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Wishing You Well

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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

I am going to try and write this entire article without mentioning **Ring of Ma'ruf**. Wait, did I just say it? Dangit! Okay, starting now...

The Wishes might be the single best reason that casual players have to start using sideboards. At the very least, *Judgment* signals a whole slew of House Rules about what "own from outside the game" means. Today, I'll assume that "own from outside the game" translates to something vaguely tournament-esque: 1) Any card that has been removed from the game during game play and 2) Any card from your 15-card sideboard. (For other ideas, see Anthony's [article](#).)

That's right: I'm talking a little about sideboards today. Don't get used to it.

The number of ways to use the new Wish cards are staggering. Every time I look through an older card set, I see diabolic possibilities for cards like **Golden Wish**, **Living Wish**, and **Burning Wish**. (What's that? You've never seen **Golden Wish**? Look to the right, my fine friend!) With the growing list of possibilities comes the realization that many of my readers are far more diabolical than me. Thus more than any previous Thursday at House of Cards, what I describe today is only the tip of the Very Evil Iceberg.

Here are some observations, sideboards included:



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THE SILVER BULLET SIDEBOARD

silver bullet, noun: A simple remedy for a difficult or intractable problem.

A fun deck to build is one that can tutor for a solution to virtually any deck. Usually these decks are built around something like **Eladamri's Call**, **Tinker**, or **Enlightened Tutor**. "Silver Bullet" decks consist of cards that are absolute bombs in some matchups and borderline duds in others. As a result, the trick until now has been to balance out the tutored-for cards so they are at least marginally useful against any opposing deck. It's silly, for example, to build a deck with each Circle of Protection and four **Enlightened Tutors** when you run the risk of drawing a **CoP: Red** versus a mono-blue opponent.



With the Wishes, however, you aren't forced to worry about drawing your duds. Instead, every single Wish can tutor directly into your sideboard for an Answer (note the capital "A"). Even though **Golden Wish** is so darned expensive to cast (to prevent degenerate combo decks), you can still use the silver bullet strategy. But now your Answer is going to be arriving fairly late in the game. Either that, or your deck is going to be relying on a different Wish.

One interesting dilemma with the silver bullet approach is what to do with the deck after Game 1. In playing Game 2 of a Friday Night Magic match, do I throw my single-copy Answers into the deck and remove the **Golden Wishes**? That doesn't seem quite right, since I only have one copy of each Answer. Do I leave the deck unchanged, then? That seems, I don't know, anticlimactic.

A possible solution to this problem is to substitute tutors for Wishes after sideboarding. So a Golden Wish sideboard might have 11 deck-hosing Answers in it along with 4 **Sterling Groves**. After Game 1, out come the Wishes and a few other cards, in go the Groves and some Answers. Now the deck performs just like a regular, albeit tuned-to-kill, silver bullet deck.

THE VIRTUAL-SEVEN DECK

Another fun use for the Wishes is to use three copies of each game-altering spell in the deck with the fourth copy in your sideboard. With four Wishes, you effectively have seven of each important spell in your deck. The goal

here is not so much to find deck-hosers, but instead to find your best spells at the best times.

Imagine a green deck built like this and facing Jane's black deck. Jane drops **Laquatus's Champion** and grins that victory is hers. You sure "wish" you had your **Anurid Scavenger** to block and VOILA! Living Wish makes it so. Later in the game, after amassing a small army of weenies and reaching threshold, you decide that drawing a **Centaur Chieftain** would end the game nicely. Luckily for you, you still have all three Chieftans in your library, along with three more copies of **Living Wish**. That gives you six chances to draw the spell that will make Jane groan and slap her forehead. Wheeee!

THE "ALL IS NOT LOST" APPROACH

Finally, the Wishes welcome back cards that get removed from the game. Usually cards are removed from the game because they are the victim of a) your really powerful spells, or b) some vile trick on the part of your opponent. Although you can't rely on (b) to occur, you can sure build a deck around (a).

I count at least five (albeit related) ways to have fun with cards removed from the game. They are:

1) Single-Shot Effects: Some cards do something really, really cool... once. The Wishes, however, allow you to invite cards like **Gamekeeper** back for more. Imagine an **Academy Rector** that puts a seemingly endless stream of enchantments on the table. Or a **Bogardan Phoenix** that refuses to die. Or a **Carrionette** that refuses to let anything else live. Also scary, imagine a recursive **Nostalgic Dreams**, **Recall**, or **Restock**. Yikes.

2) Casualties of War: Sometimes cards get removed from the game as a matter of extreme attrition. **Apocalypse** is probably the best example of an "I hate spells" card. For a more moderate example, try **Planar Void**. Sometimes, though, you just don't want to see your favorite spell banished from the game. I mean, should **Holistic Wisdom** always have to take that card out of your hand forever? Can't **Yawgmoth's Agenda** be just a little more forgiving to things put in the graveyard? The Wishes allow you to be discriminate with what is out of the game forever.

3) Very Free: Some cards from *Alliances* (e.g. **Force of Will**) and *Mercadian Masques* (e.g. **Vine Dryad**) are deemed "free" because they can be played without mana. But if you read the fine print you'll see that you -- gasp! -- have to get rid of one whole card from your hand to pay their cost. Not any more. Oh sure, the card will be gone for a little while. But as soon as you draw your **Burning Wish** it can make a timely comeback. **Spinning Darkness** is another card that feels a lot more free than before.

4) Back from the Dead: As all **Magic** players know, the graveyard is only a temporary resting place at best. Some cards, like **Ichorid**, **Bearscape**, and **Psychatog** (to name a very few), try to make the graveyard slightly more permanent. That's obviously no fun, so luckily the Wishes can get cards removed from the graveyard back to your hand, where they have a chance to return to the graveyard a second time.

5) Super Search: Finally, some cards can remove great chunks of your library from the game, usually in search of something. With the Wishes, remove enough cards and you effectively have a tutor. **Browse** starts to look like darned good way to find your important cards. **Demonic Consultation** becomes more ridiculous (if that's possible). **False Memories** is a like an instant-threshold and tutor in one. Even the lowly **Manipulate Fate** becomes a cantrip/tutor when combined with a Wish. Combo decks around the world just sat up and grinned.

And although I can't think of a reason to Wish for a removed Wish, I am betting that somewhere somehow someone will find cause to do so.

Remember that these many uses for the new Wish mechanic aren't mutually exclusive. Feel free to drop both Answers and fourth copies of spells into your sideboard while playing **Call of the Herd** a third time. As I said, the sheer number of possibilities are mind-numbing. Be creative with what you Wish for.

Below are some preliminary ideas for Wish decks. As with last week, it's hard to call any of the decks "lite" since the Wishes themselves are rare, but two of the four decks don't rely on additional rares. Hopefully you will see a way to make good use of the ideas, however big or small your collection.

Next week: Elves, druids, and elementals... oh my!

-j



Leave it to Jay to find a combo with Manipulate Fate.

| The Golden Bullet | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Type 2 Silver Bullet Deck | | |
| Main Deck | Sideboard | |
| 60 cards | | |
| 4 Brushland | 4 Orim's Chant | 4 Sterling Grove |

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 11 Forest | 4 Rampant Growth | 1 Circle of Protection: Black |
| 8 Plains | 4 Call of the Herd | 1 Circle of Protection: Blue |
| 1 Island | 4 Squirrel Nest | 1 Circle of Protection: Green |
| 24 lands | 4 Wrath of God | 1 Circle of Protection: Red |
| | 4 Golden Wish | 1 Circle of Protection: White |
| | 2 Dismantling Blow | 1 Compost |
| 4 Birds of Paradise | 2 Restock | 1 Sacred Ground |
| 3 Mystic Enforcer | 1 Rout | 1 Still Life |
| 7 creatures | 29 other spells | 1 Worship |
| | | 1 Nature's Revolt |
| | | 1 Teferi's Moat |
| | | 15 sideboard cards |

The Diet Bullet (semi- *Lite!*)

Type 2 Wish deck

| Main Deck 60 cards | | Sideboard |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 13 Forest | 4 Living Wish | 1 Druid Lyrist |
| 10 Plains | 4 Golden Wish | 1 Circle of Protection: Black |
| 23 lands | 3 Squirrel Nest | 1 Circle of Protection: Blue |
| | 3 Armadillo Cloak | 1 Circle of Protection: Green |
| | 14 other spells | 1 Circle of Protection: Red |
| 4 Llanowar Elves | | 1 Circle of Protection: White |
| 4 Thornscape Familiar | | 1 Beloved Chaplain |
| 4 Llanowar Knight | | 1 Compost |
| 3 Druid Lyrist | | 1 Steamclaw |
| 3 Beloved Chaplain | | 1 Auramancer |
| 3 Voice of All | | 1 Squirrel Nest |
| 2 Fleetfoot Panther | | 1 Armadillo Cloak |
| 23 creatures | | 1 Aura Shards |
| | | 1 Voice of All |
| | | 1 Kavu Chameleon |
| | | 15 sideboard cards |

Rector Set

Extended Living Wish tutor deck

| Main Deck 55 cards | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 4 Bayou | 4 Birds of Paradise | 4 Living Wish |
| 4 City of Brass | 4 Carrionette | 4 Pattern of Rebirth |
| 4 Savannah | 4 Wild Mongrel | 2 Animate Dead |
| 3 High Market | 4 Academy Rector | 1 Squirrel Nest |
| 2 Brushland | 1 Auramancer | 1 Diabolic Servitude |
| 2 Llanowar Wastes | 1 Cloudchaser Eagle | 1 Defense of the Heart |
| 1 Phyrexian Tower | 1 Thorn Elemental | 1 Worship |
| 20 lands | 1 Verdant Force | 1 Death Pit Offering |
| | 20 creatures | 15 other spells |

Flaming Nuts (semi- *Lite!*)

Odyssey Block Burning Wish squirrels deck

| Main Deck 60 cards | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 14 Forest | 4 Squirrel Mob | 4 Chatter of the Squirrel |
| 9 Mountain | 3 Anarchist | 4 Firebolt |
| 23 lands | 2 Gorilla Titan | 4 Reckless Charge |
| | 9 creatures | 4 Burning Wish |
| | | 4 Squirrel Nest |
| | | 4 Acorn Harvest |
| | | 3 Overrun |
| | | 1 Dwell on the Past |
| | | 28 other spells |

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