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Jack Kittredge, editor

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Welcome to the Family!

Yep, we're proud to be **the** parents of a family of games that have received outstanding critical acclaim. And we're extra proud that a kind of extended family of players has grown up around those games—playing them a lot, looking forward to new ones, writing or calling with questions, ideas, and suggestions. We know a number of you personally, and many more through active correspondence. **ENCOUNTER** is our way of sponsoring a family gathering on a regular basis so that this diverse and quarrelsome, but always dedicated and intelligent clan can talk to each other over time and space.

Of course, as editor, I'm going to be inserting myself a lot in these conversations. I'll be writing some of the articles and features, commenting on what other people say, and of course (ultimate power) picking what gets printed at all. But I hope that won't deter you from having your say. This journal is really intended to be for and by the players of our games and other games we're convinced are innovative, intelligent, and fun.

So if a question bothers you or a point in the rules seems ambiguous, let us know. If you have some ideas you've tried out for game variants or additions, fire away. If you're handy with a pen and want to draw an Alien, a Quirk, or how your best friend looked when

you stabbed him in the back, we'd love to see it. If you think a new game is so great others should know about it, send in a review. You get the idea—speak up and let your light shine out.

In turn, I'll promise to consider everything carefully and try to get in as much of interest as is possible (speaking of that, as readership grows we'll be expanding **ENCOUNTER** both in size and in flashiness, so bear with us during these humble beginnings). In addition, I'll promise to get this thing out on time and in a readable fashion and try to keep it interesting. Finally, there are some big doings here at Eon right now (more on that next issue) and I promise to keep you abreast of what we're coming up with and knocking our heads against as time goes on.

Again, thanks for showing your support, and welcome!

Jack

Jack Kittzedge, editor

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LETTERS

from Dr. **Frederick L. Minn, Blue Bell, PA:**

Allow me to tell you of a new Alien power for **COSMIC ENCOUNTER** that my friends and I have devised and tested. It is interesting and works well.

"Once each challenge you may take exactly 4 tokens from the warp (including 0 or 1 of your own) and place them onto any planet. Each token is worth one vote from its owner whether the 4 tokens should stay or return to the warp. You break ties."

Keep up the good work.

Editor: Hey, Z like it. Feels very strategic, always active, requires careful consideration of other player's needs and scheming how much you can get if you give them a little something, too. Could grow to be hated, tho. You've done a fine job of writing it too, clear and concise. Any ideas for names out there! Sounds like a bit of a Psychologist, or even a Politician.

from **David Wilson**, lately of Boston, MA:

How do the other players determine the response to the Sniveler? Majority rule, and if a tie, Sniveler decides? Sounds logical to me. And we've had an argument over the phrase "You can't lie." Some friends have argued that you can whine "I don't have a card over 15" even if your highest card is a 6. Technically, it's not a lie, but it seems like fraud to me.

Editor: Unfortunately (for the Sniveler) it cannot get tokens or a base by sniveling unless all other players unanimously agree—of course the penalty for their refusal is that each & every one of them suffers a penalty if unanimity isn't present. Your friends are zigh t about the Attack 15, Dove. It may be fraud, but it isn't a lie. Znciden tally, the Sniveler was designed in a moment of inspiration after watching one of my partners (who shall remain nameless) whine his way through an entire play-testing session. Per aspeza ad astza.

from Quen tin Long, Los Altos, CA:

A question or so: I've recently played a few games of **CE**, and I'm wondering about the beloved Pirate (any time the Dragon shows up, the Pirate has an 80% chance of showing up as well-at least, that's how it is in our games) . . . to wit, which powers are turned off during the raid? Some of us rules-lawyers look at that phrase "appropriate to the challenge" (I think that's it?) and say that any power with the word "challenge" doesn't work, because it's a "raid"--not a "challenge." Others of us figure that the only reason to call it a "raid" is to help set a raid apart from a "normal" challenge-to put it more clearly, the reason it's a "raid" is to help it be between the Pirate and his victim, with no outside interference; if that's the case, then the only powers which don't work are the **ally**-affecting ones (Crystal, Magnet, Diplomat, and so on).

If you couldn't understand that question, how about **this**: Can the Laser lss the Miser's hoard? Local convention is that the Miser can decide which of his hands to use, but the Laser gets to do the random pick from whichever hand the Miser decided upon. Pro: The Laser gets to pick from the opponent's hand; therefore, the only control the Miser gets is to choose **which** hand is picked from. Con: The Miser's hoard "is not subject to loss of cards because of other powers", therefore the Laser, which must "select a card", can't affect the hoard. Therefore, the Miser's hoard becomes unusable (except for the occasional Edict).

Got a question regarding the Schizoid: Recently, some twit made the term: "4 or more external bases and one or less internal bases." I said that since that term involved the loss of a power, the Schizoid could not fulfill it and therefore it was illegal; the reply was, "Ah, but the Schizoid could get 5 external bases, and then lose all his home system bases; then normal winning conditions prevail and he wins-and since 5 is, indeed, greater than 4, he's also won according to his terms!" *I say* that's garbage.

Editor: Whew! If you guys play the way you write sentences, heaven help the rest of the country at the next CE world championship tournament. I hate to settle what must be wonderfully spirited arguments out your way, but the gospel on your points is: Most Pirate victims can use their powers, as if they were in a normal challenge (Mind, Chronos, Seeker), but those powers where it would be inappropriate (alliance powers, or those where "tokens" affect the outcome: Virus, Anti-Matter, Macron, etc.) because of the particular constraints on the raid-challenge may not be used. Yes, the Laser can pick from the Miser's hoard (if the Miser chooses to play from it) since no extra "loss" is involved-the Miser would play one card and lose it anyway. I'm afraid you have a real sharp Schizoid on your hands. The winning terms quoted are valid, because even the Schizoid could meet the second term, and it is not necessary that it also do so while it has its power, according to the power text itself. Any Schizoid who would come up with such terms and put itself at such a disadvantage, however, has a problem. . .

from Thomas J. DeMarco of Riverside, N.J. :

First let me congratulate all of you on an excellent game company. I have enjoyed Eon products since 1977. Second, please note the enclosed order form. I have fulfilled the requirements to receive a new **CE** box for free. And just in time, too. My old box is bursting at the seams with 6 Expansion kits in it already. The 2 more I'm ordering now would have destroyed it.

Third, I'm extremely glad that you are introducing **ENCOUNTER**. I've had to spend a lot on other mostly uninteresting magazines just to get one or two articles about Eon games. Now I'll be able to get a whole mag about Eon & Eon products every other month. (I know it is way too early to consider yet, but when you're ready to go monthly, so will I.) The green invitation you sent makes **ENCOUNTER** sound great. I hope that it will also include articles on **DUNE** and other games you may have had a hand in (especially **DUNE**).

Now I have a bunch of questions concerning **BORDERLANDS**.

- A. When shipping by **horse** chain, does everything shipped have to be shipped in **the** same direction along the chain?
- B. Can a horse be produced on a riverboat adjacent to a horse breeding ground or adjacent to a string of **horse**-bearing territories connected to the horse breeding ground? (I think not because riverboats are not "land territories" as per expansion kit #1 rules. But it does seem possible from rule 2C, Production Limitations. This question would also apply to bridges and ships.)
- C. Does an opponent's riverboat(s) between two territories count **toward** the point total trying to prevent my riverboat from passing between those two **territories**? If the opponent has more than one riverboat between the 2 territories, does only the one I'm passing count toward the total or do all of his count toward the total? (I think that the riverboat would count toward the total, but only as that boat is being passed. An opposing boat wouldn't count after it has been passed, nor would any other opposing boats behind the lead opposing boat until it is their turn to be passed.)
- D. Does passing an opposing riverboat count as another borderline passed since the opposing riverboat sometimes counts as a territory? (I don't think that it would.)

All of us who have played **BORDERLANDS** enjoy it immensely. I wonder if you could give us an idea when the next expansion kit will become available and what kind of goodies it will contain?

Editor: Thanks very much for the kind words and thoughtful questions. I hope we can live up to your expectations for ENCOUNTER. We probably will have something to say about DUNE in the months ahead, since it's one of our favorites, still. (Many readers may not know that the Eon design team produced DUNE virtually as it was published for Avalon Hill in 1978. The only changes were the box art and the advanced rules, which are wholly of Avalon Hill's origination.) On your questions:

A. Yes, everything must move in the same direction along a horse chain. The rules make the move a sequential one (first this, then that) and thus it is strictly one-way.

B. Horses may be produced through adjacency to a breeding ground on a riverboat, bridge, or ship, just as if they were land territories. The primary use of the "land territory" distinction is to limit certain development moves, e.g. making cities on boats or bridges.

C. Yes, an opponent's riverboat must be counted toward the total in seeking passage for your own riverboat. You're also correct about only one counting at a

time, just as it is being passed.

D. No, boats don't count as borderlines for boat movement, only territories on the sides of the river.

We've been very excited about the response to BORDERLANDS, and have been working feverishly this fall on the second Expansion Set for it. It should be available this spring, and it'll knock your socks off! We opened the game up in a whole new way, deepening it and making it even more strategic. I can't go into details yet, except to say we take on universities, the church, air power, and a sixth player, among other things. I think you'll love it.

10 New Cosmic Encounter Aliens

We often get suggestions for additions and variants for our games. This issue, *ENCOUNTER* is featuring 10 new Aliens for CE (complete with wild and super flares). These were all designed by James V. Beach and James A. Rasfeld of Costa Mesa, California. The descriptions are all unusually clear and complete, and the ideas themselves sound like a lot of fun. Try 'em on for size. You may find a few which will become your favorites.

Weed¹

You have the power to grow. At the beginning of the game, take an extra set of 20 tokens and set them aside. At the start of each challenge, before the destiny pile is flipped, take one token from this extra set and place it on any of your bases. This token, though a different color, is your token to be used in any way applicable. Once you have forty tokens on the board, you have reached your maximum and may not bring in any more. A Cosmic Zap will prevent you from bringing in another token but will not affect those tokens already on the board. The same is true if you lose your power. Do not use in a 6-player game.

Wild Weed: When returning tokens to your bases, you may place some of them on any one of your system's planets where you have no tokens.

Super Weed: You can take one token from the warp at the start of each challenge in addition to bringing a new one in. You may do this even after you have reached your maximum.

Ghost

You have the power to steal life. If you are a main player in a challenge, your tokens in the warp may join

the challenge as allies. You may place up to 4 of these tokens in the cone in addition to any other tokens you may have already in the cone. These "dead" tokens may not ally against your "living" tokens. If you lose the challenge, both your dead and your living tokens go to the warp. If you are a main offensive player and you win the challenge, both your dead and your living tokens take the base along with any other offensive allies. If you are a main defensive player and win the challenge, you take one reward card for each of your dead tokens involved and return the tokens to any of your bases. Once on a base, your dead tokens are considered living. If a deal situation results, return your dead tokens to the warp.

Wild Ghost: If you are a main player and you lose, you may ring your **lost** tokens around your opponent's star disc. These tokens subtract from your opponent's totals in subsequent challenges. At the end of each challenge, remove one token from the star disc and place it in the warp.

Super Ghost: If you are asked to ally, your dead may ally also with up to four tokens [giving you a possible 8 tokens involved in the challenge] or, if you wish, your **dead may join the alliance alone.**

Traitor

You have the power to betray. If you are a main player in a challenge, you may ally against yourself with up to four tokens. Your opponent does not ask you to ally; it is your choice alone. If you are a main defensive player, you may put tokens in the offensive end of the cone. These tokens may come from any base ^{excluding} including the one being challenged (you may not, **however**, evacuate the base totally). If you are a main offensive player, you may also put tokens in the defensive ring of the cone. The challenge continues normally with all offensive allies counting towards the offensive total and all defensive allies counting towards the defensive total. After the challenge is determined, the losing main player and all his allies go to the warp and the winning main player and his allies collect their **applicable prize.**

Wild Traitor: You do not have to keep your end of a deal. If no deal is made, you do not have to put three tokens into the warp.

Super Traitor: If you are uninvolved in a challenge, after challenge cards are played but before they are revealed, you may ally with both sides of the challenge. After the win is determined, your losing tokens go to the warp and your winning tokens take the base or rewards along with the winning main player and any of his other allies.



Auctioneer

You have the power of sale. Once per challenge, you may auction off another player's card as he attempts to play it. You take the card and bidding (in Lucre) begins among the other players. Play freezes, until the bidding is over. The card goes to the highest bidder. The person who played the card needs only match the highest bid to keep it. The Lucre payment goes to you. If no one bids on the card, you must buy it for three Lucre (or as many as you have, up to 3). Your payment goes to the box. Only challenge cards, kickers, and Edicts may be auctioned off. When challenge or kicker cards are auctioned, they are auctioned off before they are revealed and players must bid on them blind. Use only in a game with Lucre!

Wild Auctioneer: As a main player or as an ally, you may auction off your own hand, one card at a time, until either no one bids on a card or until you decide to stop. You may, if you wish, not tell exactly what you are offering and simply announce it (face down on the table) as "an Edict" or "a challenge card".

Super Auctioneer: If no one bids for the card, keep it (free of charge) or, after looking at the card, discard it.

Gemini

You have the power of double attack. You attack 2 bases during each of your challenges. These bases must be adjacent and must both have tokens from your opponent inhabiting them. Point the cone between the two planets and continue the challenge normally except that you may place up to double the allowed number of tokens into the cone. Allies are still limited to one to four. The defensive player adds the tokens on both planets to his total. If you win, you and your allies take both bases (or, if you wish, just one) and defensive tokens on both bases (and the cone) go to the warp. Your allies may take both bases even if you take just one. Planets which have no tokens on them may be attacked as one of two challenged home bases (or, if 2 adjacent planets are empty, both may be attacked). If you cannot attack 2 planets, your turn ends. If zapped, you attack one base during the challenge.

Wild Gemini: You may make up to 4 challenges during your turn. You still must win the previous challenge to continue your turn.

Super Gemini: You may always attack 2 bases, whether or not a player has tokens on both. The two bases must still be adjacent.

Wretch

You have the power of misery. If you are a main player and if after the challenge is determined your opponent's total is 8 or more points above (or below if Anti-Matter is a main player) your total, the challenge is determined as an overkill. You win instead of him. Note that you still win if your total is higher than his no matter how high it is. If Insect copies your power, either player can call an overkill.

Wild Wretch: Every time you lose tokens to the warp, take one card from the deck as consolation.

Super Wretch: The challenge is determined as an overkill if your opponent's total is 5 or more points above (or below if Anti-Matter is a main player) your total.

Industrialist

You have the power to build. If you play a challenge card in a challenge and you win or make a deal, do not discard it but leave it face up before you. You now add this card to your total the next time you are a main player. If you win again, do not discard either card but keep them both face up before you. You now add both cards to your total the next time you are a

main player. This process continues throughout the game: the "stack" of challenge cards before you becoming larger each time you win. Compromise cards in the stack count as zero towards your total. If you lose a challenge, discard your stack but keep the challenge card you played that challenge. This card becomes the first card in your next stack. If you are zapped, keep your stack but do not add it to your total. Discard the challenge card you play that challenge. If you lose that challenge, also discard your stack. If you lose your power, discard your stack.

Wild Industrialist: As a main player, you may play as many attack cards in a challenge as you wish. Their total, however, may not exceed forty. Play all the cards at the same time, face down. After cards are revealed, discard all of the cards you played.

Super Industrialist: You need never discard your stack, even if you lose the challenge or fail to deal. Add each challenge card you play to your stack.

Scavenger

You have the power of recovery. Whenever you are to take consolation cards from another player, or reward cards from the deck, you may, instead, take any or all of the cards from anywhere in the discard pile. If you do not take all the cards from the discard pile, take the remainder from the appropriate source. You may, if you wish, take some cards from the other player or from the deck before taking any from the discard pile. You may look through the discard pile at any time.

Wild Scavenger: If another player loses his power, you may use it. You may not use your own power if you are using his and you must keep his power until he regains use of it again or until you lose this flare. You may not use this flare again until the player regains use of his power.

Super Scavenger: At the start of each challenge, you may take one card from anywhere in the discard pile and put it in your hand.

Mimic

You have the power of duplication. If you are involved in a challenge, you may copy one action of another player during that challenge. If someone takes tokens from the warp, you may take out (up to) an equal number of your tokens. If someone takes consolation from a player or rewards from the deck, you may

take an equal number of cards from the same player or from the deck (respectively). If another player plays an Edict, you may announce that you are playing the same Edict (but you do not actually play a card). You may do this last action only if that Edict allows you to play it immediately. If Lucre is in the game and someone takes Lucre from the box, you may take an equal number of Lucre. In all cases, the other player finishes his action before you may start to mimic it. The actions mimicked cannot be directly related to the use of a power.

Wild Mimic: If someone plays a wild Flare, you immediately play this card as if it were the same Wild Flare. He gets to use his Flare first. Use once per challenge.

Super Mimic: You may mimic the use of someone's power just after that player has used it. You may not, however, mimic those powers that cannot be used with Insect or Plant.

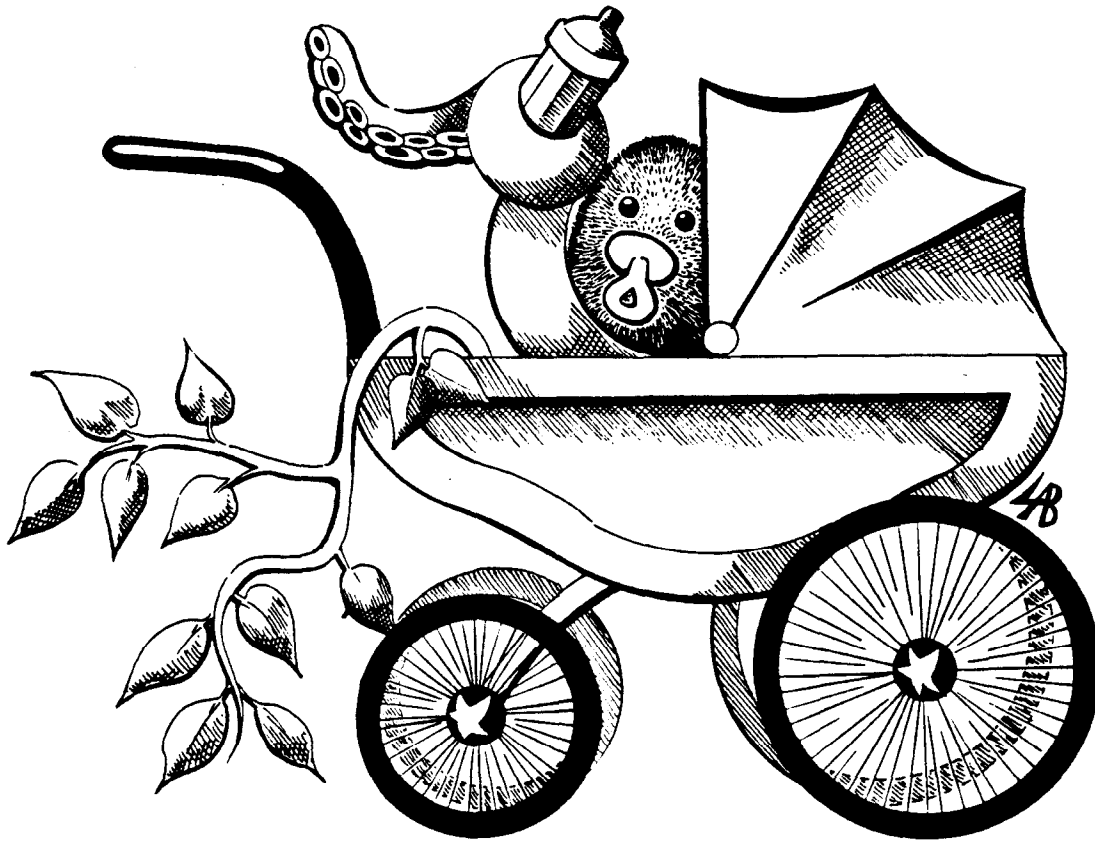
Craven

You have the power of retreat. If you are a main player in a challenge you may, at anytime before cards are revealed, end the challenge. If you are a main offensive player, you and all alliances return to any of your respective bases. If you are the main defensive player, you evacuate the base and you and your allies return to any of your respective bases. The main offensive player and his allies take the base. Any challenge cards played are discarded. You may avoid the consequences of an Edict (including a Cosmic Zap) or a Flare by ending the challenge just after the card is played. Note that a Cosmic Zap will stop you from ending a challenge if played just after you tried to end it. The Edict is discarded even though you avoided its effect. If you end the challenge, you are considered to have won it even though you may have just lost a base. Also, as an ally you may pull completely out of the challenge anytime before challenge cards are revealed. This will not, however, allow you to avoid the consequences of an Edict or Flare.

Wild Craven: When someone draws consolation from your hand, you choose which cards he takes.

Super Craven: You may end the challenge just after challenge cards are revealed. If you are an ally, you may pull out of the challenge just after challenge cards are revealed.

**Are You Reading Someone Else's Copy?
Don't You Deserve a First ENCOUNTER?**



Announcing: Baby Quirkings

Knut-Michael Wolf, of the West German branch of the family, is pleased to write us of the birth of "Baby Quirkings". He made it up for his pre-school daughter, Veruschka, who loves it. Without further ado, his rules:

For ages up to 6, average playing time 15 minutes or less, 2 to 6 players. This is the easiest-to-play version for players who can't yet read.

1. Object: The same as in Quirkings (**ed:** the children's version of Quirks we included along with the rules for the adult game) you must be the first player to make one plant, one plant-eating animal and one animal-eating animal.

2. Set-Up:

- A. For this version you only need the trait cards.
- B. All trait cards are shuffled together and each player is dealt 5 cards.
- C. The deck is set to one side and the top card is turned over to start the discard pile.

D. The youngest player plays first.

E. (Optional rule if the players are very young) Every player lays his or her cards face up on the table.

3. A Turn:

- A. Take a card either from the deck or the discard pile and look to see whether you can use it to complete a Quirkling.
 - B. If you can't "build" a Quirkling, discard one trait from your hand to the top of the discard pile. This is the end of your turn.
 - C. If you've got a complete Quirkling, lay down the set of 3 trait cards and take one additional card either from the deck or the discard pile. This is the end of your turn.
 - D. According to rule C, you have in your hand: 5 cards at the start of the game, 4 cards after you've laid down your first Quirkling, and 3 cards after you've laid down your second Quirkling.
 - E. When you have made up your third Quirkling you have one card left which is discarded. This is your win, and the end of the game.
- Note: You may only build one Quirkling of each type.

A DARKOVER Expansion Set (?)

DARKOVER was the second game in Eon's line. Following on the heels of **COSMIC ENCOUNTER** was hard to do anyway, and the game did not sell well initially. Some players thought it was too difficult to set up, some said it was too intense for a relaxing evening, and some just thought it was silly. Time, however, has seemed to vindicate our decision to publish it (we knew at the time it was a risk to put this kind of game in a box) and now it is among our top sellers. Robert Morse, of Indianapolis, has long been a **DARKOVER** fan and has come up with the following ideas for an Expansion Set for the game.

Darkover is an excellent strategic game. To win, a player must consolidate his strength while effectively gauging the strength of others. A good sense of timing is also essential. Game events such as the Fire and the Starstone Duel make the game unique, even bizarre, but these events are tame when compared to the notorious Ghost Wind.

The Ghost Wind allows players to introduce their own imaginative activities to the game. In consequence, virtually *anything* can happen. I recall a game in which people were purposely calling random numbers from the phone book. I have also witnessed players lapping up the beverage of their choice (while meowing intermittently), and popping their cheeks to the tune of "The good 01' Summertime." I challenge Marion Zimmer Bradley to invent stranger side effects than these!

The combination of Ghost Winds with other game events can have unforeseen consequences. I remember a contest wherein several players agreed to a Ghost Wind that required speaking in falsetto for the remainder of the game. This, by itself, is deranged enough, but trying to keep a straight face while grown men with Mickey Mouse voices chant, "One, please don't bum; two, please don't burn. . . ," can cause internal hemorrhaging.

Just as disorienting, at least potentially, is the combined effect of two ongoing Ghost Winds. During one game, the first "wind" required impersonating a famous personality for the rest of the game; the second demanded that all speech be in pig latin for the game's duration.

Let me go out on a limb here, and remember, you read it here first: Impersonating W.C. Fields while simultaneously speaking in pig latin may seriously detract from a player's overall game performance.

My enjoyment of the **Ghost Wind** led to my revising the rules regarding it. And after reading *Two to Conquer*, a **Darkover** novel by Bradley, I came up with some ideas for expanding the entire game. These ideas appear below.

Ghost Winds

1. Stockpile: Ghost Winds used in previous games are saved. Before each game, a blank paper is folded up and kept with the Ghost Winds for that particular game. If the blank paper is drawn, the person who drew it draws from the "stockpile" of previous Ghost Winds. Ghost Wind procedure then proceeds normally.



2. Equipment: One additional Ghost Wind chip. (Note: when the first is drawn, it is not returned to the box for the rest of that game.)

Overworld Towers (see: *The Forbidden Tower*)

1. Equipment: Three or four Overworld peril chips. (Extra peril is available through Eon; as for original artwork on the new pieces, you're on your own.)

2. Conditions for Using a Tower in the Overworld:

- A tower in the over-world is really an extension of an existing tower. As a restriction, a player must hold the tower in his home domain in order to establish an **overworld** extension. If, after establishing an overworld tower, a player loses the tower in his home domain, the overworld tower is also lost. (Note: a player who regains his home tower does not automatically regain an overworld tower; he may form a new one, but only after meeting all requirements.) A player in Exile may establish an overworld tower if he holds any regular tower with three tokens.
- A player must have at least three tokens in the **overworld**.
- A player must have an overworld peril chip.
- A player must have a Keeper power disc.

3. To Establish an Overworld Tower, a Player Must:

- Announce his intention during his turn (before movement).
- Play an overworld peril chip face down.
- Reveal his Keeper power disc to all other players.
- Arrange his tokens in the overworld in a circle.
- Choose a laran gift for his overworld tower. The choice is known to all.

4. Laran Gifts Available:

- a. Weather Control. Once during each of his turns, a player can cause a Snow Storm, a Fire or a Ghost Wind (his choice). Regular rules on all three follow from this point. If a Snow Storm is chosen, any expended peril chip can be used to mark the area afflicted.
- b. Spells are double their amount.
- c. Immune to Illusions.
- d. May use the "Illusion" tactic without the appropriate peril chip.
- e. May use Clingfire.
- f. May use Clingfire.

5. Movement: A tower operating in the overworld allows an additional token move.

The Compact

The signing of the Compact was an important event in Darkover's history. It forbade the use of laran gifts for purposes of war.

If two sword peril chips are played as part of the same battle, the top power disc is turned over. If it is a Keeper, the Compact has been agreed to by all the domains and the game is over. The winner is the occupant of castle Hastur. If no one meets this requirement, the winner is the player with the most tokens in the Hastur domain. If victory is still in doubt, the Regent wins.

Clingfire

There are 8 Clingfire peril chips. These chips are kept separately from the rest; however, expended Clingfire is returned to play the same as other peril (by Fire or Ghost Wind).

A player may draw Clingfire if he has selected that **laran** power for his overworld tower. A player collecting Clingfire peril may only take one for each castle he holds. This is never in addition to returning a token from the overworld. A player may only take one Clingfire peril chip per turn.

A player who loses his overworld tower and hence his use of Clingfire automatically loses any Clingfire peril he has collected.

The Regent may ask for Clingfire only if he is able to use it.

If a player with Clingfire loses a battle, he may immediately play a Clingfire peril chip. This is considered part of battle, not spelling. His opponent now draws from the plot cards, up to three. If he draws his home domain, the Clingfire does not affect him. However, a spell may still follow. If he does not draw his home domain, his tokens go to the overworld (those in the challenge).

A player may elect to play two clingfire chips in the same battle. If this happens, his opponent may draw only one plot card to determine the effect. A player may not play more than two Clingfire peril chips in any one battle.

A player in Exile who is attacked by Clingfire picks any domain where he has tokens. He then draws plot cards as described above.

Ridenow is not immune to Clingfire.

Illusions

There are four illusion peril chips. An illusion is revealed during a spell. It expends the opponent's spell chips. A second spell may follow, but neither player can use an illusion this time.

If two illusions are played simultaneously, they cancel each other out. No spell follows, and the tie goes to the defender.

Command Voice

Use of command voice makes the speaker's wishes irresistible to those who hear him, Command voice is used infrequently; therefore there is only one "Voice" peril chip.

To use Command Voice, reveal the peril chip just prior to any other player's turn. That player must now obey your wishes regarding all aspects of his turn (domain choice, movement, peril and clan selection, decision to battle, selection of power disc, decision to spell, and the number and type of spell chips to use. A player cannot command any more than three spell chips to be used and cannot command any other type of peril. Also, you cannot command a player to use his laran gift (except where movement is involved-Alton, Aldaran) or not to use it. Note: as a further restriction, the player who is commanded cannot use any other type of peril during his turn (e.g. kite, sword, etc.).

If the player being commanded does not have the commanded power disc or spell chip, he may choose himself. If he doesn't have as many spell chips as asked for, he must play what he has. (However, if for example a spell # 1 is asked for and he has only a #2, he does not play it.)

A player using Command Voice cannot cut his victim short during clan and peril collection. Collection must be the amount entitled to, although what type of collection is made (peril or clan tokens) is the choice of the person doing the commanding. If the Regent is being commanded, he can be made to ask for a chip that is not available.

A player cannot be commanded during the Wars of Succession.

Other Equipment

About 7 to 10 more spell chips would be useful, due to all the additional types of peril.

Editor: Obviously Bob Morse has read the Darkover books carefully and expanded the game in its original spirit. Let me quickly add, however, that we allow only Ghost Winds which don't hurt anyone, and random phone calls at night don't meet that requirement.

We'd be glad to get reactions to Morse's ideas. Try mocking it up with pencil & paper, or we can supply peril chips at 10 cents each if you want to go all out. (P.S. If you're planning to get DARKOVER anyway, now is a good time. The price of it-and COSMIC ENCOUNTER, too-will be going up shortly due to the costs of making these weighty classics.)

Special Report: CE World Championship Where There's a Will, There's a Way

Last Labor Day weekend the first annual COSMIC ENCOUNTER World Championship Tournament was held in Chicago. The site was the World Science Fiction Convention. After two initial qualifying rounds, there remained only 6 finalists, gathered around their assembled Aliens.

Jack Scheirer, as the Vacuum, hoped to triumph through his opponent's fear of attacking him and ending up in the warp. David Woodcock was heard humming a mysterious incantation as he donned the Sorcerer's cloak. Cynthia Dudley and her nimble Filch fingers were always ready to benefit from an opponent's strength. Mark Henckel raised a few eyebrows and brought forth whispers of admiration as his Will ruthlessly preyed upon the weak and the lonely. Lowell Cunningham used the Magnet's attractiveness as an ally to maximize his own trips through hyperspace. Robert Morse brought forth more teeth-gnashing than anyone else as he deliberately Assassinated helpless occupants of foreign bases.

The struggle was mighty, and conducted according to the Eon tournament rules (originated by long-time CE player Alan Emrich from California). These rules allow players to earn points based on their performance so that rankings can be developed. While the points slightly skew the game, this system has been the best devised to date to approximate the intuitive value most players assign to various game positions (see system explained at the end of this report).

COSMIC ENCOUNTER lived up to its billing as the Science Fiction game for Everyone when novice David Woodcock, introduced to the game at the first qualifying round, became one of the 6 finalists!

In the final game all 8 Expansion Sets were used and players had to deal with Moons, Flares, Kickers, and all sorts of side cases on their way to ultimate victory. The Wild Filch managed to pocket a hefty part of the deck before being spotted, and the positive moon had players beside themselves trying to avoid negative statements under grueling tension.

The struggle lasted 2½ hours, with the warp working overtime to accommodate the Vacuum and the Assassin. Even so, everyone managed to keep his or her power until the final moments, when the Filch was finally overturned. As the end approached, each player made bids for the win, only to be turned back by the collective opposition. But finally Mark Henckel, the Will of Franklin Wisconsin, triumphed.

As the first COSMIC ENCOUNTER World Champion he carried the trophy home, had his name inscribed on the permanent plaque, and got a load of Eon games as well. The others, in order of finish, were:

2nd Jack Scheirer, Vacuum, 13 pts.

3rd David Woodcock, Sorcerer 11 pts.

3rd Cynthia Dudley, Filch 11 pts.

3rd Lowell Cunningham, Magnet 11 pts.

4th Robert Morse, Assassin 8 pts.

Each of the finalists was awarded an autographed Aristocrat power (a sneak preview of Expansion Set 9) and a selection of Eon games.

The second annual World Championship CE tournament will be held next Labor Day at the World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore. We hope you can make it, and will be notifying readers of the details as the time gets nearer. In the meantime, try duplicating the finalists' powers in a game of your own. Let us know if the Will always wins.

-Peter Olotka

COSMIC ENCOUNTER Tournament Rules

Victory Point System

- 1 point for every home base (5 possible)
- 2 points for every foreign planet base (10 possible)
- 6 points in a "pot" divided among the winners (Thus a player who has won alone and had all of his or her home bases would score the maximum of 21 points.)
- If a game has not finished in the time limit, take the accumulated points at that time and the player(s) with the most at that time divide up the pot
- Take the top scorers in multiples of four (down to your selected cut-off number and advance them to the next round

Round 1

- 2 games, timed at 50 minutes
- 4 player games using first 15 basic powers only
- special rule that Virus does not multiply his allies

Intermediate Rounds

- 1 game
- everyone starts at zero points again
- 50 minute time limit to games
- on round 2 add in Expansion Sets 1, 2, & 3 (excluding Dictator & Schizoid); on subsequent rounds add in Set 4, then Set 5
- take top scorers and advance to next round, as above

Finals

- 1 game, no limit
- include all Expansion Sets (use of Sets 4, 5, & 8 is optional for tournament play)

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Some Thoughts on Designing a Game

Most serious game players have at least dabbled in game design. Whether it is only discovering a better way to play a particular favorite game, or creating an entirely new game from your own imagination, if you are reading this journal you probably have already done some design work. I thought some of you might appreciate a few random musings from your 01' philosophical editor on the art and science of it, and how maybe even to see your ideas published and on the market.

Designing It

First off, the world needs more good game designs. Games can open people up to speculation, make them laugh, and allow them to experience strong emotions in a safe and structured way. These are valuable reasons for gaming, so don't let anyone make you feel guilty for wasting your time on games. Even if you never get it published, the creative effort and discipline you've put into your game will serve you well in other pursuits.

But how do you make a design good enough to publish? Of course the main thing is that it should be fun for groups to play. The easiest way to do that is to design with a group. Whether they be just playtesters or co-equal designers, a regular group usually develops a spirit of its own. It's important to allow this to flourish, to let everyone feel a part of it, and to get people to relax and speak their minds. If this kind of honest exchange about the game—what feels good about it and what makes a player feel dumb or bored or **angry**—takes place, then you have an excellent source of feedback about how it feels to a number of different people. If you can listen to this feedback and let it guide the game's development, you probably will end up with a product which feels good to play.

Games also need to be humorous. But making them so is a trick. The best humor is spontaneous, as you know if you've listened to a comic give the same routine several times. The best game humor is that which develops out of situations in which people find themselves, and how they manage to deal with it. Trying to "can" the humor and put it in jokes on the cards, or somesuch, usually leaves the game feeling flat after a few playings.

The theme of the game is obviously important both in selling it, and in getting people to play it with friends once they bring it home from the store. Ideally, it should be broad enough that many people feel that they can identify with it or know something about it. Yet it needs to be focused enough to excite interest and create a mood of willingness to enter into the game's world. Specificity has a side-benefit as well: It can help you target an audience for the game which is easily reached through magazines, books, or other media appealing to those interested in that theme.



Before it can be considered done, a game really has to be blind-tested. That is, give it-board, pieces, rules and all to a group that you think is like the kind of group that will buy the game. Then leave. Find out later what happened. If they opened up the box but never played, you've got a problem (rules are confusing, too hard to set up, etc.) If they played it once and then did something else, it needs more work (maybe the pace is too slow, maybe it's not challenging enough.) If they played game after game, then you know you're onto something.

Lastly, rather than getting every last detail in the graphics done to perfection, go through the rules with a ruthless eye. Does the latest version accurately reflect the markings, colors, shapes, etc. of the components still? Are the same terms and names used consistently throughout? Do the instructions tell the player what he needs to know as he needs to know it? Are headings accurate and helpful in finding answers to questions? No one is perfect, but a few problems with the rules can turn people off faster than any other facet of a game.

Getting it Published

Once you think your creation is ready to stand the test of time, the next big hurdle is getting it to market. Do you raise the money to publish it yourself, or do you try to break down doors of existing publishers to have them buy it? That depends, of course, largely on what you really want to do over the next few years.

Assuming you can raise the money, publishing a game yourself means you are going to be a business person first, and only second a game designer. For quite a while. Without mass media advertising or a national distribution network, your growth is going to be slow, no matter how good your game. So look for several years of traveling to trade shows, managing a warehouse, dealing with production mistakes and assembly flaws, calling or visiting buyers, placing ads, and keeping up with mounds of invoices & bills & tax forms & correspondence & billing notices & et cetera ad infinitum. It doesn't leave much time to have a personal life, much less invent new & better games.

Financially, game publishing is one of the businesses which **is** still accessible to the individual without much capital. But you have to have enough to produce the game, store and ship it, advertise it, and maintain the business for awhile before you can expect much income. Realistically, you shouldn't be in **business** unless you can **achieve an 8 to 1 markup** or better. (Eon has never managed that with any of its games.) An 8 to 1 markup means that your production costs should be one-eighth of the game's retail price. So if it sells for \$10, you should be able to produce it for \$1.25. This is because you will sell it to distributors for roughly \$4.50, and out of that you will have to pay for all production plus storage, shipping, advertising, phones & office expenses. The ubiquitous **middle-person** takes most of the money, right from the get-go. The only way you can get that kind of markup is by lowering your expenses via producing and selling large numbers of games. And of course the only way you can get high volume is through expensive advertising and distribution incentives . . .

If you would rather sell the game to a publisher, be rid of the hassle, and go on to do more designing, I can certainly understand it (that's what we wanted to do, and only started our own company when we couldn't convince anybody that the world was ready for our games). But even here, there are plenty of pitfalls. For one, another publisher isn't going to treat your game with the special attention it deserves. They'll be looking mostly at their existing "line", and how your new item fits in. This means such petty things as box size compatibility, ease of manufacturing components with their existing connections, thematic consistency, age & price 'brackets', etc. The game's quality does not always overcome these sorts of concerns.

On the other hand, publishers know their ultimate livelihood depends upon getting enough good games to keep themselves competitive. So they will treat you fairly and with respect. The occasional stories of game "theft" rumored around the industry have never been substantiated, to my knowledge. So if they like your game, publishers would rather buy it than steal it.

"Buying it", in most cases, means getting from you the exclusive right to publish and market it, including the right to change it in any way they want, in return for a royalty to you for every game sold.

As far as royalties go, about the maximum you can expect would be 5% of the company's gross income on the game. So if it retails for \$10, the publisher will gross about \$4.50 on it, and would pay you 22.5 cents on each one it sells. If the firm thinks the game is unfinished, or in other ways requires unusual expenses, it may well offer you less than 5%.

"When I get to that point, I'll dicker," you say, "but how do I get in the door?" Well basically, you knock. Send them a letter saying you have a game, briefly describe it, and ask for a chance to send it in. Most publishers will respond with a form letter describing how they receive new games. The larger the company, the more offensive the letter will be. But in all cases you will have to agree to a "non-confidential" basis for disclosing your game. This means that they can show it to whomever, or discuss it with whomever, they wish. And if later something similar comes on the market, you can't sue them. Bite the bullet and sign it, if you really want your game to be looked at. Don't worry, if they like it they would rather have you "onboard" via a royalty agreement than take the risks of having a creative designer permanently at their throats.

Living Off It

Whichever way you go, don't expect one game to make you independent. This business has a crazy logic which seems to serve the players better than the designers. Whether you publish yourself, or go through existing firms, you'll be forced to create more games. In the first case, the business logic demands expansion. In the latter, you won't make enough to live on off royalties on one game. So you're locked in by success, and your energies for the next few years are going to be spent proving you have more than one game in you. Celebrate this, and go with it. After all, isn't this just what you want from your favorite designers right now?

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