Rumor claims another
Cloud Lord army is nearby . . .

Overheard at Mt. Gram:

Jî Indûr: "Hey Erennis, gimme yer
stuff."

Erennis: "I thought you had some toys .
.."

Jî Indûr: "I give 'em away—you know,
to Mages, Commanders, Dragons . . .
now gimme!"

Erennis: "O.K., you're the Boss."

Jî Indûr: "Dat's right, an' don' fergit it!"
Daelomin: "Jî INDÛR, GIVE ME YOUR
ITEMS!"

Jî Indûr: "Sure! Why not . . ."

Erennis: "Sigh . . ."

GAME 165

And war raged on.

The minstrel cast a last look
down upon the burning deserts of
Gorgoroth. Nazgûl hunting was actually
quite boring, he thought as their band
turned south toward Harondor. South,
towards tougher game. Yes, and more
songs to write.

GAME 178

Witch-king, who is to be your
new leader? Mûrazôr is dead at
Elrond's hand. Since his death, it's been
rather peaceful around here, no insane
triads. I shall idle away Angmar from
you. Time for you to move or die!

Zarendarger (4)

PS Sneaker has done more damage to
me than your entire kingdom has!

GAME 184

News Flash: The Quiet Avenger has
introduced submarine warfare to the
world. Wait . . . What? . . . Correction,
my mistake, what this reporter
thought was a break through in naval
technology is . . . actually . . . the QA
navy at the bottom of the sea.

ME News Agency

To the Dog Lord and Easterling
Leaders:

I sincerely apologize for the
recent rash of fires occurring at so
many of your population centers. It
appears that some of our children
have found a box of matches but have
not been properly trained in fire
safety. We have corrected this
situation by taking their matches away
and are letting them play with torches

instead. Hopefully, this will solve both
of our problems and we can put our
differences behind us.

Your friend, trusted neighbor, and
life-long pal,
High Plains Drifter

PS: Dark Lieutenants: sorry about that
army, too.

GAME 186

Mûrazôr was a dropped position.
The Freeps gloat over their pitiful
victory. They have not faced true
warriors in battle yet. I say to them
"Come south and learn the
consequences of resisting the Lord
Sauron. Your pitiful armies have not
fought anything real yet. But they will,
and it will not be long. Death comes for
Nightspawn.

Carnage

From Prince Arfanhil,
To All Free Peoples—
Be it known that Rhudaur has joined
with the Light; contact with our new
allies is welcomed. Those who wish
closer cooperation should write soon!
To Ūzahil—

Thank you for your offer, but we
must politely decline.

GAME 188

Sittin' on a dock of the bay,
Watchin' the tide roll away . . .
Wait a minute—tide? There ain't no
tide in Nûrnen! No doubt about it—we
gotta git ourselves a real ocean. Any
real estate for sale out West? With a
port, maybe?

Akhôrahil the Blind Mage

GAME 189

Where are the Gondor legions?
Cowering in their camps, of course!
The Rose of Harondor

GAME 190

Having chosen this position,
I will play it to its rightful
conclusion
Woodmen, you knocked on the Gate,
It did not open.
You and that pointed ear Elf are lucky
to have survived,
Unlike at Gundabad.
Poor Waulfa

Hmmm?

Turn four is now history and a
new chapter is written. But just for
review, the facts at that time were:

- 1) Woodmen army commander
dead at Gundabad.
- 2) Woodmen/Noldo armies fail to
take Goblin's Gate—severe losses.
- 3) Elven lord killed, army
dispersed.
- 4) Elven city falls.
- 5) Woodmen camp joins Dragon
Lord.

So was that kicking butt or
kissing butt in Mirkwood?

I do not foresee the future, butt
I wouldn't brag unless I knew that I
had enough water to put out the fire.

Khamûl

Typical Rhudaur Council Meeting

"Boring."

"We just sit around and practice,"
whined another.

"Where's the adventure? The honor?
The glorious battles?"

"Well I'm not going to just sit around!
I'm going to get involved!" He rose.
WHOOSH! A bright blade took off his
head.

(silence)

"Hey look everyone, I'm practicing!"

"I love sitting around!"

"Arfanhil's daring and flamboyant
leadership . . ."

GAME 191

The die has been cast, the seers
have spoken--the nation of the
Easterlings will be **FREE!**

Subtle threats have been
received from the DS; but honest, open
communication by Elrond was what
won us over.

Neutrals, join the light; if they
(DS) would threaten us now, what
would they do in the end game?

Ovatha II

GAME 194

Once again I AM again. While my
body is stuck in Louisiana my mind
roams free across the plains of
Rhovanion. Free People, let this be a
game of communication and
cooperation. Neutrals, we hope that
our unity will lead you to the Light.
Dark Servants, may you play with skill
and cunning, thus being worthy
opponents.

Selur Rodrom

Easterlings:

Thoust think that thoust art
crafty, but both the pure hearts of
men and the all seeing eye are not so
easily deceived. We know the stuff
you're made of and the games you
play.

GAME 195

Yo ho ho, gonna have some fun,
Sailing, sailing on the Sea of Rhûn—
Ûvatha's boats are gonna sink,
All our sailors gonna sing and drink,
An' we won't stop 'til we've won!

Tipsy Northman Bard

(Before being thrown overboard)

Middle-earth™ PBM circa 2950

GAME 4

"Oh sir! Sir!" gasps a humble
servant of Ren, "Things cannot be
worse."

"What are you babbling about,
slave?" Ren coldly questions.

"Oh sir, there are Gondorians in
Mordor at Minas Morgul."

"Minas Morgul? That is too bad,
too bad indeed."

"But sir, are you not worried?"
asks the servant.

His question is answered only by
cold silence.

GAME 7

How to say Non-existent Done
Dead Dragon Lord on toast.
Witch-king burger with a side of fries.
Wolf-bait Ice King
Fried Fire King
Played out Cloud Lord
Flat lined Blind Sorcerer
Prostrated Quiet Avenger
Coagulated Dog Lord
Done dead Long Rider
Devastated Dark Lieutenants
Wiped out White Wizard
KO'd Khand
Dragged out Dunlendings

GAME 14

So the war bogs down by the
16th week. Almost all the Good and
Evil armies are expended. Money
reserves are gone. Prices for goods
have been at rock bottom for months.
Now the character battles begin in
earnest. A pestilence of thieves
descends upon the land. Four dragons
have been turned away by the brave
Free armies.

But spring is coming, hope shines
in the West! All the brothers of the
Light have survived the foul winter

when many neutrals and evils did not.
Rally brothers! Let us take the fight
back to Mordor!

Lord Argirion

Of the Valiant Peoples of Gondor

GAME 18

I am sure by now it is apparent
that I have dropped out, along with
the Northmen, Dwarves and Riders.
Please allow me to explain.

Between the Sinda running
around looking for encounters and
BOTH the Gondors sitting mute and
playing hanky panky with themselves,
I decided it was not worth \$6.50 a
turn just to watch half of my team
which, I may add, was all the
powerhouses of the game, sit idle
while we get the snotlings beat out of
us!

Although the Northmen and
Dwarves attacked a Neutral right off,
against my pleas, they at least did
something! It was a rumor that some
of my team were on winner's
certificates. HA! Yeah right! To this I
must ask the question that was on my
half of the team's mind: Just who in
the hell did you play?

The Berserker #5

P.S. If it was those NASA monkeys I
bet it was a close game!

GAME 25

Somewhere in Khand . . . a lonely
woman of middle years and grim
visage wanders. The mountain air is
cool and night is falling . . . What is
this? A dark hidden cave?! Well, since
the camp she seeks seems not to exist,
perhaps she'll step inside and see what
fate decrees . . . with luck, the trip will
not have been wasted . . .

Ûvatha, I tire of your presence
at Shrel-Kain. Koldana fell honorably
in single combat, but you killed Girion
with poison in the dark. He will be

avenged. I wish to thank Elrond for his help. It has been, and will be, much appreciated. Guillaume, my youngest envoy, speaks very highly of you and wishes above all else to be counted among the elf-friends. I will hold council with any neutral who wishes. Any information any of the people of the Free can supply would be appreciated.

Bard I
Slayer of Smaug
Master Archer of Dale
King of the Northmen

GAME 26

The wood has been defiled. Wargs barking, Goblins laughing. All decent men and elves are in an uproar. Dol Guldur must fall and soon.

Ren the Very Dead will no longer be whipping us with his tongue.

Zarendarger (5)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Little Ren Peep, the eighth slave of Sorehead, has been executed. He was apprehended while searching for his 3 lost armies of sheep. Found on him were a picture of his mommy (who always wanted him to more like Mûrazôr) and a clean pair of underwear (Witch-king underoos). His last words were "I am his sword . . . Fear me, for I am . . ." (cut short). In an effort to delay the execution, Ren quickly stuck his foot in his mouth, preventing the hangman from slipping the noose over his neck. His epitaph reads-- "Here lies little Ren Peep the wanna be conqueror. In the three Ages of Arda, no one was wimpier---Stumpy is still at large."

The flames leapt high into the moonless night. Their brilliance reflected the anger of a nation having lost its leader. Higher and higher they

swept until the roar of the winds rushing in to feed the inferno almost eclipsed the screams of a thousand warriors that worshipped alongside.

"Burn the World"
"Death to Gondor"

Turn 4 Tallies: FP claim 3 Fire King, 1 Long Rider, 1 Dog Lord, 3 Dragon Lord, and 2 Ice King armies routed. DS claim good weather and zone defense is foul play.

Sorehead summons the Eight (a.k.a. the Nine) and the Mouth for explanations.

GAME 28

"We need to expand," ponders the king.

"Not to the north," says a Dwarven emissary.

"Not to the south," says a Khand emissary.

"Not to the east," says a Silvan emissary.

"Not to the west," says a Long Rider emissary.

"Then where?" questions the king.

"Anywhere you like, my lord," states his subjects.

"Bah!" murmurs the king.

And so it begins again! Well met to all my fellow Servants of Sauron--if you haven't contacted me, please do. Neutrals, we invite you to join us in our upcoming victory. And last of all--Freeeps--don't look back, something will be gaining on you

Good Gaming
The Grey Hunter
Lord Ren the Unclean
Master of Barad-Ungol
Servant of Sauron

GSI ERROR POLICY

Many players have inquired recently about how GSI handles mishaps and mistakes that occur with their game turns. There are a variety of different answers to this general question, covering a wide range of circumstances, and we felt that perhaps it would be best to cover as many of the factors and issues involved so that any confusion can be minimized.

First of all, the number of problems that occur on game turns is relatively small, given the huge number of turns and the amount of entries on each turn. Many players go an entire game without a single error or problem happening to them. However, because we are all human here at GSI, mistakes and problems do sometimes occur.

What does GSI do to minimize mistakes?

First of all, GSI does two daily reviews to ensure that all turns that are received (either by fax, e-mail, phone-in, or regular mail) and are filed correctly, pending entry into the computer system for their game. All corrections and changes are also checked to be sure they were filed away correctly. These checks are done first thing in the morning and the last thing before turns are mailed out. This is to ensure that the chances of GSI receiving a turn, but not processing it, are minimal. Next, GSI does a double-blind data-entry, with the second review being done by a different staff person, in order to minimize the number of data-entry mistakes. This is to ensure that the orders and entries going into the game processing program are as accurate as possible. Additionally, the data-entry process includes a multitude of internal verification checks that ensure that mis-types and mis-spellings are flagged, corrected, and thus minimized. Finally, after all the results are printed, the staff reviews each and every turn to ensure that all the information is correct. This includes player name/address, account balance, and a list of the orders that are most critical/unusual and that are hardest to correct afterwards. If the data-entry was done correctly, 99%+ of the time the program that processes the orders will generate correct results.

What does GSI consider an error and what is not an error?

Problems fall into three general areas - 'player oversights', 'other problems', and 'GSI errors'. The first two kinds of problems generally have little recourse in terms of modifications to turn results. The last case is the only instance where GSI can make corrections, and there are some limitations to how much can be corrected in some circumstances.

What can GSI do in the case of a 'player oversight'?

If the problem is a player oversight, then there is nothing that GSI can do to modify results generated from such oversights. Even in cases where the oversight is "very slight" and "would not affect the game", our responsibility as game moderators dictates that we can make no modifications to the turn results for such errors. Otherwise, GSI places itself in the un-enviable position of having to determine what oversights do affect the game and what oversights do not, and this determination would be both time-consuming (expensive) and difficult. Such problems are simply 'part of the game'. Player oversights cover a wide variety of problems, including but not limited to:

- 1) Orders left blank.
- 2) Orders with misplaced/missing 'required information'
- 3) Order codes and order numbers that do not match
- 4) Invalid 'order codes', 'order numbers', and 'required information'

- 5) Duplicate skill orders
- 6) Mis-spelled id's, hexes, spell numbers, etc..
- 7) Illegible handwriting and/or fax transmissions
- 8) Turns sent to GSI on or after the due date (after 9 AM, or 9 AM of the day before for e-mail turns)
- 9) Hand-prepared turns with incomplete, or with invalid/missing information (player name, game and position number, due date, security codes, etc.)
- 10) Hand-prepared turns submitted in non-standard format (missing pages or characters, non-alphabetical listing of characters, etc.)

The data-entry process generally has a lot of error-checking built in, provides numerous defaults for some missing information, and has some flexibility with regard to some entries. However, character id's, 'required information' codes, etc. must be indicated in full or as specified on page 108 of the rulebook. Furthermore, the 'required information' for each order should be complete and presented in the sequence specified in the rulebook. If the oversight amounts to an entry that was hard to read (i.e. illegible fax or handwriting), and our staff was forced to make its 'best interpretation' of the entry (as opposed to our simply mis-typing it), then there is nothing GSI can do. To do otherwise would encourage/reward players to write illegibly and then allow them to be able to 'choose' what they wanted afterwards. Hand-prepared turns, especially those not using our standard format, increase the chances of some of the above-mentioned oversights.

What can GSI do in the case of 'other problems'?

If the problem is an 'other problem', then again there is little that GSI can do to modify results generated from such mishaps, although there is much we (GSI and the players) can both do to try and prevent such occurrences. Even in cases where the mishap is through no fault of the player (nor GSI), our responsibility as game moderators dictates that we can make no modifications to the turn results for such mishaps. The problem is that GSI has no way of confirming (in most of these cases) whether the information (as specified by the player... after the turn has been run and received!) is correct. This opens up the possibility that unscrupulous players could provide false 'corrections', after the fact.

It is a commonly known of the postal system that some times postal items will take longer to be delivered than others. And that a certain number of postal items will be delayed or lost. Perhaps not surprising considering the volume of mail being handled, but aggravating nonetheless. We would all like to think that this will not happen to our turns, but the reality is that this does happen from time to time.

However, it is not commonly known that there can be problems with fax and e-mail submissions just as well. Admittedly, such problems are more uncommon, but they are still just as aggravating. Furthermore, although everyone can apply postage and drop an envelope into the mail box [although a number of turns are returned 'postage due' or 'missing postage' each turn], not everyone knows how to operate a fax machine (or e-mail) properly. This can cause unexpected problems with the turn copies received by GSI (or worse yet, NOT received by GSI).

Even in cases where the turn does arrive (only it arrived late), there is simply no way for GSI to implement and adjust for those 'late' orders. There are numerous reasons why this can not be done, even if the adjustment for the missed order is "very slight" and "would not affect the game". The game is designed so that actions and events occur 'in step' - on the due date. How would GSI handle late orders that would affect other players (agent actions, combats, army movements, challenges, etc.)? Even if we could skip adjusting for those orders, the remaining orders would have to be determined and adjusted 'by hand' by one of the staff. This process would be extremely time-consuming (expensive) and ripe for introducing additional errors.

Furthermore, what if the turn arrives so late that it comes in after the next turn? And what if the turn never arrives? For these reasons (and more), such events, however rare, must simply be 'part of a PBM game'. Such 'other problems' include a wide variety of problems, including but not limited to:

- 1) Turns submitted (faxed or mailed) that fail to reach GSI before the due date
- 2) 'Overnight' or 'Priority' mail that fails to reach GSI before the due date
- 3) Completely illegible fax turns
- 4) Turns faxed 'upside down'
- 5) Fax and e-mail turns lost in transmission to GSI
- 6) Mechanical problems, such as down phone lines, jammed fax paper feeds, equipment failure, etc.
- 7) Mistakes made in transcribing phone-in turn orders
- 8) E-mail turns not submitted one business day before the due date
- 9) Misinterpreting game mechanics described in the rulebook

Players are encouraged to review their turns carefully to avoid some of the above problems and to contact GSI (even as late as 2-5 PM EST of the day before the turn is due) to ensure that the turn has arrived on time and intact. We urge all players that are using any 'new' means to submit turns (fax, e-mail, etc.), or in instances where the turns are 'critical', that you contact GSI (as described above) to ensure that your turn was received intact. This leaves the option (in cases where the turn has failed to arrive) of using our phone-in service or faxing the turn at the last minute. The bottom line in all the above instances is that if an error can not be determined to be the fault of GSI, then in order to protect the interests of the other players in the game, it must be assumed to be one of the above mishaps or oversights, and thus no corrections can be made.

This is not to say that GSI does not do everything in our power to minimize such 'other problems' - that is what we are in business for! We are as unhappy to see a missed (or special service turn) as you are. Customers that receive their turns, with actions as they ordered, are happy customers that want to play more and tell more of their friends! Thus, in addition to the procedures described above, GSI will attempt to contact players who submit turns that seem to have problems brought on by no fault of the player. This is the reason that we ask players to provide the 'Emergency contact phone number' and to update it periodically. GSI can not call if the problem is simply a 'player oversight', nor can we call if a turn has simply failed to arrive, but we will try to reach the player if the mishap is due to most any of the other listed examples. The only restriction is that if the turn was submitted very near the due date (i.e. received by GSI on the due date), then there may not be time for GSI to contact the player and wait for their response before the game must be processed. For example, if we receive a turn the morning the game is due, and there is a problem, then we will try to contact the player and hold the game from processing (as long as is possible) awaiting the re-submission of orders, but the game can not be held up too long without risk that the other players in the game will not have their turns mailed out (and thus received) on time. Thus, cooperation between the players and GSI can impact greatly, and reduce significantly, the number of such problems.

Furthermore, if there are elements of the game mechanics that are unclear, either in the rulebook or from conversations with other players, then please contact GSI and we will be glad to try and clear up as many such questions as we can. Some aspects of the game mechanics are not revealed to players, but there are also some elements of the rulebook that are more clear to some players than others. And, although we can not make adjustments to results simply because a player misinterpreted the rulebook, we can try to improve each new edition by better explaining any sections that are confusing to enough players.

What can GSI do in the case of 'GSI errors'?

If the problem is that GSI received the turn, but did not process it (i.e. we misfiled the orders) then we will do everything we can to see that as many missed actions/orders as possible get implemented/corrected so that the impact to the player is minimized. In some cases, not all actions/orders will be able to be so corrected (see below). This kind of error does not happen often (less than half-dozen times a year on 50,000+ turns). If the error mentioned above was such that several turns were missed, and thus the entire game would be affected, then more radical solutions (up to, and including, re-running the entire turn) would have to be considered. This would be unfair to some players (i.e. an assassination works on the first turn, but fails on the re-run), but would be more fair to most of the players. Fortunately, this kind of error is extremely rare, having actually happened only once or twice since GSI began running turns back in 1981.

If the ME-PBM program fails to implement the actions/orders on a turn as they are described in the rulebook (such occurrences are also very rare, becoming rarer with each passing year), or if the problem is a data-entry problem, then (as above) GSI will do what it can to correct the error. There are times when our staff will mis-read or mis-type an entry, and despite our double and triple error-checking, the error will go undetected. In some cases, the error can be easily corrected (transferring an artifact to another character, or putting troops on maneuvers, etc....). However, in some cases, some such errors can not be fixed because they would affect the results that other players have already received (and assume are valid). Instances of such errors could include - army movement, combat, agent actions, challenges, etc.... and there are many reasons why we can not change/correct such errors.

First of all, it is hard to contact all the players that might be involved. In fact, in some cases it is impossible to reach some or all such players. Furthermore, it is (arguably) not fair to penalize those players for answering their phone and then trying to force them to accept changes to their results, often detrimental changes. Although some players would welcome such changes in the spirit of 'fair play', some players would view the error as "GSI's problem, not theirs". Both points are valid and must be respected. Furthermore, what if GSI could reach some players, but not all? The issues become complex and convoluted. Therefore, GSI has little choice in such instances but to try correct those aspects that can be corrected without affecting the results of other players, while at the same time trying to minimize the damage done to the player with whom the error occurred. Therefore, some actions can be corrected while others can not.

Each case is handled on an individual basis and sometimes extreme solutions can be worked out such that at least the overall balance of the game can be maintained (although perhaps not exactly what it would have been) to the mutual agreement of the player and GSI (as game moderator). Fortunately, these kinds of errors are uncommon because we take extra steps to verify the validity of such actions (described above) before the turns are ever mailed out. But, alas, we are human....

What should I do if I think I have an error?

GSI can best improve itself, in terms of minimizing our errors, if each and every player will bring any such errors to our attention immediately - even if you are not sure it is an error, and even if you deem the error to be 'small'. We need and want to know when we go wrong. We feel that it is better that problems are dealt with while they are small, than when they grow (undetected) into something big. And you may learn how to best avoid mishaps and other problems and thus ensure better enjoyment and performance in your games. So call GSI and let us know - we may both gain from the time and effort!

In conclusion, there are times when players feel that their circumstances warrant adjustments to the game by GSI. In some cases, the player is not so justified, and as game moderator, GSI must protect the other players in the game and deny any such adjustments. In other cases, the player is justified, but GSI may be

limited in terms of how much can be adjusted. In such cases, we will frequently compensate the player outside of the game (a free turn or two), but we can not, as game moderators, penalize the other players in the game for what amounts to 'GSI's error'. We regret these instances and work very hard to avoid them, but they do happen from time to time. We know that "The customer is always right", but as game moderator, GSI is not functioning as businessmen, but rather we are acting as referees. An analogy for such instances would be a referee in a sports event - the referee may blow a call from time to time, but if they do, it is just 'part of the game'. As businessmen, we will try to compensate the players in cases where we feel it best serves GSI and the player both, but such compensation may not always be within the confines of the game. Fortunately GSI, like most referees, strives to make few errors and thus the outcome of the each game can be determined almost entirely by the players (along with their skills and strategies) and not by the referees! We hope this clarifies any concerns about how GSI handles the above-mentioned matters. If you have further individual questions or problems, feel free to contact us directly.

Good luck in your gaming!

Game Systems Inc

Learning to "Think 2950": Some observations for 1650 players.

By

David Rossell and Mark Jaede

This article is the result of a series of conversations between a veteran player of ME-PBM 1650 and a first-time player who started in the 2950 scenario. As teammates on the Free side of Game 22 of 2950, we came to the conclusion that many players were strategizing and evaluating the play balance of the 2950 scenario according to the conventional wisdom of the 1650 game. Both of us believe that this is a mistake; the 2950 game demands a fresh look. There are three key changes which force 1650 players to rethink their assumptions: economy, geography, and agents.

Most 2950 nations start with very fragile economies, and it is entirely possible to drive them into bankruptcy within the first few turns. One writer in the e-zine The Mouth of Sauron observed this about the Dark Servants, but it is also true of the Woodmen, Northmen, Silvans, and Rangers. Even the mighty Gondors could go broke quickly with the right combination of over-recruiting and gold thefts. The implications of the new economy touch every aspect of play. Each player must be a careful bookkeeper. We heartily recommend projecting revenues and expenses over at least two turns. Allow some slack for limited sales (the initial maximum sale seems to be under 20,000 gold), pop center losses, and just plain errors. Especially pay attention to seasonal changes in production. This is serious. Players who are used to the large numbers of characters and troops of the 1650 game will be in for some unpleasant surprises if they blithely recruit in the style of the old game.

Be aware, too, that the capture or destruction even of small pop centers can make a huge difference. A nation running close to the edge cannot afford the loss of a village or a couple of gold-producing camps. On the other hand, large pop centers with fortifications are much harder to take, because no one can afford the armies it would take to storm them. In the absence of large armies, the much-maligned Siege order may prove more popular. Military tactics also

must change in a limited economy. Massive assaults against large pop centers are nearly impossible, except perhaps in the later stages of the game. Military actions must be planned and evaluated in terms of rather modest increments of cost vs. benefit. Consider recruiting fewer troops with better armor and weapons. Beef up your armies with artifacts and mages; combat bonuses will be worth proportionally more in this game. Remember that feeding an army might be more cost-effective, since you can get it into combat more quickly.

Just as you want to minimize your own expenses, you want to maximize your opponents' maintenance costs. Look for opportunities to force your foes to keep more troops in the field than you do. This may be done by maintaining interior lines, as in northwestern Mordor, or by threatening several pop centers with a few mobile troops. The latter strategy looks especially promising for the Corsairs against the Gondors (and vice versa), for the Long Rider in Rhovanion, and perhaps for the Witch King in Eriador. In some cases a force may do more harm by staying visible and tying down garrisons than it can do by committing itself to an attack.

Remember that your opponents are operating under similar constraints. (Yes, even the Gondors.) When in doubt about the size of the enemy armies you see, don't assume they contain huge numbers of heavy troops. You may well be looking at a herd of men-at-arms. Even if they are heavy troops, you may rejoice as they draw their fat paychecks from your enemy's treasury.

A tight economy also mandates team cooperation. As important as this was in the old game, it is even more so in the new. Richer and rear-rank nations should be prepared to transfer gold and pop centers to the front liners, perhaps within the first few turns.

The next major change from 1650 is the new political geography. A previous writer in the Mouth noted the disadvantages faced by the Dark Servants, who no longer have a major presence in Eriador. He correctly pointed out that the Witch King is split between Minas Morgul and the ruins of Angmar, while the Dragon Lord faces all or part of the forces of five Free nations. We think, however, that the geopolitical changes are more far-reaching and not so one-sided:

Angmar/Arnor--The Witch King, while his capital and crucial characters are in Mordor, has two fewer Freeps to deal with. Cardolan, with its pesky ability to hire armies at no cost, is gone, severely restricting the Free Peoples' ability to take out Er-Murazor early-on. Here especially, a small stay-at-home force coupled with a small cavalry army with food would be very effective in tying down the two Eriador Free Peoples. As in 1650, negotiations with the region's neutrals is crucial to give the area Free something to think about. Evils should watch out for the tremendous Freep challenge characters in the area.

Mirkwood/Riddermark--In one sense, the Dragon Lord in 2950 is even worse off than he was in 1650 (if that were possible). He is surrounded by five Free peoples, three of whom have nothing better to do than to take DL pop centers (Sinda, Silvan and Woodmen). But, with the reduced economies in 2950, the Dragon Lord is much safer. Dol Guldur becomes a virtually impregnable fortress. Goblin Gate is a formidable obstacle, especially without the Dwarven heavy infantry in the area. This is one theater in which the Freeps really have to coordinate pressure on the Dragon Lord using the Sindar's challenge characters, the Woodmen's recruitment capabilities and the Silvan's agents and armies. Lothlorien is more vulnerable here than in 1650. The Dragon Lord's biggest enemy is his economy, and the Free would do well to implement a gold-theft program against the Dragon Lord ASAP.

The Riders of Rohan are a bit of a wild card in the region, and really in all of Middle-earth. Located at a crucial road juncture, equipped with the ability to recruit all heavy cavalry (if they conjure mounts), even blessed with some metals production, Rohan can be, well, the cavalry that rides in at the last minute to save the day. This requires that the Rohirrim are careful to provision their armies and provide armor and weapons for the few troops they can support. But the appearance of 2000 Rohan HC at Dol Guldur could spell the Dragon Lord's doom, and they can make a valuable contribution as far away as the Sea of Rhûn -- if the Rohan player is committed to the team.

The Dunlendings and White Wizard can shift the balance of power in the region, pin down Rohan troops and generally make nuisances of themselves by plaguing the Free in the area with uncertainty. The Dark Servants need at least one of these neutrals, preferably both. Offer anything and everything, for these neutrals are surrounded by Free, and if they wait until Turn 10 before making a decision, the Free nations in the area will be able to devote most of their attention to them. For the Free, they don't need the Eriador neutrals on their side, but they do need to keep them from joining the Dark Servants until Angmar is clear. Again, fortifications are very important; Isengard is impervious to army attack early in the 2950 scenario. The Free need to keep up communication with these neutrals. If they can secure their allegiance, that will allow Rohan to ride to the assistance of the other Free in Mirkwood, Rhovanion or Ithilien.

Rhovanion/Rhûn -- Here the balance of power has shifted somewhat in favor of the Free. The Northmen can out-recruit the Long Rider, and the Blind Sorcerer lacks a massive army to send to Uvatha's aid. Long Rider pop centers are much more vulnerable, especially the village at 3017. Here, as in the Gondors, the evils need to be careful with their agents lest they lose them. The Northmen will need substantial financial support if they are to recruit enough troops to stymie the Long Rider and Blind Sorcerer forces. But it can be done, especially with the Northmen able to draw upon the presence of Silvan and Dwarven troops in the area. The relocation of the Dwarves' capital to the Iron Hills provides the Northmen with a powerful and much-needed ally. But the Rhûn Easterlings are a de-stabilizing presence in the area, able to recruit a lot of troops. Both Free Peoples and Dark Servants desperately need the help (or at least promised neutrality) of the Rhûn Easterlings. If the Long Rider player is not aggressive in the region, the Free might be able to afford a pre-emptive strike against the Rhûn. The Evils need to offer the Rhûn lots of goodies to win them over quickly.

Mordor/Ithilien/Gondor--Much changes while much stays the same. The Evils do not need to fear thousands of Eothraim cavalry bearing down on Morannon, nor do they need to worry about the vast Gondorian levies of the 1650 scenario. Northern Gondor has lost two-thirds of its tax base since 1650. Southern Gondor has lost about half of its pop centers. Militarily, life is good for the Evils. They can keep small armies and adequately defend the gates to Mordor, relying on fortifications to keep pop centers from falling to attack. Economically, life ain't so good, and if the Evils try to recruit the massive armies they needed to in 1650, they will go bankrupt quickly. Nevertheless, Ithilien is still Middle-Earth's meat grinder. Evils need to continually send troops into Osgiliath to disrupt Free plans and to try to get the Ithilien pop centers. If the Evils give the Gondors time and peace, the Gondors will be able to combine to take out one Serv capital at a time. Between the two of them, they can comfortably support 4000 heavy infantry, maybe 6000 HI in the short term. These are not the Gondors you know from 1650. Not even close. They still

produce a lot of troops and taxes relative to other nations, but not relative to the Mordor fortifications. The Gondors must do their best to keep Ithilien in Free hands and wait for their Mirkwood allies to polish off the Dragon Lord and head south. Without the Eothraim to worry about, the Dog Lord can afford to help the Long Rider in Rhovanion, confident in the Ice King's ability to defend northwestern Mordor.

The Corsairs and the Khand Easterlings play much the same role in 2950 as they did in 1650. The Corsairs will have little fun raiding Mordor's nonexistent coastline, so they will be heavily inclined to join the forces of Sauron. Like the Corsairs, Khand has compelling geographic reasons to turn evil.

As with the economy and political geography, the agent balance in 2950 mandates new thinking. Actually, not all of this has to do with the new scenario. The recent upgrade of the guard function in both scenarios has caused some confusion for those who were used to a highly aggressive agent game. Nevertheless, the presence of some agent artifacts among the Free in 2950 makes the DS agent position that much more difficult.

There are, however, some ways for the DS to work around their agent limitations. One is to train agents with guarding and gold thefts before taking on the Free army commanders. Another is to look for unguarded targets. Secondary pop centers and recruiting army commanders are much less likely to be guarded than front-line commanders (unless, of course, the Free have read this article). A third approach is to locate and steal the very agent artifacts which are causing the trouble. Generally, the DS should concentrate somewhat less on stopping the large Free armies (which are just not as large as in 1650) and more on actions which bring in cash, tie down Free resources, and generally cause confusion. Be unpredictable. Remember that guards can't be everywhere, and they cost money while producing nothing. The Free, on the other hand, should look for opportunities to set up guard traps for the DS. The Free have no choice but to name agents and guard whatever they can. The Free should also look for opportunities to put their artifacts to use in modest offensive actions as soon as they are ready.

These three changes -- economies, geography, and agent rules -- cannot help but affect the balance of play. Several commentators have suggested that the changes seriously unbalance the 2950 game. They do not, however, agree on who benefits. One writer notes that, compared to 1650, the Free took a much bigger economic hit than the Servants. Another says that the new geography, agent mix, and character balance make the Evils' position untenable.

We believe that all such evaluations are premature, and contaminated by "1650 thinking." Much of the perceived imbalance may disappear as players cast aside 1650 assumptions and develop strategies and tactics which work in the new scenario.

Encounters in ME-PBM

by
Darin Fitzpatrick

Because some previously published explanations of encounter investigation are not entirely clear to some readers, I would like to explain the encounter process as I understand it. This information is based on both experience and conversations with GSI.

Types of Encounters

Encounters come in two basic types: army encounters and character encounters. Army encounters show up as reports by the army commander. They do not allow any response. Character encounters show up either as something to be investigated (a hidden path, cave entrance, underground maze, etc.), or as a specific situation with a list of options. They only occur for characters traveling alone or with a company.

Occurrence of Encounters

A random function determines whether an encounter occurs. If one does occur, it is reported late in the turn sequence -- after movement. Thus the encounter takes place at a character's new location. If several characters are at the same location, it is randomly determined who will get the encounter.

If the encounter is not reported to any character, you can't interact with it. For example, if you move to Amon Lhaw, but don't get a report of either seeing the High Seat or finding a hidden path, you cannot use the chair. I once tried this, issuing order 285. I got the response that no circumstances were around to react to. Later in the turn, I encountered the chair after all.

Since encounters take place after movement, moving a new character to an encounter location involves another random function. If the encounter is an NPC, it may move away before your character gets there. (Dragon chasing is a good example of this.) Also, Gandalf will still be in an encounter hex after he interacts with an army, but he will leave the next turn -- before a second encounter can occur.

Responses to Encounters

Army encounters do not allow any response. They are over by the time they are reported.

Unknown encounters are meant to be investigated, using the order 290, InvEnc. This order will cause you to get the full encounter description the next turn, assuming you stay in the hex. I don't know if you can investigate, move the investigating character away, move a new character to the hex, and still get the full encounter.

Some encounters, when investigated, will simply happen, without allowing any response. A typical example is the spirits & wights who guard some hidden artifacts. You either beat them or you don't.

If you give order 285 after an unknown encounter, you will experience the full encounter as if you had already seen its description. If you guessed what the encounter was, you might have given the correct response. Otherwise you are shooting in the dark, and may or may not have a response that "fits" the

encounter. You might want to try this for encounters that don't move (Amon Lhaw, Lonely Mountain, Paths of the Dead) or if you can see an NPC in a pop center.

If a character gets a report of an unknown encounter, another character in the same hex, and of the same nation, can issue the InvEnc order. Note that this is more limited than the ReacEnc order.

Full encounters with a list of responses require the order 285, ReacEnc. I have not seen a difference between giving the "FLEE" response and simply ignoring the encounter, although some may differentiate the two. Riddles also require order 285.

Another character of any nation in the same hex can also respond to the encounter. I don't think you have to be friendly with the first character's nation, so you could get a Nation Message that so-and-so had an encounter at your location and "steal" the encounter. It is possible that you have to be in a company with the first character (or of the same nation) in order to do this, but I've never tried it.

If more than one character gives a response, they will all have the encounter. Of course, if one defeats an NPC, the others cannot also encounter it.

A character with or in command of an army cannot have a character encounter. They can therefore not respond to a character encounter seen by another character. The rulebook blatantly misstates this; it should read, "Only characters traveling alone or with a company can respond...."

Success in Encounters

Some encounters are pure combat, and they seem to be based solely on challenge rank, including all artifacts. The spirits & wights that guard hidden artifacts seem to work the same way. Certain artifacts give bonuses when fighting certain types of creatures (undead, spiders, wolves, etc.)

Others will be easier for characters with certain skills; GSI specifically states this fact. Except for agents stealing from sleeping dragons, I have never seen any compilation of skill-based success rates in encounters. This would make a very interesting project.

Allegiance clearly influences some encounters. Nation may also play a part. It is also possible that certain specific characters can succeed in an encounter. The "NAME" response for dragons implies this; it might prove true for Aragorn and the Paths of the Dead.

Some luck is also clearly involved in the outcome of an encounter. A powerful character giving the "right" response can still die.

I hope I have cleared up some confusion without creating more. Encounters can have a very great influence on the game and can also be a lot of fun. Be prepared, and enjoy!

GSI EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENT

The last month has been very hectic around here trying to get all the bugs and kinks worked out of the new GSI email turn system so that GSI will be able to begin sending out email turns as soon after 5/1 as possible. We will not be able to get everyone started right away (i.e. as this goes to press, CIS and Internet players are on hold until a few technical details are worked out) but we hope to have most ME-PBM

1650 users starting on time and ME-PBM 2950 soon thereafter. We appreciate your patience and we hope to have everyone who is interested up and running as soon as we are able.

In order to make Middle-earth PBM™ turn results available to players via email, GSI can now produce a PDF file that is 'readable' using ADOBE™ Acrobat™ Reader. The PDF file will contain both the text and the graphics inherent in our ME-PBM turn results, including the character sketches and the maps! There are no extra fees for this service and the email turn will replace the normal mail turn. Sorry, State of War game turns will not be available via email.

ADOBE Acrobat Reader (v1.0 or v2.0) is available (for free!) for use on many different computer platforms (v2.0 for Windows & Macintosh, v1.0 for DOS & Unix) and will allow the receiver (on AOL or CIS) of the PDF file to view and print the file contents. Internet users will need to "UUdecode" the .uee file first and then use ADOBE Acrobat Reader to read the resulting PDF file.

If the receiver of the email file does not have any of the above systems, yet is able to print a Postscript file, GSI can also send a Postscript version of our turn results (instead of the PDF). The receiver may not be able to 'view' the results, but they should be able to at least 'print' them. Please use this only as a last resort!

The ADOBE Acrobat Reader is available (via download) directly from the ADOBE BBS @ 206-623-6984. Questions regarding the use of the ADOBE Acrobat Reader should be directed to: (voice) 206-628-2757, (fax) 206-628-5737, or on Compuserve (GO ADOBE). You can also purchase the Reader from ADOBE on CD-ROM for about \$15. You might also be able to access the Adobe Acrobat Reader on America Online (keyword "Aldus", or "Adobe", or via a software search - applications/acrobat). On Compuserve, GO ADOBE. On Internet, a URL source site maintained by Adobé - <http://www.adobe.com/Software.html> and via FTP from <ftp.adobe.com>. Except for the CD-ROM, and BBS access charges, all the above sources should provide the Reader at no charge.

If you want to begin having your turns sent via email: First, get your copy of ADOBE Acrobat Reader for your computer platform. Then contact GSI (via email!) and let us know your user-id and platform. We will schedule a test turn and then, if all goes well, we will commence sending turns via email as soon after that as possible. Be sure to include a list of all your games/player-positions, and at least one current security code from one of them.

(CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER)

your work and we did not give credit where credit is due. Hopefully this will correct that oversight. If anyone else is interested in submitting cartoons, send them in--we'd love to see more of them!

That about wraps it up for this month. We hope you have a good time reading our little publication--if you do, spread the word! The more readers we have, the more submissions we can get and the better *Whispers* will be. Until next month, keep your swords sharp and your spells ready.

Stuart

The Hall Of Heroes

Game #29 - The Dark Servants: #17 & #14

Malezar, the premier mage of the Quiet Avenger, stood at the Crack of Doom. Excitement and anticipation made his heart race. With one simple act, the years of conflict and struggle would be at an end. His Master would take his rightful place as ruler of the land--and Malezar would be at his righthand side.

"Lord Sauron!" he shouted in the gloom. "I give you your legacy! Rise up and take your place as the greatest power in all the land! Throw aside your chains and bring a new Age to Middle-earth. This realm is now yours!" With that, Malezar gave the One Ring to his Dread Lord. A great cataclysm ensued--lightning struck, fires raged, thunderclouds formed and burst--and the entire world knew--SAURON HAD THE ONE RING!!

In this game lasting 78 turns, we have the Quiet Avenger reaching the highest amount of victory points possible--2700. We also have a new high in personal challenge rank--339, gained by Malezar. Congratulations on a game well played. Final standings are as follows:

#17 Quiet Avenger - 2700
#14 Cloud Lord - 2300
#9 Sinda Elves - 1833

Top Free People: #9 Sinda Elves - 1833

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Malezar/Quiet Avenger: 339
Highest Net Commander Rank - Grasty/Cloud Lord: 180
Highest Net Agent Rank - Thergor/Quiet Avenger Tarendar/Cloud Lord: 140
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Or Adat/Cloud Lord: 130
Highest Net Mage Rank - Malezar/Quiet Avenger: 313
Most Mithril - Cloud Lord: 985
Most Artifacts - Cloud Lord: 46
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 93

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!

Game #117 - The Dark Servants: #15, #19 & #16

Under the iron leadership of the Blind Sorcerer, the Long Rider and the Ice King, Sauron's servants have spread the Shadow to encompass all of Middle-earth. Their foes are crushed and they look over a land covered in eternal night, one in which they are the new lords. Final standings are as follows:

#15 Blind Sorcerer - 2183
#19 Long Rider - 2083
#16 Ice King - 2034

Top Free People: #23 Dunlendings - 900

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Akhórahil/Blind Sorcerer: 188
Highest Net Commander Rank - Ashdurbuk Zalg/Ice King: 141
Highest Net Agent Rank - Luthien/Ice King: 125
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Ilarien/Long Rider: 115
Highest Net Mage Rank - Morarthdur/Blind Sorcerer: 135
Most Mithril - Blind Sorcerer: 2275
Most Artifacts - Cloud Lord: 24
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 57

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!

The Hall Of Heroes

Game #147 - The Dark Servants: #13, #25 & #16

Sauron's laughter rolls through Middle-earth and his unblinking Eye looks over a landscape torn and brutalized by his most faithful Servants --the Dog Lord, the converted Easterlings and the Ice King. Those most faithful to his cause have earned the right to oversee his new reign of terror. Final standings are as follows:

#13 Dog Lord - 2133
#25 Easterlings - 2050
#16 Ice King - 1967

Top Free People: #8 Dwarves - 1100

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Gaurhír/Ice King: 247
Highest Net Commander Rank - Baltab/Ice King: 180
Highest Net Agent Rank - Ulwath/Ice King: 135
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Yazhgar/Ice King: 108
Highest Net Mage Rank - Gaurhír/Ice King: 222
Most Mithril - Dwarves: 989
Most Artifacts - Ice King: 35
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 31

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!

Game #174 - The Dark Servants: #20 & #19

The Dark Lieutenants and the Long Rider have risen to the top in Sauron's service, leading their brethren to victory over the pathetic Free. In totally dominating their enemies, they have earned top honors in Sauron's eyes. Final standings are as follows:

#20 Dark Lieutenants - 1450
#21 Corsairs - 1300
#19 Long Rider - 1292

Top Free People: #21 Corsairs - 1300

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Celedhring/Dragon Lord: 176
Highest Net Commander Rank - Bain I/Dwarves: 113
Highest Net Agent Rank - Jí Indúr/Cloud Lord: 123
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 89
Highest Net Mage Rank - Hoarmúath: 128
Most Mithril - Dog Lord: 654
Most Artifacts - Cloud Lord: 17
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 15

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!