

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group
Club Notice - 5/28/81

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(Unless otherwise stated, all Holmdel meetings are on Wednesdays at noon in room 4H-405.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
5/27/81	Book exchange
6/1/81	Film Program, HO auditorium
6/10/81	SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES by Ray Bradbury (QUATERMASS AND THE PIT by Nigel Kneale at HP)
7/1/81	THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON by Robert Heinlein
7/22/81	DRAGON'S EGG by Robert Forward
8/12/81	THE GODS THEMSELVES by Isaac Asimov

Our library is in HO 4B-510. Mike Lukacs (x4043) is librarian. Debi Bennett (HP 1B-368 x2408) is in charge of South Plainfield activities. Evelyn Leeper (HO 1E-321 x6334) is Club book-buyer. This notice publishes anything (not slanderous or libelous) submitted by club members. Members, feel free to submit.

1. The following books have been chosen for book discussions and are in print:

DRAGON'S EGG by Robert Forward
THE GODS THEMSELVES by Isaac Asimov
TACTICS OF MISTAKE by Gordon Dixon
GAMEPLAYERS OF ZAN by M. A. Foster
SNOW QUEEN by Joan Vinge

Anyone wishing to purchase any or all of these books should follow the instructions in item 3 of this notice.

2. Included this notice is Alan Gopin's survey of existing games based on S.F. works. The club can probably afford to buy one or more of these little wonders PROVIDED INTEREST IS SHOWN by members. If you are one of those people who said you would like to get into science fiction gaming, let me know which games interest you. Or let me know that you are interested in game playing, in general, and don't care which game. In the mean time, so that you can have a taste of sf gaming I am including the following:

THE GAME OF STAR FORCE (A game of strategy for two players): On a piece of paper draw a planetary battlefield. You do this by drawing a square and with two horizontal and two vertical lines dividing it into 9 smaller squares (called "sectors"). The Eckses and the Os will fight for this battlefield by alternately choosing

sectors to land troops in and occupy. They designate that they have captured a sector by drawing their hereditary coat of arms in the sector. The coat of arms of the Eckses is the letter "X" and the coat of arms of the "Os" is the letter "O". The game continues until one player has connected two opposite sides of the battlefield with a "star force," that is, a set of three sectors that lie in a straight line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. When a player has such a star force, he has won and the other player is expected to hit him/her on the head with a toy light saber and run home crying.

This is not just a game but a simulation of how actual space battles will be fought.

3. All right people. You asked for me to arrange for group discounts on science fiction (on the last member poll). Witter's F&SF Book Company catalog has come out for the new year. I will put a copy in the library. Witter gives the following discounts:

- 10% on orders of \$10 or more
- 20% on orders of \$25 or more
- 25% on orders of \$100 or more

In addition, he sometimes forgets to charge sales tax. This is how we will work things:

- Examine the catalog in the library and choose books that you want to buy.
- Write on a piece of paper your name, room number, phone number, titles, authors, and prices.
- Deliver the paper with payment in full to Evelyn Leeper, room 1E-321. [Yes, it's true you now have to pay in advance; we cannot chase everyone to be sure we can get our money back after we have have paid for books for members. Sorry.] DEADLINE FOR THIS STEP IS JUNE 11, 1981.
- On June 13 I will drive to the F&SF warehouse in Staten Island and purchase what books have been ordered. Some books may not be in stock. Unless we have been specifically requested by the member who wanted the book to place the ordered item on back order if it turns out to be unavailable, we will simply refund the purchase price.
- We will pay with the fund of collected money and will get the largest discount we qualify for.
- Upon returning to the labs the following Monday or Tuesday we will give to members their purchases and refund to them their proportion of the money saved because of the discount.

Members can probably expect to get about 20% though there might be some chance of getting enough for the 25% discount.

- At no point will anyone associated with the club get any benefit from this transaction other than the discount that applies to all. We are doing all this purely out of service, a love of doing things for members of the club. We get nothing for it. No appreciation. No respect. I tell you it's a thankless job. Here we are, slaving for the club, working our fingers to the bone. And do you think anyone cares? Not a sausage! It's enough to make a grown man weep. I didn't have to do all this stuff for the club, you know. I did it out of the goodness of my heart. I didn't have to found the sf club. I could have spent the time on my job. I could have made something of myself. I could have had class. I coulda been a contender. I mighta even made it to corporate vice-president. Ah, I'm just wastin' my breath. No one cares.

Mark Leeper
HO 2B-515 x7093

A Short Review of Some S.F. Games Currently Available

BY

Alan M. Gopin

The last poll taken in the notice indicated a number of people were interested in S.F. gaming. As the club's resident games expert I was "volunteered" by Our Fearless Leader to write an article on the subject. The list of games that will be reviewed is by no means exhaustive. They were picked based on whatever came to mind when I sat down to write this article. For a more complete list of S.F. games in print see the games ratings chart in any issue of ARES magazine.

The games to be reviewed have been divided into two groups, games based on existing S.F. literature or film, and games with independent themes.

Games Based On Existing S.F. Works

StarShip Troopers

This game is based on the novel of the same name. One player controls the M.I. and the other gets the Bugs, complete with tunnel complexes you can design yourself. This game is fun to play but it is basically the U.S. Marines vs. the Japanese in W.W.II in drag. The rules are written using programmed instruction making them easier for a novice to learn.

Dune

This is an excellent game for up to six players that faithfully recreates Herbert's novel without getting stereotyped after a couple of playings. Each of the factions has unique special abilities that contribute to setting the mood of the game. For example, the Harkonnen player has control of four times as many traitors as anyone else, and the Fremen player can ride sandworms. The object of the game is to control three of the five cities on Dune. The game is replete with treachery and the search for spice, the money that is required to do almost anything in the game. I recommend this one.

Freedom In The Galaxy

Although this game is not strictly based on an existing work, any resemblance between it and a certain VERY popular movie is completely intentional. One player controls the rebel forces and the other the empire. Each gets a number of characters who go out stirring up and suppressing planetary rebellions, trying to kill off each other etc. This game is a lot of fun and comes complete with imperial atrocities, princess Zena Adora, Redjck, and Adam Starlight. (Three guesses who they are supposed to be.)

The Creature That Ate Shenoydan

This small and very easy to play game is a sophomoric romp through every grade B Japanese monster movie ever made. One player is the Creature, who can breathe fire, jump over tall buildings in a single bound, control the minds of hapless humans. The other sucker gets to play with a ragtag collection of police and national guardsmen. The object of the game is for the creature to munch as much of metropolitan Wisconsin as possible before the National Guard finally does it in. For more detail on this game see issue 43 of MUVPS magazine, which contains an article by your author on the strategy and tactics of this little gem. This game is very popular and deservedly so.

War Of The Ring

Based on Tolkien's Ring trilogy this game is worth having for the map alone, which is a beautiful rendition of middle earth. The fellowship player must destroy the ring before the Dark Lord can capture it or overrun middle earth. There is also an option for a third player to take the part of Saruman. The problem with this game is that the Dark Lord has the advantage of knowing what the good guys are up to. Because of this, the game often degenerates into a tag team personal combat on the slopes of Mt. Doom between the fellowship and the Nazgul. Maves magazine published a variant called "Take a Letter Frodo" that largely solves this problem.

Dare

This little game is based on Laumer's Holo series of stories. One player gets the Dare, a giant robot tank, and the other gets a bunch of manned tanks and artillery and infantry and tries to stop it, usually without a lot of success.

Games With Independent Themes

Dungeons and Dragons

This was the first of the Fantasy Role Playing games that have become so popular. The players get to act out the personality of a character generated through a series of random die rolls. One player is the Dungeonmaster. He gets to set up the scenario and watch the rest of the players blunder into his traps. The players get to role play mighty fighters like Conan and great wizards like Merlin, but only when they get very good. A game of D&D never really ends, it just expands into infinity.

Traveller

This game is to space opera what D&D is to fantasy. The players can role play Luke Skywalker, Juan Rico, the Stainless Steel Rat, etc. There are rules for fighting with lasers, building starships, fighting with starships, generating planets, and lots of other things too numerous to mention here. Personally, I prefer this to D&D, although I play D&D more often.

Starforce

This was the first game to use true 3-D movement. It is a game about the wars between races (including Humans) in the 25th century. The game is based on the premise that starships are powered by PSI talents that teleport them through space. These notshots are in short supply so its a no no to burn the other guy's planets.

Swords_and_Sorcery

This is sort of a boardgame version of D&D, and if you can stomach the puns on the map (New Orc City for example, and they get worse), this is a good game for 2 to 7 players.

Battlefleet_Mars

Mars is being run by a multinational conglomerate, the ARES corporation, and the colonist rise up against their corporate opressors. This game is noted for good celestial mechanics and an unusual game system, in which the winner is the one who forces his opponents morale down to the point where their population nollars quits.

As a final note there are a number of magazines on the subject of S.F. gaming. ARES is one of them and comes complete with a game in each issue, along with science fact, science fiction, and reviews of games, books, and movies. The science fiction is often related to the game in the issue. Other S.F. gaming mags include The Space Gamer, The Journal Of The Traveller's Aid Society, and Dragon magazine.