



The Cornerstone

**Tau Beta Pi
Michigan Gamma**

Volume 9, Issue 8
March 27, 2012

My First TBP Volunteering Experience

By Evan Noon

Between programming projects and circuits' homework, I have finally found time to write down my thoughts on my first TBP volunteering experience. As a whole, the experience taught me much about myself and Tau Beta Pi. First, I'm going to give a brief background of myself so that you will better understand where I'm coming at certain points in my story.

I am from the great state of Tennessee. Specifically, I am from the city of Knoxville (see

Diagram 1 for the location of Knoxville). Where I grew up, there were lots of trees and very little snow. As a kid, this is a perfect excuse to spend my entire childhood outdoors. Specifically, I spent a majority of that childhood in the woods right behind my house.

In these woods, my friends and I would spend every day making forts, trails, chasing animals, and doing other

things that woods are perfect for. However, I couldn't stay a little kid forever and eventually, extracurricular activities and AP classes got in the way of fort building and general wandering through the woods.

Now, don't think that I lost my appreciation for nature in the least bit. Every year I try to go backpacking and camping. Also, I love walking through the Arb. However, these activities tend to be more observing nature than directly interacting with it (I know what you are thinking, but with backpacking you walk on a trail and sleep in a tent, which is little *interaction*). Interacting with nature is not something I had done for quite a while. This is where my first Tau Beta Pi volunteering experience comes in.

For my first set of service hours, I chose to attend the Arb Work Day in February. Despite the snow (the only snow that actually stayed on the ground for longer than 24 hours this winter), the ice cold wind, and having to wake up early on a Saturday morning, it was a blast! The project that we were working on was invasive species removal. In simple words, this meant cutting down and removing certain types of plants, specifically honeysuckle and buckthorn. I was once again interacting with nature even if that included cutting it down. Where we were working, there were no trails. You had to wander and find your own way. Also, we got to and help improve the Arb's ecosystem.

I was really happy that I once again was in touch with nature. I also felt much better about deciding to elect for Tau Beta Pi. When I had first heard about the almost 20 service hours, I felt overwhelmed. I was taking a hard semester and these hours on top of my normal schedule was not an easy undertaking. However, after this experience, I realized that community service through Tau Beta Pi was fun. This experience, along with the rest of my community service through Tau Beta Pi, has been very enjoyable and I cannot wait to do more! ◇

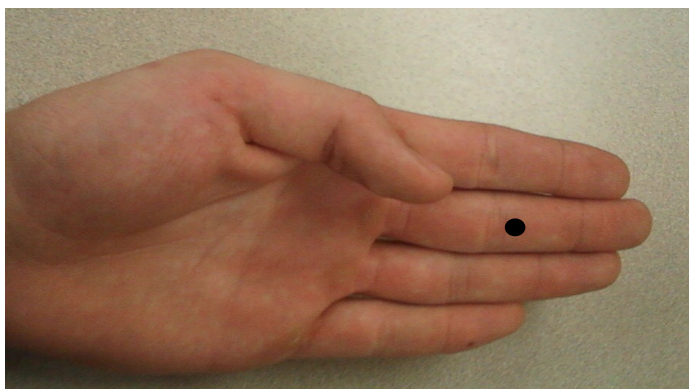


Diagram 1: If this hand is Tennessee, the black dot is Knoxville.

Inside this issue:

<i>Yuri's Night: A World Space Party.</i>	2
<i>Dwarf Fortress Or, Why Winning is Overrated and Losing is Fun!</i>	3-4
<i>Elson's Facebook Timeline</i>	5
<i>Youtube Video of the Week: Dinosaur Office</i>	5
<i>Vote Oliver's Hypothetical Turtle for President!</i>	6
<i>Puzzles</i>	7
<i>Robert's Rules</i>	8

Upcoming Events:

- Thank you Gamma—3/28
- MindSET 4: Water Bottle Rockets—3/31
- North Campus Woods Conservation—3/31
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore—4/01
- Tau Beta Paintball—4/01
- Towsley's Children Center—4/02
- Electee/Actives—4/03
- Sequoia Place V—4/04
- New Initiatives 5—4/05
- Poker Tournament—4/05
- Tutoring every Wednesday and Sunday

More information online at

<http://tinyurl.com/7bjlplp>

Please sign up online.



Yuri's Night: A World Space Party.

By Nathan McKay



Now that I have your attention, I would like to properly invite you to a truly awesome event: Yuri's Night, a planet-wide space-themed party. Yuri's Night is a global celebration of humanities past, current, and future efforts in space exploration. The event's name honors Yuri Gagarin, the first human to launch into space aboard the Vostok I space craft on April 12th 1961. This outstanding accomplishment began a new era in the technological development of our species. On that day humanity became a spacefaring civilization, able to look with our own eyes not only outward into the beautiful expanse of our Universe, but back down at ourselves.

The goals of Yuri's Night are to increase public interest in space exploration, inspire a new generation of explorers, and HAVE FUN! Trust me, you don't want to miss out on this party, it's a blast (space-pun). This year on April 10th our chapter of SEDS (Students for the Exploration and Development of Space) is once again hosting U of M's celebration at The Necto Night Club (we were unable to book the club on the actual day L). Doors open at 9:00pm and tickets are only \$5. The Michigan Electronic Dance Music Association (MEDMA) will be DJing the event, and they are very good at what they do. This is real dance music that energizes the dance floor, none of that Top 40... stuff. There will be a space-themed costume contest starting at 10:30pm, with 4 unique awards being given out:

- Yuri Award - Overall best costume
- Spock Award - Most logical and thought out costume
- E.T. Award - Not-sure-what-it-is interesting costume
- Han Solo Award - Costume that is the most thrown together yet still gets the job done!



Launch of the Vostok I



There will also be a Group Award that will go to the organization with the most costume clad members present. TBPers, get a costume, show up, and make us proud! Last year Dan Becker and I were part of a 4 person Space Shuttle costume. All those 18+ are welcome to join, and those 21+ welcome to drink (did I mention the drink specials?). If you are interested in joining us on April 10th in celebration, contact me (ngmckay@umich.edu) to purchase a ticket. ♦

Facebook event page:

<http://www.facebook.com/events/205254759576683/>



Dwarf Fortress

Or, Why Winning is Overrated and Losing is Fun!

By Dan Becker

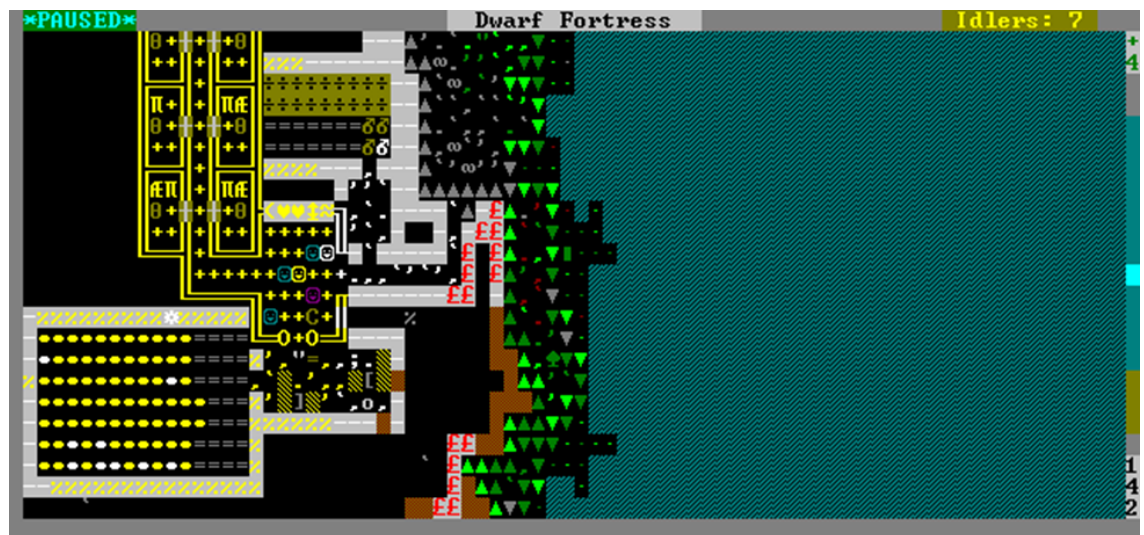
I'm not afraid to say that one of my favorite games was the Sims. I could sit down, build a house, and CONTROL TINY LIVES. But after a while, it kind of got boring- once you got enough money, you could buy the best equipment, your Sims would live lives of luxury, and just about nothing bad could happen. Basically, it was simple, and simple is boring.

One fateful day in my sophomore year, something dangerous happened. I got bored on the internet. A chance Penny Arcade article linked me to something called "Dwarf Fortress" with promises of ludicrous complexity. I soon found myself reading a 20 page tutorial to learn the most basic mechanics necessary to play the game. Within a month, I had a thriving, dwarf-filled fortress... until 80% of the dwarves committed suicide while the rest went slowly insane.

Perhaps I should back up. Dwarf fortress is a game like no other, in which a player must direct a steadily increasing group of dwarves in their quest to mine, drink booze, and fight off hordes of goblins, elves, and carp. It is made entirely by two closeted geeks, known to the internet as "Toady One" and "Threeto." The game is enormous in scope, modeling everything from the medical status of an individual's internal organs to the global economy and literally everything in between.

When you first play dwarf fortress, you create a world. After deciding a couple parameters, the game randomizes variables, seeds civilizations, runs a sophisticated geology and erosion model, simulates wars, unleashes megabeasts on unsuspecting populaces, writes several volumes of history, and then timidly asks where you would like to start your first settlement.

That's where things get tricky. There are many, many ways to lose dwarf fortress, but not a single way to win. The official motto that you see every time you pause the game is "Losing is Fun!" Everything can and will kill a dwarf- they can die in a cave-in, a dragon's fiery breath, from a goblin's rusty sword, or in the surprisingly powerful grip of the common carp. But, as it turns out, dwarves have Feelings too, as I learned the hard way. If one of their friends or families die, the dwarf will be sad. If the dead dwarf doesn't get a proper burial, their friends will be even sadder. If the dwarf's decaying corpse starts stinking up the hallway where it died, its friends may become so unbearably depressed that the only course of action left is to take their own life. Now, all of THAT dwarf's friends and family will be upset. And so the depression spiral continues, which incidentally is how I lost my first fortress.



In its original form, all graphics are in the form of ASCII. So, a typical screen might look something like this.



Dwarf Fortress (cont'd)

While you may see only an incomprehensible garble of random characters, I see a small but reasonably well-off fortress complete with living chambers, a storeroom, and a dining hall. It's kind of like the Matrix in that way. But fear not, graphics-lovers! You can download a tileset, which makes the game much more comprehensible:

While the add-on is not written by the impeccable Toady One and is therefore not "official," it is a great example of the extensive community that has grown up around Dwarf Fortress.

At this point (or more likely, about 5 paragraphs ago) you may be asking yourself why anyone would want to play a game that requires reading a 20 page tutorial to do anything, looks like



crap, and that you can never, ever, win. To which I say: ALL the awesome things!

Due to the ever-present distractions of classwork, labs, and "presidential responsibilities," I rarely have the chance to play Dwarf Fortress anymore. However, when I did, I was able to make a few modest projects, such as a perpetual motion waterfall, an entrance hall capable of turning any enemy into obsidian (protip: mix the water and lava), and a dwarven reactor so powerful that running it for too long can actually crash the game. Others with more time and ambition have actually created mechanical computers (yo dawg, I heard you like computers...), statues hundreds of stories high that spit lava, and palaces constructed solely out of soap.

Whoever is still reading this article is probably mouthing the words Minecraft in a really hilariously obvious way right now. To this implied comment, I can only say with a condescending yawn that I was into graphically poor insane world-building simulations before they were cool. Also, from what I see and hear Minecraft is WAY too simple to play and easy to understand. And it sounds like in Minecraft you can't unwittingly dig into Hell and release a horde of demons that instantly destroy everything you've ever worked for, so I don't even understand how people could think that Minecraft is in any way better than Dwarf Fortress.

If you've made it this far, congratulations! You've won! Except that you can't win in Dwarf Fortress. So instead I guess you'll just have to settle for these helpful links to get you started building your own insane fortress. And remember, Losing is Fun!

Download the game: <http://www.bay12games.com/dwarves/>

Learn the game: <http://afteractionreporter.com/dwarf-fortress-tutorials/>

Get a tileset: <http://mayday.w.staszic.waw.pl/df.php>

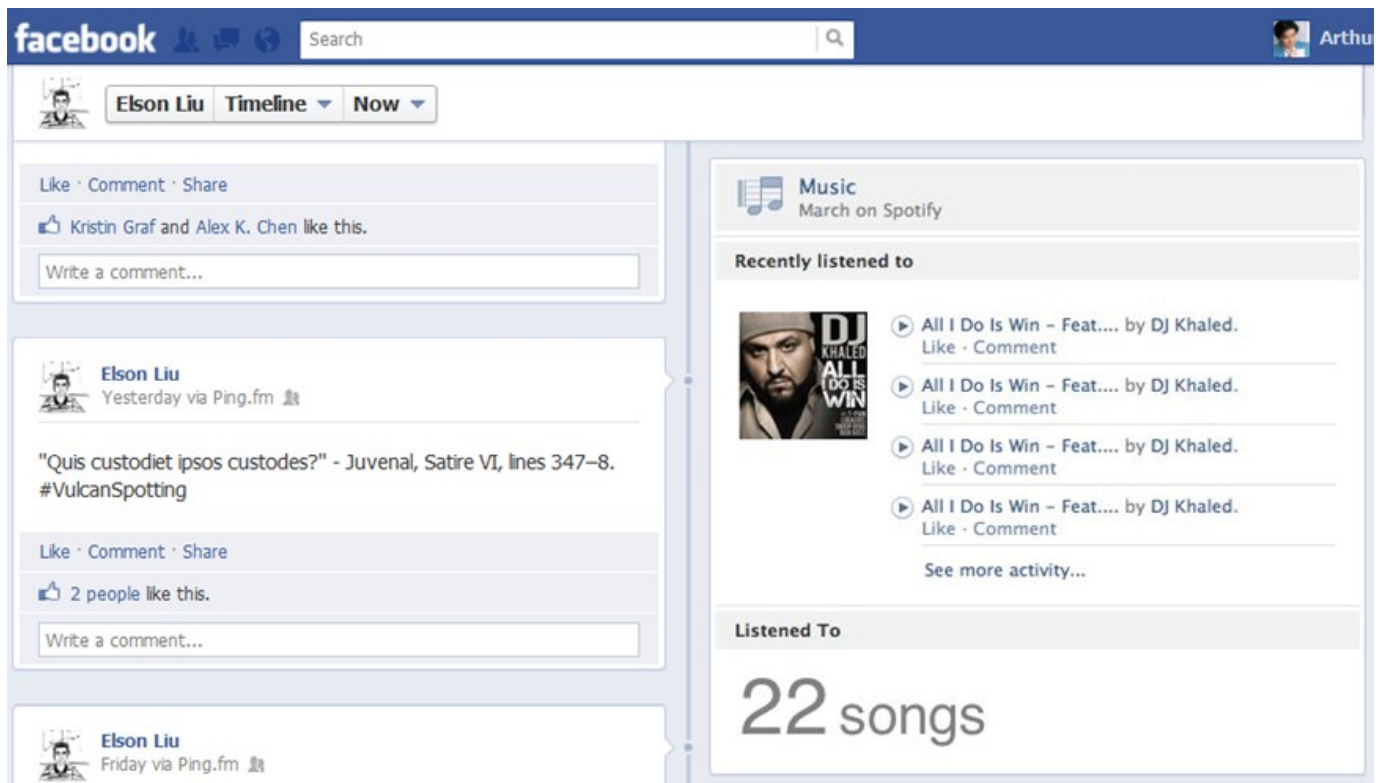
Learn ALL the dwarf fortress things: http://dwarffortresswiki.org/index.php/Main_Page

Whatever you do, don't ask Dan about Moonmist. ◇



Elson's Facebook Timeline (All He Does Is Win)

Submitted by Arthur Shih



YouTube Video of the Week

Dinosaur Office



See what industry would be like in the Prehistoric Era. Rawr!




Submitted by Ben Rothacker

When in Southern California visit **UNIVERSAL STUDIOS TOUR**
AN MCA COMPANY

*Vote Oliver's Hypothetical Turtle
for President or else . . .*

CLAWS



ROY SCHEIDER **ROBERT SHAW** **RICHARD DREYFUSS**

**OLIVER'S
HYPOTHETICAL TURTLE**

Co-starring LORRAINE GARY • MURRAY HAMILTON • A ZANUCK/BROWN PRODUCTION
Screenplay by PETER BENCHLEY and CARL GOTTLIEB • Based on the novel by PETER BENCHLEY • Music by JOHN WILLIAMS
Directed by STEVEN SPIELBERG • Produced by RICHARD D. ZANUCK and DAVID BROWN • A UNIVERSAL PICTURE •

TECHNICOLOR® PANAVISION® **PG** PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
SOME MATERIAL MAY NOT BE
SUITABLE FOR PRE-TEENAGERS

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON MCA RECORDS & TAPES
...MAY BE TOO INTENSE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

COPYRIGHT © 1975 BY UNIVERSAL PICTURES COUNTRY OF ORIGIN U.S.A.

75/155



Puzzles of the Week

Sudoku: Fill in the boxes such that each row, column, and larger box contain the numbers 1-9.

		2			1	9		
8	9		2	4		7		
3	7			9		2		8
5	3					4	7	
	1	9					8	5
7		8		3			9	4
		3		5	4		6	7
		5	6			1		

KenKen: Fill in the boxes such that each row and column contain the numbers 1-5 following the mathematical operations in the outlined box. (Hint: $15x \Rightarrow [3 \times 5 = 15]$)

3—	1—	11+		
		40×	3	
3			2÷	
3—	2÷		15×	
		30×		



Robert's Rules of Order

According to Yvan A. Boucher

Motion – Formal proposal by a member that the group take action

Second – If you want to support or debate in favor of a motion

Object – If you oppose a motion of believe that is should be debated or discussed before passage. If no one objects, a motion is approved by unanimous consent.

Example

Tau Bate #1: "I move that we approve all computer science curricula as eligible for membership in TBP."

Tau Bate #2: "California Alpha Alpha seconds."

Tau Bate #3: "Object."

Debate

Have the floor – have been authorized to speak by the chair

Sentence: Chair, "The representative from the Alpha society has the floor."

Yield the floor – a person who "has the floor" stops talking

Sentence (implied): "..." (The person stopped talking and yielded the floor)

Sentence (expressed): "I yield the floor back to the chair."

You can move to **extend** or **limit** the length of a debate (which in this case is when we talk about candidates). You need to have the floor and then say "I move to limit/extend debate on some/all candidates to X minutes/comments." This motion must be seconded. The chair will ask for objections. If there are none, then the motion passes, if there are objections a 2/3 vote is required to pass the motion.

Point of Information – Use when you have an inquiry as to facts affecting the business at hand. Must be directed to the chair but can be directed to a member through the chair. This is the most commonly misunderstood point in this article. Only use this to obtain information, not to provide information.

Good Usage: "Point of Information. What are the requirements for DA status?"

Bad Usage: "Point of Information. That candidate told me he/she is anti-kittents."

Parliamentary Inquiry – A specific kind of point of information used to ask the chair about procedure (a good way to avoid someone using a point of order against you).

Example: "Point of parliamentary inquiry: How can we end debate and vote?"

Point of Order – Use to inform the chair that you think the parliamentary procedures have been broken. You say, "point of order." If the chair grants you the floor, then you may state your case. The chair then rules on your case, either for or against the point.

Appeal – Use if you do not think the chair has ruled correctly, especially in cases of point of order. A majority yes/no vote is taken on the ruling of the chair.

Point of personal privilege – Use to fix a situation affecting a right or privilege of you or the assembly.

Best Use: "Point of personal privilege: Speak up, I can't hear you!" ◇