

Writers Guidelines for *Your Move!*

A Newsletter for SPI Gamers

In this Issue:

Articles Wanted:

*Tactics, Strategies,
Tricks and Traps,
Player aids,
Scenarios, or
Variants.*

Inside:

Content wanted
Acceptable Length
Renumeration

I have had many people ask for writer's guidelines, so... they will likely be in the next newsletter. (just kidding.)

They are here. These guidelines are specific. They are long. They are opinionated. But that should leave you with no doubt on what I am looking for!

The best advice I ever had from an editor?
"Write an article well enough to convince me I want your article, despite my preferred article statements."

I look forward to the discussion!

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The Goals Behind "Your Move"

For people who still enjoy SPI's great games.

- ⇒ Promote play of the old SPI games.
- ⇒ Promote appreciation of what SPI accomplished.
- ⇒ Promote gaming activities readers can participate in.
- ⇒ Promote better gaming skills.

"I needed a place to promote events in the SPI universe — tournaments, game fests, gatherings— and I did not want them tied to a single website."

— RHG

Writers Guidelines—2/2022

By Russ Gifford

Each issue of the “Your Move” Newsletter has these components, open to submission:

1. Your Move Answer
2. Your Move Challenge
3. At least two articles related to SPI games.

That may increase to three or four articles per issue, but I do not want the zine to become ‘too big.’

Better to leave them wanting more, than to have it unopened because it has ‘too much to read right now.’ (Magazines can lie around and picked up and browsed. eMagazines are ‘out of sight, and thus, out of mind.’)

There will be at least two ‘advertisements’ in each issue. *You may submit your events, and they will be evaluated for inclusion*

Content for articles:

- ◇ **SOLID descriptions of game tactics with a specific picture, and you are likely in!**
- ◇ **A discussion of a game’s potential strategies – but you NEED to add an idea of the tactics one needs to pursue to make those strategies happen. Do that and your article is in!!**
- ◇ **Replays:** Love to discuss these. Perhaps a single move with explanation is good? And if you have a full replay, we can link to the entire replay at SPIGames.net
- ◇ **How to Play a specific game – you bet!** If it can be small enough to fit - THAT is a challenge! Thus, pick a little piece of the game – show me how to do Cavalry charge in Wellington’s Victory – or specifically, show how a WV cavalry charge rolls up the Skirmishers!
- ◇ **Scenarios for existing games?** Oh yeah!
- ◇ **Variant rules** should have a coherent concept behind them.
- ◇ **Player Aids?** As long as they are worth the space, certainly!
- ◇ **Thought pieces / General Overview:** Discuss it with me first. These can work. But they can fail too.

For example: I am not a big fan of my ‘SPI games of 1972’ article. Far too pedestrian. It COULD have gotten to something good, but I likely needed another two pages at least. *It met the point of establishing where SPI and gaming was in 1972, to take people back there, so it got in.*

But to really do the GAMES justice I needed more – and I am not certain doubling the size would have done it – so I did not do it. (I MIGHT make a part II for next issue to see if I can reclaim it the sunk value of those three pages!)

“Derived Errata” -- I MIGHT go for ‘derived’ errata – but you will have to sell me on the value. Your experience level with the game matters a great deal in this. Want to offer a set of rules to FIX a hole in a game? This IS the route to do that, but as I said, sell me on the NEED, and you are in. (‘Sell me’ means ‘Explain it to me and SHOW me why I need it, not just say, “its broken” or “it’s bad.”’)

The trick: Make your SALES PITCH your article -- explain/show the need for the rule(s) – and I will print the article explanation, and LINK it to the Derived Errata on spigames.net

Why I am not a fan: So everyone understands why I have to be sold: I played in 25 to 100 tournaments and continue to do so. ‘Home rules’ and ‘derived’ errata don’t mean a THING when you are NOT AT HOME. BUT playing with them as a default will wreck your play in a tourney. You will find an opponent rolling past you, and think – “Wait – how did my opponent do that? They can’t – there’s a rule that says so!” ... Mmm, no, that is not a ‘rule’ to anyone else but you. Your opponent and the TD will not give a damn about your derived errata in the heat of the battle.

However, GOOD derived errata can be a boon to players, and to tourney directors. One of the reasons for the existence of SPIGames.net is to have the **official errata** at one’s fingertips. *But Derived Errata requires more care.* It can help, BUT too often it is not good errata. Why do I say that? I make that statement because of my experience. The many derived rules ‘errata’ I have read on BGG is the writer changing a rule to something HE wants it to be – not to fix a true hole in the rules. They usually couch it in a statement that the designers ‘got the facts wrong’ and that loses me right there.

I can be convinced of the need for derived errata – if you have the EXPERIENCE and the FACTS to prove to me it is needed to fix a rules hole. I am NOT interested in fixing a design flaw that only you have the august knowledge to know exists.

Sell me on a needed RULES clarification, and I will help you sell it to others, here in ‘Your Move’ and on SPIGames.net

Length of articles:

Obviously, the article should be long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to keep a reader’s interest.

Articles from 250 to 2500 words are always welcome. Over that, we have to talk!

Pictures help, but they take space too. Look at 1000 to 2000 words unless we have talked. One picture or table per page will make that 1000 words take 3 pages. *I don’t expect to publish ANYTHING in a single issue that is MORE than six pages.*

If we have not discussed your article before you submit, try for the shorter side of that. Short is FAR more difficult to do – I understand that. (Look at this set of guidelines!) But - do not give up. Talk to me about it. I might have a suggestion to help you sharpen your focus.

I get that these games are complex, and it takes words to cover the subject.

We have options. Some articles might get 'continued next issue.' Replays, derived errata – we will link to the *Replay* or the *Errata* on the SPIGames.net website after making the case for them on a page or two-page article.

Have a point and make that point. If you are open to editing, I may return it with suggestions if see something you could change or add to make it better. Otherwise, my edits will be for grammar and clarity, not style, *and I will NOT send those types of edits back.*

Final Word: A 2000-word article with a few pics is 6 pages. That is about as large as I want to go. I will be a tough sale the larger the article. But let your quality shine, and it will get there!

Meaning -- a good to great 5000-word article is not off the table!

If it is good, and I want it, it could be printed in back-to-back issues as a continued story. But if you go above 2000 to 2500 words the odds are about the same as the defender in a 3:1 on the Quads table. Not too good. *And a hint: if you do go over 5000, plan it to break it across two issues, and make the break clear to me. And make it at an exciting point! 'Hook' me, and you have a sale.*

Remuneration:

IF your article is accepted for 'Your Moves' I get the online rights, and first print rights.

I will give you a whopping 1 US cent per word for the first 1000 words, and a half cent for each word above that.

You must have a PayPal account if you want the money.

(This only includes the portion for 'Your Moves.' The items published only on SPIGames.net are accepted as a gratis contribution and thank you.)

Note: It is likely these will NEVER see print. But if I do, I do not want to track down everyone after the fact. If after 5 years I have not printed it, your rights will revert to you by the acceptance agreement.

Return of Print Rights: If after two years I have not printed your article, you can write to me requesting return of the print rights. Unless I am in the process of preparing a printed copy, I will send notice I am releasing my claim on first print rights. Holding your words hostage for 5 years for an unlikely potential future is worth something, gang. Thus, the fee for your work and services.

Want to sell me an article? Remember my goals above:

I want to talk about the GOOD, not the BAD. I want to promote SPI Games, and gaming using SPI Games. I want readers to enjoy the process.

Please submit your queries to this email. Or send completed articles (in Word or Text) as attached files, to rgifford@spigames.net

If you do not get a response within 48 hours, please send a follow-up. Thanks.

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