EVIL, MEAN, AND ROTTEN.

A fantasy game for the bad guys? Yea, verily. *Monsters! Monsters!* is the new fantasy role-playing game from Metagaming Concepts. No more good-guy heroes. In *Monsters! Monsters!,* you become a monster character — come up from the dungeons — stalk into town — and wreak havoc. The eviller you are, the more experience points you'll earn...

*Monsters! Monsters!* was designed by Ken St. Andre, lavishly illustrated by Liz Danforth, and edited by Steve Jackson of the Metagaming staff.

As with our previous game, *Stellar Conquest,* every effort was made to provide a clear, complete rule system. Major omissions and contradictions that plague other game systems are avoided by a carefully organized format. This is an excellent game for novice Game Masters and new fantasy buffs — and should be a relief for experienced gamers exhausted by confusing rule systems.

*Monsters! Monsters!* is a 52-page, 8½ by 11 rule book with Danforth’s full color cover. Also included are four maps for the Game Master to use in setting up an initial adventure.

Rules sections include:
- Introduction
- Game Preparation and Setup
- Character Creation
- Experience Points
- Spells and Magic
- Feats of Bravery
- Special Combat Techniques
- Combat Turn Sequence
- Combat Maps
- Explores, Encounters, Tables, Scores, Rolls
- Unusual Combats
- Combat and Wargaming
- Notes

So put a new twist in your gaming — try *Monsters! Monsters!* Approved as an outlet for antisocial tendencies by the American Psychologists and Crazies Association.

METAGAMING CONCEPTS
Box 15346
Austin, Texas 78761

Subscribers to our magazine *The Space Gamer* get a discount price — $5.00. *The Space Gamer* appears bi-monthly. A year (six issues) is $5.00; two years (twelve issues), $9.00.

$7

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Mostly business this time.

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**MicroGames Project:** Our MicroGames were the surprise hit of last issue’s feedback. All of our readership were favorable to the idea except for the complexity/sophistication buffs where reaction was still fair. The two key elements seem to be price and the shorter playtime. Also crucial was a playable, well-designed game. Based on your response MicroGames go up on our project list. To be a success, i.e., economically possible, they will have to attain a 50% to 100% larger distribution than our first games. So, let your local store know you like SF/F games and tell a friend we’ll send him a copy of TSG for the asking. With a little luck and your support TSG #9 (Jan/Feb) may see the announcement of the first of a series of MicroGames. With pricing that will lower cost. It may be that an even more complex version might be offered for the same price, $1.25.50 per turn may seem expensive, but if you are getting 10-20 hours of play value from each game turn and corresponding with other players, it’s dirt cheap. Or an even more complex version might be offered for the same price, $1.50. A $1.50 paperback reads in two to three hours. $1.50 in quarters in over 100 minutes. So, before you sneer at $1.25, think about what other entertainments cost.

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Speculations

TRIPLANETARY: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION
by Steve Jackson

TRIPLANETARY has to be consid­
ered a first-class wargame. Because of its SF attack, it never
command the following of, for in­
cstance, DIPLOMACY. However, it is
an excellent example of its genre.

The Board

The only problem with the
Triplanetary board is that it is too
small. In order to represent most of
the Solar System on one moderate-
sized hexsheet, it was necessary to
take great liberties with scale and
put all the planets and their moons
in the same hex. To add insult to
injury, ships are prohibited to leave
the board for any reason. They
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There are three possibilities:
(1) A ship, by rendezvousing with a disabled ship, could aid in repair work. That ship would become an un-disabled auxiliary, twice the normal speed. Thus, a D4 ship could operate in only two turns.
(2) A ship might take another ship in tow by matching course, linking up, and expending three fuel points per course change (if the towed ship is the same size or smaller) or three (if it is bigger).
(3) This is the one I like. You could forget about the "heroism" rule entirely. If you're really the heroic type, your play will show it. Try these suggestions out: you may like them. A good game is worth improving.

In attempting to analyze the Soviet manned space program and its future plans, one cannot avoid the almost insurmountable enigma. The Russians are still extremely secretive (although not to the degree of past years) about their space program. They do not announce their missions or their objectives in advance, nor do they volunteer much specific information even after a successful flight.

Yet a manned space program by its very nature is a rather visible thing. Our perspective, our play will show it. The goal of what to expect from the Soviets over the next three years. In general terms, the Soviets will probably launch three to five missions a year. Each mission will utilize the Soyuz space-craft and the Salyut space station, where scientists, sensors, and satellite tracking will be carried out. It is highly probable that on occasions the Soyuz will fly independently of the Salyut (whenever the Russians are testing new equipment). Thus was the case on Soyuz 22, an earth resources flight testing new equipment and the Soyuz space station. They are certain to attempt this before the U.S. space shuttle can begin constructing an American space station.

This objective is within Soviet capabilities, but barely. Soviet limitations in the space field are twofold. First, the hardware problems: The Soyuz spacecraft, the current workhorse of their program, is not the engineering equal of the U.S. Gemini vehicle which last flew in 1966. The Soyuz does not have an onboard computer, its inertial guidance system is suspect, most military analysts looking at it quote a U.S. astronaut, "almost all activities aboard the Soyuz are controlled from the ground, even seemingly ad hoc events." The life-support and safety features are very limited, and the spacecraft's overall structural design is faulty and weak. The worst aspect of the Soyuz is its flight record. Twenty-five per cent of all Soyuz missions have ended fatally. But Soyuz is only one example of the uncertain reliability of Soviet hardware.

In the field of rocketry, the Russians have made few advances since Gagarin's flight. They have been unable to develop rocket engines of any power since they do not have the metals to withstand the high temperatures. Russian electronic and computer system is still years behind the West. In fact, the Soviet's often buy Japanese or West German equipment, when they fail to miniaturize components of their own. The second limitation, and the most damaging, is the Soviet approach to space flight. The Russians are very conservative in their thinking. They pursue narrow and limited goals. The management behind the Soyuz is quite poor. It is dominated by bureaucratic inefficiency and political demands. Most problems are dealt with in isolation. A problem may be solved, but its causes are usually glossed over. Three different Soyuzes, as an example, have failed to dock. This is representative of a lack of technical thinking and a weak system control.

This conservative approach has symptomatic results. As long as a piece of equipment works most of the time, the Soviets see little need to improve it. As a result, there have been few improvements in any of their hardware or systems, and very little thinking toward any redesign.

With all these shortcomings, how will the Soviets achieve their objective of a permanent manned space station? Essentially through over kill. No matter how poor the
The Russians have enormous resources. They have and can pour huge amounts of materials, large numbers of scientists, engineers, whatever is needed to reach their goals. And among those resources is money. The Soviet space budget is believed to be twice that of the U.S. program. The method is wasteful, costly and dangerous, but it will work.

The actual configuration of the space station will probably be limited to two or three Salyuts joined together. The reputed Saturn-5 class booster of the Russians is still experiencing difficulties, and there have been some reports the booster has been scrapped.

Therefore, it will take a series of launches to get up the necessary material. Construction will require EVA. Something the Soviets haven't attempted since 1969, but they do have the ability. This space station will have a crew capacity of six, and will be re-supplied by unmanned Soyuz type vehicles.

The purpose of this space station will be varied, but its major emphasis will be on military reconnaissance. Both Salyut three and five were military space stations, and the Soviets are eager to have a permanent on station orbital reconnaissance system. Their current unmanned method is both severely limited and unreliable.

There will of course be a great deal of scientific work done. The Soviets are developing a new telescope for planetary studies, and they will continue to investigate such areas as crystal growth and earth resources photography.

For the next three years, while the U.S. space program is dormant, the Soviets will dominate the headlines. They will probably score many space firsts, and perhaps pull off a few surprises, but with their rigid thinking, their limited technology, and their emphasis on military oriented flights the Soviet space program will remain narrow and self-constrained endeavor trying to conquer an area where unbridled imagination and initiative are the most important assets.

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SIMONSEN'S TRINITY AND GRAND DUELS
by Scott Rusch

In TSG# 6 a very interesting article appeared. It was written by Lynn White, and was named "SPECULATIONS: Space War Games-Avoiding Chicanery." In it the author pointed out that technological progress, typified by automation, transmutation, and fusion power, would eventually result in a utopia of abundance and leisure. This article is to carry her ideas a little farther.

For one thing, very complicated mechanisms will be controlled by individuals with computer-link implants. These implants (see Pournelle's article in the September '76 Galaxy) will feed information directly into the brain as though you were remembering it. This will allow you to keep track of many different factors (such as a space fleet) as well as have instant knowledge of anything in the computer's memory banks. Expertise will no longer be knowledge of something, but rather existence in doing it.

The human race, therefore, will have three different pastimes, come the millenium: the search for knowledge, the creation of art and sport (warfare comes under this category), and the pursuance of public business.

Do not be deceived by this utopian picture. There will be competition and conflict. Rivals for power (such as is left) for a woman, man, or boy, or leadership in a hobby or sport will at some time or the other come into conflict. And they will not be easy to control, as each can command the production of armies at a thought. For safety's sake a "code duello" will be developed.

How will these duelers fight?

I suppose there will be a great variety in the methods used, from pistols at dawn for traditionalists to interstellar wars for connoisseurs. And there may indeed be the connoisseurs, for death may not be serious anymore (memories in the computer could be fed into a cloned body after the first one's demise). Old age will also thus be dealt with, so that time may easily be spent on a long-tern interstellar duel.

To see how such a duel may be performed, let us use Stellar Conquest.

Each player is put at a star system, which he may never leave, with nothing but himself and his transmuter. He has all the technological levels, but may only buy SCTs, ATKs, ESCs, DNs, MBs, and AMBs--no PFS, IUs, RIs, or CTs. The transmuter puts out 120 IUs each year, so that time may easily be spent on learning. He may also buy another transmuter by expending 120 IUs. MBs and AMBs may only be emplaced on the home system, and no moving transmuters. Object of the game is to win decisively by destroying all the MBs and AMBs of the enemy's home system, thus killing him; or to win marginally by having more stars occupied or last passed through by your ships at the end of turn 40. For two player games use either Ceti and Canis or Scorpi and Bootis and ignore the other half of the board. For three player games use Dipha, Aurigae, and Tauris or any other reasonable combination. For four player games use Scorpi, Canis, Ceti, and Bootis.

Now, the reasons for these rules. For one thing, most of the other stars are used by people uninvolved in the spat, and so cannot be used directly, though the spaces around these stars will be fought for by the robot ships. For this reason, and to limit the spread of combat so the authorities can control it, the duelers have to stay in their particular systems. The duelers will use the same technology from fairness and from lack of research personnel (since only one human on the planet, and him busy running a war, not much R & D can be done). And no PFS--it defeats the entire purpose of the duel.

So now, like the gods of old, go and enjoy your wars!
This is a systems sheet for GODSFIRE. Enjoy it and hold on for the game. It will be out in time to play at Christmas.

LASER WEAPONS COMPARED TO PROJECTILE WEAPONS

by Steven List

Charles Bowles' recent article on laser weapons was an interesting survey of currently available technology, but I think he failed in one important respect: a comparison of laser weapons to conventional weapons quantitative terms. The table shown in the end of article gives data on several "popular" German weapons of WW II, with the final column, Muzzle Energy, being the kinetic energy of the projectile as it leaves the gun tube. The chemical explosive that some of the projectiles carry is not counted. That is, the energy transferred to the target is solely a function of the energy output of the gun.

Muzzle energy is chosen as equivalent to Mr. Bowles output power figure. Just as a laser beam in air loses energy through thermal blooming and other dissipative mechanisms, a projectile slowed by atmospheric drag loses kinetic energy. When the projectile has slowed to about 1% of its muzzle velocity, it has already lost half its muzzle energy. Kinetic energy is proportional to the square of the velocity, but so is the drag. Therefore, as the projectile slows, drag decreases and less speed is lost. As the laser power loss to thermal blooming are related to the inverse cube of the distance, the power level falls off faster. To make a meaningful comparison of the two types of weapons, range should be specified. But for qualitative purposes, a comparison of muzzle energy to power output is valid.

Since a watt is a joule/sec, or a joule is a watt-sec, the thermally-pumped gas-dynamic laser Mr. Bowles cites must operate for a full second to put out 60,000 joules. This is little better than one percent of the over 5 million joules of kinetic energy for the King Tiger gun. While 15 times as much as the small arms round, a typical machine gun could fire about 10 rounds per second, an output (i.e. power) the laser is about the same as a modern infantryman's weapon.

Another problem is weight and power supply. With no more than 20 pounds of rifle, ammo and accessories, a single man is very mobile and good for a fire fight. I have no idea what the weight of this laser is, but an output of 60 KW at 1% efficiency requires 6000KW of input. For a thermally-pumped laser, this means heat at the rate of 6 million joules per second. This heat has to come from somewhere, and in concentrated form (the heat is present in the air, but since the average-sized window air conditioner needs about an hour to pull six million joules out of the air, this is not a practical source), which indicates some sort of chemical reaction. About the simplest is burning a gallon of #2 oil (diesel) has a heat value of 146 million joules. Assuming as much as 80% of this heat can be captured and pumped into the laser, the fuel consumption of continuous operation would be about 3 gallons per minute. Of course, there are other ways of generating heat, but they would require heavier equipment. After all, the gun is a device for burning fuel under pressure in order to extract mechanical work rather than heat.

Regardless of the way the heat is obtained, even if 100% is pumped into the laser it will waste 99%. In one second, for 60,000 joules of useful output, 5,940,000 joules of waste heat must be disposed of. That is nearly enough to vaporize 100 cubic centimeters of iron.

Examine the pulsed electrical CO₂ laser, which is 24% efficient and puts out 2000 joules per pulse. It only takes two pulses to equal the German machine gun bullet, a mere twenty pulses per second to match its rate of fire. Twenty pulses/sec at 2000 joules/pulse is 40 kilowatts. To get this output from a 24% efficient electrically-pumped laser requires 166 KW of electric power, which is about the output of a generator driven by a 200 HP engine. Sure, there are more efficient power sources, such as fuel cells, but they all have their own drawbacks. What it boils down to is that a laser with a power output comparable to that of an automatic rifle, with current technology, would require a vehicle to cart it and it's power supply around. Nobody is going to bother unless it's worth it.
Is it worth it? Well, in little over a second, the thermal laser's 60kw output (neglecting losses in air) will vaporize a cubic centimeter of iron. This is dandy if you want to shoot a one-centimeter cube of iron which will obligingly hold still for as much as a second. Don't, however, plan on making little cacti out of the iron in a tank with such shots. Even assuming you can keep your laser beam on the same spot of a moving target several thousand meters away, you won't even warm it up. Iron (of which armor plate is an alloy) is a tremendous conductor of heat. To melt a hole in it, you have to put heat in faster than it can disappear by conduction. A sixty-ton tank can absorb a lot of heat before getting very warm. An automatic rifle won't put a hole in a tank no matter how many shots hit the same spot; a laser of this power won't, either. Short discussion is in order. Some may argue that a laser beam is hotter than the 1000 or so degrees of an oxy-acetylene torch, which cuts iron quite readily. However, the torch cuts the iron by providing an excess of oxygen, which at the elevated temperature literally causes the iron to burn up. Also, such a torch is very poor at punching holes in the middle of a thick plate. Since it can kill a man much more easily and economically than the laser, its use as an antipersonnel weapon is distinctly secondary. What's the point of a laser in a tank? Perhaps the only drawback would be the inability to rapidly turn it on or off. Vehicles are out-those worth the effort are too well armored. Nobody builds armor plate aircraft. A thermal laser would be far easier to melt holes in than armor plate, and most of the interior components are unprotected. It is far easier to hit a plane with a beam of light than with a projectile, as well, but there are still some problems. Most aircraft have highly polished skins that would reflect most of the incident energy-meaning incredible power rates would be required to get sufficient energy onto the target in a very brief time. To make an effective anti-aircraft or anti-missile system, much greater laser efficiencies are required, with a computerized target acquisition and ranging system to bring a converging beam to a point-focus on a rapidly moving target in the middle of a moving target.

Considering the power levels involved, Mr. Bowles infantry laser weapon is currently impossible. And unless the waste heat problem is solved, we would indeed have "a very interesting picture of night combat", as a firearm-equipped sniper with an infra-red equipped rifle would have a wealth of targets literally lighting up like beacons with each shot fired.

Do lasers have any future as weapons, as opposed to their use as triggers, ranging devices, etc? Maybe not on earth, but quite possibly in space. Research is being conducted on nuclear-pumped lasers which have a gas laser tube coated with uranium oxide. Slow neutrons are directed into the tube. These neutrons react with uranium nuclei to cause fission and the release of more neutrons, and thus a chain reaction. The energy released pumps the laser. Current lab models of such units are woefully inefficient, with power outputs about that of a flashlight. But far greater efficiencies could be achieved if the neutron source were combined with the laser. The tube and the laser would contain the same material, and the laser would be pumped by the neutrons. The total available energy of the reactor would emerge in the laser beam, providing power in the gigawatt range with negligible heat waste. Such units would be used as orbital power plants, beaming energy to remote users such as spaceships or lunar installations. Needless to say, such a weapon would be a formidable weapon. About the only drawback would be the inability to rapidly turn it on or off.

THE YTHRI: INNOVATIONS APPLAUDED

by William Brogden

In my opinion, this game breaks new ground for science fiction gaming and for war gaming. The major innovation is a way of handling movement and combat on three levels, space ships, atmospheric craft, and ground forces. Another innovative aspect is the extremely asymmetrical distribution of forces. The invading Terran player has overwhelming force, so a "win" for the Ythri player consists of putting off the inevitable for more than 15 turns.

Space warfare typically lasts only a few turns, during which the Ythri space force attempts to delay the invasion and to destroy as many troop transports as possible. This is a very critical phase for the Ythri player, and good or bad luck here can have a large influence on the rest of the game. I think the movement and field of fire rules are extremely good; accounting for movement in terms of turning the ship is nicely handled, and I really like the orbiting guardian satellites.

Combat on the planet's surface works well, with the atmospheric and ground forces having different levels of influence rules. However, based on playing 8 or 10 games, it seems to me that the Ythri player has rather restricted defense strategy possibilities. This is due partly to a lack of guerrilla tactics which the highly mobile native forces could utilize to interfere with the movement of Terran forces and supplies. The Ythri atmospheric units can give some flexibility if unopposed, so it is extremely important for the Ythri player to destroyTerran atmospheric unit transports in the space warfare phases.

The instructions are very clear with good examples and have been kept simple enough so you can begin play very rapidly, yet the game has a lot of depth. There is a big psychological difference between the sides of the game which reflect the spirit of the novel it is based on. As the Ythri, you watch the huge Terran war machine move in on your planet. You can't hope to beat them, but you may be able to hold out until external political forces make the Terrans withdraw. As the Terrans, you almost feel sorry for the pitifully small Ythri forces, but they turn out to be surprisingly hard to eliminate. This is an innovative and mind-stretching game with a lot to offer, both as the basic game and as a base to build on.

WEAPON TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Projectile (kg)</th>
<th>Muzzle Vel (m/sec)</th>
<th>Muzzle Energy (joules)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.92mm rifle, machinegun</td>
<td>.0128</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>3,990</td>
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<tr>
<td>20mm L/35 lt. tank, arm. car</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>36,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75mm L/14 Panther tank</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1,860,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>75mm L/70 Panther tank</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>2,070,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88mm L/56 Tiger tank, Flak</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>3,080,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>88mm L/71 King Tiger tank</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>5,200,000</td>
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PRESENT AT THE BIRTH OF MONSTERS: The Evolution of a Game

by Ken St. Andre

In a way it is all the fault of Steven McAllister, he whose name is immortalized in the Peters-McAllister chart in Tunnels & Trolls. We had only been experimenting with the most basic rules of T & T for a couple of weeks when he rejected the notion of Monster Ratings and started to individualize the creatures in his dungeons. The first result of such a fairness policy was the chart that regularized the creation of Elves, Dwarves, Fairies, Hobbits, Trolls, Orcs, Giants, etc.

After that, the very nature of Tunnels & Trolls, and my own sense of a fair play, made the development of Monsters! Monsters! inevitable. For a fair description of how the game actually arose I refer you to my introduction in Monsters! Monsters! It only remains to say that MIMI already existed in rough form as early as November 1975, and that Howard Thompson had agreed to print it as early as January 1976.

This article really has to be Ken St. Andre's explanation of two games in strength right up to the personal creative efforts. For T & T you are expected to design at least one tunnel complex; for MIMI, I really expect the players to design their own city. That is a lot of work, but the rewards are tremendous. When you get into city planning, the details of how this place could really work, you will learn a tremendous amount about the past. You will have been like in the Middle Ages. If you want to run a city of 20,000 people, you will have to be very careful about the law of them, a reason for 20,000 people to be in one place, a world or at least a nation for them to be a part of, and a world of their own. Another aspect of the design of MIMI is the preference characters who manage to survive will be able to improve themselves. Thus, heavier weapons required greater individual strength to wield them. When using magic, spells are equivalent to heavier, more powerful weapons, and so, required more strength to cast them. What is the point of giving a character a Constitution of 80 if you're not going to use it for anything? So I defined Constitution as a measure of a character's strength in his own life, and from my extensive reading in the field of heroic fantasy (and just plain history) it has always seemed that luck was a major factor in the success of any kind of hero. Logically, when I got to a situation where nothing else can help, luck can still come through and save your neck. Thus, a character's luck became the saving rolls (which are used when a character needs a chance to save himself from something unpleasant). Here, I must disagree with something Steve Jackson changed in the rules of MIMI. On page 29 there is a discussion of Saving Rolls where a column labeled minimum roll required. Since a character's likelihood of making it's Saving Roll is 50%, the use of such absurd characters, or alternately the whole game turns into something different. For the entire table of Saving Rolls, everything has such a good time being silly that you don't mind the absurdity of it all. The method of granting that there was such a good time being silly that you don't mind the absurdity of it all makes a player-character's dice-rolled number of success. If the average person to acquire and then acquire more strength to cast them. Such polyhedra are difficult for the average person to acquire and are also quite expensive. (Since I was unemployed at the time, I was strongly opposed to anything for which inflated the price of the game, and on strictly anti-inflationary principle I still oppose the kind of equipment that is responsible for the instant increase of the cost of my gaming. I am probably a minority of one opposing the use of miniatures in fantasy gaming, pre-fabricated pieces that only serve to give an impression to a piece of painted plastic every time.) So rolling some odd number of dice were needed they would be the conventional 6-sided cubes that any one could go down to the corner drugstore and acquire. The next thing I wanted to do was make a player-character's dice-created attributes directly applicable to the play of the game. Thus, heavier weapons required greater individual strength to wield them. When using magic, spells are equivalent to heavier, more powerful weapons, and so, required more strength to cast them.

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place with a genie. Just don't be surprised when a corps of 7th level wizards show up to greet you, just happening to be in town for a wizard's convention that weekend.

Essentially what we did was to paint the front cover, invented her own brand new monsters-the green beastie-right on the spot. And we did the same thing with the Shadowjack, inventing, as a type, a character who had been an individual in a Zelazny novel.

I have to admit that the people participating in the game actually given in the rules for MIM! or Ell! I haven't said much about why magic is the way it is, or how the combat system works. For those who read the rules, the logic and the problems are apparent. I would like to note that there really should be an asterisk on the "take that you fiend!" spell, the effect; to other players, they're casters' IQ by the level the spell is cast on.

I'd like to say a few words about the process of producing this kind of role-playing game. It looks easy. If you are an average reader, you can get through the rules of MIM! in about half an hour. But it is like writing a novel, a salable story in one that must be careful in what one says. The object in MIM! has been to give all the information necessary to set up and play the game without going on in boring length on any one thing. I have tried to be amusing about it, and Steve Jackson seems to have felt the same. The whole thing has been proofread at least a dozen times to try and eliminate contradictions between something explained one way on page 8 and completely differently on page 32. Last, and most difficult, is the task of getting your artist to come forth with material to bring animation to what starts as a bunch of abstract ideas. I want to give pounds and buckets of credit to Liz Dunfort for putting me in the lettering department, the easiest part of the whole MIM! production. Even though I had to spend all my spare time doing the final touches, I don't offer incentives like cash out of my pocket and a cut of the profits forever, and almost camp in her living room so that her brushes can kindle the easel, this game never would have been the life of print without her artwork behind it.

My advice to other game designers is make friends with as many fabulous artists as you can, and when you're ready to publish, include as much art as you can get.

THE WORLD OF FRITZ LEIBER

This is a brand new collection of short stories by a noted writer in the fields of fantasy, science fiction, and other genres. Fritz Leiber has given me more hours of enjoyment than any other single writer in the field of speculative fiction. He is a master of the written word, and his stories are considered to be more complete than any other. His is a wonderful collection, and don't miss this book!

MAN PLUS is available from Random House, but TSG recommends a short wait for the paperback.

THE WORLDS OF FRITZ LEIBER is an Ace paperback and carries a cover price of $1.96.

PROJECT FEEDBACK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>Fantasy Role Playing Game</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>MicroGames</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>Universe</td>
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<td>5.37</td>
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<td>4.42</td>
<td>The Computer Gamer zine</td>
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<td>3.51</td>
<td>The Fantasy Gamer zine</td>
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You can see why we won't be splitting up TSG into specialty zines. The answer to improvements would seem to be expanding TSG to a more room for everything.

THE WORLD OF FRITZ LEIBER

Not only surprising the rules, a game which is included in this book. The answer to improvements would seem to be expanding TSG to a more room for everything.

The generally low ratings in comparison to the game type rating comes from the nature of the project feedback. Readers know we can't do everything, so as your right, what was liked was rated very high. What you wanted less was rated very low to help what you really wanted. That's the only way you can get feedback that you wanted.

The FRP game is a rate of one and a half stars.

Fantasy Role Playing Games

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<td>6.57</td>
<td>Greycrak</td>
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<td>6.83</td>
<td>Dungeons &amp; Dragons</td>
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<td>Eldritch Wizardry</td>
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<td>Gods, Demons, &amp; Heroes</td>
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<td>Castle</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>Royal Amules of Hyroaden Age</td>
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Fantasy Board Games

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<td>6.76</td>
<td>Sorceror</td>
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<td>War of Wizards</td>
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<td>Dungeons</td>
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<td>5.41</td>
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<td>4.30</td>
<td>Battle of Helms Deep</td>
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Planetary Tactical Combat

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<td>8.17</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
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<td>7.50</td>
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<td>5.97</td>
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Space Role Playing

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The asterisk indicates that too few ratings have been received for a fully stable score. Stellar Conquest has been moving up despite it's age. Outreach is moving to be popular. Monsters! Monsters! is also getting a pretty good reception.
SHOOTING IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY: A Review of STARSHIP
by Tony Watson

Every once in a while a really good, innovative game will appear from a small and relatively unknown design house with some of the best in Fantasy Games Unlimited's Starship.

It is apparent that some good thinking and design work went into the creation of the game system is excellent and achieves its end as well as entertaining the players with a good "feel" of space contact and engagement.

The key word is "contact." Starship is not a game of space combat per se; it is a game of contact. Each of the two players controls one starship in a situation governed by one of four different scenario orders with goals kept secret from their opponent. There are four sets of mission orders for both the Interceptor and the Intruder. They range from purely peaceful contact to the out and out destruction of the opposing vessel. Levels of victory are determined by comparing the actual mechanics of the game to the outlined missioned goals; and violation of certain orders (such as firing when forbidden to, etc). It is possible for a player to win a resounding military victory yet still lose because of a failure to fulfill his strategic goals (e.g. keep contact to the opposing vessel). It is also quite possible for both players to claim a victory even though their objectives may be very diverse.

The actual mechanics of the game are quite detailed, with wargames, including speed, damage, and weaponry status (which are maintained on a series of tracked charts). Sliding counters along the tracks will denote changes in the vessel speed, what weapons are armed, shield strength, and any damage the vessel may have sustained. The trick to staying alive in combat is learning how to take irreparable damage.

Combat utilizes anti-matter pods and disruptor cannon. There are also arrestor beams, but they serve as tractor beams and do not cause direct damage. Weapons must be loaded before firing; this takes time as well as causing strain on the weaponry system. In combat resolution, there is no chance element. During the combat phase (there are two a turn), each player reveals his planned attack shot or all. If the range is correct or overshoot the target is hit, with appropriate decline in effectiveness of overshot due to range. Each weapon has a damage capability factor, with pods being more effective than disruptor banks, though shorter ranged. The weaponry system keeps track of the strain on those circuits, and it is not difficult for a trigger happy space captain to burn up his guns.

Starship utilizes a small map which is three dimensional in design. A distance computation chart (analogous to artillery), from a square of their color to another square of their color, teleport from one square of their color to another (analogous to air transport), undelete a unit of his color, or conjure or destroy a vortex (a magical storm of chaos). Optional rules allow for a trigger happy space captain to conjure or destroy a vortex (a magical storm of chaos). Optional rules allow for interesting spells and rules, such as invisibility, clones (where a multi-color sorcerer splits into single color sorcerers), assassination details, and the effect of the shifting of the magical universes. There are four sets of mission orders to be developed by the players as the game progresses.

In all, I found STARSHIP to be an enjoyable game. The one point of the game I didn't like was the shallow development of the importance of magic. All the colors did was to divide the map and give units an advantage in one battle that they lost in the next. I would have preferred to see each color as a separate type of magic, with the same overall strength, but with different characteristics and limitations.

Sorcerer is available from Simulac Publications Inc., 44 E. 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10010 for $9.00.
STARSHIP TROOPERS: A REVIEW
by Sumner N. Clarren

To the slowly growing set of fine science fiction board games, add STARSHIP TROOPERS, by Avalon Hill, released in July at the second national gaming convention, Origins II, in Baltimore. For the last several years, Avalon Hill has produced only historical war games. However, the renaissance of gaming over the last three years, and the success of science fiction games like STELLAR CONQUEST and STARFORCE, has lured this usually conservative game company into producing a truly interesting science fiction game.

SST was apparently produced with the blessings of Robert Heinlein, author of the book by the same name. His letter and signature are on the back of the bookshelf style, multi-colored game box. The game is truly tactical in scale and in flavor. A hex is one mile across, and one turn is approximately 12 minutes. The game is designed by Randall Reed, who brought miniature detail to board games with tank vs tank battles in TOBRUK. Unfortunately, TOBRUK also required an excessive amount of dice rolling. Randall Reed recovers nicely with SST where the play mechanics are clean and well-conceived, leaving a game which is accurate to the book, yet eminently playable.

The game, in seven separate scenarios, sets forth the confrontations between the Terrans (earth men) and two alien races: the Skinnies (humanoid and nine feet tall) and the Arachnids ("a mad man's concept of a giant intelligent spider")

Avalon Hill's fine quality and attention to detail are reflected in the game components and playing aids. The full-color, mounted map board suggests an alien planet with pink mountains, burned-out red desert, green savanas, and rainbow-hued city and spaceport. The over 500 counters make use of suggestive silhouettes for the main combatants and mobile weapons. A counter represents a single terran (in armor and suit), a unit of enemies. Also represented are a full range of S. W. & E. (Special Weapons and Equipment), air cars, engineer units, and even a human with ESP talents. The attractive, two-color booklet includes useful information, pictures, and play examples, as well as the full rules. (Incidentally, lest you be alarmed at first, the charts for combat and terrain effects are not in the rules book, as the rules state, but on a separate piece of card stock.)

The rules book uses the "programmed instruction" method tried out in Reed's earlier game, TOBRUK. Scenarios are arranged in increasing order of difficulty, with new groups of increasingly complex rules introduced for each scenario. This structure allows one to start quickly and to digest the rules through the use of bite-size increments of detail.

Almost all the interesting and highly destructive weapons are there. The terran player has a status sheet so he can keep track of the weapons each of his men is carrying. Included are high explosive rocket launchers, nuclear weapons, delayed action proximity and delayed action remote mines, heavy nerve gas (useful against these spidery), various demolition charges, and heavy beam and missile weapons.

The game has a good feel to it (By "feel", I mean the gestalt AH-HA of seeing reality captured through the fortuitous, artful use of rules). In my third game, four terrans (two scouts and two marauders with rocket launchers) coordinated their efforts so that within one-half hour (two moves) they were able to disrupt a strongpoint and destroy a nearby communications center and power station before the Skinnies could respond. In another game, B squad was totally surprised when Skinnies in the ground opened up to disgorge heavy beam weapons and angry Arachnid warriors. A separate pad, duplicating the board allows for the careful plotting of the complex Arachnid tunnel systems, the positioning of Arachnid engineers, and the placing of demolition charges for the factory. Game rules allow for infantry drops to the planet with the inevitable scavenging, retrieval boats, rocket beacons and full retrieval procedures. In later scenarios, the terran can descend into the Arachnid tunnels for the secret plotting of the Arachnid brain and to free prisoners.

STARSHIP TROOPERS is a fine tactical science fiction board game from Avalon Hill. It will be interesting to compare it with SPI's STAR SOLDIER now being play-tested, which is in the same scale. STARSHIP TROOPER is available from Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214 for $10.00 plus $1.00 postage.

NEWS & PLUGS

KEN ST. ANDRE WRITES

I have always felt that ideas belong to everyone. Hopefully MINI will inspire ideas to keep its players amused indefinitely. If problems come up (and no matter how careful one is they always seem to), I trust you will be able to read between the lines and solve them for yourselves, but if you ever feel you want to talk to me about anything that has to do with MINI or T & T, I would be glad to hear from you. My address is 2232 E. Pinchot #8, Phoenix, Az. 85016, and my phone number is (602) 955-6229. Happy human hunting and Merry Monstering!

NOTICE***NOTICE

Metagaming Concepts and The Space Gamer announce that we will no longer be able to accept orders for games or subscription from foreign countries.

SPACE HUK

This is a variable-player, limited intelligence, tactical, space warfare game. Each player has one or more starships with which he takes on other players. 1 to 9 copies-$2 each; 10 or more copies-$1.50 each. Send orders to: Scott Rich, 1640 East 1140 North, Logan, Utah 84321.

NOTICE***NOTICE


WARCON III

Board wargames, fantasy games, etc., with prizes for tournament winners. At Texas A&M, on Jan. 28, 29, 30. Info from: Jerry D. Ruhlman, P.O.B. 6916 Aggieland St., College Station, Tex., 77844.

WINTERCON V


GROUND ZERO

These illustrations by Winchell Chung show a warship and an interstellar base for HYPERWAR, one of several MicroGames currently being designed. HYPERWAR will be a tactical ship combat game played without dice or other random elements. Combat will be resolved through the interaction of player-selected strategies and allocation of ship power to defense and offense. Players design their own ships; as the game progresses, technology improves and more powerful ships can be built.

AGGIECON & WARCON

TSG/MGC will be at AggieCon and War Con. Rumor has it that someone else has already slated a STELLAR CONQUEST tournament. MGC will sponsor at least one event, possibly with a new MicroGame, and run a dealer's table with all our products.

A.F.E.F.&C.C.C.

The Austin Fantasy Film Festival & Comic Collectors Convention will be at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas on November 19-21. MGC/TSG will be there part of the time with games for sale, some games to play, and conversation.

ORIGINS '77

The National Wargaming Expo will be held at Warner College in Staten Island, N.Y. on July 22, 23, 24, 1977. We have very little info, so write ORIGINS '77, Simulations Publications 44 E. 23rd St. New York, NY 10010.

EDITOR

Ben Ostrander of Austin has taken over the editor functions of THE SPACE GAMER. Submissions for publication should be sent to him at the TSG/MGC address.

SF SWIFTIES

by Steve Jackson

"Ha, Kirk! Your weapon is empty!" cried the Klingon, unfazed. "Nobody can survive 15 Gs," said Tom, flatly. "This spell will protect our party from the giant birds," intoned the wizard impeccably. "I've lost the signal, sir," said Uhura remorsefully. "What our captors have forgotten is that, on the Moon, anyone could easily jump the Grand Canyon," said Tom with an Evel grin. "I am call Circe," she said charmingly. "This wind amulet has lost its power," said Captain Ilq'uruth disgustedly. "Giant insects are suckers for judo," said Tom flippantly.
Avalon didn’t want to fight. But that didn’t mean it couldn’t. As the Terran Empire found out — the hard way — when it tried to invade... They had underestimated THE YTHRI

THE YTHRI is based on Poul Anderson’s Hugo Award-nominated novel, The People of the Wind.

THE YTHRI is a game of invasion from space and planetary combat for two to four players. It can turn any science fiction fan into a wargamer — and vice versa.

Includes: Rule booklet / 14 x 17” space map / 17 x 18” Avalon map / 242 perforated counters / combat results tables

METAGAMING CONCEPTS
Box 15346
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NATIONAL GOVERNMENT LOYALTY

Effect of Subversion. Subversion pushes regions to revolt, eliminating them as tax and production sources and disrupting the player’s party balance.

Scenario Four. As the worlds of the Narym woke, the Bosses were overthrown one by one. Limited representative government appeared...

MONEY IN TRANSIT
NATIONAL BANK
REGISTER OF LOANS

Number of years controlled:

Amount that may be borrowed:

Repayment schedule:

Only the national government may borrow money. For rules on borrowing and repayment of loans, refer to Section 777.
Dear editor:

In TSG #7 Norman Apperson wrote an excellent letter on the difficulties of hitting a target with laser fire at the 300,000 mile figure I mentioned in my laser article in TSG #5. Indeed it does require a high degree of accuracy, but in reality we presently have the technology to hit an object 100 meters across and smaller in deep space at 300,000 miles and more.

As Mr. Apperson says, hitting a 100 meter object at 500,000 kilometers means a ten meter long laser tube would have to be aimed within 2 microns or .002mm. To do this we solidly mount the laser as a structural member of the ship. The outside of the cooling shell of the laser tube a high resolution TV camera is solidly mounted. The camera is highly sensitive (present military TV scanners can produce a daylight quality battlefield picture using only starlight) and designed to pick up only light at the laser wavelength. The lens on the camera is a high magnification type. The TV display feeds directly into a computer which controls very small maneuvering rockets which aim the entire ship at the target. A special lens mounted on a rotating arm spins in front of the laser end 120 times a minute.

In the vacuum of space laser beams will not diverge significantly over great distances, and the ability of optical equipment to pick up objects at great distances is only limited by the size of the optical lens and its quality of workmanship. The small, lightweight TV camera aboard Mariner 10 was able to obtain resolution on objects 150 meters across at 10,000 km. above Mercury and 20 km. across at 4,500,000 km. The TV camera used on most of these missions uses about 750 lines vertical and 750 horizontal. Therefore to pinpoint an object 100 meters across at 500,000 km. the TV camera will have a telescopic lens giving it a seventy-five km. field of vision at that range.

In operation the laser weapon would initially fire when the rotating diverging lens was covering the end of the laser. This would produce a wide beam of about 75 km. at 500,000 km. The reflection of the target would be picked up by the TV camera and fed into the computer which would then activate maneuvering rockets and aim the entire ship at the target. This process would be repeated once or twice until perfect aim is obtained and then the laser would fire when the rotating lens is not in front of the laser end.

Once this system has been sighted in by actual firings at direct targets the only cause of inaccuracy will be the unequal expansion due to temperature change within the metal between the camera lens mounting and the laser tube itself. Since the laser would be continuously cooled and could be fired at intervals according to the rate of divergence of the second, this change in beam aim would be minimal and predictable. After trial firings on drones the computer would be able to predict and compensate for these very small changes in beam aim on the first firing.

If you are still not convinced, let's try another approach. Mr. Apperson states that the range maximum must be 100 km. where the ten meter long laser tube could be off by 0.1 mm. That degree of accuracy would be a piece of cake for the laser systems I just described. To increase that range by ten fold we will use the laser as a scatter weapon. If the beam is allowed to diverge uniformly over a large area the power density will drop too low to be effective, but it is possible to split the power into smaller beams. For example, if the 1 meter diameter beam is allowed to diverge uniformly over one area the power density will drop to about 1000 times its original. If the beams will cover a much larger area with no drop in power density, a ten meter long laser tube would be able to obtain resolution on objects 150 meters across at 10,000 km. and the forty G ship at 100,000 km. As I originally said, the combat range of the laser weapon should move out to about 300,000 miles.

The laser triggered miniature nuclear warheads I mentioned in the TSG #5 article apparently already exist in a little larger form. Reports of the 13th meeting of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group in 1973 suggested possible use of multiple warheads for missiles in 1978 which are clean (no fission products) and with a yield of 50 to 100 ton of TNT.

In the same article I failed to mention a theoretically possible weapon that may become a major factor in the distant future. Selected isomers of selected isotopes are imbedded in a beryllium rod core, which is surrounded by a layer of enriched uranium or plutonium. Only about a 10 micron diameter is required. The entire mass, which is only about 100 microns (0.1 mm.) in diameter, is rotated in a powerful magnetic field and hit with a powerful fast pulse laser. As the entire mechanism vaporizes in a small nuclear detonation it emits radiation and tremendous power. It should work, but the theoretical physics required to build such a device is extremely complex. There may be a device (Gamma Ray Laser) that is possible, it may be a long time coming.

Charles R. Bowles
Colo. Sprgs., Colo.

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Following your comments on growth of the wargame/fantasy-posture industry as a whole will probably hit about $20,000,000 sales in 1982, given a moderate, one of these industries, and will level off or increase, depending on further advances on inflation or fad or some unknown factor. I see no reason why MC should not be a turning industry, say 2-4% of that total by then. This stuff is beginning to be respectable, and its possibilities are informal tutorials among the middle class have not been scratched. Speaking Eldon Tannishly, the greatest market seems to be in...
eastern Europe and the Soviet Union—very high literacy, chess is big, they are philosophically agreeable to considering societies as long-term affairs, and the applications of systems analysis are still pretty avantgarde. The difficulties are enormous, but most of the West does like to grant monopoly situations, though they would never put it so.

Lynn Willis
San Francisco, Calif.

It seems strange to me that a magazine which is dedicated to science fiction gaming, and continuously produces excellent articles on this and related subjects, should carry an editorial denouncing ‘creative thought’ as being a trifle silly. No doubt it was roughly as silly as the Pan-Slavic movement, as well as the Pan-Germanic etc. The 11 is everythin~

As for the humanities: we need them to keep us in touch with our own culture and past. Although my personal bias otherwise can continue, I find life without literature and history and art to be damnably boring. True, we do suffer from a glut of degenerate delusions, and the editorial was one of self-righteousness and hellfire-harangue which I have not encountered since I read Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Finally, the general content of the editorial was roughly as silly as the sermon alluded to in the previous one.

I do not doubt that too many people pursue ‘higher education’ for the wrong reasons or for no reason at all. I agree that anyone who spends years of time and thousands of dollars with no goal in mind is something of a fascist and that people who will not organize their own lives have only themselves to blame if they are not happy.

But the failure of education cited in the editorial is not so much the failure of an institution as it is the failure of those who attend it who are not motivated and with clear purpose. To indulge higher education and creativity for the failure of a few folk (or many) is to put one’s thumb on the scale with certain ancient peoples who—when suffering prolonged drought, famine, or other calamity—broke their ides to show their gods how they felt.

Lynn White's article was interesting, but it seems that she has neglected the fact that there is no single cause as a war with a single cause, something that was drilled into me countless times by my history classes. Take WWI as an example. It was not a war created by the fact that somebody from Serbia shot Franz Ferdinand that got Austria-Hungary to mobilize their troops. There were many causes besides, both related and unrelated, like the opposing forces of Austrian-Hungarian power and the Pan-Slavic movement, as well as the Pan-Germanic etc. The...
their forces, and the committee decides who has "won," if anyone has. Eldon would then have won!
(Note: this particular scenario isn't too serious. The Bolon has no reason to fight— the Zulus may want the Nazi technology, and the Nazis the Bolon, but other than that nothing would be incorporated as a moderator-controlled trouble-maker, like the vortices in WORCENER or even as a planet-controlled troublemaker, with that player controlling the "machine-gone-mad" in the way he/she feels will tear up the game the most.)

And the purpose of all this? To add realism, of course. No war has yet been fought by any particular set of rules except perhaps when a particular army got "general orders" and used those. But even when such things as international law exist, they usually get broken. Hitler marched through neutral countries without a blink, for example. And little crazy things like Thermopylae are hard to come by in a rules-controlled situation. The only rule there was— you can march a man through an arrow very well, but not very far... people with arrows in them tend to fall down.

How about, in SC, the ability to self-destruct and really tear some enemy up? Considering the destructive force of a SC, combined with its engines, it seems to me that you could probably reduce a whole planet if you were to totally unleash all that power at once nearby. Say kill all the colonists and reduce a TR80 planet to ST60, and totally eradicate BR planets.

And ATK, on the other hand, would only kill the population and reduce the planet's capacity to the next smallest level (or if the planet's type is impossible to capture, reduce the planet's type but not population, like ST40 to MT40), and an ESC would just kill the planet, and all the engines would kill say ten million people. Maybe that's a bit much, but the potential is there. Maybe a SCT would only destroy a million people, and a DN, the ESC does above, and reduces empty planets only. But that also makes a way to break down PFS's, yes? Well, we shall see.

K. Allen Bjorke
Minneapolis, Minn.

May Brian Bloomquist be Hung?
No satire or humor? The man's a sadist! I'll admit that as a war-game I take SF as not too serious, an escape hatch from the threat of eternal trenchfinger. If you can't laugh at a floundering (no insult intended) SF mag, you might as well laugh at you! You admitted yourself that "where you're going" might be bankrupt. Hope not.

Please do not publish anymore articles about ESC vs. ATK. We see the ruddy problem, and who the bloody cares what the exact odds are? I would bet as often on 6.029% as I would on 8.365%, never, not a real bet, a kamikaze on the side, but...

Your magazine did make an interesting point, right now lasers, phasers, and blazers are less dangerous than.

I will probably be making several comments on SC, as I finally scrounged up the money with the inflow of summer work cash. I really wouldn't pay anybody for anymore detail ship/ship articles on SC, the "Ship Effectiveness..." article pretty much takes care of that. Who's going to argue with that roller coaster formula on the bottom of page eleven?

Frank B. Weir, Jr.
Clarion, Iowa

I used to like TSG. It was a nice, friendly sort of magazine at a forest I could feel comfortable with.
This was not so with Issue #7. First of all, the editorial, besides being outright wrong, had absolutely nothing to do with gaming, which is what TSG is all about. I'm not saying that you shouldn't express your viewpoint, but you should pick subject matter related to gaming.
May I also say that swearing is a sign of a small mind. I say that I'm old worldish, but your comment in "Game Design Notes" was totally uncalled for. Have you lost your wit?
The rest of the issue was fine, but I really couldn't enjoy it after such a cold beginning.
The quality of the magazine is definitely improving, but instead of investing your money on a computer, why not look into type setting and color covers. It would increase the quality tenfold.

But still the warmth is gone, and unless it returns, you have lost a subscriber.
Paul O'Connor
Van Nuys, Ca.

I was extremely interested in your discussion of the use of lasers in ship-to-ship warfare in TSG #7; as I am currently developing BATTLEFLEET MARS for SPI. The two objections to the use of lasers at extreme ranges (in the range of several tens of thousands of kilometers) were that a) the loss of power of a laser beam increases with increasing distance would decrease the effect of a laser weapon, and that b) the arc that a spaceship presents to a firing ship decreases dramatically as the distance between the two ships increases, making it difficult or impossible to hit a distant ship.

In BATTLEFLEET, we are assuming that the two most common weapons are lasers and nuclear missiles. Obviously, phasers are only for use in extremely close conditions, as a nuclear blast in space (where there cannot be a shockwave) will do little to no damage if at a distance from a ship.
To answer the first objection to the use of laser weapons, the power of a laser decreases very little with distance. In space, there are obviously very few free atoms to diffuse a beam; thus the only way of decreasing the power with distance is the inevitable divergence of the beam. No matter how tight the beam is made, there will be some divergence with distance. However, as technology increases, a laser beam can be made tighter and tighter. Therefore, if one assumes that laser technology, one can assume as tight a beam as one likes; I believe it is possible to develop the technology to hold a beam to a divergence of say 100% over a distance of 50,000 kilometers over a period of 100 years.

The second objection is more cogent. As Mr. Apperson showed in his letter, the arc a ship presents at extreme ranges is quite small, and thus as distance increases we can assume that the ability of a firing ship to hit another ship decreases. Mr. Apperson assumes a maximum range of 5,000 km; we're assuming a somewhat more advanced technology, and a range of 20,000 km. (Also 20,000 km is good for play reasons, which is another pressing reason).
To integrate these two factors—the fact that the power of a beam will decrease slightly over great distances, but that increasing distance will make it more difficult to hit a ship—are assuming a "DM"-like hit system: first you roll to see whether you've hit, and if you've hit, then determine how much damage the target ship receives. If the amount of damage is in no way dependent upon the range, but the probability of hitting a ship is.

Greg Costikyan
New York, N.Y.

In TSG #6, the writer of the review on THE YTHRI for an historical appraisal is good. He explains the reality of THE YTHRI as compared to The People of the Wind and how it comes from a "rude" phase to a "polished" phase, recreating more closely the outcome of the novel. Also, however, one sentence irked me: "Unless the Terran player has been foolish and split his forces (or worse, lost some of the transports before landing), it is a simple task to capture three chotts or cities and win the game by turn 12." The player played THE YTHRI for quite awhile now, to work out the best strategy, and have found that the only real hope of a successful attack by the Terrans is to split his forces. This forces the Ythri ships to spread out more, making it all the easier to destroy them one by one.

On the planet, I have been successful in winning as the Terran player by splitting or combining the enemy forces. Of capturing the bases, they are relatively easy to capture, but again, unless the incompetent Ythri player would under no circumstances do it by turn twelve. In my opinion, Mr. Howe should play THE YTHRI more before making such comments on play style.

Mike Lazich
Burlingame, Calif.