

Diplomacy World

Issue 100

www.diplomacyworld.net



**A Look Back at the Past
While We Head Towards the Future!**

Notes From the Editor

Welcome back for another issue of Diplomacy World. It has been a long time in coming – more than 30 years – but despite a number of obstacles along the way, Diplomacy World has reached its 100th issue. A lot has changed since Walt Buchanan founded this zine. We've seen the growth and decline of the postal hobby; the birth and death of Compuserve's and America On Line's communities; the advent of the Judge systems; the switch to on-line play; the transfer of Diplomacy between game companies; the release and general dismissing of Colonial Diplomacy; numerous attempts to release an official computer version; design of various adjudication and mapping software; the recent growth in face-to-face activity; and so much more. In so many ways, the hobby is completely different from what it once was. And yet, above all else, there are the people and the personalities. That has always been what set apart this hobby from so many others. Diplomacy is The Game, but the players – the people – are what keep things going. So many lifelong friendships have been formed through this hobby. Marriages have been born (and plenty have been destroyed). I still remember the day I received an issue of the zine Ramblings By Moonlight in the mail which included a photocopied photograph of Cathy Ozog holding her baby in her arms; at that moment I thought to myself "Without Diplomacy, that baby would have never been born!" (You can read more about the beginnings of that story in this issue - see Eric Ozog's piece). If you want to look at Diplomacy as pushing pieces around, and nothing more, that's fine – but you are missing so much!

Certainly there is always a demand for Diplomacy-related articles discussing strategy, tactics, negotiating skills...maybe there are no truly NEW ideas on those subjects after all this time, but most of the literature written on those topics has been lost to the ages. When you add the discussion of variants, and the new strategy and tactics necessary to master those designs, the number of potential articles can reach immeasurable levels. But for me, while I enjoy articles like that which allow me to hone my skills or rethink my latest playing style, I will always have a fondness for articles dealing more in the personality side of the hobby. A list of the winners at a major Diplomacy tournament doesn't tell you the whole story; it doesn't tell you who stabbed who, where they ate dinner, what new friendships were born, who had to sleep on the floor, who got lost on the way there, and who kept calling their spouse to apologize for missing their anniversary.

Now, with the first 100 issues completed (and perhaps the next 100 on the horizon), I hope you will join us both for a look at the past and a focus on the future. Regardless of all the changes, the Diplomacy hobby is still alive, and in some cases thriving. Face-to-face events remain active, the internet offers a wide range of

places to play and people to play with, and publications like this one can still provide entertainment, education, and hopefully increase your enjoyment of Diplomacy – a game like no other.

This is my second stint as Lead Editor of Diplomacy World, and although the hobby has changed quite a bit since the 1990's, I am still hard-pressed to decide whether I am enjoying myself more now or then. Perhaps it is a bit more challenging now, but on the other hand it's easier to get in touch with people via email, easier to transfer articles, and the days of printing out 200 or 300 copies and stuffing them into envelopes are gone as well (although we still have a few copies which get delivered the old fashioned way). So in many respects, I think I am having more fun, and getting more satisfaction, right now! Maybe it is an appreciation that comes with age, or I suppose it might simply be that I don't spend so much of my hobby time on other publications the way I used to, so I can focus more directly on Diplomacy World. Whatever the reasons, I hope some of you readers are enjoying the results of our efforts as much as I am. I'm quite proud of the issues we've put together in the last year!

Aside from all of the other material in this issue, I am **VERY** pleased to announce that Avalon Hill (through Wizards of the Coast) is releasing a **new Diplomacy set** in March of 2008. A copy of the first ad, as well as whatever details I have been able to gather so far, is included starting on page 6. This can only result in positive things for the hobby, from less-expensive sets being available to current Diplomacy fanatics (instead of the exorbitant prices some used sets were going for on eBay) to what I hope will be a growing group of new players introduced to the game for the first time.

I am also very pleased to announce that at least ONE hobby member is foolish enough to listen to me whine. That's correct, **the lovely and talented Jim O'Kelley** has taken the bait and signed on as the new Diplomacy World Club and Tournament Editor. Don't be left out in the cold, there are still a few Editor spots left vacant. Be the envy of all the other mental patients in your area by signing up for one now!

Regarding this issue, there should be something in here for just about everybody. Between the usual articles and the special features provided for #100, I really can't list everything! But among the highlights, you'll find:

- An interview with Diplomacy creator Allan Calhamer
- Information on the new Diplomacy set
- The first results of the new Diplomacy World Demo Game
- Glimpses into hobby history from some of the

biggest names ever to stab somebody for a supply center

- A true Diplomacy DipCon love story
- A 24 scene masterpiece covering the fun at Euro DipCon XV
- Melinda Holley on Gunboat Tournaments
- Report on Diplomacy in Australia and South Africa
- An interview with DW founder Walt Buchanan (and his ex-wife Carol)
- And much, much more!

Don't let this major landmark issue fool you, though...even before we put Diplomacy World #100 to bed, we started work on Diplomacy World #101. But the overall quality of that issue, like all those before it, is dependent on the articles that Diplomacy players like YOU provide. So what are you waiting for? **Start writing!** Maybe something in this issue has inspired you? It isn't too late to submit a similar "my history in the hobby" kind of article. In fact, there are a few I was

hoping to include in this issue which didn't arrive by the deadline. I plan to print in DW #101 instead. Why not join them and include your own?

Finally, see below about the new Diplomacy World Writing Contest. I was quite disappointed to see that even with the offer of cash prizes, we did not receive a single entry in the Diplomacy Fiction category! That means if YOU had sent something, you'd be \$50 richer right now! Perhaps the new contest, Strategy and Tactics, will result in more submissions? I'd hope that at least a few of the thousands of downloads this issue generates will decide to power up their word processor and send something our way.

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is April 5th, 2008. If you can't, or won't, consider writing a full article, we'd still love to hear from you with feedback on this issue, or ideas for future articles. See you in the Spring, and happy stabbing!

Diplomacy World Contest

The Writing Contest Continues!

Okay, so nobody wanted to win any money last issue? No problem. Maybe the idea of writing Diplomacy-related fiction was a bit much for you. I can accept that. So, this time around, we're going to go with something simpler: Diplomacy-related Strategy and Tactics articles.



The rules are simple. You submit an article for publication, **specifically letting me know that it is a contest entry.** Your topic this time is **Diplomacy Strategy and Tactics.** You can focus on traditional Diplomacy or a variant, that's up to you. Whether its specific to a particular nation, or opening strategy, end-

game ideas, stalemate lines, how best to use convoys...the range of specific topics is limitless. Length can be anywhere from 500 and 5,000 words, but pretty much I leave it in your hands. All the submissions will be judged by myself (potentially with help from other members of the Diplomacy World staff). Most (and probably all) entries will appear in a future issue of Diplomacy World, most likely #101 or #102.

Just like last time, I'm going to resume tradition and offer **cold hard cash** to the winners. The winning entry will receive a \$50 prize, with second place fetching \$25, and third place \$10. **Both the first and second prize winners have the option of trading \$25 of their prize for a new Diplomacy set from Wizards of the Coast!** Otherwise you can take your prize as a money order, Paypal transfer, convenient gift card, or even a donation to your favourite charity – whatever works for you.

Submissions should be in text, rtf, or Word format, and submitted by email to [diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@of.yahoo.com). Your entry **will be judged as submitted**, but I reserve the right to edit it for publication afterwards as I see fit. The deadline for contest submissions is one second before midnight, **March 31st, 2008** (using my local time here in Dallas, Texas). Feel free to ask any questions, and good luck!

Diplomacy World #100

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Contributions are welcomed and will earn you accolades and infinite thanks. Persons interested in the vacant staff positions may contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming a columnist or senior writer. Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer. It is currently manufactured by Hasbro and the name is their trademark with all rights reserved.

The New Diplomacy Set – A Sneak Preview

By Douglas Kent

It was purely by chance that I happened to stumble across the news of the new Diplomacy set, scheduled to be released by Avalon Hill (through Wizards of the Coast) in March of 2008. Recently I had been keeping a mental note of what used and shrink-wrapped sets of Diplomacy had been selling for on eBay, in order to make some advisements on the Diplomacy World blog (<http://blog.diplomacyworld.com>) about what people should expect to pay. Unfortunately, with Diplomacy basically out of print for a number of years, any new players who wanted to get their hands on a set were forced to deal with the often-pricy world of used wargames. Whether it was a resurgence in demand, or people looking to purchase sets for the holidays (gifts for loved ones or themselves), the closing bids have gone up recently. I've seen prices vary wildly, and not always based on condition or edition. In general, the old GDW sets with wooden pieces would sell for the \$40 to \$60 range, while the Avalon Hill bookcase sets ranged from \$20 to \$60 (the plastic pieces often resulting in the lower prices). The Hasbro edition was the most expensive, with shrink-wrapped sets selling for close to \$100. Sometimes I'd see sets sell for half this, and other times even an Avalon Hill wooden-piece set would go for close to \$100 – it all depended on the exact listing and how many bidders were attracted to that particular item description.

So in my searches for used sets, I happened across a listing for "Diplomacy – Keep Your Enemies Close." Upon further examination, I realized it was an eBay listing for a new Diplomacy set. The game itself wasn't available yet, but the seller was taking pre-orders for \$29.99 plus shipping. This caused me to start wondering why I hadn't heard anything about it before now...so I decided to grab my deerstalker cap and my magnifying glass to investigate further. The game was afoot!

My next stop was the Avalon Hill website. I searched all over, including the forums and the archives. Nothing. Not a single mention of a new Diplomacy set. In fact, it sounded like the only new games upcoming under the Avalon Hill label were related to the Axis & Allies line. But I wasn't about to give up. After a few phone calls and a dozen emails, I was able to get in contact with some Wizards of the Coast personnel (which is the Hasbro subsidiary which publishes the Avalon Hill game line) who could in fact confirm the company's plans to release a new Diplomacy set, as well as other classic Avalon Hill games, to celebrate AH's 50th anniversary.

To me, this is very big news, and a major positive for the Diplomacy hobby. Obviously as of this writing I have not actually SEEN the new set in person, but with a moderate price and attractive components, having the

game in print again should help bring a whole new generation of players into Dipdom.

It was difficult to get all the detailed information I desired on the new Diplomacy set before we went to press, because the design division involved in this product had already left for the holidays, but between the print ad supplied by WOTC and the pre-order details on eBay, this is the information I believe to be true:

- There will be 315 game pieces, including armies, navies, and supply center control markers. From the graphics in the advertisement, these pieces will likely be cardboard chits or circles instead of the more familiar wood, plastic, or metal pieces. Aside from keeping the game at a more reasonable price point, people with a history of hex gaming might feel more comfortable with these familiar pieces.
- The map appears to be similar in design to prior versions. It measures 30 inches by 20 inches. It isn't completely clear whether it is a mounted board or not.
- There is a pad of conference maps. The product information suggests this is 20 pages in size, so it may include some other material besides the conference maps themselves.
- The rulebook is listed at 24 pages. I am still trying to learn how much of those are strategy and tactical hints or other helpful articles.

In a perfect world, obviously this set would be priced at \$29.99 and include metal pieces, a huge collection of strategy material, information on various segments of the hobby (including major internet links), and who knows what else. But reality has to play a role here. The best scenario is for people to discover Diplomacy, learn the game, find their way to the Diplomatic communities or gaming clubs, and grow to love the entire experience. So now when I hear people talk about not being able to afford to pay the high prices on eBay for a set of Diplomacy, I'll have somewhere to direct them!

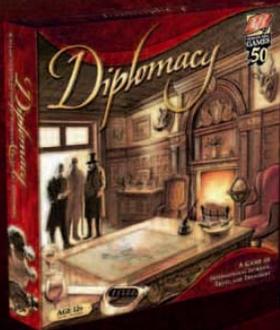
Once I have my own copy in hand, I will prepare a full and accurate review of the components, rulebook, and anything else included in the set. And, of course, I would welcome similar reviews from the rest of you. In the meantime, I hope you make it a point to publicize this new release, the first time Diplomacy has been in print in this century I believe, and use the product as a way to introduce gamers to the Diplomacy hobby!

Ruining Friendships For Fifty Years



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Diplomacy



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To find a store near you, go to: avalonhill.com



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A Conversation with Allan Calhamer

Interview by Bill Coffin

For those of you new to the hobby (and believe me, Diplomacy is less a game than it is a way of life), Allan B. Calhamer is who you owe all of this madness to. Calhamer invented Diplomacy in 1954, after taking a course in 19th century European history under Harvard historian Sidney B. Fay. Fay's book Origins of the World War shaped the basic premise and design of the game. Calhamer extensively playtested Diplomacy over the next few years, and self-published it in 1959. The game was originally published by Games Research, Inc. and then later by Avalon Hill. Avalon Hill, in turn, was acquired by Wizards of the Coast, makers of Dungeons and Dragons and various collectible card games such as Magic; the Gathering and Pokémon. Wizards was then acquired by Hasbro, which currently owns the whole shebang.

Calhamer himself has written a multitude of articles on Diplomacy for gaming magazine and Diplomacy fanzines. His largest effort is "Calhamer on Diplomacy," a book published in 1999 on the historical contexts of European diplomacy prior to World War I and how that is reflected in the game. Calhamer currently lives in retirement with Hilda Morales, his wife of 31 years, in La Grange Park, Illinois. In 2005, he graciously took some time to speak with me on the game's enduring popularity, evolutions in styles of play, and what has to be one of the greatest dirty tricks ever played in the hobby's history.

Diplomacy World: The publication of Diplomacy is nearing its 50th anniversary. From having sent the game from its invention through its various changes, what is your general impression of the game's success? I've read that people have attributed its success to the fact that it was the first adult board game where players could conduct no-holds-barred negotiations with each other and carry out dirty tricks. Is it really as simple as this?

Allan Calhamer: No, there's more to it. That's a big side of the game, to have open negotiations, where you can say whatever you want and nothing is binding. And there are a whole lot of tricks to learn, and so on, ways to phrase things and ways to guess whether somebody is kidding or not, that kind of thing. One thing in mind is the proposal just isn't a good proposal; it's probably just something the guy thought up to keep you busy. If it's not a good quality, you're going to turn it down anyway. But in fact, you find that after a while there's not as much trickery as you might think. And you're more concerned with whether you're getting a solid proposal or not. Has the thing been thought out and is it really good or is it just a poor plan? This is really more important because most of the people are not playing too many tricks. The tricks do not always work that well. There's a right time when

they just work beautifully, but you don't use them at other times because it makes people suspicious of you. Players call these things "stabs." You generally don't want to use a stab unless you expect to do an awful lot with it, unless you think you can knock the guy out. Otherwise, he comes back and he's awfully angry about the stab, and you've just got another enemy. So you tend to play it straight unless there is just a beautiful stab.

DW: Hasbro has published the official rules for Diplomacy for free online, and various methods of Internet Diplomacy have made it possible to play the game for free. One might speculate this is a big reason for the game's flourishing as an online pastime. On the other hand, the game is becoming less private property and more public property, since there are ways of playing it without buying a set. Does this bother you at all as the creator, or are you glad to see the game reaching a new audience?

Calhamer: I don't know how many people are playing Diplomacy without a set. If you're playing on the Internet, you might want the set anyway. So that's why I don't worry about that much. I figure if...it's hard to tell what the amount of this is. Even though it's free, it serves as advertising for the set. If that actually helps to sell sets, it'd be a real smart idea. But it would be hard to get figures on how many people were just dead-heading. I don't think it's that serious a matter.

DW: Some players insist that certain countries, such as Italy or Austria, are inherently weak, whereas others players insist that there are no weak Powers, only weak players. What are your thoughts on this?

Calhamer: First of all, you'd like to know how strong your country is and how strong the other countries are, so you play a few games. One thing the weaker countries can do is to ally with each other. Germany and AH do this very frequently. If you ally the two of them together, they're a pretty good bloc. They don't have to descend against each other. Each one gets a secure border and there's some cooperation with each other. The attack on Warsaw goes a lot faster if you can get those countries together, for example; that kind of thing. There's a fine attack on Venice where Germany sends an army down there and helps Austria because it's hard for Austria to get all that stuff in there.

I think you bring the game back into balance when you play it that way, but of course, you don't have to play it that way.

DW: Indeed. I've seen it played where it's more like a knife fight in the dark, a real free-for-all.

Calhamer: If it's a wild free-swinging everybody-versus-everybody battle, the middle countries will go out first and the further you are the corner countries, England and Turkey, will survive the longest. But once you know this, you start allying against them.

Germany/Austria/Russia is a fine alliance that comes up frequently. Germany lays off Austria and Russia and AH go after Turkey. That can be quite tough. Turkey really has to run around to get protection somewhere. He has to get England into Saint Petersburg or Italy to attack Greece.

DW: I've seen certain players comment that those who enter into unconditional alliances are in some way violating the true spirit of Diplomacy, that by not even going for a solo victory, they bring the game down. To what extent do you share or reject that sentiment?

Calhamer: I agree. They're starting out playing for a draw. That's not good for the game. They should be playing for a win, however they play. Even if they start out that way (in an alliance) they should still play for a win. But of course, you can keep trying to break those kinds of players apart. You can work all game to tempt them into taking a stab or something.



DW: There have been a great many board variants invented for Diplomacy, but a common criticism is that they are unbalanced as the standard game. I have heard this leveled most often at Colonial Diplomacy, but also at variant boards in general. From a design perspective, what is the key to maintaining an even keel across the board, and what advice would you give to Diplomacy enthusiasts who wish to design their own board and maintain the kind of game balance seen in the standard game?

Calhamer: We worked a long, long time on balancing the Diplomacy board. I had a very good group of people playing. The first bunch of players were mostly operations research people or they were familiar with operations research, who were workers in a scientific research laboratory. We'd play a game and we'd talk and send memos back and forth to each other and so on, and we'd have another game with more conversation, and so on. Somebody would suddenly come in during the middle of the day and say "I think you should make Tunis a supply center" or something with a long list of reasons why, and the rules were changed during this period. I had a one-man company with a seven-man research team. Board balance was, of course, an overwhelming consideration. Now, these guys make up variants and they don't have anything like that behind it, they jump

into variants and the result is the variants just don't have all that effort behind them, all that revision. So they're not as good as the main game.

DW: Less commonly than variant boards, we see variant rules. Three that come to mind all involve Italy: starting off with a fleet in Rome rather than an army, establishing North Africa as a supply center, or allowing armies to cross from North Africa into Spain. All of these rules have a major impact on the game, requiring major changes in strategy, tactics and diplomacy. Are there any rules that you have come across that you have invented but never officially implemented that you find especially intriguing or interesting to play?

Calhamer: That's a good question. I never encouraged variants much but I did have a few of my own. But it's been a long time back and I'm not sure I can bring them all up. There were some variants which seemed to work and I don't remember them now, I think. One of them was if you had fewer than seven players, to have one player play two countries that are so far part that they almost can't work together, having one player play France and Turkey or something. That way you have all seven Powers in the game that does a relatively small amount of damage to the game. People seem to like that better than playing with some of the countries left out of the game.

DW: In an article of yours that you wrote some years ago, you tell a great story about how your fellow players once stole a set of your orders and threw them in a padlocked trash bin to prevent you from moving. Now, while understanding that base trickery is going to win you the game in every instance, and that good diplomacy and strategy are the keystones of a winning game, that said, the trash bin trick really was a good one. Are there any others to share with us?

Calhamer: Those trash bins were for classified waste and could only be opened by properly secured people. It might be two weeks before one was opened by somebody with some special position in the CIA or something. That was kind of funny.

DW: I once read a story about how the British Diplomacy enthusiast wrote a story about how he had been involved in a game with a friend of his who he happened to know was having an illicit liaison with the significant other of another player. Sharp never actually threatened to blow the whistle on it, he knew that his friend knew that he knew, and he took advantage of the fact that the guy would bend over backwards for him in the game for fear of getting Sharp angry and the whole situation blown wide open. Despite something like this or the trash bin trick, have you come across any especially interesting bits of skullduggery?

Calhamer: There must have been over the years, but it's been some time. As you seem to have grasped, the

skulduggery is really not key to the game. I always saw it, in spite of all the hilarity, I saw Diplomacy as a serious strategic game. So I never paid that much attention to it, but there are all sorts of little tricks that keep coming up.

DW: Almost invariably, the games I fare best in are when I lie the least. Talking straight with other players seems to work the best for me.

Calhamer: One thing that happens a lot is you notice that somebody is slipping something over and you stop to think whether this is advantageous to yourself or not. It might be. You notice that Italy has one extra piece, but you're Germany and you're allied with him so you figure what the heck, you just shut up.

DW: Diplomacy players have, over the years, scrutinized opening moves in the game to a degree not seen in most other pastimes outside of chess. Such scrutiny often considers the tactics of opening moves but seldom mentions the diplomacy that goes along with them. Obviously, one should consider both, but generally speaking and as a player, how much consideration do you pay to the tactical side of your openings versus the diplomatic side of them?

Calhamer: There is a period of two or three or four moves when most of the effort is to pick up most of the undefended small powers. In general, it makes more sense to go after whatever of those you can get before you square off against a power that is defended. So as everybody is going after the small powers, the "easy eats,"...that being the case, you may not solidify your major alliances for a couple of moves. You want to see how that kind of thing goes. Interestingly enough, you don't always need the major alliances solidified right away. You can wait and see who's positioned where and how many pieces they have before you decide to ally with one. Once you start something like that, you want it to go as fast as possible before anybody can react to it. Because if two of you are attacking one person, somebody will try to attack one of you from behind. This is one of the things that keeps balancing the game. So if you are going to make a 2 on 1 attack, you want to advance as fast as possible. So you try the attacks you think will go the fastest.

DW: Having read older Diplomacy articles, I've come across the notion that certain countries, such as Italy and Austria, can only be enemies, as their initial positions demand it. But then with the invention of the Lepanto opening, you suddenly start seeing Italy and Austria form lasting alliances. Nothing in the game really changed in terms of rules to make this shift possible. The change happened in the minds of the players themselves.

Calhamer: It's just like inventing a new opening in chess. It's the same idea entirely.

DW: In the decades since Diplomacy's invention, have

you seen many changes like this; changes in perception of what Powers are well suited for certain kinds of alliances?

Calhamer: Yeah, I would say so. For a while, Austria and Italy were referred to as the Austro-Italian superpower because they played so well together. There was a time when people didn't realize how strong Turkey was. That changed quite a bit, and people began blocking in Turkey very early to keep him from overrunning that end of the board. A lot of these changes have taken place. I haven't played in a little while, so I don't know what people are doing now, though. At one time people thought Russia was awfully strong, which I didn't agree with. In fact, I felt satisfied giving Russia an extra piece at the start because I thought it wasn't very strong.

DW: I play mostly online, and most of the folks I play with tend to refer to Russia as playing two different countries, and that presents a set of different challenges. Many players feel they have to give away one front so they can focus on the other. Or you can be jack of all trades and split evenly, but either way, you have double the challenge.

Calhamer: They tend to lose the north or the south, then?

DW: A lot of the games I play in, Russia opens strongly to the south and leaves a lone fleet in St. Petersburg to either bounce with Germany in Sweden or just stay there as a troublemaker unit. Northern openings tend to be more of a maverick thing that take people off-guard, and as a result, the situation in the Balkans gets more unstable because Russia isn't there to help sort things out. So a wild scrum develops among Italy, Turkey and Austria.

Calhamer: Or for a long time, you see it go both ways, of course; strictly a northern Russia that's captured England or something. Or you see a strictly southern Russia that's taken Turkey and Austria. And you will see more of a more balanced Russia that is successful. That depends on a lot of things. It's a good game that way. I remember one fellow who had just seen the first couple of games and he noticed how differently the two boards were going. On one board Russia was big and the other countries were getting beaten up and on the other board, France was big. And he was quite enthusiastic. He said he was quite surprised at how differently the two games would go. And that is very true. It stays that way. And you will get all three of those Russian results. You'll get among the successful results, a strong north, south or center.

DW: Diplomacy is reported to have been a favorite of both John F. Kennedy and Henry Kissinger. As the game's inventor, did you ever get the chance to rub elbows meet famous figures who were also Diplomacy enthusiasts?

Calhamer: I did not meet any of those people. I did exchange a letter or two...the one letter I got that came from the inside, so to speak, came about when I read that David Eisenhower, who was hanging around the White House because his grandfather was president, was a fan of Diplomacy and he was always grabbing Secret Service agents to play Diplomacy with at the White House. So I sent him a letter with some advice, and I got what you'd expect: a brief letter of thanks, I enjoy the game, blah, blah, blah. But that's about the only contact I had from deep inside the White House. People in the Pentagon played it and I did talk with some people there, and there was intelligence back and forth but nothing very big was ever made of it.

DW: Could you offer some words of advice or encouragement to novice players who might be intimidated by the presence of so many veterans in the hobby and the volume of articles written on how to play the game?

Calhamer: That's a good question. You get the same thing in chess and you get it in spades because there's far, far more literature. It always helps to read and play some more and to sit down and analyze a little. Grab anybody you can and just play a little.

DW: I notice that neophyte players often play not to win, but simply not to be eliminated right away. This seems to be a way to develop bad habits in the long-term of the play of the game, playing not to die but also not to win.

Calhamer: I haven't noticed this especially. But if you're getting knocked down to three or fewer units, not dying is your first order of business. Once you're down to about three and your early expansion is over, you've got to survive first before you can expand. Theoretically, you're still trying to win the game but immediately, you're trying not to lose any of those three. You are knocked really down, and you end up going around offering your assistance to anybody so you can get a fourth piece and get back to active status. It's possible they're more worried about getting knocked out than winning, but that sort of makes sense because winning is far off in time. Even if you have a quick game going, and not being knocked out is not so far away.

DW: Especially in a face-to-face environment where, if you get knocked out early, you spend the rest of the evening on a couch reading a magazine, whereas in postal or electronic games you can always just go to another game. The stakes are not as high for getting knocked out initially except to your pride, maybe.

Diplomacy has made an interesting transition that few games make from just being a game to a bona fide hobby. There is a culture around the game, a community that really supports it, discussion about various elements of the game that transcends simple appreciation of the game. Were you ever surprised by the intense

enthusiasm that Diplomacy's fans have for this game?

Calhamer: Not really. I approached it from chess, for one thing. Chess is far more analyzed than any other game in the world. There are more books about chess than there are about all other games combined. So since I approached it from that direction, I really expected that. I put out articles of my own on how to play France, etc., in the early days. And most of the early players also played chess or Go or some game like that. We had a surprising number of Go players playing Diplomacy, for some reason, actually. I was not surprised by that at all. My idea was that if the game was worth considering in the same breath as chess or Go, that you do approach it that way. That's why [the enthusiasm] did not surprise me at all. I was grateful for it, of course, that it aroused that interest. But I really expected it to be played the way chess or go is played, with the same seriousness. The interesting thing about Diplomacy is because of the lies you can tell and the crossing people up and so on, it's completely hilarious. This is poles apart from the serious side of the game. And yet, it's as good a serious game as chess or Go and it has that different quality about it. It's serious, but it's not just chess with some different moves. Because of the multiple player thing, it is different from all the other strategic games. That keeps it forever different. So you can treat it like chess or like Go, but it's still has a hugely different dimension.



DW: I'm currently reading your book, "Calhamer on Diplomacy," and am really enjoying it. Are you working on another Diplomacy book?

Calhamer: No. You think the world needs another one? The original "Calhamer on Diplomacy" still sells you know, but it never was a great seller.

DW: That's a shame because it's got a lot of valuable insight in it, not necessarily from the tactical side, but in providing a historical backdrop against which the game was created.

Calhamer: Yeah, I think guys were looking more for a tactical book, and I was talking about the game as a whole, as a phenomenon, and so on. And maybe that's why it didn't go so well.

DW: Do you play Diplomacy much anymore?

Calhamer: No, I haven't played in a while. I should, though. I've got a lot of time on my hands now. It used to be the excuse was I was working for a living, you know. But I do have that time. Maybe I should scare up another game.

The Fake Diplomacy World #40: Why and How I Produced It

by Bruce Linsey

With an Introduction by Rod Walker

What you are about to read is the tale of the largest fake Dipzine ever produced -- 52 pages of it! It was also as large as any issue of Diplomacy World put out to date -- but of course (and to nobody's surprise) Larry Peery bettered that by a considerable margin.

The production of 'Diplomacy World #40' took place during the 'Great Feud' -- a time about which tales are still told at Diplomacy camp-outs by hobby old-timers reminiscing around the campfire. It was a time when even DW (my bad, I fear) had become enmeshed in the 'Enemies List' mentality of the period.

In retrospect, fake or not, this was one of the best issues of DW ever issued, readable and interesting from end to end. (That is my view now; I had a very different opinion at the time!) It was so good that the DW staff was deeply divided over whether to make our next actual issue #41. At the time the fake appeared, I was already considering turning DW over to other hands. I had decided to ask Larry Peery to take over. It didn't occur to me then that the fake's real message was that Bruce would do a bang-up job with DW if given the chance. Had that occurred to me, there would still be the problem of Kathy's (Kathy Byrne, who was then DW's General Editor) reaction, which would certainly have been hostile, to say the least. As it is, Larry steered DW through some difficult times and avoided the worst salvos of the feud.

As it happens, this fake was itself an unknowing piece of deeply poetic justice. The tale is as follows: During the late 1960s, I had produced a fake GRAUSTARK (which may have been the earliest fake; I don't recall). This inspired Eric Just of Oklahoma to turn out a very clever and funny fake of my own 'zine, EREHWON. Well, of course, nothing would do but that I had to do a fake of Eric's 'zine THE DIPLOMAT. (Eric, by the way, in essence also invented postal Diplomacy, since none of the GRAUSTARK-inspired hobby was known to him at the time.)

The DIPLOMAT fake was a masterpiece of cunning. I even arranged (through my co-conspirator, Jeff Key) to have it mailed from Eric's home town of Paoli. The fake succeeded beyond our wildest dreams because Eric didn't get the genuine issue out for a while. Hilariously, many players actually sent in orders based on the fake moves in the fake 'zine.

The poetic justice, of course, is that after the fake DW came out, the real publication was delayed for some time. For quite a while, many people believed the fake to be the real thing. Thus I was hoist by my own petard, although at the time few people (if any) knew it.

So just remember guys, it may take years, but trickiness today will bite you in the ass tomorrow.
--Rod Walker

Bruce here: Thank you, Rod, for that terrific lead-in. And now, here is the story of the Fake Diplomacy World #40, which until now I've never told publicly. But Doug Kent asked me to write something for DW's 100th issue, and when I came up with the idea of relating this story, he felt it would be an interesting and appropriate snippet of hobby history to share with you all.

It was the spring of 1985. The Diplomacy hobby back then was thriving, and it was very different than it is these days. Email was in its infancy; most dipzines were available by postal mail only, and there were many hundreds of postal Dip players playing games in well over a hundred North American zines and subzines. I do believe that we as a hobby almost single-handedly kept the U.S. and Canadian postal services in business!

In those days, it was fairly common and widely accepted as fun for someone to publish a fake issue of someone else's zine. Usually this was just for kicks -- the more people the imitation could fool, the merrier, though some of them were also clearly just spoofs. My own zine, THE VOICE OF DOOM, was faked twice; once by Gary Coughlan and the other time, I believe, by Keith ("Tro") Sherwood. Both fakes were masterfully done.

But the Diplomacy hobby was also mired in a Great Feud, consisting of me and many of my supporters on one side, and Kathy Byrne and many of her supporters on the other. The details of this bitter conflict are unimportant here except insofar as they pertain to the fake Diplomacy World. Kathy and I were both highly visible and hard-working hobby members, each with our own publications, hobby services, and large groups of friends, many of them mutual.

Rod Walker, Diplomacy World's Managing Editor, was one of these mutual friends. Striving to stay on good terms with everyone, but perceived by some as being partial to my camp, Rod brought Kathy on board as DW's General Editor; in part to alleviate the aforementioned perception, and in part because he felt that Kathy could take a big chunk of work off his hands. It seemed like a win-win situation for everyone. Mark Berch, a good friend

of mine, was already part of the DW staff as its Strategy and Tactics Editor, so the new arrangement could (and should) have brought balance to Diplomacy World, cementing it as the hobby's flagship publication.

What Rod did not count on was Kathy's insistence on carrying her feuds into DW. Soon after she came on board, Kathy decreed that in the next issue, there was to be no mention of me, my publications or my hobby services. And once she had successfully twisted Rod's arm, I was pretty sure that she would never relent on this point. This meant that DW would not publish the ballot for the Runestone Poll, which was the hobby-wide poll for rating zines, subzines and GMs; and which I was preparing to run for the first time that year. Nor, if the boycott continued, would the Poll results be mentioned in DW's pages later that summer. Prior to that, DW had often given coverage to the Runestone Poll. Additionally, THE VOICE OF DOOM had recently put out its 100th and final issue -- a 270-page behemoth, the largest issue of a dipzine in hobby history. DW's past policy had been to publicize such milestones, giving the special issue a write-up in its pages. But there would be no mention of this either. That issue of VD, by the way, contained my chronicle, "The History of a Diplomacy Zine," which won the Rod Walker Award for outstanding literary achievement that year; so the Walker Award, too, would simply have to be (you guessed it) completely ignored in DW.

Mark Berch, with whom Kathy was also feuding, wasn't treated much better. He wrote a perfectly good article for DW, part of a delightful series about a fictitious Dip player name Shep Rose, and submitted it to Kathy. She rejected it and sent it back to him, which was of course her prerogative as editor. But when Mark asked her how he could improve the article so that she would consider it worthy of publication, she refused to reply, sometimes even returning his mail unopened, and Mark eventually complained to Rod. The article remained unpublished.

Rod, meanwhile, was caught in the middle of all this. He ultimately decided that he had to let Kathy's decisions stand, or risk losing her, but he found himself painted into a corner. Thus, when I approached Rod about printing the Runestone Poll ballot that spring, he had to say no. But he was sympathetic, and so he quietly agreed to send me the DW mailing list, and I used it to distribute the ballot to DW's readers directly rather than through the zine. The result was that 265 hobbyists voted in the Poll that year, more than twice the previous high.

Later that spring, I had a cool idea: if I couldn't get any of my hobby projects covered in the real DW, then why not do a fake one? I'd already produced fakes of several well-known zines, notably BRUTUS BULLETIN and DIPLOMACY DIGEST, so I had experience at it. More importantly, I already had a copy of the DW mailing list, thanks to Rod. (The delicious irony here is that Kathy's own hard-line policy not only provided the impetus for the

fake, but also made it possible, since if DW had published the ballot, I would never have gotten its mailing list from Rod. Remember, the zine was not distributed online back then; the mailing list was REQUIRED in order to distribute a fake issue to its readers.) I could kill two birds with one stone: produce a terrific issue of Diplomacy World full of great Dip-related writing that many hobbyists would enjoy reading, and at the same time completely demolish Kathy's boycott of me.

(As an interesting side note, I found out much later from Rod that a few folks had thought that the preceding issue -- DW #39 -- had been a fake because it had a beige cover instead of blue. DW had used other colors in the past, but Rod had intended to standardize the color to light blue. For #39, though, apparently the printer was out of that color of paper.)

I approached Mark with the idea of doing a fake DW, and sought his approval and help, receiving both. Since his Shep Rose piece had been rejected with no guidance on how to get it accepted, he contributed it instead to the fake. Later, a bunch of my other friends -- Paul Gardner, Bruce McIntyre, Gary Coughlan (writing under the pseudonym "Lynne"), Ron (Canada) Brown and others -- would contribute articles as well. Steve Hutton helped provide the solution to the crossword puzzle which had appeared in DW #39. Fred Davis, who was the zine's Variants Editor, sent in a copy of Vern Schaller's Far East Variant Game. I even got articles from two British hobbyists, Derek Caws and Richard Hucknall. The issue had become a true team effort. And yet somehow, I managed to maintain secrecy throughout this entire time. Neither Rod nor Kathy had any inkling of what was to come.

As work on the issue progressed, it grew and grew until it became as big as any previous issue of DW had ever been. In addition to the aforementioned articles, there were several pages devoted to the Runestone Poll results. The tribute to VOICE OF DOOM's 100th issue was there, as was a blunt review of WHITESTONIA, which had also reached its 100th issue. At one point I went to the printer and had them make up several hundred manila envelopes with the return address of George Graessle, who was doing the actual production and mailing of the zine at that point. George conveniently lived in Newark, New Jersey, not too far from my home in western Massachusetts.

Although the issue contained mostly "serious" material, my favorite part was the closing paragraph on the inside back cover, which read: "DIPLOMACY WORLD HAS BEEN FAKED TWICE, the first time by AI Pearson when he put out his excellent parody called 'DIPLOMACY WURLD #31A'. The second fake DW was produced by Bruce Linsey...You can write for a copy if you like. It was produced as a joke, and you should be getting it right about now. (Get it?!)"

When the typing was all done and the pages all pasted up, I made up the hundreds of copies needed and spent a couple of long evenings assembling, enveloping and addressing the issues. Then I loaded them all into some large cardboard boxes, and then it was off to my friend Kevin Stone's place in downtown Jersey City, where we spent an enjoyable Friday evening going to dinner and playing games, leaving my car on the city street overnight with its boxes full of nefarious cargo. I distinctly recall being overly worried that night that some punk might break into my car, steal the fake DWs, and render all my effort meaningless. Saturday morning, we arose, found the car unmolested, and drove into Newark together -- had to get the right postmark, you see! -- and Kevin (who was also sworn to secrecy) helped me mail the zine.



The rest of the weekend, I spent waiting for the shit to hit the fan. And boy, on Monday, did it ever! The hobby was rocked by this event. It changed the course of not only DW, but of the Great Feud and of the hobby as a whole. Kathy was livid, I heard from a number of people. Rod himself was furious with me for having (as he put it) "hijacked" the DW mailing list in order to send out the fake. It was a long time before he and I were on good terms again, and I felt bad that he considered himself deceived.

But the fake was one for the ages. I heard from several people afterwards that it was very entertaining, or the best issue of DW they'd yet seen, and so on. Kathy's friends predictably panned it, but many folks enjoyed it. I even learned later from Rod that the DW editorial staff was deeply divided on whether they should count this as the real issue #40 and just continue the numbering with #41, though in the end, they didn't.

In the aftermath, Mark Berch came up with what I thought was a brilliant idea: that I be invited to join the DW staff, and that Kathy and I would produce alternate issues of the zine. And though his proposal caught me by surprise, I think I could have done a good job. (Whether I would have wanted to is another matter -- I had just taken over custodianship of the Runestone Poll and was working on some other hobby projects as well.) But it was a moot point -- there's no way Kathy was going to accept that arrangement.

Another amusing aftereffect was that poor George Graessle, whose return address was on the envelope,

got back a bunch of copies from the Post Office -- those addressed to people who had moved since I'd gotten the mailing list from Rod all those months previously.

And another funny note: If you look at the words "issue 40!" in big bold letters on the front cover of the fake, that type size and font may look slightly familiar. That's because those letters were fashioned by cutting and taping up the letters from the words "Scott tissue" on the wrapper of a roll of toilet paper! (Boy, think of the fun Kathy's friends could have had if they had known THAT!) I distinctly recall cutting the "issue" out of "tissue", then using some of the other letters to form the "40!"

As for Kathy, her grand scheme of having the hobby's flagship zine boycott the work of her enemies lay in tatters, blown asunder by this publication, and never again (to my knowledge) would an editor of DW try to make the zine withhold hobby news or articles from its readership for any similar reason. She stayed on the DW staff for just three more issues and (it should be noted) did a fine job. Both DW (which was, in my estimation, actually helped by the fake) and the Runestone Poll (which Kathy had tried so hard to stifle) soared on to great heights in the years to come, with the Poll drawing participation from over 500 hobbyists at its height in 1988.

So...would I do it all again? Gee, let me think about it for a moment...hell, yeah!!! While I have certain regrets about the way I handled one or two specific items, and while I definitely felt bad about pissing off Rod; yes, under the same circumstances I'd do it again in a heartbeat. It was not only a great publication, but also a glorious coup, and a true turning point in hobby history.

And that, dear readers, is the story of why and how the fake DIPLOMACY WORLD #40 came to be. I'm delighted to finally relate it after more than 22 years of keeping it to myself. I thank Rod Walker and Mark Berch, both of whom were helpful in corroborating my recollection of events and filling in some background info. I do still have a few spare copies of the issue, available for postage plus a couple of bucks, but email me first at GonzoHQ "of" aol.com to make sure they haven't run out if you want one. (Heck, email me anyway -- I'd love to hear feedback from this story!) I understand also that Doug Kent is planning to post the fake issue online, where it can be viewed for free.

I'd like to close by congratulating DW's current AND past staff on bringing the publication to its 100th issue in such fine fashion. Long live the game and hobby of Diplomacy -- and long live Diplomacy World!!!

Bruce Linsey's fake Diplomacy World #40 is now available for download in the back issue section on the Diplomacy World website – www.diplomacyworld.net. Check it out!

Making Italy “Al Dente”

By Alfred Nicol

“Al dente” means “firm to the bite,” and refers to the method of cooking pasta that ensures it is not too soft, but still firm. For many Diplomacy players Italy, famed for its pasta, is just too soft; so vulnerable to attack, so limited in growth, and not in the least bit firm to the bite! Statistics seem to back up the suspicion that Italy is particularly hard to play. Along with Austria-Hungary, Italy has an unwelcome record for eliminations. Although not usually the first to be wiped off the map, it rarely seems to survive beyond the mid-game, and wins are even rarer. Assuming that the people who play Italy are no less able than any of the other players, we have to conclude that there is something about Italy’s location that makes it particularly difficult. It is the purpose of this article to identify those weaknesses as an advance warning for the prospective Italian player, and hopefully to show that these weaknesses can in fact be turned to one’s advantage.

Italy’s weaknesses are almost all dependent upon its location on the board. The first problem is that it has an initial shortage of accessible supply centres, causing slow early growth. With only one guaranteed build in Tunis, which drags at the very least a fleet away from the action, and precious little opportunities in 1902, it seems that the first challenge for Italy is to get beyond four centres before others spot its relative weakness and gobble it up - al dente or not! This is not helped by its middle position on the board, making it vulnerable to attack from either France, AH or Turkish fleets marauding down the Mediterranean, as they must eventually do.

Owning the only supply centre that is directly adjacent to a neighbouring one (Venice-Trieste) makes the sense of vulnerability even worse. In fact, future alliances will often view Italy as second on the menu, and the main threat seems to come from the east. Once two of Turkey, Russia and Austria-Hungary have gobbled up the other one it is almost certain that Italy, whether or not they were involved, will be devoured next. In short, Italy is the nation most vulnerable to either an AT or RT alliance, both of which are common phenomena in Diplomacy. When they get rolling, with Italy’s limited early growth providing scant protection, an early exit is in the cards.

Furthermore, Italy is often not included (and not needed) in either the western triangle of Germany, England and France, or the equivalent eastern triangle. This reduces the opportunities for building lasting relationships and obtaining the spoils of war. As if this wasn’t bad enough, if Italy is lucky enough to get into the mid-game with a decent force, the stalemate line at the western end of the Med means that three fleets of England or France can indefinitely prevent an Italian breakout into the Atlantic, and thus severely limit Italy’s attacking options. I’m sure

you will agree that these facts make for pretty depressing reading, and may well contribute to the look of despair seen upon the face of any player who has just been assigned Italy. However, I believe that whilst Italy will never be the strongest nation on the board, its greatest strength may well be in its weaknesses. Let us look at these weaknesses in turn, and see if they may offer any advantages to the ailing Italian general.

A slow early growth is not such a handicap. It makes Italy less of a threat, and much less likely to be jumped on by your paranoid neighbours who only recently made all sorts of long-term promises. Many are the times that an overly-rapid early expansion of France or Russia has led to overly-rapid demise at the hands of smaller nations. A six unit start at the end of 1901 doesn’t just give one a lead; instead it paints a target on your chest, and this is a problem Italy will never have to face in the first year or two. No one will jump Italy or feel especially threatened by them, which might just give a bit of breathing space.

Italy’s central location may well make it vulnerable to attack from either side, but it also means any new builds will never be far from the action. A new Turkish army may take two years before it sees any action, and any builds in England tie up fleets for convoying before they can even rattle their sabres. Not so with Italy, whose units will be ready for almost immediate use. Furthermore, the central location gives Italy a unique choice: they can choose which triangle or theatre of war to get involved in. Italy, like no other nation, is equally well-poised to take on a campaign in the east or west, providing one with choice and opportunity. For this reason, unlike most nations, Italy may do well not to commit one way or other too early. Wait to see how things look by the end of 1902 or at least 1901. It is quite possible that the non-threatening east-west savvy Italy will find itself courted by a number of players for aid and assistance as the plans of other nations begin to go awry. This is a very privileged position to be in, with great gains to be made by coming to the aid of an Anglo-German attack on France, or an assault on Turkey in order to help a struggling AH. The fact that Italy is neither part of a western or eastern triple also means that they will almost certainly not be the victim of an early 2:1 attack, which can often be the case for almost any other nation. If during the first year you feel as if your playing on your own, don’t worry...the offers will soon come rolling in, and so will the opportunities.

The shared supply centre border with AH is often mentioned, as I did earlier, as a weakness. It is important to remember the obvious thought that this vulnerability cuts both ways. With AH potentially coming under attack from both Turkey and Russia, you can almost guarantee that they will not be heading westwards, and will be

falling over themselves to construct a firm agreement in the very beginning of the game. This mutual vulnerability can actually give a sense of security and mutual dependence. An Italian pact with Austria-Hungary may well be especially fruitful.

In addition to all of these unlikely strengths, Italy's weakness is itself its greatest strength. You will not be perceived as a threat and will almost certainly be underestimated. Other nations will often want your aid, and will put your disposal on the back burner. Play your cards right and by the time they've got around to dealing with you, you will be dealing with them.

Now that you are reassured that Italy's weak start is not all doom and gloom, there are some certainties that I believe Italy must come to terms with from the start, and use as a guide for future planning. The most important of these is Italy *will fight Turkey*. If you think this is not the case, or believe Turkey's kind promises of plans to go north instead of west, then you are only kidding yourself. When Turkey breaks into the Ionian - splitting your forces, threatening Tunis and your home centres - you will only have yourself to blame. If Turkey survives the early stages, and is not the victim of a concerted and well-planned AH and Russian attack, then by the third or fourth year they will be coming west. So you have to choose: when you will fight them? When they have six units and you have four or five, or when they have three in the beginning?

Secondly, at some point you will have to fight a nation at the western end of the Mediterranean, either France or England. This threat will probably come later than the Turkish one, and can be faced down with the gains made in the first three years and possible help from other allies in the middle of the board. In fact early deals with France can usually be made with minimal effort. You promise to keep Piedmont empty and France promises not to build fleets in Marseilles or enter the Mediterranean. France will have either Germany or England to deal with, and will be keen to secure a southern border.

The third reality is that without doubt the easiest early gains can be made by making all manner of promises to AH, and then in conjunction with either Turkey or Russia gobbling them up. I would warn against this short term strategy. Firstly, Italy will not get the lion's share of the supply centre-rich Balkans. Secondly, any gains in AH will be difficult to keep and easy for a juggernaut of RT to reclaim. Finally, once AH is gone, where will Turkey go for their next supply centres? Probably not the now more-powerful Russia, but Italy! Consequently any gains made in 1902-1903 will be lost by 1905, with you crippled and pleading with France that propping up your failed nation as a buffer against Turkish aggression is a far better option to feeding on your carcass. Believe me, I've been there!

This leads me onto my overall strategy for Italy. Seeing

as Turkey is in my opinion Italy's greatest long term threat, they should be disposed of as soon as possible. Some hard negotiation early on with Russia is necessary, and Italy must do all it can to prevent a Russian-Turkish steamroller which will certainly result in an early bath. Russia must be persuaded that their best bet is to commit at least two units to the battle, with AH putting their full weight behind the proceedings. Italy will build a fleet from expansion into Tunis and occupy the Eastern Mediterranean and convoy into either Smyrna or Syria; commonly called the Lepanto. This will ensure the demise of Turkey, and almost certainly give Italy a chance to survive into the mid game. I must just mention that Tunis will be there in 02 and if, in return for future favours, AH can be persuaded to support Italy into Greece, then the gift should be accepted. Greece can cause havoc in the Balkans and act as a support into Bulgaria for AH or Russia. Tunis will wait.



It is Russia who I believe will offer the best option for a long-term alliance. If the attack has gone well, then AH will be sandwiched in-between, and Russia's early loyalty to Italy will be preserved due to the geographical separation. Any previous Russian loyalty to AH will be hard to maintain if Italy offers a decent share of the spoils. Once this is done, Italy's attention should be turned west where the forces of the victor of the western triple will almost certainly be coming their way. The other major advantage of an alliance with Russia is the benefit of their friendly fleets in the NAO. These will be essential for cutting support in MAO and breaking the stalemate line at Gibraltar. Without wishing to sound duplicitous, persuading Germany to bounce Russia out of Sweden, and getting England to press them hard in Scandinavia, will mean that one's ally doesn't grow too fast and become a monster in the end game.

Should such ambitious plans work out, then Italy's survival into the mid and even late game is highly likely. A win, or at least a share in a draw, will not be impossible. Italy will have shed its reputation for softness, and shown its capacity for displaying that all-important quality when cooking their most famous dish: al dente.

When not teaching Philosophy, Alfred is an enthusiastic player of all styles of board games, when he's not out bird watching or enjoying wine! Diplomacy is fast becoming his favourite game, and he runs a Diplomacy club at the school where he teaches which is well (and noisily) attended.

The Diplomacy World Interview: Walt Buchanan

Conducted by Jim Burgess

In this installment of the Diplomacy World Interview: Jim Burgess (J – plain font) interviews *DW Founder Walt Buchanan (W – in italics)* with input from Walt's **Ex-Wife and DW Co-Founder Carol (C – in bold)**

Walt's Bio: *I won't say much here, Jim, since much is covered below. Suffice it to say, that I have been blessed with good wives, two fine sons, and careers that have gone from aerospace (participating in the systems analysis of the Apollo booster rocket), to being a gunnery officer on a carrier during Vietnam, to being an attorney, an electrical engineer, and now the J.R. Thompson Chair Professor at Texas A&M University. I have been very fortunate and being in postal Diplomacy was a fun part of all of this.*

J: Since I became interview editor a dozen or so issues ago, no interview and issue have I looked forward to more to than this one. Professionally and personally, *Diplomacy World* has sometimes been a grind, sometimes a pleasure, and always a bit uncertain as to where the next issue will come from. But it gives me special pleasure that this last year or so I feel I have played the part of the "muse behind the scenes" in bringing former editor Doug Kent back to the head of the class. If I did anything, it only is inspiration; these last few issues have nearly been entirely Doug's doing. And so, where a few years ago I was anticipating a slow stagger to issue #100, we reach it instead with arguably the most consistent, wide-ranging and most importantly highest read issues of the whole century-making run, with a clear path to many more great issues to come. It is in that moment, that I most eagerly step back to the beginning, the very founding of *Diplomacy World* and its first editor, Walt Buchanan. Welcome, Walt, I'm so glad you agreed to this interview format to appear in this special century issue.

W: *It is an honor to do this, Jim. By the way, I will be answering questions about events that took place over a third of a century ago, so forgive me if I get facts wrong or have time events out of sequence! I'm sure the gist of what I say will be correct, however.*

J: OK, let's take this in some small bites at first as we step back to the founding days. Where did the first inklings of an idea for starting *Diplomacy World* come from? It did have to do the beginnings of the idea that this Diplomacy hobby was a worldwide hobby didn't it? Of course, while it really was not a worldwide hobby then, it really IS a worldwide hobby now, and *Diplomacy World* is read in dozens of countries around the globe, both traditionally English speaking ones and others.

W: *Before I discovered postal Diplomacy in October 1970, I had been playing postal chess for eight years*

thru "Chess Review." This magazine gave the big picture of postal chess and so, once I learned what was going on in the postal Diplomacy hobby, I thought it would be nice to have a magazine that could do the same thing for it.

J: Then, of course, you put a great staff together. The first masthead of *Diplomacy World* #1 (<http://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw1.pdf>) lists the staff as Walt Buchanan (Executive Editor), Carol Ann Buchanan (Associate Editor), Michael Lind (Art Director), Doug Beyerlein (Demonstration Game Analyst and Ratings Editor), Edi Birsan (Strategy Editor), Len Lakofka (Tactics Editor), Rod Walker (Press Release Editor), David Lagerson (Contest Coordinator), Rick Brooks (Variants Article Editor), Lew Pulsipher (Variants Design Editor) and "Prince William" (Big Help Department). These are some of the giants of the hobby well known to most people with much of a sense of the hobby's history. But lesser known, at least to me, are Carol, Michael, David, and Rick, and of course "Prince William". How about if we start there, who is Prince William and what was his "big help"?



W: *Carol was my wife then, Jim, and although we are now divorced, over the years we have become good friends...*

C: Yes.

W: *...again (by the way, my wife, Charlotte, is a good friend of Carol too).*

C: And we also have fun comparing Walt stories!

W: *Nice since Carol is the mother of my sons, Bill...*

C: Will.

W: *...and John, and she has agreed to answer this question and others that she might find interesting to comment on.*

C: Prince William was the first son of Queen Suzanne (who really should have been listed somewhere on that masthead).

You see, Queen Suzanne was actually the most notable dignitary ever to be associated with Diplomacy World. She was the voice crying in the wilderness, bemoaning the time and energy that the common man devoted to this postal hobby celebrating war. As you might expect, her comments could be satirical, scornful, sardonic, scathing and/or sarcastic.

Prince William began his career in the Big Help Department stretched out sleeping across his mother Carol's lap as she dutifully typed each current issue. After the pages of each issue were printed, Prince William reigned over the ritualistic "Ceremony of Collation." (And no, this was not a royal feast – this Ceremony was the all-important rite of collating the pages into the next precious issue.) Prince William presided from his portable baby seat, bouncing along to the rhythm of the pages being picked up in order, aligned oh-so-carefully and stapled just-so. Pick up, align, staple. Pick up, align, staple. Pick up, align, staple. Sometime Prince William became so mesmerized he fell asleep while conducting his royal oversight duties...

And Queen Suzanne is incensed that her second son, Prince John, has not been mentioned. He, too, was an integral member of the Big Help Department after his birth. (Four hands were definitely better than two in providing that extra help in publishing a quality magazine, such as typing when no one was around.) Together, the two Princes worked closely with Queen Suzanne to insure that each issue maintained the high royal standards.

J: What about the others, are there any interesting stories in how you signed these people on for this project?

W: When I started DW, Jim, I had been active in the hobby for over three years, so I knew the most active hobbyists. I therefore asked the ones, who had a particular interest, to be an editor for that particular "department." I was most fortunate that they all agreed.

J: These were the days before the Internet, when this really was primarily a postal hobby, but Edi Birsan was one who was famous for picking up the telephone and talking people's ears off. How much of the beginnings of Diplomacy World were forged on long telephone calls and how much on letters and calls for articles in the other major Diplomacy szines of the time?

W: It really was primarily a postal hobby then, Jim. From my perspective, since long distance phone calls were relatively expensive then, they were mostly used during

critical stages in a game to negotiate moves. Brenton ver Ploeg was a master at this. I too remember calling someone to set up a stab to wipe out Austria and take control of the game for my Italy! And of course Edi was a master at this too.

J: Wasn't part of the impetus to calling it Diplomacy World the relationship to the I.D.A. and the attempt to get the other part of the hobby (the one in Britain) involved? Larry Peery was a big part of the IDA and that effort. Can you tell that story?

W: DW had nothing directly to do with IDA, although Larry Peery was the driving force behind the creation of IDA. It was created to provide, as you say, an organization for what was becoming a worldwide hobby, since both Larry and I knew this had been done for chess. It also became a legitimate alternative to TDA (The Diplomacy Association) started by John Beshara. TDA was really just a sham organization created by John to massage his ego and reward his friends. Since John Boardman and John Beshara were good friends, when Larry, Carol, and I exposed this, we were cast into the Outer Darkness by Boardman. Feuds were common back then and this became one of them. I wasn't even able to trade or subscribe to Graustark after that!

J: Yes, I know, the feuding in the Diplomacy hobby pushed apace into the late 1980's as it seemed to be an intrinsic part of the hobby. Since then, I and others have made great efforts to defuse hobby feuds (one of the ways I have done that is by being "anti-organization," since part of the IDA/TDA issue was that issue of competing organizations). If you act quickly and try to convert them into humorous interludes, you usually can get people to relax a bit. The one continuing feud issue (which was not an inconsequential question in the IDA/TDA feuding era) that is difficult to manage is the battle between different views of the world approach to war and warfare in the "real world". John Boardman and his pacifist views still have him feuding with some hobby members who are affiliated with the US military. And there is some hot and heavy discussion on one of the Diplomacy discussion groups at present on attitudes toward the War in Iraq and Afghanistan. In general, though, the Diplomacy hobby is so much more congenial than it ever has been before; we hope to keep it that way with our "diplomatic skills." But I'd like to keep this mostly lighter toward the jokes and the fun in the hobby. These interviews also are great places to record the facts behind famous hobby jokes. Your wife Carol formed a "nonexistent" organization called the "Diplomacy Widows Association"; there was a time when many people were getting divorces over Diplomacy, though I've not heard of any such things lately. Can you give me a sense of what was going on with these "spouse issues" back then?

W: I'm sure Carol will be glad to jump in on this one! I should say though that Diplomacy probably did contribute to our divorce. I think Carol originally enjoyed

some aspects of the hobby, but I got her too involved in it. Before the computer, putting out DW was a lot of work (still is, right?!), but back then, Carol would do all the typing on a typewriter and have to manually correct mistakes. Getting the camera ready copy ready for a commercial printer was also a big task too and this was all done by Carol. I took advantage of Carol in this and I still regret that. The professionalism of DW had much to do with Carol. She was also English major, by the way!

C: Nonexistent? Just who says it was “nonexistent?”

J: According to Mark Berch. It says so in the Diplomacy A to Z (<http://www.badpets.net/Diplomacy/AtoZ/D.html>) and has been copied from there into the new Diplomacy Wiki.

C: Queen Suzanne has issued a royal proclamation on this subject:

“The Diplomacy Widows Association was a vital and valuable organization enabling Diplomacy spouses to unite in order to throw off the shackles and chains that fettered their respective spouses (and sadly, sometimes the widows) to this insidious, invasive, pervasive and menacing hobby that demanded an ever-growing allegiance from its adherents. While their spouses are vainly seeking to rule the world, the Diplomacy Widows Association fights for justice, peace and the American Way!”

And why was the Diplomacy Widows Association founded? “Albatross Press” says it all!

J: Indeed, well, once this article is published, a Google search will find the Royal Proclamation as well and perhaps the A to Z and Wiki will be changed. We’ll see. The Hoosier Archives were another precursor to *Diplomacy World*; let’s now move to the Archives in particular. What was really tremendous about what you were trying to do was the completeness of it, having every issue of every Diplomacy zine ever produced. But you must have had some failures or major difficulties in getting issues of some szines, can you tell us about some of those problems and how you surmounted them if you were able to do so?

W: HA was the precursor to DW. I learned of the postal hobby in October 1970 thru an insert in a Diplomacy set I had purchased. In it was the address of Rod Walker, among others. Rod’s “Erehwon” was a work of art, I thoroughly enjoyed it, and one feature was a listing of Rod’s Diplomacy zine collection. It was from this that I got the idea of building up a complete collection going back to Graustark #1 of May 1963. When I left the hobby in an active way in 1978, the Archives was virtually complete. The list I printed of missing issue copies in HA #128 consisted of a long paragraph. Amassing this collection mainly just took persistence and the help of

many friends. Carol was also very helpful in this endeavor. She may like to tell you of taking out staples and ironing issues to take out the wrinkles!



C: Oh my gosh! How I’ve repressed that memory!! You must realize that any new additions to the Hoosier Archives were actually museum pieces and therefore treated as such. There was a mandated method of carefully removing the staples. The first step involved using the thin blade of a pocketknife to gently pry each side of the staple up to the perpendicular position. Then the zine was affectionately turned over, the blade of the knife was slipped under the staple and oh-so-deftly pulled straight out of the confining pages. Success – only two tiny puncture wounds in each page. Then came the ironing. Each page was tenderly laid on the ironing board, smoothed out by hand and then – pause – a warm iron was applied to the page, softly and tenderly removing all wrinkles. Once this restoration process was applied to the entire zine, then – and only then – the zine was ready to be added to the collection.

J: I think I’m getting a sense of who REALLY did all the work in this process and how I would also have an ex-wife (mine also is named, Charlotte, that’s a good name for a current wife!!!) if I tried to get *The Abyssinian Prince* going again with that kind of help. How large did the Hoosier Archives get before you finally gave them up? If we think about a regular one-car garage, did you fill one of those?

W: Not that big, but pretty large! As I remember, it filled seven four drawer filing cabinets, plus a two drawer fire proof safe. The safe was to store such priceless items as Derek Nelson’s (a player in John’s first game) copy of Graustark #1!

J: Wow. I think you have told the story of how you passed along the Hoosier Archives before, at least I think I know the story, but we’d like to hear your version for the record here. The existence of the Archives allowed

people like Jim Meinel to write a definitive Encyclopedia of North American Dip. Zines
(<http://devel.diplom.org/Postal/Zines/TAP/Encyclo.pdf>).
What happened?



W: Several years after actively leaving the hobby, I realized I was never going to get active again, but I did want the first 15 years of the hobby preserved. Jamie McQuinn was a librarian and he knew other librarians at Bowling Green State University and he volunteered to have the Hoosier Archives stored there in their popular culture archives. This seemed like a very safe and accessible place for it, so I was delighted to see this happen. Before the move, Jim Meinel visited us in Indiana and cataloged the entire collection.

J: Hoosier Archives, of course, also was a szine, a szine that lasted in your hands for, I believe 250 issues, before being passed to Eric Verheiden. The szine Hoosier Archives always seemed to me to be fairly short; didn't it only run one game at a time? Can you characterize Hoosier Archives, the szine, for our readers?

W: HA was normally 12 pages, spirit duplicated on both sides of six 8 ½" by 11" sheets of paper. It was this length since six sheets of paper weighted one ounce and could be mailed with one first class stamp. We did this with an AB Dick spirit duplicator (How many now remember that process?) and Carol named it the Albatross Press. I can't imagine why you did that, Carol?!

C: Ha!

W: You might guess that Carol did all the work of typing these issues and correcting the typos, which consisted of using a razor blade.

J: Ohhh, I think I know where this is going...

C: Using a razor blade to scrape off the typo, then you had to align a small fresh and clean strip of that pesky purple backing in between the front and back portions at the site of the typo, correctly retype the letter(s) and then remove that little strip and proceed merrily on your way until the next typo).

W: Ah, how the computer has spoiled the younger generation! By the way, HA, the zine, was started to build up, HA, the archives, but expanded into running a demonstration game, the players being some of the best in the hobby. We also printed articles on good play and

this morphed into DW itself. (Carol also liked to write press releases and might like to relate some of the stories of "Queen Suzanne"!)

C: Already covered above – Queen Suzanne has already gone back into her royal retirement. It was an effort just to entice her out briefly for a proclamation. She did, however, enjoy writing the press releases for inclusion in Hoosier Archives.

J: Also, as a whole, you withdrew from the Diplomacy Hobby in the late 1970's, just as I was ramping up my involvement. You presided over the first 20 issues of Diplomacy World; we've made it to 100 in almost exactly 34 years, which averages about 3 issues per year. You tried at the beginning to publish six issues a year, I believe, twice that rate. And for most of its history DW has aspired to four issues a year. Was all this just ordinary burnout, or is there a story in you backing away from the Hobby, this is NOT a story I've ever heard, but I think I'm beginning to see that it had something to do with the length of your first marriage?



W: For the first two years DW came out every two months and consisted of 32 pages. Before word processing this was a mammoth undertaking and took a lot of work. (Care to comment, Carol?!) Carol prepared all the camera-ready copy on big sheets to be reduced at the printer into 8 ½' by 14" sheets. When we got them back, the sheets were folded; center stapled, and collated by hand, usually about 1,000 copies. I would set up an assembly line and have neighbor kids come over to help with all this.

C: Pick up, align, staple, sigh. Pick up, align, staple, sigh. Pick up, align, staple, sigh...

W: This final process took a solid weekend, including adding address labels and assembling all the issues to be bulk mailed. (Remember this was all before the computer and word processing.) When I turned over DW to Conrad von Metzke, the circulation of DW was up to 850.

J: Wow, my circulation for The Abyssinian Prince has flirted with 200, and for much of its history has

consistently been between 125 and 140, but knowing how hard that is to produce, 850 just sounds huge.

W: Anyway, after the first two years, we went to a bimonthly schedule with 40 pages and a heavy stock color cover, since this was more efficient and made the zine look more professional. We even had bulk sales to retail stores. I got out of the hobby both due to the divorce with Carol and the decision that I wanted to do something more with my life professionally. At the time I was an attorney with the VA doing administrative law. My original degree was in math and I decided to go back to night school, take some electrical engineering classes, and become a patent lawyer. Well, I liked the EE classes so much, that I left law and became an engineer. During this time as I was working on my master's, still at night school, one of my profs asked if I could like to teach a EE course as an adjunct. I liked this so much, that when the opportunity arose, I became a full time professor. I've never regretted this decision, but I have enjoyed watching the hobby evolve over the years, maybe as a proud parent would watch a child grow up.

*J: One of the early parts of you backing away was passing the mantle of *Diplomacy World* to Jerry Jones, Jerry is the only one of *DW*'s editors whose location is not known, and therefore he is not contributing to this landmark issue. Jerry also only produced seven issues before passing *DW* to Rod Walker, a process that was not that smooth. Why did you pass *Diplomacy World* to Jerry and did we get what you expected when you made the decision?*

*W: My giving up *DW* was a two stage process. First I asked Conrad von Metzke to become the editor, while I still remained the publisher. It was after that that Jerry took over. I don't remember the exact circumstances, but I imagine it was because he was willing and Conrad and I thought he would do a good job. I should add that it is gratifying to see *DW* pass thru so many editors and publishers over the years and still be going strong over a third of a century later and reach the #100 issue milestone. I'm also delighted to see Doug put it on the Web along with all the back issues. As we speak I am gradually sending Doug the back issues to put on the Web. Who would have guessed this would happen when *DW* first started?!*

J: I don't think anyone could have foreseen all that has happened since. What have you been doing in the hobby since the late 1970's, anything worth talking about?

W: No, not really, except to follow what is going on. Doug Beyerlein, and now Fred Davis, has been very helpful in that regard, not to mention you and Doug. For awhile, I would get Graustark thru a third party, but I stopped doing that years ago. It will be interesting to see how

many issues Grau gets up to. I imagine John Boardman is well into his 70s by now.

*J: Yes, Graustark is slowing down, but really only because John's wife's health has been failing. It will set a standard and a body of work that simply never will be equaled. I'm having lots of trouble at the moment keeping *The Abyssinian Prince* going, and that is the only szine with any hope of catching up to John. Finally, I usually ask people about the future of the Diplomacy Hobby. As you know, most Diplomacy is now played FTF or on the Internet and the Postal Hobby that you were so much a part of is now a boutique sidelight to the mainstream of the hobby. But more people are playing Diplomacy now than ever. I've estimated that there is something on the order of 10,000 active players worldwide on the Internet at any point in time if you cast a wide net in your definition of active. What are your general thoughts on the future of the hobby?*

W: Well, I imagine there is a good Yogi Berra quote on this, but I have no idea! I'm just glad that the hobby is still in good hands, such as those of you and Doug.

*J: What about *Diplomacy World* itself. Doug wanted me to "Don't forget to include the questions about how much he idolizes me, how great I am, how I am his hero, how he wishes he was me, how he has a shrine built to me in a closet at home, how he is nominating me for a Nobel Prize, and how he hopes to arrange to have me granted a special doctorate." Doug Kent really has saved *Diplomacy World* in my view, both the first time he took it over, and perhaps even more importantly this time. What do you think of Doug's direction for *DW*?*

W: Of course I'd like to see it continue and I think Doug is doing a great job. As I said in an earlier email to you, maybe a pyramid slightly larger than the Great Pyramid at Giza is in order!

J: Thanks, Walt, anything else you'd like to add?

W: Just to thank you and Doug for all you are doing, Jim. The postal Diplomacy was a big part of my life for almost eight years and it is nice to see that it has endured and evolved. I was amazed that when I happened to Google myself sometime back, that here were references to me for postal Diplomacy in addition to my professional career! This has to be due to people such as you and Doug.

J: Thank you for starting this institution of the hobby, and here's to a smoother second century of issues!

W: To that I will have to add an unsolicited comment that we have here at Texas A&M, gig'em!

The Good Old Days – Comments From the Old Timers

A number of hobby members (past and present) were kind enough to submit comments about their involvement with Diplomacy, as a way to celebrate Diplomacy World #100. When those contributions did not amount to enough for a full article on their own, I have elected to collect them in this section.

You'll find a wide range of opinions and experiences here, in some ways giving us hope for the future, and in others causing me to long for the days of old. If nothing else, you get a chance to put a face with a few names you may have seen over the years.

Discovering Diplomacy in Italy - Enrico Manfredi

IL CORRIERE DIPLOMATICO

I cannot remember exactly when I discovered Diplomacy. I wonder if I was introduced into the game by the spirited Albion zine? Thanks to Don Turnbull, its editor, a used reddish box of the 1961 edition from Games Research arrived in Italy around 1970. Perhaps it was the first of its kind.

I was delighted to read the final statement of the second paragraph: "The rules do not bind a player to anything he says; deciding whom to thrust as situations arise is part of the game". I was still more delighted to discover the hobby, and the Diplomacy-by-mail community abroad.

I started playing in some games GM'd by Don Turnbull in his zine Courier. Here I discovered another funny side of play-by-mail Diplomacy: the communiqués from the "press". I particularly appreciated those which did not have any practical reference to the game, but that were written just for the amusement of the readers. I still remember the strange adventures of Peter Charlton's Count Pisserazzo, who in one occasion tried to set a record by "climbing the acute side of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, upside down on a pogo stick". Only postal mail was used by the players in those games, but in one instance, playing as Italy, I received a convulsed and distorted telegram from Walter Luc Haas, as Austria: "NO VEN-TYR [BUT] VEN-APU LEPANTO STYL". I imagine the telegram left the mail officers very perplexed indeed!

Shortly thereafter, I decided to organise a Diplomacy game at the University of Pisa, in the department where I worked, with weekly deadlines. A board was affixed with the map of 1901 Europe and its armies, fleets and supply centres. Bystanders began to look at the results of the war between the Great Powers, and to make comments about the performances of Professor X or Doctor Z as country leaders. The competition became very fierce. The Theory of Probability was even used by someone to optimize the moves. Frantic phone calls were made between "allies" shortly before the deadline but – owing

to that paragraph # 2 – an atmosphere of suspicion was looming on the Department. Scraps of paper with movement schemes and alliance proposals were secretly exchanged during formal meetings. At last the Director of the Department – a very beloved and much feared Professor - stepped in, shouting: "You all are going to ruin this research institute!" and staring at me with his dirtiest look.

This was the end of my first attempt at running a game. Perhaps it was a good thing, since my wife also was looking at me strangely because of how late I was returning from "work" each evening.

To avoid a new Italian entry into the Diplomacy Widows Association, I decided to start a zine of my own, Il Corriere Diplomatico, and to organise regular Diplomacy games. In the meantime I kept in contact with foreign hobbyists, such as Walt Buchanan, Conrad von Metzke, and others. From the first issue of Il Corriere in 1972, to its 130th and last issue in 1982, eight games were played between a couple of dozen players. Shortly before closing down Il Corriere printed also the rules and the map of my "Worldiplomacy" variant, which extends the game's scope to include the USA and Japan. This variant was later published in Lew Pulsipher's Blood and Iron zine.

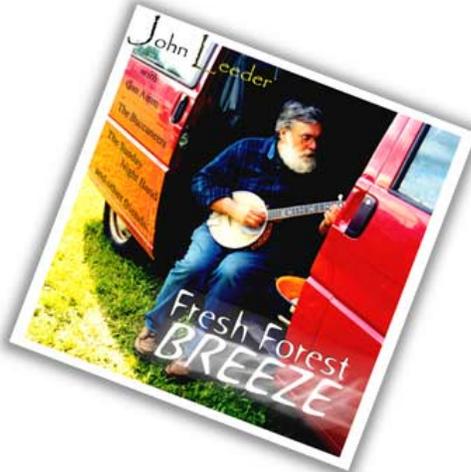
Among the regular players in Il Corriere there were some veterans of the game attempt from the University, such as Marino Marini and Antonio De Paulis. Excellent and resourceful players were also the late Menotti Cossu, as well as Rodolfo Bacci, Fausto Calabria (already an international Diplomacy player), Fausto Citernesì, Riccardo Lombardi, Claudio Nardi and others. Some of them also excelled in vitriolic "press releases". The longest, strenuously contested game lasted from 1977 to 1982, giving rise to heated and emotional end-game statements.

In the meantime, the Avalon Hill edition of the Diplomacy board game began being sold in Italy (and other European countries also), and new GM's appeared. Claudio Nardi took over the last games from Il Corriere Diplomatico in his zine Er Coriere Diplomatico (in Roman dialect). Paolo Rodolfo Carraro, another good player, started his Imperium zine. In Switzerland, Walter Luc

Haas started publishing his Europe.

These were among the first, but many more were to follow after my exit from the hobby.

Folksy Diplomacy - John Leeder



I haven't touched a Diplomacy board in 20 years or so. The grand old game filled a certain space in my life at an important time, and I developed some skills that served me well in later life, and made many friendships (mostly by letter, a few face-to-face) which, unfortunately, drifted away after I moved on.

The first publisher with whom I was in contact was John McCallum, maybe around 1970. Most recently I was in touch with Cal White, in the early 1990s, but it got to where I was just receiving his zine, not participating. My favorite publisher over the years was Conrad von Metzke, but I never met him in person. Prominent publishers whom I met included John Boardman (who turned out to be a distant cousin) and Fred Davis. Names of friends from those days are too numerous to mention; if any of them are still around, I'd be happy to hear from them at leeders@nucleus.com.

In my garage is a heavy metal filing cabinet full of archives from my time in the postal game; any hobby

historian who wants to drive a pickup truck to Calgary can have it for the asking. It hasn't been opened in years, either.

I took early retirement (not entirely voluntarily) from my real-world job as an editor in 2001 (the company shut down its Calgary office and moved the jobs to Toronto, and I chose not to follow); since then I've been collecting a pension and doing occasional jobs and volunteer work, especially with adult ESL. In 2003-04 I spent most of a year being pretty well a full time caregiver during my wife's bout with breast cancer, from which she so far has had a complete recovery. I am still involved with folk music, particularly with the Canadian Society for Traditional Music (www.yorku.ca/cstm), and recorded a CD a few years ago. (You can check out my website at www.johnleeder.com.) I do lots of grassroots music, enjoy playing in Celtic sessions, and perform occasionally. My children are out on their own and my wife has just retired, so we're anticipating more flexibility (albeit with reduced finances) in the upcoming years.

Musings of An Old Diplomacy Hack - Clayton McQuiston

After a short break of about thirty-five (35) years I am again in a Diplomacy game. While initiating greetings and negotiations as the Tzar of Russia at the start of a new standard game I revealed this fact to my prospective Italian ally (Douglas Kent, Diplomacy World Lead Editor.) He told me about the upcoming issue #100 which he hoped would contain comments, notes and articles from many of the early F-t-F and PBM players. Since I was playing by mail in the late 60's and early 70s, some of my

favorite Diplomacy related memories might qualify for inclusion, and he asked me to see what I could come up with. (*Wanting to curry favor with a potential ally, I of course quickly jotted down the following and sent it in before the next turn.*)

The problem of trying to remember back that far.... Ah, well after all I am old!

Actually I only have three vivid memories of that time:

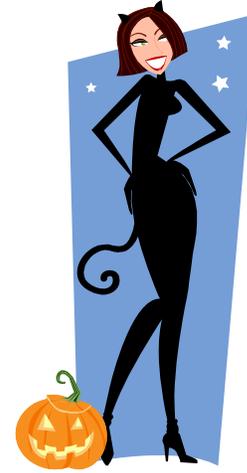
First, I remember getting into play-by-mail (PBM) games through through the premier gamezine at the time, Graustark, with the games mastered by the publisher John Boardman. He had a fixed publication schedule, so deadlines were very, very serious. I was addicted and PBM was great, because it was very hard getting into a face-to-face (FTF) game once you had destroyed all your friendships with good or bad backstabs. I also subscribed to other Dipzines, but the names escape me.



After a couple years in PBM games, I found myself in a game with John Boardman HIMSELF!! Of course I didn't know it was him because he used a pseudonym. However, when I mentioned in a letter that I would be in New York city on business, he revealed his real name and suggested we meet in person. I was awed to be invited to his apartment and discuss changing some of my moves and alliances. When I got back home and stabbed my allies up to then (young, impressionable kid that I was), I got the rude awakening of being critically stabbed by John in a few turns. (As I recall John won in the end; imagine that?)

In one of my early games I was Austria and had negotiated a good working relationship with the Sultan of Turkey. The game was going well with our two front wars with Russia and Italy. Somehow, Germany played by Doug Beyerlein was also working with us against Russia. *By the way, back then everything was done by mail (snail mail) since long distance calls were expensive.* I mentioned to the Sultan that I would be in his home town of Chicago in two weeks on a two day business trip and suggested dinner to celebrate our good working relationship. I set up reservations at a nice place, said I would have on a suit with a blue sweater vest and asked how I would recognize him there (since I didn't really think he had a turban). He wrote back that he would be in a light tan business suit. When this very lovely young blond haired woman came in the restaurant in a light tan business suit, I admired her, but otherwise showed no interest. After a few minutes she came up to me and asked if I played Diplomacy. I blurted out, "OH MY GOD, YOU'RE THE SULTAN OF TURKEY!" (*A few heads turned.*) It had never occurred to me that my ally or opponent in a PBM Diplomacy game would be a GIRL! – well more specifically a very attractive Woman.

Her name was Marie and we had a great dinner and laughed at my obtuseness.



A couple of months later I attended the DIPCON'74 held in Chicago and we saw each other again. Doug Beyerlein was also there too. It is great meeting the people you are playing with/against in PBM games. Somehow I was not surprised that Germany and Turkey turned on my poor Austria when I learned that Marie and Doug had gotten engaged right after DIPCON'74.

Speaking of DIPCON'74, it was the only one I attended and it was great. There were 49 full boards the first day and I won my board as Germany. We then had 7 full boards the second day and though I only survived with one piece alive at the end, it was the best finish for Russia in that round. So I moved on to the final board. Since I cannot remember anything about the last round except that I played England, I was probably one of the two countries wiped out. There are some real cut throat players in those DIPCON games!

I have come full circle to start playing Diplomacy again. I dropped out because it was consuming too much of my time as I changed jobs and my business career ramped up in intensity. I had to travel a lot; I set up and ran my own management consulting business for 27 years, then sold it well and retired about 10 years ago. With more time on my hands I did get back into game playing, but it was with Everquest online—which was great for the social aspect of grouping and guilds. But I got to the top (Level 70 Dwarf Paladin and other characters) and tired of it. I turned to playing Settlers of Catan online because it is quick and competitive. But the complexity was missing. I happened to see something about Diplomacy online and the light bulb went on. Playing over the internet certainly is light years better than the old delays of PBM.

So I am back. *Where did I hide those old daggers?*

Clayton McQuiston - Purcellville, Virginia USA

Dippy Diplomacy - Jim Benes



I don't know the year, but I know it was a long, long time ago that I played my first game of Diplomacy. I'm pretty sure that the person who introduced me to it is my old high school buddy, Joe Antosiak. He was always into table games. Through him, I've even met the creator of Diplomacy, Allan Calhamer of LaGrange Park, Illinois.

In any event, memories of Diplomacy conjure up crisp fall weekend afternoons, when a group of us got together to play this fascinating game. I can't recall all of the players, but I'm sure the Gork was there, probably Hambone and Chico too, my brother at times as well, and some of the other guys from Riverside-Brookfield High School or Morton Junior College.

The games would go into the evening, punctuated by pizza and beer, as I recall (and oh, how faulty memory gets to be as the years pass).

In any event, just as an addition to a silly newsletter that I started to publish in 1970 or 71 (its main function then was to keep tabs on tabletop sports leagues, and believe it or not, the Western Star-Post-Free Press is still around today—let me know if you'd like me to email you a copy), I decided to add a sort of "Sunday supplement"—or a once-every-three weeks extra section—running Diplomacy games. I called it DIPPY after the nickname I think some of the guys used for the game.

Over the course of several years, I adjudicated about three dozen or so Diplomacy games, and met several new friends who are still involved in the tabletop sports leagues but no longer Diplomacy.

If there were two things I tried to do, they were to adjudicate the games fairly and to get the results out in a timely fashion. I think I succeeded at both.

I had always thought of play-by-mail Diplomacy as a leisurely game, with communications taking the form and time that communications actually did around World War I—in other words use of the postal service. The game was "postal Diplomacy" after all, right?

As more and more players relied on the telephone and more and more pressed for quicker deadlines, I stuck with my once-every-three-weeks publishing schedule. To make it quicker would have been difficult, given work and family obligations.

After awhile, it took longer and longer to find seven people to sign up to play, and I decided that DIPPY had run its course. When the last game ended, so did the supplement.

I have always marveled at how Mr. Calhamer was able to come up with such a uniquely complex board game that didn't rely at all on chance. The man is a genius.

Limp Diplomacy? – Cal White



Man, 100 issues! It says a lot about the way a zine is viewed by the hobby that so many people have refused to let it die.

I remember when I first came into the hobby back in 1974, DW was THE zine. It spoke for the hobby and to be published there, even a letter, was something else. It

gave you legitimacy, at least in my eyes. I don't think I ever wrote anything specifically for publication in DW, but I remember feeling quite thrilled when the editor (Walt? Conrad?) chose to reprint an article of mine, "Do Yours Hang Limp?", a humorous look at how players would position the old wooden blocks that came with the Diplomacy set. To this day, you can still find this article

all over the Internet with a Google search.

Anyway, I just wanted to congratulate all the people who have taken the time to keep the old girl in existence and, despite the virtual death of the postal hobby, I hope DW sees another 100 issues.

Experience Does Matter - Lenard Lakofka

I played Diplomacy actively for about five years. I won at least six times and may have won 7 or 8, I'm not sure. I was the first to build four as Russia; at least I was told that was a record. I ran Liaisons Dangereuses for five or six years and hosted two dozen or more games. Then Dungeons & Dragons came along.

I was playing a game as Turkey with my business partner Larry Blandin. Our GM, I believe, was Conrad Von Metzke (though I could be wrong about the GM). Larry could charm the fuzz off a peach and he was an excellent negotiator but he was not an experienced PBM Diplomacy player. He did not post Standing Orders nor did he take the precaution of filing a set of orders as soon as the game adjudication came out to cover his butt in case something went wrong. It is a terrible thing to be attacked in place with no orders.

Larry was living with a lovely woman named Gayle. She had an apartment on the 6th or 7th floor of a Lake Shore Drive apartment building near Addison Ave in Chicago. I went there to discuss our business venture the International Game Show (we were hosting DipCon that year as well). After our business talks we sat down to Diplomacy. I had brought a company envelope addressed to the GM with the lines on the back

"Supersedes all standing and prior orders" and I had already signed and dated it.

We discussed and came to a plan where he would help attack Germany and Italy with the help of Russia and Turkey (me). Again showing lack of experience. You don't ally with Russia and Turkey as Austria.

We wrote up our orders. Put them in my envelope and I had him sign the back of the envelope. (I knew he had no standing or prior orders.....smile.) I sealed the envelope and went down to the mail box. Larry was in the window of his apartment with a pair of binoculars. He could see the envelope well enough to be sure it was the same one. I dropped it in the mail box.

Did I forget to mention that I took out a razor knife while I was in the elevator and scraped the front of the envelope to obliterate the address? I made it look as if the envelope that scraped on cement or some such.

So the game results come out and take three centers from Austria. Very large smile. Then to add to my joy the letter comes back to our business address and Larry gets to see that the POST OFFICE screwed him. He fell for that too! How sweet.

Judge and Jury – Chris Babcock



I first learned about Diplomacy while playing "To Boldly Go," a space opera game designed by Jeremy Maiden. In discussions on the design list, Jeremy mentioned his roots in the postal Diplomacy hobby and admitted to designing several variants, some of which are actually playable. While I enjoy playing, I have not yet been able to organize any face to face games and it's only practical for me to commit to slow games.

I participate in hand adjudicated Diplomacy and lurk on real time lists, but most of my energy is spent in the judge community. I started asciiking.com with the idea of creating a graphical interface for the nJudge to lower the hobby's barrier to entry for the benefit of roleplayers and other text-based gamers who I think would be an asset to the community. The asciiking.com website and the USAK judge are run with an eye towards enriching the

Diplomacy hobby as a whole by building the player pool and educating new players on the core values of the community - as I see them, of course. ☺

I am currently collecting an interest list for those who would like web hosting, email, mailing lists, bulletin boards, blogs or similar services free and ad-free for Diplomacy and other games.

Philatelic Diplomacy – Paul Milewski

When I was in prep school, some of us met on Saturdays to play Diplomacy. There were seven of us, and we played horribly boring games, week after week, with only rare moments of inspiration or imagination. Still, it was better than Monday through Friday. That was in the sixties. I stumbled onto the hobby, such as it was, by being online back in the eighties. I found playing Diplomacy on the internet highly unsatisfactory then, as I do now. At any rate, next thing you know, I was subscribing to, and playing in, postal zines. I won't mention my favorite publishers, because I would surely omit someone I should include and I may inadvertently and wholly unintentionally indicate a preference for one over another where no preference exists. I've enjoyed meeting a couple of the players I've met, I am crazy about Melinda Holley's telephone voice, and I especially enjoy the exchange of letters with incarcerated players, one of the few groups of people left in the US willing to put pen to paper to communicate. Now, in an ironic twist

of fate, I find myself playing in one or two postal zines that appear on anything resembling a regular basis and with horribly limited player lists, so that most of my current playing experiences are not far removed from my prep school Saturdays. I tried face-to-face play, but I have found that the eccentricities of adults willing to play in the first place are overwhelming in person. Something about putting a stamp on an envelope has a civilizing effect on even the most bizarre people, though it is clearly not a complete remedy. My biggest regret is in being so slow-witted that it took me way too long to figure out Diplomacy is a role-playing game, not a military simulation, and that I never stood a chance due to my stunted social skills. Boil it all down and what I'm left with is something that has been a constant source of interesting, relatively harmless and fairly inexpensive diversion through the years, a stable point of reference in a life that has taken a few twists and turns along the way.

A Victim of Success – Bill Quinn



With the publication of DW#100 another Dip milestone has been reached. As a former dedicated participant of the hobby and now an outside observer I must say that the hobby is not healthy and probably dying. The world has changed in ways that the hobby, as it was, could not deal with. It's one of the reasons I do not play the game today. It has crossed my mind. On opening that old blue box my pulse did quicken a bit. The thought crossed my mind, "I'll be a standby player. Maybe I'll sign up for a game." No, I won't. Times have changed and the game I loved and was addicted to is now a relic of the past. The internet and cheap long distance voice communications have rendered the eloquent and persuasive hand written letter obsolete (I never trusted anyone who typed their letters). The game player of today is different from the player of the '60's and '70's. The action now is visual and

immediate. Diplomacy was (and is) ponderous and cerebral, not well suited to the computerized modern age. Long ago as BNC I made a ruling that e-mail games were not the same as snail mail games. This difference is much more drastic today than it was then.

In addition, the demands of and passages of life have taken away the time I used to spend pouring over the map and correspondences from my fellow players. Running a business and investing or reinvesting the proceeds from that enterprise consume me. Others now depend on me and the decisions I make. I often lament that I am a victim of success. Where would I find time to be that player I was? Spare time, it seems, is the province of the young. The young are not interested in the game of Diplomacy.

What is the future of the game? Unless there is some drastic change in the world or a new and innovative way to apply it, I predict the game will fade away with the generation that played it. Perhaps a face-to-face revival could save it. Especially if there was some monetary

reward attached. (my f-t-f players used to play for money to make it more interesting... and it was!). Without satisfying the gaming needs of the young, and making them aficionados of the game, then we shall be like old soldiers and just fade away.

Variation on a Theme – Fred C. Davis, Jr.



I was introduced to the game of Diplomacy by a fellow Mensan, Marvin Garbis, who was playing in an all-Mensa game in 1968. The moment I saw the board, I knew I had to get involved, so I immediately bought a copy of the original Games Research set. I became a standby player in this Mensa game almost immediately, and shortly after that I got to play England. I was quickly wiped out due to a novice error, but I then began to participate in other Postal games in other zines.

My one victory was in 1969B, when I (as France) defeated Russia in a very long game that wound up in a two-man finish. In this same game I met Don Horton, who was playing Austria. When we learned we were both Mensans and both worked for Social Security, we decided to establish a Mensa Diplomacy Special Interest Group, and run some more all-Mensa games. I started a bimonthly newsletter for the SIG called Diplomag. Don Horton ran the first ten games in his Zine Claw & Fang, and subsequent games were farmed out to various zines, some of which developed into larger zines.

In my early years in the hobby, I received help and guidance from some of the Big Names in the field. I wish to give special thanks to Rod Walker, who assisted me in variant design and in setting up my own zine Bushwacker. I also received help from the late Don Turnbull in England. Both Walker and Turnbull printed some of my variant designs before I started to publish Bushwacker.

I became interested in Dip variants almost immediately. My first designs included Abstraction, Atlantica (4 versions), Economic Dip IV and United States Dip II and III. I started Bushwacker in 1972. Mostly I ran my own variants, and never ran a regular game. I ran a total of

25 games, but never more than three at a time. That's the main reason the zine lasted so long. Too many editors got in over their heads running too many games, and dropped out. I published 234 issues, ending in August 1991.

I founded Diplomag in 1976 to coordinate the activities of the Mesa Diplomacy SIG. After 42 issues, publication of this zine was turned over to Ron Brown of Canada, and later to Bruce Poppe. I again took over the zine in 1986, after I retired from SSA, and ran it thru issue 124 in July 1995. I then turned the SIG over to Andy York, who published 11 more issues thru November 1997. The Postal hobby was dying out by that time. Three more quarterly issues were published by Bill Young & Kate Slaminko, with the final issue (138) appearing in January 1999.

I continued to play in a few Postal games, mostly Gunboat (anonymous, no press games) until 2003. Also I have added a few more variant designs to my list, with the last two, Atlantica III and IV, appearing in Diplomacy World #99. I also keep in contact with a few Old Timers with a quarterly newsletter, Davis Doings.

I've also attended several DipCons over the years, held in Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Madison, San Diego, and elsewhere. I've met many interesting people that way, including Allan Calhamer, Rod Walker, Conrad von Metzke, the Carusos, Don Del Grande, David Hood, Bruce Linsey, Larry Peery, Cal White, and Andy York just to name a few. I also travelled overseas and met several British and German players. The Postal hobby was great for making international pen pals.

Perestroika Diplomacy – Larry Cronin

I became deeply involved in diplomacy from 1987 to 1992 as the world was turning upside down (for the better) and Mr. Calhamer's unique game allowed me to grasp it in a new way. Some of you may recall I put out the zine *Perestroika* - Russian for 'restructuring' - as Mr. Gorbachev and I saw a new world order appearing. I featured games of my versions of economic diplomacy - called the 'Perestroika' variants. (My name is misspelled in the Variant Bank as Cronlon - can someone fix that?) Diplomacy was obviously about more than just weaponry and talk. The combination of economic and military might was realistically balanced in the variant and even caught the eye of Allan Calhamer who has reliably exchanged Christmas cards with me each year since.

Ideology was not quite the driving force it is today. I don't know how tolerance and Islamic-whateverism could be captured in a variant, but I am sure someone will try. Terrorism never played a big role in our games, but Phil Reynolds invented a great variant - middle eastern dip -

which taught me all the names of the important towns in Mesopotamia before the Bush family decided to annex the area.

My zine also focused on sex religion and politics - everything a good mother tells her son not to talk about. My prescient cover in November 1990 had George Bush asking, "Now What?" and I quoted Hunter S. Thompson who commented, "Crack is ruining the drug culture." I made friends and I lost some. Mom was right - partly. In the nineties I begat three children and that sank my ability to reliably produce a zine or play regularly. Since those days I also lived out several incarnations as CEO of a company from 1992 to 2002, played in a garage band The Hot Buttered Cheerleaders, got involved in other insane hobbies like Lionel Trains (with the kids of course), and am now writing a novel or two. My fifteen year old son is beginning to play Dip. I would love to hear from anyone old or new involved in the hobby, via email at LCroninMD "of" msn.com

Genesis Diplomacy – Mike Olivetti



In the beginning there was Face to Face, and then there was Nash ...

How long have we been playing this game? 40 years? Was it really 1968 when it all started? How many of us remember the burgundy box, much bigger than standard packaging for board games, because it had to accommodate that large beautifully colored board? And that was when it was folded up! The wooden pieces? Thin narrow blocks of wood for ships and thick stocky blocks for armies? I still have my first game. I've lost the burgundy box. I got tired of taping the corners and edges to keep the lid together. But I still have the wooden pieces, the conference maps, and that board! My kids laugh at me. They don't have original anything.

I'm sure us old farts come from similar origins. The only

way you had seven players, consistently, was if you were in a fraternity. Those of us who were less fortunate, actually had to learn to enjoy the game without an active Italy, and in some cases, we had to play with both Italy and Germany sitting out. But we played. Five was better than anything else going. When I was out of school, working in the real world, I had to cultivate players. Telling stories to co-workers, planting the seed, watering, nourishing. And then, like magic, Friday night, if you had a spouse, they would join in. Diplomacy, Face to Face, with people you could be whatever you needed to be to get that next center. I remember one game. I was Austria. My co-worker's wife was Russia. We talked. We smiled. We never got past bouncing armies in Galicia. Neither of us was in that game very long.

I recently received an email from AOL stating that I had

been a member since 1979. I went to AOL after CompuServe, where I first played Diplomacy by email. That had to be in the mid 70's. (Is that possible, Doug?) Do you remember sending and receiving text messages, through a very basic program which allowed you to keep addresses and push text? Nothing else, just blocks of text. For you young people, it would be like playing Diplomacy using your mobile phone's text messaging. Yeah, exactly like that.

Now, talk about old memories! CompuServe had a very dedicated Diplomacy Club membership. Your first game of Diplomacy by email on CompuServe had to be played with a bunch of newbies. Kind of a test, to insure you would stick it out, once you started playing with the regular membership. It was in that first game that I met our wonderful editor, Douglas Kent. He was France. I was Italy. I finished that game in a two way with England (Bjorn Borg, I think, from Sweden). I treated Doug terribly. To my knowledge, he never played in another CompuServe game. Instead he started publishing rag after rag about this wonderful game we play. Who knows, maybe we have this wonderful zine because of how badly I treated Doug, oh so many years ago!

If there are other CompuServers reading this, then you probably remember Tom Nash. Ruthless. Belligerent. A god! I played Nash once. I dreamt about playing him all the time, but I only played him once. After

that he disappeared from my Diplomacy world (no pun intended). How about Mike Morris? Another god. I've played him a few times; always the same result ... Mike Morris would beat my butt! Back then I thought I played a good game. Now, I am just fodder for younger, more aggressive players. Players like Nash and Morris.

To wrap up old memory lane, do you remember the "Don't Ask Me, Ask Someone Who Knows" articles? That was one contribution I actually am proud of. There were two sets of articles published. The first was published in the CompuServe Library for Club Members Only. The second was my last act on CompuServe before I left for greener AOL pastures. Doug also published the second set of articles in this very zine. A contribution I still think about. Not much, but very special to me. I think you can still get both sets of articles from the Diplomatic Pouch. If you haven't read them, check them out. I think you will find it well worth the time. Just like playing Diplomacy.... well worth the time.

Editor's Note – I *did*, in fact, play many more games on Compuserve...it's just that, as you would expect, I performed as terribly as I usually do, so they are easy to forget. As for the dates Mike mentions, I believe the Compuserve PBMGames forum (where the Diplomacy section was kept) opened in the mid to late 1980's.

Paroxysm and Diplomacy - Harry Drews



Diplomacy in the mid-1970s was my entry to social gaming. Prior to this, I had played two player Avalon Hill wargames. When I began playing Diplomacy, I made many long distance friends. It was the social element as much as the actual gaming that attracted me.

I've pretty much forgotten the roots of my involvement with Diplomacy. Just now, I went to the basement and pulled out the file folder of my own publishing efforts to see what I can remember. The first item is a mimeographed (wow, that's ancient technology) "Grendel

Press House-Rules for Postal Diplomacy", dated April 1973. The next is a pair of letters, one from Conrad von Metzke and the other from Doug Beyerlein, that announce the handover of the Boardman Number Custodian role to Doug.

Hedian Record was my first and brief attempt at zine publishing. Issue 1 was dated July 27, 1974. The last was issue 8, December 10, 1974, and the banner announced a circulation of 28. Only one game was run in it -- 1972-DP. It had been orphaned and I picked it up. To

my great astonishment, I see that one of my best board gaming friends to this day, Peter Bennett, was a player.

After half a year of publishing on my own, Robert Correll, Doug Ronson, and I began Paroxysm. Robert was publisher and Doug and I were contributing editors. The first issue came out Jan. 12, 1975 and it continued for 57 glorious (or silly, depending on your point of view) issues of drivel and social commentary. A few games of Diplomacy filled out each issue. It ended with the final issue on Aug. 21, 1977.

Robert and I became great friends. Somewhere during this period, Gary Lenius began playing and he's another long time friend now.

As Avalon Hill began publishing multi-player games, my Diplomacy circle of friends from the Toronto area and I started to play these non-wargaming boardgames. I live 60 miles from Toronto. We got together once a month on the last Saturday of the month and we rarely missed a session. We always had a bonus all-day games day on Boxing Day. While zillions of people crammed their way into the stores for the blow-out Boxing Day sales, we stayed away from that foolishness and indulged ourselves in the pleasure of boardgames.

In the 1970s and 1980s, until PCs and the Internet took over, I played many PBM (play by mail) games. Like Diplomacy, turns were due every two or three weeks,

and I eagerly rushed home from work to see what the postman had delivered that day. Because I live in Canada the border interfered and sometimes I would barely receive my games in time.

Robert, Peter, Gary, and I, along with several other long time friends still play our boardgames once a month at someone's house. We survived the black, black day that Avalon Hill ceased publishing due to a lost lawsuit. Would there be no more games? What would we do? As it turns out, the Europeans (especially the Germans) started publishing boardgames and some kind souls did ad hoc rules translations into English for us North Americans. "German boardgames" now has become a generic name for a vast category of games, just as Kleenex means tissues or Hoover means vacuum cleaners. I have hundreds of boardgames and still eagerly read every review of each new game published.

Playing boardgames is my favourite hobby. I play a few times each month with several circles of friends. It is the perfect way to spend an evening. It is my life-long passion. I can't imagine a life without games. And it pretty much started with Diplomacy!

PS - The recent photo of myself is of me playing Mayfair's China Rails. My friends and family and I have played the Mayfair series of crayon rail games hundreds of times.

Wonderful, Amazing, and Miraculous – Larry Peery

As DW's publisher during the second half of the 1980s and for issues 40-59 it was my privilege to guide DW through what was perhaps its most challenging crisis: its near sinking into financial insolvency. Fortunately, the hobby rallied to save its "flagship publication," and with the help of Kathy Byrne Caruso and many other hobbyists, DW refloated itself and continued its mission to serve the hobby and promote the game. During my watch DW appeared on schedule for a five year voyage, a record unmatched to this day, I believe. The 50th Golden Anniversary issue was published, filled with contributions from hobbyists all over the world. And speaking of the world, DW led the way in promoting the international Diplomacy hobby, culminating in its coverage of the first WDC in 1988. DW was at the forefront of the hobby's move into the computer age of gaming and publications, in a day when the Commodore 64 was an amazing advance.

When I handed DW over to David Hood I told him that the transfer of publishing and editing duties was the first in DW's history that wasn't caused by a crisis in the magazine's situation. I also told him that I would consider my tenure as DW's publisher and editor a success only after he had turned the magazine over to his successor.

And so, after his own distinguished tenure, he did. And now, many issues and publishers later, DW, the hobby's flagship, continues to chart new courses for new destinations for a hobby that indeed covers the world.



Congratulations to DW on its 100th issue. It's been a wonderful, amazing, and miraculous thirty-three years!

Brazilian Diplomacy - Jose Carlos Diniz, Jr.

I have good memories about Diplomacy, but I can not write all that I feel, because my English is not too good.



I am now 39 years old. I bought my first Diplomacy game when I was 14. It was on my birthday, and my grandmother gave me 15 cruzeiros (cruzeiro is an old Brazilian currency). I was in a shop and was searching

for any game that caught my fancy (I always liked games in boxes, and even moreso if it was a wargame). Then I saw a big box with "DIPLOMACIA" written on the cover (that's Diplomacy in Portuguese. Yes, we had a Brazilian version of the game back then). I thought, "What is this?" Then I read the box over, and all the information it contained. I decided to buy it.

When I got home, I showed the game to my grandmother. She looked at it and said: "Okay...I don't understand anything about it..but if you like it, I will be happy." Well, in the next few days I tried to learn that "complex game". Afterward, I showed the game to my friends, and we tried to play it, but it was a difficult task. They said "Oh no...you need to write to play this? Forget it!"

Now, the game is in my bedroom, among all my other wargames...but every time I look at my "Diplomacia" set I remember my grandmother, my mother, and all my friends that are no longer among us.

All in the Family – Jim Tretick

I started in the hobby in the mid 60s, about the same time as my Dad. We would play Chess, and two-man Diplomacy fairly regularly. Occasionally, he would have friends over for a face-to-face game of Diplomacy. Most times, seven people were in attendance. Sometimes not. Over time, I learned to play the game, taught, I feel, by one of the best players still to this day. So, by now, being the second best player in the game, when someone didn't show up for game night, I got to stand in and play. What a thrill, playing Diplomacy with my Dad and his friends; and I was six years old.



On into the 70s Dad printed and published his zine *La Guerre*. He typed it on mimeograph stencils and we printed it in the basement on our little Gestetner printing

press. I would collate, staple, and mail every month.

I remember one day when I was a senior in High School. I was in the library at lunch doing research and these freshman set up a Diplomacy board on the adjacent table. One kid set up his convoy incorrectly and I explained the right way to do it. He said, "Do *You* know how to play." "Haaaah," I thought.



I won the next three games and then they didn't want me to play anymore.

I gravitated to Sovereignty in the early 80s. This was a 16-player game of geopolitical confrontation using a 1982 world map. Each country and province produced specific goods that could be traded or used in markets, or to build infrastructure or military units. It was a step up

from Diplomacy. More negotiations; less chance for lying. Larger map; more military. Games took longer. [I'd get a game together with enough interest. Write me.]

In the late 80s, I worked with another Dip player. We would play a two-man game during the day, without a board. We would write our orders, swap notebooks, and adjudicate the moves in our heads, marking on the others' sheets which moves succeeded and which

moves didn't. We'd take our original notebooks back and do the next turn. This was a lot of fun, but work sometimes got in the way. Most times, we could finish a game in a day or two.

I've been out of Diplomacy for the most part in the last decade because I got tired of the new interpretation of 'Diplomacy' equaling 'Lie' instead of 'Negotiate.'

A Titan of Diplomacy – Vince Lutterbie

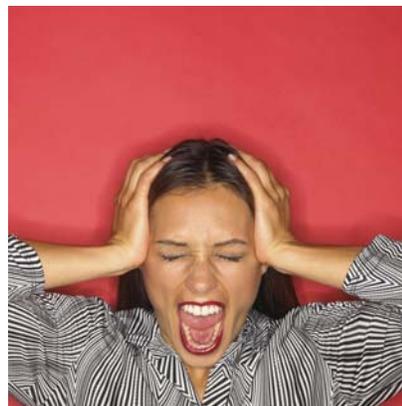
I was active in the hobby from 1987 to the late nineties where I slowly got into other areas, including playing Acquire and Titan. I started in the postal hobby because I lived in a small town with no players, and I entered a game in a zine that promptly folded. I bounced around in a few more zines and still felt the sting of the fold. Therefore, I became the Orphan Games Custodian, and later became the Boardman Numbers Custodian and generated those numbers for over 2 years. I was also Miller Numbers Custodian.

Lowrey, Jason Bergmann, Dan Sellers, Susan Welter and really, most of the gang that plays in Chicago. There were some regulars such as Andy York, Marc Peters, Ron Bottner and others, but they were all interesting and are missed by my wife and me. If any of you are reading this, feel free to contact us and let us know how you are doing.



I went to my first DipCon in San Diego, hosted by Pete Gaughan, and met many fellow players and eventual friends there. Due to geography, I became close to Gary Behnen (later known as my evil twin) and we worked on going to Cons together. Gary talked me into going to PudgeCon, maybe 1988 or 89. We went to Wichita and met a lot of people there and had a wonderful time. It turned out to be the last PudgeCon, but it turned out that I was the owner of a swimming pool and the idea came about to replace PudgeCon with PoolCon. We had several successful PoolCons, TitanCons and AcquireCons at my house. Gary and I co-hosted the 25th DipCon, and our biggest achievement was to get Allan Calhamer to attend (he came in second). For those born under a rock, he invented the game of Diplomacy and played it in his house with the hobby's original 'old farts'.

PoolCons had a lot of characters, most notable were: Kathy Caruso, Larry Botimer, Russ Rusnak, Michael



Several best memories of PoolCons: A 17-year-old girl playing her first game killed Tom Johnston's Titan. Another Johnston moment was when I took over a game for Jason Bergmann, killed Tom's Titan and his scream was loud enough to be heard by Russ Rusnak who was deep under the surface of the pool. Russ surfaced, grinning and asking "Did someone kill Tommy's Titan?" He was met with cheers and acknowledgements. I remember Larry Botimer floating on a raft in the pool eating my wife's fantastic potato salad while lightning flashed all around and rain fell heavily. We thought he was a goner for sure.

Those are good memories and I could go on and on, but suffice it to say, I gave a lot to the hobby, but received a lot more. Good luck to all.

If you'd like to get in touch with Vince, feel free to send me an email at [diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@yaho.com) and I'll forward it to Vince.

CAD Diplomacy – David Hood

We had a large group of Dippers that formed during the summer after high school graduation. Many of us also moved to Chapel Hill for college, where the Dip group just got bigger. At some point at the end of 1985 or so my friend Morgan Gurley sent in the card from a Diplomacy box that asked for a sample copy of Diplomacy World. I remember reading the copy we got some time in early 1986, and just devouring it.

Imagine - a whole widespread hobby based on The Game we CADS (Carolina Amateur Diplomats) had been obsessing about for over a year! Scoring systems, strategy/tactics articles, hobby lore and news, and everything else in the zine was just what we needed to break out of our insular world and realize what the Hobby was all about.

I remember calling Jim Burgess or Pete Gaughan (maybe both) that spring about the upcoming Dipcon at Marycon in Fredericksburg, VA. I identified myself, said I was bringing a group of players, and wanted a detailed description of the scoring system. After all, the only point of going was to win the thing, and we wanted a chance to game the scoring system from day one!

We got there as a bunch of babes in the woods. In my first round I truly did not understand why the guys kept talking about a draw without me in it, having never heard of non-DIAS conclusions to a game.

I met Larry Peery at that Con, which was very important to me for two reasons. First, we developed a friendship that led eventually to me getting involved in Diplomacy

World as a writer and general helper, which led to him handing over the reins to me beginning with issue 60. Second, he suggested that the CADs should have our own Con beginning in 1987, which indeed we started and have been running ever since.

My years of editing and publishing DW were very rewarding. In the beginning, my goal was to send a copy to every single person I could find an address for - I sent out something like 1000 copies bulk rate. I had used the newspaper publisher that had produced a political magazine my brother and I started at school, so the cost of extra copies was not prohibitive. This led to a large increase in subscriptions, although there was a big drop-off by the time I stopped publishing due to a serious retraction in the Hobby that occurred in the early to mid 90s.

The relaunch of the zine as web-based was a welcome development, and the recent resurgence under Doug and Jim has been a great success as far as I am concerned. I am honored to be included in this 100th issue, and hope they can keep things going for a good long time.

David Hood is a former publisher of Diplomacy World, as well as the Diplomacy zine Carolina Command and Commentary. He also runs the Diplomacy tournament at DixieCon (<http://www.dixiecon.com>) in Chapel Hill, NC each Memorial Day weekend, an event which just celebrated its 20th anniversary!

Appalachian Diplomacy – David McCrumb

I was first exposed to Diplomacy my freshman year at Virginia Tech. My strange roommate had this map of Europe that he kept placing blocks on, and pushing them around. From overhearing his many phone conversations, I quickly learned that this was a board game in which several people in different locations could play. Having grown up in a very rural area in West Virginia, this appealed to me, because it was difficult to get enough people together to play games. I had always loved games, and my favorite times growing up where when I visited my grandmother and we played cards, dominos and Aggravation non-stop. In fact, I was her only grandchild that she would take along when she went to Thursday night Bingo.

I read the Diplomacy rules. The first thing I learned was that the game was actually supposed to be played by seven people at the same location. That bothered me, as I knew I could never get that many back home. In a way it was lucky I heard my roommate talking about playing-

by-mail first, or I would never have given the game a second glance. I finished the rules. I got out the board. I set up the pieces. I pushed them around. My roommate came back from class. He asked if I wanted to learn the game. He showed me some moves then said, "Would you like to play a 1-on-1 game? It does not give the flavor of the 7-player game but it is good for learning the moves." And I proceeded to kick his ass. Over time I learned that while he was a good GM and publisher he sucked as a player.

I signed up for my first PBM game later that year. I played a few face-to-face games at the university gaming club. Eventually I started my own zine, The Appalachian General, and discovered my favorite part of the hobby.

My first gaming convention was at Martha Washington College. I played a game with Allan Calhmer, though at the time I did not know who he was. A contingent of the Carolina Amateur Diplomats were also there and I soon

learned they were planning a convention at UNC in Chapel Hill, NC. I started a long string of attending DixieCons because while Diplomacy was the primary focus, there was also a session devoted to variants, as well as encouragement to play other games.

Eventually life caught up and the stress of work, raising a family and community service became more important.

My zine folded, I slowly dropped to gunboat games, then even they were dropped, and finally my attendance at cons stopped. But it was a great time. I am just sorry that so many young people are missing all the fun. So much play is now done alone, in front of a computer. Computers have made participation easier, but I believe it has taken away the personal touch.

Diplomatic Cage Rattling – Russ Rusnak

Editor's Note: I searched for contributions for this *DW* in a number of different ways. In some cases I used old email or postal addresses, in other cases I searched the internet for traces of familiar names, and once in a while I'd find someone through someone else. In the case of Russ Rusnak, it was Eric Ozog who gave me his email address. Inviting me to harass Russ into contributing – the same way I had harassed Eric – he included the following: "When you rattle Russ's cage, ask him if it was really him sleeping on top of the motor home at Detroit (I may have gotten the wrong person)." What follows is Russ' response, and some of his memories of Dipdom.

Eric's half right. I was up there, but I think Bill Becker was up there with me. Still, it's been over 20 years; memories adjust themselves in that much time. I should ask Bill what he remembers. Either way, I wouldn't even try to compete with Eric, he (as well as most others) was always a much better writer.

Regarding writing about memories, I can't promise much, but here goes...I was lucky when I joined the hobby. My earliest games were under extremely reliable GMs (Jim Benes, Andy Lischett, Steve Heinowski, Jeff Richmond, and Bob Sergeant). People playing in those zines seemed to write a lot and game results were timely, something I quickly came to believe was the norm. Damn was I wrong.

One or two open ftf invitations quickly formed a great core group of what for a while became damn good friends (Andy Lischett, Eric Ozog, Paul Rauterberg, Chuck Kaplan, Dale Bakken, Marc Peters, James Wall, Mark Frueh, Mark Luedi, Bill Becker, with semi regulars Vince Lutterbie & Don Scheifler) for FTF who were willing and able to get together once every 6 weeks or so for a weekend of ftf Diplomacy, beer (for me anyway), and beef sandwiches. For the first 2 - 3 years games were played the way the game is supposed to be played. They were fluid ("a real game long alliance this time" was defined as lasting maybe 3 moves), vicious, and fun. Just about anything went during the game and as soon as the game was over, it was over. Game grudges were done, they never carried over. That lasted for 4 - 5 years. Those get-togethers produced some great times.

For whatever reasons, Diplomacy eventually lost its appeal and gave way to Titan and for a short while 1830. Strange, I don't remember most of the details all that well but I remember having some really great times. Naming a few that seem to stick out the most:

- 1) Guest GM/Ombudsman at Mary Washington (I think) college, I spent the whole weekend

running pitchers of beer to different games and meeting a lot of great people that I had only written to.

- 2) The squeal of anguish from one of Kathy Byrne's daughters when she found the Cubs glasses in a kitchen cabinet just before guests started to arrive at my first Thanksgiving ByrneCon.
- 3) Playing a 20 - 30 player Circus Maximus game at Paul Gardner's place in Vermont
- 4) My first Lepre Con at Joan Extrom & Ken Corbin's place. I've been lucky enough to be a guest there many more times over the years.

The Postal Diplomacy hobby provided me with the opportunity to meet a lot of great people and to have a lot of good times. Most of us eventually left for whatever reason, but I'm sure most are damn happy to have had the opportunity to be part of it. I'd like to offer my thanks to those of you who were there to make this a great experience.

It's also nice to know that part of my contribution still kind of lives on. Recently, I googled myself and wound up going to something called Vain Rats. I think it was for a prior far more thought out version of the Cosmic (My blatant rip off of Cosmic Encounters) Diplomacy I tried to get going when I first started Who Cares?. I guess I am/was psychically linked to someone named CosII who received credit for the Vain Rats version of some of my powers (Filth, Liberal, Terrorist, Zombie, Amoeba, Warmonger, and Bully) which he wrote almost identically word for word to my original rules.

Russ has fallen victim to one of the dangers of Google – the easy misunderstanding. "CosII" is actually Cos and the Roman Numeral II – which stands for Cosmic Diplomacy II, which is the Cosmic Diplomacy that Russ created! That's the name it has been known by for some time. As Russ surmised, Vain Rats was a different game which preceded Cosmic Diplomacy by a few years.

Be My BAF?

By Tom Swider



Caveman played Diplomacy using clubs and maps of Europe drawn on walls. Sometimes the clans would meet in cellars around billiard and ping-pong tables to tell each other lies. As technology progressed, Diplomacy began to be played by smoke signal, wireless, amateur xyns (some called it "zines") published using mimeograph, ditto, and Xerox machines. Geeks who were involved in the early computer hobby also played on Compuserve and GENie, using bulletin board software.

Some wise guy thought it would be a good idea to never moderate a game of Diplomacy, but instead write a program to do so and just worry about fixing the program rather than correcting obvious typos or concentration errors the GM made during adjudication. The Judge and its variations became popular.

Today's generation of Diplomacy players (or tomorrow's) will be looking for new ways to play that use the current technology. The trick is to make sure that the technology doesn't get in the way of the game by changing it too much from a game of interaction, community, negotiations and some strategy to aberrations like "Bounced" (anonymous games that seem to take all the joy out of the game by separating you from the other players).

Cell phones are quickly becoming a strong platform for game players, and there have been some discussions on the Internet about texting and cell phones making their way into the game. Judge servers could be extended with phone clients developed using Flash. The "FlashLite" developers platform supports SWF creation for over 100 cell phone platforms. Unsuccessful proprietary formats will fade away, leaving the more successful platforms as de facto standards, and this task becomes simpler.

As good as this sounds, it'd be easier for England to get three builds in 1901 than to see the cell phone market adapt common standards on a worldwide basis. Technology and information continue to grow in exponential fashion, and different nations have different approaches to telecommunication markets and the Internet.

An approach that uses Extensible Markup Language (XML) can help unite different cell phone platforms using a common language for rendering text and organizing data. A language that can structure Diplomacy in a non-proprietary format and tag communications and files could be used by each cell phone so that gamers can use their phones for all other purposes, and extend them for game play purposes. It may also be more useful to create an XML language that is for gaming in general, rather than one specific to Diplomacy. After all, somebody will really need to experience the thrill of playing a Fleet Rome variation of Diplomacy through cell phone or Nuclear Evil Yuppie Empire Diplomacy, and then what will they do?

Flash is a pretty adaptable programming platform, sharing roots with Java. The interface should allow both vocal, text, and hand written input (Graffiti anybody?). Imagine being able to sign up for a game (either an open game or seven of your BFFs), seeing that Austria is online and available, and using dropdowns or voice activation ("Call Austria") to speak with your opponent while viewing the current map on the cell phone screen. But can you outsmart the lie detection patch that Austria downloaded onto her iPhone?

Texting and email should be available so that you can continue to play the game at any time, be it during your commute, a weekly meeting, or a bio break. Although not common yet, there will evolve a texting language similar to what teenagers use today. These innovations can help revitalize the game so that today's gamers can enjoy the same game the cavemen did.

Someday, you may be my Best Ally Forever.

Tom Swider used to publish Comrades in Arms and helped popularize reader participation "Survivor" games. Currently, he is a co-moderator for the DuneBoardGame group on Yahoo. He also runs Dune and Dune variants on the Yahoo group In My Fathers House. You may also find him in an occasional game on ACTS. He dwells in Harrisburg, PA, making his living by designing training programs, and managing a learning management system and other training and IT projects. All in all, he'd rather be in Philadelphia.

Legal World Diplomacy

By Brenton Ver Ploeg

I vaguely knew of Diplomacy from various press reports in the mid 60's, as well as living on the top floor of a three floor apartment building in Evanston when John Koenig had a unit that summer on the ground floor. A friend of mine from some form of mail gaming tried to interest me in joining a game with him my senior year at Northwestern. Fat chance. Took one look at how much time it would consume and decided to stick with women and song, but from that point I knew the game was played postally (and, by implication, with a secrecy of communication that was certainly a twist on the in-person variety).



You can always judge a lawyer by how many books he has...some of them might even be about the law!

Fast forward a couple of years, following an entire series of unanticipated and complicated life twists that led to my having an APO address with the 25th infantry in Vietnam (yes, kiddies, there once used to be a draft), and for some presently obscure reason I decided to insure some mail and secure a busman's holiday by deciding to sign up during my last month in country for a game in Graustark. Assigned 1968CI, I drew Turkey and had a map...only it didn't show the starting locations of units and, well, I sort of recalled from memory that there was a fleet in Smyrna instead of an army.

Not much imagination is required to see that this marked me as an easy target, and Austria (Edi Birsan) promptly sent my initial letter on to Russia (Randy Bytwerk). The effect was electric, all right, but as matters developed Randy and I became good friends and, eventually, allies over four different games. He won 1968CI and I was second, but while that result seemed better than prompt elimination at the time, in retrospect I'm not so sure. It eventually cost me untold hours of letter writing, the present day cost of what must have been thousands of dollars of phone calls, delaying some romance on at least three occasions in order to finish some phone

negotiations, and ultimately a decision to even run several games at a time when a sensible person would have been concentrating on law school or at least enjoying life in San Francisco instead of adjusting pushpins on some wall maps. But it was too late, as I signed up for several more games when I returned to the US. I put off law school for a year while working a front desk in a Vail hotel and somewhere in there discovered that the odds of winning were a lot better than one in seven. (Provided, of course, that the other players had some actual life perspective). John McCallum got me interested in rating lists, and I decided to take a shot at seeing how things would work out, eventually playing 11 games and winning 8, with a tie, a second, and a survival in a game where there were no replacements and something like two or three of us still sending in moves at the end. I also confess to scrapping years of straightforward play in my last game by stabbing pretty much everyone in sight, and wrapped up the last of the three games I ran in the first couple of months of practicing law here in Miami. I ran those games in a magazine so contaminated with politics, my version of "humor", and outright depravity that its main consolation was absolving me of any temptation to ever run for political office.

Memories of the personalities are too numerous to recount (after already spending this much time talking about myself, that is), but I played during the heyday of Rod Walker and his feud with John Beshara (feuds were as common as reality TV is now), the press release exchanges with Conrad von Metzke, John Boardman (I still subscribe to *Graustark*), Doug Beyerlein (an entirely pleasant fellow that it was my misfortune to stab in our last game), and visited the wizard of Indiana a couple of times as Diplomacy World was being hatched. There were also the types that *really* knew what it meant to be serious (one of them once entered me into a standby position in one of his games without troubling to secure my agreement, then showed me as dropping the position when I demurred), but the charm of encountering such personas prepared me well for a lifetime of opposing counsel. I visited Allan Calhamer at his home a few times when I still lived in Chicago (he trounced me on the tactics in the two person varieties, naturally, but I was never worth a damn at those anyway and, hey, the name of the game says it all), bought probably more copies of his game *Hyperspace* than anyone else alive, and exchange Christmas cards with him to this day. I think it's a tribute to Allan that his game is still around in this era of electronics, and I'm delighted that you've kept DW alive. Gives me some hope that thought and human interaction still manages a toehold in a world of gaming fixated on twitch reactions and high tech.

Ocean Beach Diplomacy

By Edwin Turnage

In my younger days, when I lived in Ocean Beach, California, circa 1971, there was a board game I enjoyed playing called Diplomacy. I was introduced to the game as a youngster, approximately 12 or 13, and my friends and I would get together and push pieces around the board.

Back then, the other primary game we also played was Risk. As everyone who is reading this knows, Risk is a die rolling game of world domination. Anyway, back then, my friends and I all enjoyed a good Risk game, beating the other guys and taking over the world. However, Risk all hinged on luck and skill with the dice and it included just minimal tactical and strategic elements.



Dip on the other hand was totally different. We were shocked when we were introduced to it. There was no die-rolling at all! All outcomes were determined by decisions made during the game!

So, Diplomacy quickly became the board game we young California middle-schoolers played when we got together. That is not to say we just played board games for fun. Among other nefarious activities such as trash picking and going to the beach, we also set up a hockey rink in our back patio. We had great fun bruising the crap out of our shins with hockey sticks.

However, on those rare winter occasions when it was chilly and/or raining outside, we sometimes played Dip. There weren't any competing video games back in the early 1970s, and the only thing on TV back then was Star Trek or Time Tunnel, and Batman and Gilligan's Island reruns. When we played Dip, I'm not sure we ever had seven play, or even if we ever finished a game completely. If there were only three or four of us, we would each play two countries, or we used pre-set alliances until the game was developed.

When I was 15, I moved from San Diego to Alexandria,

Virginia. (My Dad was a Navy Officer.) In High School in Virginia, nobody but me played Dip. In fact, I pretty much quit playing board games. No wait! Come to recall, I did play an occasional game of Avalon Hill's Stalingrad, Statomatic Football, or Sports Illustrated Baseball. But sadly, there was no Dip for me in High School, or for many years thereafter. I moved to Goose Creek, South Carolina and somehow managed to gain entry to The University of South Carolina, and to even graduate from the school in 1979.

I obtained a degree in business administration, finance, at Carolina. However, instead of using my finance degree and working at a bank, I moved to New Orleans and got a job on an offshore oil rig. Working on the rig was hard work, and when the winter of 1979 came, I joined the Navy to become a Naval Flight Officer (NFO).

My NFO job involved flying in a tactical attack jet, the EA-6B Prowler. During the next six years, I accumulated 1000 hours in the EA-6B (some of which was upside down, at high-speed and low altitude, and under extreme G-forces) and logged 300 arrested landings on two aircraft carriers. The Navy was cool because I traveled across the United States and all over Europe as part of my duty. I met a lot of people, but nobody I knew in that community played any diplomacy. We might play some cards, throw some dice, acy-ducy, or backgammon, but that was it for us in terms of gaming.

I got out of the Navy in 1986, and went to law school at USC. I while there, I met Katrina, got married, and then got a job in Greenville, South Carolina. I still live here. We just dabbled in board games back then. I did introduce Katrina to Tactics II and we played it a couple times. I'm not sure she really liked the war game though.

It was around that time living in the Greenville area that I discovered the Internet. Back in the late 1980s, I used Compuserve as my Internet Service Provider. Lo and behold, Compuserve had a thriving play-by-e-mail (PBEM) Dip forum!

After finding that place, I played many PBEM Dip games on Compuserve and really enjoyed meeting the online Dip community there. I got pretty good at PBEM and even won a couple games. I learned that Dip had a following of approximately 2 million Americans. We referred to the Dip phenomenon as "The Hobby."

After a while, someone, told me about a Diplomacy Convention in Chapel Hill, DixieCon. My advisor said I should try Face-to-Face (FTF) as an alternative to PBEM. Therefore, I went up to Chapel Hill and met David Hood and his crew. I got pasted in FTF. FTF is a lot faster. But I still had fun trying it. Over time, my FTF skills

have improved, but due to declining participation in The Hobby, my other Dip skills deteriorated.

Now, with a family of five, my online Dip playing days are over. I tried to get my kids to play, but it took too long for them. Maybe in another decade, when I retire, I can participate more fully in The Hobby. Now, my participation in is relegated to an occasional trip up to Chapel Hill to see my friends. I am a crappy Dip player. But I enjoyed the trip to get where I am at.

I wish there were seven willing Dip players near Greenville. If by chance this publication reaches seven willing participants in the area, we should get together for a FTF Dip game at my house. (Greenville is only two hours from Charlotte and Atlanta. Maybe we can scrounge up seven!) Therefore, if anyone interested in a Greenville Housecon, send me an email address: photontorpedotube of gmail DOT com. Or, you can send an email by accessing the Profile of my Blog, photontorpedotube.blogspot.com.

Welcome to the Century Club!

By Charles Roburn

One hundred issues: that's an impressive number! As Editor of the Diplomatic Pouch I'd like to extend our heartiest congratulations to all the editors and contributors whose efforts have helped to make Diplomacy World one of the leading Zines in the hobby. I only hope the Pouch will some day reach the same number, and with the same level of quality!



I'd also like to thank Doug in particular for his encouragement and assistance. The Pouch has received help and support from DW since our first issue in 1995 -- that being the first time Doug took over as DW editor. I'm grateful that he's continued to do so in this second tenure. Doug sent the first message of congratulations that Heath and I received when we put up our first Pouch issue this past year. He's written some articles, sent on others, and just generally done things to make my editing life easier -- all while working on DW and planning his wedding. That's an impressive level of dedication.

It got me to thinking about the qualities necessary in a good zine editor. I've only been editing the Pouch myself for a while, and I don't claim to be an expert on all those virtues; but obviously Doug possesses all of them. ☺ So how did he get them? It seems to me that playing Diplomacy was itself probably the key.

Just consider these characteristics, which are useful in any game of Diplomacy, but also instrumental in getting that latest issue out the door:

- **Proactivity:** It generally pays to be quick off the

mark. You shouldn't wait for others to come to you; when you seek someone out and offer them a concrete proposal, you can often get them to agree. It's great when people submit articles unsolicited, and that does happen quite a lot; but it's much more productive to be active about getting people to write for you. Ask them early, and suggest topics that interest them.

- **Negotiation Skills:** People won't always accept your first proposal or offer, so you have to be flexible. If they say they don't have time to write for the next issue then offer them an extension, or get them to commit to the issue after that instead. It helps to be persuasive. It also helps to be good at begging. ☺

- **Foresight:** It takes some planning to put an issue together! You want a good variety of topics for the articles. Timing is also key; you need turn-around time between receiving an article and getting it ready for publication, and you have to schedule that into your life -- for example, if you want to put out an issue but you're also planning your wedding...

- **Determination:** Zines may be recreational, but putting one together is serious business! All the other qualities aren't worth as much unless you have the commitment to see it all through. You have to make the time to send your authors deadline reminders, to format your articles, and to do it all by your publication deadline. It can be a struggle, but it's worth it.

To date these desirable qualities have led to one hundred solid issues of a great Diplomacy hobby magazine. I'm sure that Doug and future editors of Diplomacy World will provide us with a hundred issues more. Congratulations, Diplomacy World, and I look forward to DW #200!

Charles Roburn is the Editor of the Diplomatic Pouch, which can be found at <http://www.diplom.org/Zine>. You can also contact Charles directly at [editor "of" diplom.org](mailto:editor@diplom.org)

A Meandering Trip Through My Gaming History

By Kevin Wilson

I can't remember, exactly, when I was first introduced to Diplomacy. I've enjoyed board games since I was a kid.

I remember cajoling my brother and cousins into playing Stratego, Risk, Monopoly, 4000AD, King Oil, Billionaire and others as a kid. I remember playing lots of backgammon in high school. I remember playing Acquire, Trivial Pursuit and other Avalon Hill bookcase games in college. But I don't remember playing Diplomacy back then. However, when I was later given a copy of the game, it did seem familiar, hence the uncertainty of when I was first introduced.

It was during college that I received my first Diplomacy game as a gift. It was the Avalon Hill version with plastic anchors and stars for fleets and armies. I remember being intrigued by the game, intimidated by the rules and disappointed that it required six others to truly have the full gaming experience. As a result, the game sat for a while, unplayed but occasionally picked up. Then lightning struck.



Again, I don't remember precisely when (I'm guessing in the mid-80s), at a local hobby shop, while looking at comics and other books; I stumbled across an interesting magazine, "The Gamers Guide to Diplomacy". I bought the magazine (and still have it today somewhere) and found my gaming experienced headed to a new level. Through the Guide I discovered the postal hobby. At that time, email was just beginning to become common. We had email where I worked but mainly only between our various offices. There were means to get to the "outside" world via email but not everyone had that access. Because of the job I had, working with outside vendors, I was one who did have that access. I tried a couple of games on the judges but found I enjoyed the postal version much more, even if only a few other players had electronic access.

I think it was Pete Gaughan who ran the Zine Sampler at the time. From him (or whoever was running it if not Pete) I received a sampling of various zines. I remember Boris the Spider, S.O.B., Graustark, Perelandra,

Maniac's Paradise, Crimson Sky and a few others. Wanting to jump right in I subscribed to almost all of them. Today I can't remember how many different zines I've sampled over the years but I still receive Boris and S.O.B. to this day. Several of the others have since folded and some I dropped either due to inconsistent publishing schedules or from lack of time or interest. I've gone back to a few now and then, like The Abyssinian Prince or Northern Flame, but usually I've tried to keep my number controlled to keep the number of games active at any one time under control. I've kept Boris and S.O.B. because I could play other games in them: Dune, History of the World, Stellar Conquest, Outpost and Machiavelli just to name a few. I've tried a lot of games over the years but I find I keep returning to the few classics name above.

At one time I had boxes of zines. I think I sent a few to Doug who was trying to revive the archive. I also think I sent a few to whoever was running the sampler at the time but most ended up at Bowling Green State University where they have a collection of fan zines of various hobbies. I know I sent several boxes of zines there over the years. I still have too many sitting in a box and maybe I'll send some more to BGSU but some I like to leaf through now and then to see what was going on way back then.



My first Diplomacy game start was in Boris, Boris IX, which, surprisingly, I won with a 19-center Austria in 1910. Naturally I thought this was going to be easy! As you will guess, the next win was a while coming but come it eventually did. I think the reason I did so well in the first game was I worked hard at that game. I wrote everyone, all the time. I didn't have that many other games active so even when I wasn't writing, I found myself thinking about the game. Only a few times since

have I found myself thinking about the strategic and tactical situation of a particular game when my mind wasn't otherwise engaged. Usually, I've done fairly well in those games too. Too often I'd allow myself to have too many games active at once (sometimes it's hard to say no when someone asks you to play or to fill a game) and my performance would suffer as a result. Now I try to keep it under control so that my play is worthy of the others who have also decided to take the time to play so we can all enjoy the game.

While the postal hobby (I guess now we should call it the email hobby since almost everyone uses email now to communicate and to differentiate it from the judges) did allow folks like me, who wanted to play but didn't have groups nearby to play face-to-face, to actually play the games, not being able to meet your other participants is a drawback, a small drawback but still a drawback. Over the years I've found myself to have regular, outside the game, email exchanges with other players but those have come and gone. I've communicated with folks that I thought would be fun to meet if an opportunity presented itself but none ever seemed to come about.

I did attend one sci fi convention in St. Louis where a group organized a Diplomacy tournament. We only had six players but we did have a good game. It's the last time (and maybe the only time) I've played a game to completion face-to-face. That group later formed a team in a World Diplomacy Tournament. I won my first game, again as Austria, for the team. But the next couple of rounds didn't go so well. The team started well but I think we ended in the middle of the pack.

I attended GenCon one year but didn't enter the Diplomacy event as I didn't want to commit the time. No one I had run into through the hobby was attending so there wasn't anyone I tried to meet. It was fun and I did play a couple of games of Dune but mostly I just walked around and took in the sites.

Over the years, even before I had discovered the postal Diplomacy hobby, I was discovering other games too. I found the Game Master series from MB and at one time had copies of all of them. I still have all of them except the original Axis & Allies and Broadsides & Boarding Parties. I have a 2nd edition of A&A but no copy of BS&BP today. I also found the SPI games, the American Heritage series and had a few of them at one time or another. The only game I still have of the SPI days is StarForce. I no longer own any of the American Heritage games. I found StarForce a nice enough match with my interest in science fiction to keep but didn't keep the others.

I even tried buying at local auctions and selling online, before eBay became big, when the only place online for

games was rec.games.board.marketplace. Not everyone had net access so I even sold for others on consignment. Over those years, hundreds of games passed through my house, either through my own buying and selling or as consignments for others. Had I the resources and desire to own and kept them all, I could have amassed a collection of almost 1,400 games. Today, I have just over 100. It could have been fun but my wife is certainly happier that they are gone.

The postal Diplomacy hobby was my introduction many other games as well. Some I've named above. Many, if not most, I was not familiar with before coming across them in the zines. Games like Dune, History of the World, Kremlin, Stellar Conquest, etc were all games I've come to enjoy after finding them through the zines. Through Diplomacy I found these games, through finding these games I found the conventions and through a trip to GenCon, mentioned above, I found the Eurogames. The Eurogames were just entering the scene about the time I attended my one and only GenCon. Settlers, Formula De, Through the Desert and others were hitting the US market then. Having a weak spot for gaming, they sucked me in. Tigris & Euphrates, Puerto Rico, Princes of Florence, Carcassonne and many others later entered my stable.

Fortunately, the online gaming community was also exploding and there were many avenues to play. Again at times I found myself overburdened with active games. And time and time again I had to ration my activity. I still own many of these games but don't get to play them like I would like. I've never had the luxury of an active gaming community where I lived, even when in St. Louis. Sure, there were many, many groups of role-players and players of miniatures and CCG players, none of which I ever got that interested in. But not many board game players. I continue to hope someday I'll find both a group and the time to be active.

In the last few years my gaming has slowed a bit. Finally my wife and I were able to have a family. I hope when my daughter (3 years) and son (9 months) grow up they will indulge daddy's desire to play. I'm plotting now by introducing my daughter to games that might get her started. So far, Chutes & Ladders seems to be a hit! ;-)
Maybe the bug will stick with her or my son when he's older. We'll see. But for now, I don't have the time I once did so I devote that time to those few classics that have given me the greatest fun: Diplomacy, Machiavelli, Dune, History of the World and a few others.

I'm glad Doug kept pestering me to write something. I kept saying maybe but didn't act. Finally I did and looking back has been fun. I hope you, the reader, enjoyed this little ramble through memory and time. I know I did.

The Rubicon of a Diplomacy Player

By Jamie McQuinn

Doug has been bugging me for months to write up something for his *Diplomacy World* 100th issue. For some reason, he thinks my hobby-life story would be interesting, even though I am no longer an active Diplomacy player. I also suspect I was one of the few hobby old-farts that he could track down that didn't turn him down outright...

Like many of us, I started out playing Risk. I saw it in a Sears catalog and asked for it for Christmas. I must have been nine-years-old. This game soon became a staple for my Dad and brothers, as well as my buddies in the neighborhood. I loved every chance I had to play it, as much as I cringe at the thought of playing it today. But then sometime around age 14 (1974, and I still have a vivid memory of this) I walked into John Richter's basement and saw a Diplomacy board with all its colorful pieces set. I was immediately intrigued. John told me that his older brother, Mark, played this game by mail. What a concept! I soon bought a copy and Diplomacy became my favorite game. Whenever we could get four to seven guys together (not easy when none of us drove) we'd spend an afternoon sticking knives in each other's back. Risk was soon put aside as a boring kid's game.

It wasn't long before I was introduced to the postal hobby. My first Dip zine was *Pelucidar*, published by Burt LaBelle. I also recall a zine called *Totenkopf* and played Dip and Nuclear Destruction through Flying Buffalo, Inc. I didn't get very far in any of my games. In fact I cannot recall ever actually finishing a game. I probably NMR'd myself out, and I went on to other interests (drama club, girls) and mostly forgot about this hobby. While attending university I dabbled a bit with an occasional Dip game, but also spent many years playing Dungeons & Dragons. It was pretty cool for college guys to play (and girls played too!) but I started losing interest when high school, and then junior high aged kids, started showing up? It wasn't so cool anymore.

Fast-forward to the early 1990's, married with children. I'm not sure how it got started, but at some point I got together with John (with whom I also attended college), Richard, Don, Gary and some other old college buddies. We would get together for an occasional Saturday afternoon game of Diplomacy, when the wives would let us. Also, right around this time I rediscovered the postal hobby. I don't remember how, but I vaguely recall responding to an ad in Avalon Hill's *The General*. I mailed a few dollars to the publisher of Zine Register, and received a large envelope full of Dip zine samples.

From what I can tell, I jumped back in at the tale-end of the "Golden Age" of Diplomacy zines. This was just before the Internet took over, and there were dozens of zines being published from all over the world. Soon I was

subscribing to, and playing in, the likes of Doug Kent's *Maniac's Paradise*, Pete Gaughan's *Perelandra*, Brad Wilson's *Vertigo*, Andrew York's *Rambling Way*, and of course, *Diplomacy World*. It wasn't long before I got the itch to try my hand at publishing. I started out as a sub-zine of *Maniac's Paradise*. *Plausible Paraphernalia* offered word games and featured PBM Scrabble.

In 1995 I moved from Michigan to Dayton, Ohio, and it was at this time that I became aware of the Hoosier Archives and the plans to save them from destruction. Walt Buchanan, one of the founding fathers of the Postal Diplomacy Hobby, had eight file cabinets full of zines from the earliest days to the mid 1980s. No longer active in the hobby, these cabinets had to go. Pete Gaughan began a campaign to raise funds to have all the zines shipped to him in California. This was expected to cost hundreds of dollars. Instead, I offered to drive a rental truck to nearby Indianapolis and store the Archives in my basement. This adventure was documented in an article that appeared in *Diplomacy World* #78, "The Pulp is Past, or How I Came to Be the Custodian of the Hoosier Archives and What I Found There." You can find it at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/hoosier.htm> for the article, or <http://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw78.pdf> for the entire *DW* issue. Apparently this is the most famous thing I have ever done, because if you "Google" me today, this article is usually at or near the number one hit. Eventually, the archives found a permanent home at the Bowling Green State University's Popular Culture Library, in Bowling Green, Ohio.



Jamie Wins "Mr. Congeniality" (David Hood on the right)

It was also shortly after the move to Ohio that I finally decided to take the plunge and publish my own postal diplomacy zine, *Crossing the Rubicon*. *CTR* included standard Diplomacy, gunboat, and Colonial Dip, along with Scrabble and other word games. I also had subzines from Dave Partridge, Pitt Crandlemire, Scott Morris, Phil Reynolds, Andy York, and Tim Lurz. I worked hard to

make it an attractive looking zine, and for that reason, Jim Burgess predicted it would be short lived, and he was right. *CTR* only lived for 16 issues. It was great fun, and I made many friends, but it just was a bad time. During the two years I published my marriage ended and my job went to hell.

During this time I also attended three DipCons, twice in Chapel Hill and once in Columbus. At least one of the Chapel Hill events was also a World Dip Con. It was at this event that I won "Mr. Congeniality". David Hood called it the "Player's Choice" Award, but it was an honor nonetheless. When David informally polled players throughout the weekend, one after another mentioned that they enjoyed playing with me. I also started my involvement with the Internet Diplomacy Hobby. I spent some time as the editor of the Postal section of the *Diplomatic Pouch*, and was introduced to email Dip using the Judge system.



Colonial Diplomacy at an Early Rubicon Games (clockwise from left: Jamie, Mike Gonsalves, John Richter, Joe Carle, and Ward Nahri).

The best offshoot of *Crossing the Rubicon* was that I started my own housecon, Rubicon Games. The first event was in October, 1996, and the attendance was very small. Four showed up on Saturday and another four on Sunday. We never played any Diplomacy that first year, but it was a start. I played my one and only game of Avalon Hill's Advanced Civilization. However, by Rubicon Games II, I had a full house for the whole weekend. Several of my *CTR* subscribers made the trip to Dayton, from Louisville, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Pittsburgh. There were FTF games of Diplomacy and Colonial Diplomacy as well as other board and card games.

Rubicon Games survived the *CTR* fold, and grew and evolved over the years, however by RG IV & V, it became clear that this event could not be sustained as a Diplomacy event. Since I was no longer an active Dip zine publisher, I had fewer Diplomacy players attending,

and the gamers in the Dayton area have little interest in Dip. This was the time of the Euro games explosion. Every year, a new game would become THE game of the year; Settlers of Catan, History of the World, and Puerto Rico have remained Rubicon Games favorites. The annual event followed me as I moved to four different houses, and it has outgrown my space. So, this year I tried something different for Rubicon Games XII. For the Saturday portion of the event, I rented a large conference room on the University of Dayton campus. We had nearly 30 attendees and more than enough room for all kinds of games, including for the first time in many years and game of Diplomacy! In the coming years, Rubicon Games will continue to grow from a "housecon" to what I hope will be large regional board gaming event.



To be quite frank, my interest in the game of Diplomacy has waned. Over the years I would dabble in an occasional postal game, or more likely an email game. I am a member of the Vermont Group, played in several gunboat tournaments and GM'd many games for Newbies. However, I finally came to the conclusion that as a player, I'm just not very good at Diplomacy. In addition, when I have time for gaming, I'd much rather play three or four other board games in the time that I can play one game of Diplomacy.

In Dayton, I have been the coordinator for Game-Day: the Dayton Area Boardgaming Society. (<http://game-day.org>) We meet 4-5 times per month at several locations in the Dayton area and play every sort of board game: Euros, Mayfair rail games, war games, and card games. This group, and Rubicon Games, will continue to be my Hobby focus. Yet I will always treasure my experiences in the Diplomacy Hobby, the good times and the good friends I made. Congratulations to Diplomacy World and it's 100th issue.

Jamie McQuinn, a long-time gamer and occasional Hobby-Old-Fart, is a librarian in Dayton, Ohio.

My Start in Diplomacy

By Paul Kenny

It is interesting how people who played the game Diplomacy from different backgrounds. Mine was that of a grognard war-gamer. A "Grognard" was the nickname of Napoleon's veteran infantry the also is the nickname of those hexmap-war-gamers who refight historical battles of old. I cut my teeth on the classic Avalon Hill and SPI war-games, and when I was first exposed to Diplomacy I would have much rather been playing Third Reich or War in the East.



My first exposure to Diplomacy came when I worked with Lewis Matt. There were a couple of the guys who worked for him and would play this during down times. Apparently this had started when one of the guys had brought in a chess game and Lew introduced them to Diplomacy. Lew had the original Games Research copy, but by the time I had met this crowd Lew had painted the map on the reverse side of large ceiling tile and we played on that. Lew had made colored flags, using straight pins with paper cardboard flags: square flags for armies and triangular flags for fleets, and we moved those pins on the homemade pin map. I don't think we ever were able to get a game together of more than four of us. It was a good introduction to the rules.

Then I noticed that Avalon Hill had also sold this game. So I bought a copy myself, and tried playing solitaire. I interested some more friends, and was able to orchestrate a few seven player games. A couple of these games run over several weeks, doing one or two turns a week. They were complete with written treaties and silly one page newspapers.

After I moved to New Jersey my old wargamer friend, Jack Thomas, had put my name in the Opponent's

wanted section of a Avalon Hill game magazine called "The General." From that ad I received a couple letters inviting me to play in a play by mail game. The first game I played by mail I was put in a bad position, but thankfully the game ended after a few turns as the game master really didn't want to be running a game that would take such a long time. But I didn't learn from that as soon I was playing in Fred Davis's play by mail variant diplomacy zine.

My involvement increased when I started going to gaming conventions. I really wanted to go and play wargames, but once I signed up for a Diplomacy game then I found myself in the Diplomacy contest. These tended to be so time consuming that one rarely had time for anything else. I think I was spoiled in that I did really well the first time I played during an Atlanticon in Baltimore, coming in third overall. But after that I was never as successful at a large gaming con. I was to also come in second or third overall in an Atlanticon in Trenton, but that event was not very well attended.

It was at these gaming conventions that I got to meet John Boardman and Robert Sacks. And I got to pick up other samples of other zines. For example, I picked up some of John Boardman's zine called Graustark. I got to meet a lot of characters, such as Brad Wilson, Jack McHugh, John Caruso and the late Kathy Byrne Caruso.

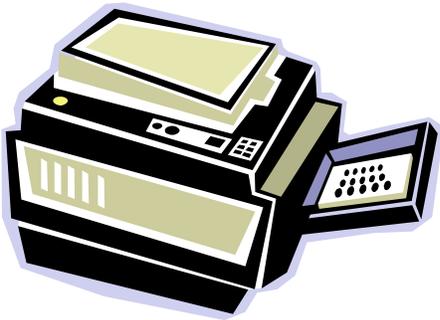


I met Tom Swider at one of the cons in Baltimore in 1987. We discovered that we both lived in Collingswood, NJ. So after the con we started gaming together. At the time he was publishing a variant Diplomacy zine called *Comrades In Arms*. He invited me to come up with a variant sub-zine of my own for his CIA. I liked the idea of publishing and had considered making my own zine so this would be a way for me to try out publishing on a small scale. So in the summer of 1987 I started a little variant sub-zine called *Standard Deviation*, borrowing the name from the math terminology. I was a physics student at Rutgers at the time and the math and science references were swimming around in my head.

Later Standard Deviation would become the Variant area of my zine *ABSOLUTE!* Before I folded Standard Deviation I was to put out over 100 issues.

Tom and I also shared an interest for saving money and we agreed to share an apartment to save on expenses, and as a student I never had money, so saving money is good. We managed to stay roommates for five years without killing each other. After I graduated we both were feeling a bit crowded and separated ways.

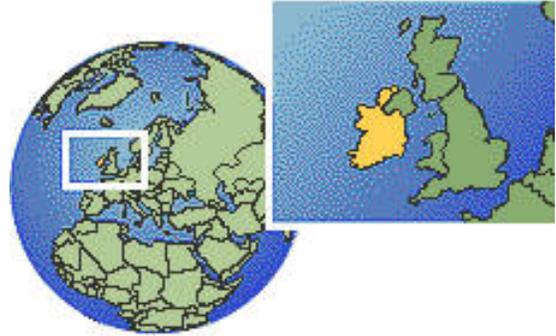
In April 1991 I was tired of being limited to just variant games of Diplomacy and I wanted to try the straight forward gem of Diplomacy, so I started *ABSOLUTE!*, a regular Diplomacy zine. Originally I wanted to keep the zine small so as to keep it easy to produce. I also wanted to keep the zine down to 6 pages or less so that I could keep the postage down. I would draw a lot of my own illustrations, but a co-worker who could draw saw my little drawings and said I needed help. He drew several drawing so as to save my readers from my terrible drawings. I had also bought a used copier and could never get proper service for it. My zine had the reputation as the ugliest zine one could ever lay eyes on.



But *ABSOLUTE!* had some great writers. Sure, I would write for my own zine, but to make up for it I had enlisted some friends and readers to join in. First I encouraged my then-girlfriend and later wife Sandy who wrote a column called "Sandy's Slapshot," about hockey, and later Civil War history, and later still just about family chat. Longtime friend Andy Bingnear wrote his American Beer review column American Beer Hunter. Later I was to learn that there was some British guy who also did a series called the "Beer Hunter." Perhaps he was a secret *ABSOLUTE!* reader. Steve Cameron did a game review column called "Steve's Spot." He also wrote about his dogs. Ken Walker did an excellent historical series in his "Historical Spotlight." His articles in his column even won a hobby award for best writing one year. I thought he should have received a Walker award.

And Dwight McMahon wrote articles on politics. And Lesley Martin wrote some pretty funny articles, the all time favorite was the one on "Man things," like the "Man things" one would find at Home Depot or the hardware section at Sears.

And of course the zine had a very active letter column. I found it pretty fascinating as I typed in what people had written. I didn't like the typing so much and I was very thankful when people would e-mail me their orders and letters so I could just cut and paste them and didn't have to worry about doing all that typing anymore. I am a lousy typist to begin with. I was able to get Sandy to do some of the typing for me but then I married her and she stopped doing the typing for me.



I was also encouraged to write about more political topics. At first people were complaining that my zine was too bland. So I started writing about Northern Ireland, which was in the days before the ceasefire. There was never a shortage to write about there, and the zine ceased to be called bland. It might have been called a lot of other things, but bland it wasn't. Actually, the zine would also later cover slavery, WWII, the Jewish holocaust, the Armenian holocaust, the Irish famine, the Irish Uprising in Dublin 1916, the WWI polish occupation, abortion, and Avalon Hill being taken over by Hasbro. It wasn't bland.

After *Comrades In Arms* folded I continued *Standard Deviation* as the variant section of my own zine. Roger Cox and I tried to get some variant games going there but nothing ever came of it.

The website for *ABSOLUTE!* was started in 1996. The website started as a status portal so one could see if the zine came out or not. As I write this the web site is still there and I still maintain the links. The web site is <http://users.net-gate.com/pdkenny>.

I like publishing, and made it to issue 85 before life had overtaken me on everything. I keep thinking someday that I will get issue 86 out. But that's another story.

Paul Kenny's next issue should be out any day now...or not. He lists Jack McHugh as one of his lifelong toadies, despite Jack's half-hearted claims that it is the other way around. It's a good thing Paul had Sandy stop typing the zine, or their marriage could have ended up like Walt and Carol Buchanan's! Slave labor on a Diplomacy zine is dangerous business...

Diplomacy: Past, Present and Future

by Jack McHugh

I have been asked by your glorious, if washed up, editorial team of Mssrs Kent and Burgess to write something for DW issue 100. I was watching a repeat of Cosmos the other day and on it Carl Sagan was droning on about the past and the future of the universe. I decided someone should do the same for Diplomacy.



Normally this would take a lot of work, but since I've decided to concentrate on myself and ignore everyone else this is much easier, and a lot more interesting to me.

- 1962 - I am born.
- 1968 - I attempt to join one of John Boardman's first play-by-mail(pbm) *Diplomacy* games but cannot reach the mailbox.
- 1977 - I play Diplomacy face to face at the Penn Wargamers club where I manage to finger Professor Plum with the Candlestick in the Library.
- 1977 – (a week later) I find out a week later I have actually played the game *Clue*.
- 1977 - (a few more weeks later): I play Diplomacy face to face for the first time. And am eliminated from the game when I lose my last nobleman.
- 1977 - (yet even later): I find out I was playing *Kingmaker*.
- 1978 - I play *Diplomacy* for the first time and am eliminated by 1903 as very few people can read my orders due to my terrible handwriting.
- 1979 - I join the Diplomacy hobby as a font in Tom Swider's zine, Comrades in Arms.
- 1980 - I join my first pbm in Graustark—by toadying to Kathy Caruso I am able to survive until 1903 when Kathy's Italy swallows my Austria. It is years before I realize the naked women in the pictures Kathy has sent me are not her and her offer of "sex for centers" was also a total fabrication on her part.
- 1981 - Subscribe to several zines...join several games....begin to make my mark on the hobby as "NMR McHugh".
- 1982 - I join a game in Vertigo, Brad Wilson's zine, where I am forced to NMR due to being unable to read Brad's faded zine due the early's 1980's ditto fluid shortage.
- 1984 - I subscribe to several zines, including Dick Martin's zine, one of the first zines done on Mac computer...this does nothing for my play and I still can't survive past 1905.
- 1986 - I find Doug "the Sack" Kent's Maniac's Paradise and decide to lift it out of the gutter by publishing subzines in it.
- 1987 - I discover that there is an overseas Diplomacy hobby—I subscribe to The Canadian Diplomat—the publisher Bob Acheson had lots of different variants going, despite his lackadaisical schedule, I still NMR a lot.
- 1989 - Doug's wife Mara tries to get me to run away with her but I refuse as I don't think Doug will publish my subzine if I do that. The joke's on me, years later I find out he tells me he was willing to anyway.
- Early 1990's - I think I started writing for *Diplomacy World* around this time - I could look it up by I'm way too lazy and besides technically I'm at work so I shouldn't even be doing this.
- 1991 - I succeeded in taking over DW with my chief henchman, Doug "the Sack" Kent.
- 1992 - I actually put out a couple of issues of DW - I thought it was only one but Sack tells me it was actually two, then I NMR out of DW as well.
- 1994 - I get kicked out of most of my games by NMR.
- 2006 - I play a few games on the internet to conclusion...I find I like the Modern Dip variant a lot.
- 2008 - I get an offer to play in the Owls Diplomacy Tournament online.
- Future - Make a comeback and take over Diplomacy online.

Despite his many flaws – both personality and personal hygiene-wise, Jack McHugh remains my number one hobby toady and secret weapon. Usually threatening to unleash him, or his dirty socks, is enough to get what I want (that's how I got Tom Swider to write for this issue, for example) His horrific snoring is also still the talk of the hobby.

How to Try in Publishing Without Really Succeeding

By Robert Lesco

It all began with Doug Acheson standing on my doorstep. I had been familiar with Diplomacy since high school and like a number of others, it was a series of compelling articles in The General that led me to investigate the postal hobby.



After one false start (Sleepless Knights had just folded) I received an issue of Praxis. It almost ended there for me. It was the height of The Great Feud and the pages were saturated with personal invective. I cannot imagine how many prospective hobby members were turned off by this sorry episode and coinciding as it did with a flood of inquiries prompted by said General articles it couldn't have been more ill-timed.

Then one morning in May, Doug appeared unannounced at my door. I must have been a sight, having just come in from an extended run. I joined my first game and Doug's 'zine, Clandestine Activities, remains one of my favourite hobby memories. It was a great thrill to bring Doug out of retirement years later to resume GMing the Windfields game in Northern Flame.

At some point I made contact with Cal White via Tyromania, a 'zine dedicated to introducing newcomers to the hobby. In Tyromania Ronald Newmaster and I established a friendship that endures to this day, though it didn't stop him from clobbering me pretty spectacularly.

I attended my first CanCon shortly thereafter and was the victim of a feeding frenzy but I did get to meet another individual who, along with Cal, would be a hobby mentor – Doug's brother Bob Acheson, publisher of The Canadian Diplomat.

I found contributing to Cal's Northern Flame so much fun that he asked me to be a guest GM. It could be that he was grooming me as a successor because in 1994 he asked if I would take the reins. I probably haven't revealed this before but at the time I was tapering my hobby activity with an eye toward spending more time on

ASL. I shudder to think how that would have turned out, if only in terms of "personal growth".

Computers and e-mail have changed the hobby but not so much as I would have guessed. What has changed is that Dip is increasingly what gets done in the time remaining. In "the day" it seemed Number One for many but with the years come other demands on one's time.

There are fewer players and there are very few 'zines remaining. What I think is hurting the postal hobby is the scarcity of "institutions", for lack of a better word. Sure, DipWorld, the Zine Register and the novice packages are out there but it is a bit of a job to find them. There was a lot more help and support for me as a newcomer than I think is readily available today. We don't seem to have the key contacts for newcomers that we once had.

I have grown Northern Flame's circulation largely by absorbing games from folded 'zines but I do get the odd inquiry out of the blue. I was once asked how long it takes to produce an issue and my best estimate is about an hour per page. I wish I could say that I am slow because I get it right but I cringe every time I send out an issue for fear of the mistakes that will be pointed out to me in the coming days. There are a number of things I know I could have handled better but I am blessed with a patient and forgiving readership.

Bob Acheson's death – far too young – led to me being Canada's only publisher after Cal, who had originally been asked to finish the games, repeated history by putting the touch on me.

My favorite hobby memories are of the people I met in person at CanCons, and by distance through playing and publishing. I can imagine no other circumstances under which our paths would have crossed and I would be much poorer without their acquaintance.

I'm not sure there are any photos in existence of me playing Diplomacy so, since publishing is a marathon, not a sprint (especially the way I do it), and possibly to give you an idea of what Doug Acheson encountered back in 1988 or so the photo I chose to send was taken as I was approaching the finish line of the 2006 Mississauga Marathon. The joke I tell here is that my hair was jet black forty two kilometres earlier. Here's hoping it's a long way to the finish line for Northern Flame.

If you'd like to help keep Northern Flame going, contact Robert Lesco at rlesco "of" yahoo.com

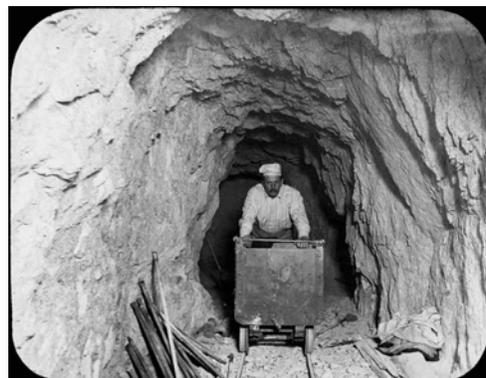
Diplomacy Around the World: Tournament Diplomacy in Australia

By Bill Brown

Australia has had a strong hobby since the early 1980's. In those days hobby zines and postal play were what brought people together.



around 10 tournaments a year, and we attracted up to 80 players to some of our bigger tournaments. We have had tournaments held as part of Gaming Conventions and Expos, in pubs and clubs, in schools and colleges, and at one tournament we even had the tournament dinner down a mine!



Dinner is served.

For those of you who don't know much about Australian geography, Australia consists of a few small coastal cities (Sydney is the biggest with over 4 million people) that contain most of the population and are separated by large distances (Melbourne-Sydney 873km (1.5 hour flight), Sydney-Adelaide 1415km (2 hour flight), Melbourne-Perth 3456km (4 hour flight)). This obviously has the effect to isolate players and playing groups from other similar groups. This was especially important in pre-internet days.

In 1992 the World Diplomacy Championships were held "Downunder" to coincide with the Australian Championships in Canberra (the capital of Australia) for the first time (and we were able to repeat this again in 2002).

Canberra has an interesting history. When Australia first federated in 1901 (the various states up to that time were individual colonies), the rivalry between New South Wales and Victoria (a rivalry that still exists to this day) meant that they wouldn't agree that the Parliament would be held in either Sydney (capital of NSW) or Melbourne (capital of Victoria). So a search began to find a suitable site.



The first Diplomacy Tournament ever held in Australia.

It was finally decided that a site between Sydney and Melbourne was the best option. So Canberra was begun in 1921, and they even gave it its own area called the "Australian Capital Territory" rather than let it remain in NSW. (Unfortunately us Victorians still got shafted – Sydneysiders have a 2 hour drive, while we have a 7 hour to Canberra! (So you can use this as a good reason to not trust Sydneysiders whenever you face them over a Diplomacy table!).

Hobby Organization

A Brief History of Tournaments in Australia

Then in 1987/88, the hobby began what was a very successful Tournament circuit with tournaments held in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide and Brisbane (as well as regional areas). At its height there were

We have had an organized hobby since the 1990's when players formed the Diplomacy Association of Australia (The DAA). This was formed to try to help people run tournaments, to advertise tournaments and clubs, and promote the game of Diplomacy in Australia.

With the growth of the hobby in New Zealand (a 4 hour flight east of Australia), the exchange of ideas between the two hobbies and with players from each country travelling to tournaments, the two hobbies came together in 1999 and the DAANZ (The Diplomacy Association of Australia and New Zealand) was born. This added another 3 or 4 tournaments to the tournament circuit. The hobby probably reached its zenith with tournament and player numbers around 2000-2002.



The "Cupboard"

Over the board I have seen different strategies and tactics tried down the years. For example the Italian opening move to Piedmont became popular for a time, and I myself tried what I call "The "Disguised" Steamroller (or "Juggernaut" for northern hemisphere people) with some success.

This is an attempt to stop the board ganging up early against a Russian/Turkish alliance by making it look like they are fighting – it requires Ank-Bla, Sev-Rum, Smy-Arm, War-Gal (and maybe Mos-Ukr, although Mos-StP can be stronger). In Fall, Sev-Bla, Arm-Rum, Bul S Arm-Rum, Bla C Arm-Rum, War-Gal, Ukr S War-Gal and the Russian fleet is blown up!

This achieves four things: the Russian player is guaranteed a build in 1901 to replace the fleet that blew up (and usually built north); the Turkish player can build two fleets in 1901 (and be confident that Russia is no longer a threat to Turkey); there are three armies opposing Austria in Gal, Rum and Bul; and the element of surprise may be achieved in that everyone was expecting Turkey to hit Russia!

Tournament Play

Tournament Diplomacy in Australia has always been very competitive. In the early days rules were formulated to stop physical interference (legend has it that a player was locked in a cupboard at one tournament – hence he was unable to submit his orders!), and the tournaments had a feeling of "anything goes" with different "tricks" tried. For example:

- 1) double sets of orders were used sometimes – after showing an "ally" their written moves, a player would submit these, but would have another set with "these moves overrule any other set" written on them in the order box (this was allowed by GMs);
- 2) a "flying Dutchman", where a unit mysteriously appears on the board (or is not removed after a disband). If not noticed by other players, it would stay on until the next fall turn, giving a player an advantage.

While these may seem outrageous and akin to cheating, there was a belief that the rules allowed for "anything" to take place over the board. If you could lie, why not cheat and steal as well? But on the contrary, when it came to writing orders, even the smallest mistake or misorder was challenged; they had to be right or else.

Things have settled down now, and there is not much of this that goes on at current tournaments – but it was fun while it lasted!



Amongst Australian players, competition has always been keen to win the various state championships and

the national shield. The "Bismark Cup" (named after a Dip zine contributor, not the German diplomat) was instituted in 1989 for the best tournament player over the year, and it has always been highly sought after. In one infamous incident a few years ago, in the last Tournament of the year, a player threw a game and gave a solo away to allow himself to win the Bismark Cup.

Ken Sproat began using our tournament records back in the 1990s to develop a diplomacy tournament career ranking system (the "Master Points") which is still going and very well thought of in the hobby. Players sometimes play just for Master Points as their main aim in a game!

And another major debating point in our hobby from the word go has been Scoring Systems. Don't get Australian or New Zealand players arguing about scoring systems! There have been major fallouts over the years over what is the "best" system. We usually decide to agree to disagree!

The Future

Currently the hobby is in a rebuilding phase. We have a small core of dedicated FTF players, and we hope to tap into the large e-mail hobby and bring players back to FTF Tournaments. We have had two very successful national e-mail tournaments in 2006 and 2007 (The Anzac Cup) which we hope to build on. The DAANZ has just had a change of the executive and we hope to make a bid for

the World Diplomacy Championships in 2011.

So on your travels, if you run into an Australian or New Zealand player at a Tournament, you can be sure that he probably has had an extensive background in tournament play; he knows his tactics back to front; and if he's bigger than you he'll lock you in a cupboard if you turn your back on him!



Bill has been playing Diplomacy since the early 80's (FTF and postal) and has been playing tournament Dip since 1988. He was able to achieve "Champion" rank in Masterpoints last year and has a 7.43 centre average in 161 tournament games. His best country is France, but his favourite to play is Russia. He have only recently started playing e-mail Diplomacy. He is currently Secretary of the Diplomacy Association of Australia and New Zealand (the DAANZ) and has always been a keen contributor to the "hobby".

Britain in the 1970s

By Peter Birks

Well, it all seems like a long time ago, doesn't it? Looking at those Diplomacy Days of the 1970s, the most bemusing thing for me now is how seriously we took the whole affair. Perhaps the wives and girlfriends were right all the time. Sitting eagerly at the front door waiting for the postman to bring news of whether or not Russia had moved from Warsaw to Galicia, as he had promised he would, might not have been the most profitable use of one's time, particularly when there were shelves that needed putting up, or a cistern that needed fixing.

But it didn't seem that way at the time.

The UK Diplomacy hobby had a curious Genesis (the rise of the eponymous band being curiously contemporaneous). In the red corner was, for want of a better word, the Avalon Hill group - fans of board wargames. When Graeme Levin, South Africa-born entrepreneur extraordinaire, started his magazine Games & Puzzles, part of the baggage was the British Diplomacy Club. Don Turnbull was roped in to adjudicate Diplomacy games. There was no concept of a fanzine as such on this side of the equation.

But there was another side. In the blue corner was the SF fanzine hobby, and editors such as Hartley Patterson and John Piggott had closer links with a hobby where amateur writing had just as much a place in 'zines as did simple games adjudications. At the time, there were arguments about whether it was "zeen" or "zyne". The existence of the apostrophe in front of the "z" made it clear which was correct. But, as with 'bus and 'flu, it wasn't long before the apostrophe vanished, leading to newcomers, unaware of the word's original derivation, to adopt the long 'i'.

After Don Turnbull decided that he was running enough games, Graeme Levin scouted around for some other willing volunteers, and happenstanced upon Richard Sharp, then a publisher's editor at Cassells. Richard, completely unaware of the SF fanzine side of things, launched Dolchstoss. Being a writer by profession, it wasn't long before he started introducing more editorial content, including a letter column.

Thus the British Diplomacy Club became the National Games Club (NGC), and Dolchstoss became its flagship publication. Other NGC publications started to take on

games as Diplomacy became the fad of the year in 1974 and 1975.

But I get ahead of myself.

In the 'independent' sector, as it came to be known, other zines were appearing at a rate of knots. John Piggott had started Ethil The Frog a couple of years earlier, while a student at Cambridge. A fellow student of his, Andy Davidson, went on to play in nearly 60 Diplomacy games simultaneously. Richard Walkerdine started Mad Policy, and Brian Yare (at St Andrew's University in Scotland) started Grafeti. Mick Bullock, later to become the de facto record keeper of the hobby, started 1901 and all that.



My own entrance into the hobby came about through browsing the evening paper and seeing a small classified advertisement for a games meeting. I'd been a board wargames fan for a few years, so this looked good. It was November 1972, and it was at these meetings that I first encountered Richard Sharp and John Piggott. I was introduced to Diplomacy here, and I started my first postal game in May 1973.

My enthusiasm grew in that way that it does with adolescents, and by October 1974 I had been to a couple of games conventions, and decided that I wanted to start my own zine. And so, on November 1 1974, Greatest Hits was born.

I produced an issue once every three weeks for quite a long time and, apart from a short break in late 1977 and a slightly longer one in 1984 or thereabouts, I carried on producing GH until a couple of years ago.

Over those decades far more happened, to me and to the hobby, than I have space or inclination to recount here. But the bond that kept the Diplomacy hobby going

in the UK was undoubtedly Richard Sharp. He went through a messy divorce in the late 1970s, which took Dolchstoss off the scene for a few years.

He returned in the early 1980s and kept going until early 2002. We would trek up to Amersham in Buckinghamshire twice a year, at Easter and in October, to play Bridge (face-to-face Diplomacy taking far too long when there were things such as conversation available) and silly quizzes. However, Richard then revealed that he had cancer. He had been a heavy smoker for much of his life. He died in early 2003 and at his funeral it became clear, to me at least, that this was the end of the Diplomacy hobby as I knew it.

There are still games conventions, but Diplomacy plays a much smaller part at these gatherings than it used to. At ManorCon this year (a meeting that goes back to the early 1980s), there were only a couple of tables on each of the days, despite attendance of more than 100. At MidCon, where you could once expect at least six or seven tables on the Friday and Saturday, I wouldn't be surprised if it was down to a table or two. 18xx games attract more adherents.



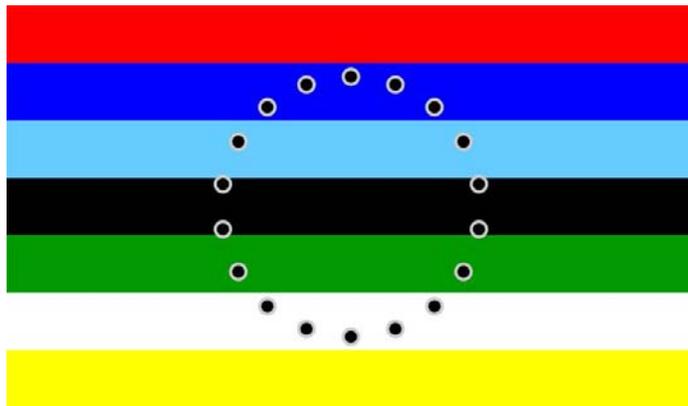
Of those people in the hobby in the early 1970s, only a few still attend the games conventions. We move on. For the youngsters of today, computer games, Second Life, World of Warcraft, and so on, offer greater attraction. I started my blog in early 2005 and found its immediacy (and ease of distribution!) far more to my liking than the hassle of printing, collating, stapling and posting. Greatest Hits never officially folded, and I guess that I have produced 270-or-so issues in the past 33 years. As with a number of other editors, I went on to become a professional writer. For my games kick, I play online poker. I'm still in touch with a couple of those guys from 35 years ago, and I know where a couple of others are. And I've still got my Diplomacy board and pieces - in the spare room. I don't think I've looked at either for several years, but I reckon I could still adjudicate a set of moves in my head. Some things never leave you.

Peter Birks was the longtime publisher of Greatest Hits, considered one of the best UK Diplomacy zines of all time. He's also a handsome devil, isn't he?

It's a Grand New Flag, or it Should Be

by Larry Peery

I'm not sure why or when I decided to start collecting Diplomacy related flags, but I do know it was early on in my Dip career. Among the earliest I added to my collection were those of France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Canada: France representing my ancestral home, Italy representing Mike Maston's ancestry, the UK because of early close links with that national hobby, and Canada for the same reason. Little did I realize then that forty-odd years later my flag collection would fill a good box; and when displayed in toto would cover the walls of a large meeting room. In size the flags range from one about the size of a hand to one the size of a king-sized bed!

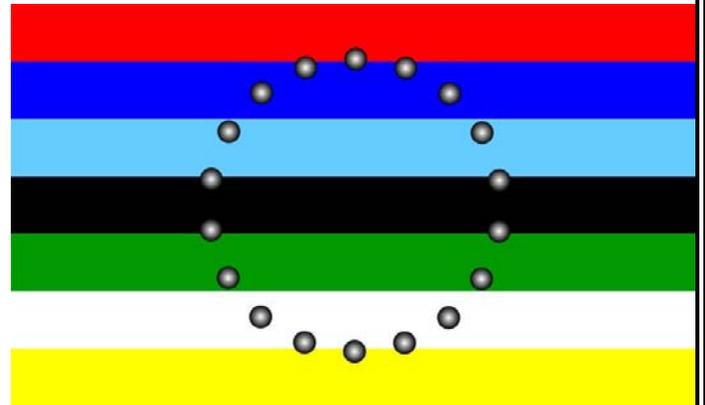


Option 1

Over the years I acquired other flags for my growing collection. A second Canadian flag came, complete with home video of it being removed at night from the flagpole of the Canadian parliament building in Ottawa. An old Austrian Habsburg flag came from a flag dealer in Vienna, but only after I promised not to display it in Austria. Apparently it's legal to own such a flag, but illegal to publicly display one there. For the 1984 Olympics event in Los Angeles we improvised an Olympic Diplomacy flag out of an Olympics beach towel with the PEERICON logo added. Jim Meinel donated an Alaskan state flag to the collection and it makes a nice companion to fly along with the Australian flag. As my Dip travels expanded flags joined the collection from Belgium, Sweden, San Marino, Monaco, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Argentina, and Uruguay. Today there are over 50 flags in the collection, representing five continents and countless Diplomacy events, large and small.

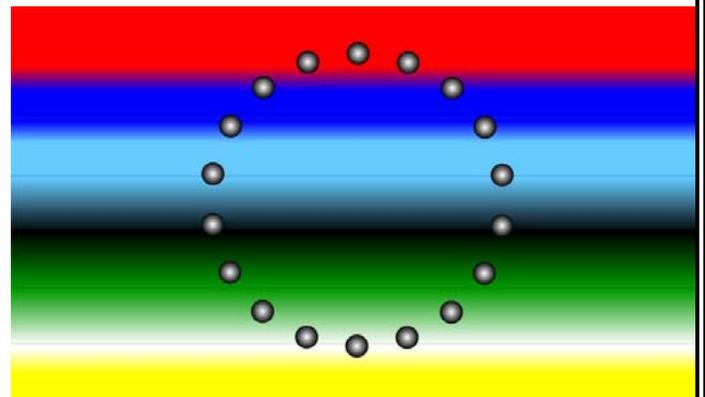
Only one flag seemed to be missing, one for the Diplomacy international hobby. Many Dip events over the years have used national flags as displays to recognize the seven Great Powers. I particularly remember the displays that David Hood and Manus Hand did in Chapel Hill, NC and in Denver, Colorado for WDC events there. The Belgians had flags representing the Great Powers

as well. But the biggest flag displays to date that I've seen were the ones for Paris EDC I where Francois Rivassou had flags for every participating country. Years later in San Marino the tradition was still being carried on with Giancarlo Ceccoli carrying the pole. A review of some of my past Diplomacy event reports in DW, The Diplomatic Pouch, or XENOGOGIC has further information, including photos, of many of these events. These were all great displays representing the parts of the hobby, but nothing representing the entire hobby.



Option 2

But, after all these years and events, one flag still seems to be missing. Its time to fill that void. So I am offering this proposal for a permanent international Diplomacy hobby flag.



Option 3

Working with Jason, a young Malaysian graphics designer in Borneo, who also dabbles in Diplomacy, we went through several ideas until we found two that we both liked. The idea of using seven colored bars representing the seven great powers for the background was a no-brainer. I opted for the seven original colors of the GRI edition of Diplomacy. We briefly toyed with the idea of using stars as the accents on the field, but black dots seemed more appropriate for a Diplomacy flag. One technical challenge arose when we had to decide what to

do when superimposing black dots on Germany's black stripe. The first illustration shows one solution, having the black dot surrounded with a white ring for contrast. The second illustration uses a black dot with a white center, also for contrast. There was no question about the number of black dots. Eighteen was the magic number, representing the number of supply centers needed for a pure victory. The first two examples show a sharp contrast between the seven colored bars. The last example blurs those lines and offers a more psychedelic approach.



Option 4

A different option, perhaps for use as a generic event flag or even a World Champion flag, is represented by the fourth and fifth options. In the first, the seven sharply contrasted bars have a seven starred yellow Big Dipper superimposed on them. In the fifth option the seven stars have a golden shade in their center.

Proposing a flag is one thing. Getting it accepted and used is another. Perhaps a good way to start that process would be to have a couple of examples made and displayed at the various national and international Diplomacy events in the coming new year? Oh, and how about a display on the cover of DW's 100th issue? I've included five options here in this article. If you don't like what I've designed, I challenge you to come up with something on your own and submit it!



Option 5

Perhaps you're asking yourself why we need a Diplomacy hobby flag? Perhaps George M. Cohan said it best:

You're a grand new flag,
 You're a high flying flag
 And forever in pieces may you wave.
 You're the emblem of
 The hobby I love.
 The home of the stabbers and dot grabbers.
 Ev'ry heart beats untrue
 'neath the Black, Yellow, and Blue.
 Where's there's ever a boast or brag.
 Should auld farts be forgot,
 Keep your eye on the grand new flag.

We'd love to hear your feedback on these flags. Send an email to [diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@of.yahoo.com) and let me know which one you prefer. If we get a decent number of votes, I'll start running one of them on the masthead of each issue somewhere. Or, as Larry said, if you don't like what he's come up with, send in something better!

Ber – Vie

By Julian Ziesing

Take World DipCon in Austria. Add BerliCon in Berlin. You get Ber-Vie: the double convention in August 2008.

Which neighboring countries on the Diplomacy board are least likely to attack each other in 1901? Germany and Austria! These two just go together well. After our Vie-Ber excursion in 2006, we proudly present ***Ber-Vie in 2008***. Again, we will start with a popular local convention, then we will go on a little trip through middle Europe, and at the end we will meet everybody at the World Dip Con, all within 10 days; only this time we're doing it the other

way around: first Ber, then Vie.

BerliCon: August 8-10

In other words: 08/08/08 (American notation), or 08/08/08 (British notation), or 08.08.08. (German notation). (We are not sure about French, maybe someone can add it?)

The 5th edition of Berlicon will be held in a cozy venue close to the city center. As usual, we will have one place where we can play and stay, with gaming rooms open

around the clock, good German beer, and the option to play football and beach volleyball. Prices for the 4-bed rooms will be very low. However, if you prefer to stay at a nice hotel, that can be arranged as well. The tournament itself will be free for foreign guests.



Brandenburger Tor in Berlin

The trip from Berlin to Austria: August 11-13

The route depends on where everybody wants to go. Via Munich? Prague? Bratislava? Hamburg? Dresden? Budget expenses, or high standard? We are open for suggestions; and in the end there might be a few different groups. Or if you want to go on your own, we are more than happy to help you with recommendations on where to go and how to book them, so that you will have a great time between the two conventions.



Dresden

WDC XVII in Austria: August 14-17

Within 4 years the "FAT" in Vienna advanced from an insider tip to one of the most popular conventions in Europe. Now the same team invites the global Diplomacy community to a special location in Austria: Burg Lockenhaus. They will even pick you up in Vienna and take you all the way to your room in the castle. If you seriously need more reasons to book, click on "home" because this is actually their website. ☺



Burg Lockenhaus

Seven Good Reasons to Go:

- If one convention is over, and the next one is only 4 days and less than 2 hours by plane away (and it's a WDC), why on Earth wouldn't you go there as well?
- And if you do, why wouldn't you visit some of the most fascinating European cities on the way?
- And if you do, why not take some other Dip players with you? Finally, a vacation where you can discuss your favorite hobby without other people looking at you like you are a weirdo...
- And if you think about coming, why not getting involved in the discussion about the route? Tell the others where between Berlin and Vienna you would like to go.
- For the ambitious ones out there: see it as a warm up. Berlin is the perfect training ground for the WDC in Austria (a lot of German speaking players!), and when you arrive in Austria you have made friends with most of them already!
- Maybe the waitress will ask Toby Harris again "and you have a small one, right?" If not, we will tell you the story...
- As Toby put it in 2006, "personally I thought the whole thing was first class this year". You might have met dip players at a con before. But all who were there last time agreed that meeting such fascinating people in "real life", outside a convention, is a whole new experience.

Interested in BerliCon or the Ber-Vie trip? Contact us by email at: vorstand "of" diplomacy-bund.de. You can register or ask for more details about both BerliCon and the Ber-Vie trip. Stab you soon!

The BerliCon organizers and the German Diplomacy Association (Julian Ziesing, Stefan Unger, Dirk Brüggemann, Julia Kitz, Frank Bacher) and the organizers of WDC XVIII 2008 (Sebastian Beer, Herbert Bieber, Clara Bretschneider, Simon Fandler, Günter Hopf, Georg Kotschy, Mathias Schmerbach) hope to hear from you, and to see you in 2008!

We Make Variants the Old Fashioned Way...

By Lewis Pulsipher

By way of introduction: I started playing Diplomacy in late 1969. I published a zine or two for several years, and was contributing editor to Diplomacy World. I was one of the top-rated players, back when we had ratings of postal games. If you look up Diplomacy at Boardgamegeek you'll find that most of the articles listed in the description were written by me (that was an interesting surprise). I designed lots and lots of Diplomacy variants, and was the second Miller Number (variants) custodian (the oldest living, since Don Miller unfortunately passed away many, many years ago). In 1975 I self-published a lithographed package of Dipvariants, still available (see the end of this article).

I stopped playing in 1976 when I went to England for doctoral research, though I kept designing variants for some years longer. While in England I started selling game designs to publishers, culminating in *Britannia* in the early 80s. While in England my *Diplomacy Games and Variants* (DG&V) booklet was published by a small company. Several years later their chain of games stores overextended, the company collapsed, and the inventory of unsold copies disappeared. I tried and failed to sell a similar idea to Avalon Hill (who also rejected *Britannia* when I submitted it directly to them--maybe I'm not much of a salesman). Someday I may get together a PDF of DG&V; right now most of the variants are unavailable.

For about 20 years beginning around 1983 I played D&D and ignored any other hobby gaming, but I am "back" now. I haven't designed a Dipvariant in many years--any "variant" I design now is going to be a variant of *Britannia*--though recently I have tried to come up with "Diplomacy as it would be if designed today instead of the 50s". I keep half an eye on the Dipvar Yahoo Group, and occasionally I'll read an online Dipzine or look at a new variant online, but I'm not otherwise involved in Diplomacy.

I used to write many articles about Diplomacy and D&D, but not many lately, except via my blogs. My most recently published article is about Stalingrad, included in **HOBBY GAMES: THE 100 BEST**, edited by James Lowder. (*Britannia* is one of the games, I'm happy to say.) Though I have a Ph.D. in military history, I teach game design in a "Simulation and Game Development" associates degree program at a community college in North Carolina. Web site: pulsiphergames.com. Blogs: pulsiphergamedesign.blogspot.com, teachgamedesign.blogspot.com.

So much for the long introduction. Doug Kent asked me to write a contribution for the hundredth issue. But about what? So I read DW 97, 98, and 99, especially the

discussions of and rules for variants.

I quite liked Dipvars that changed the rules significantly, but now I'd design a new game from scratch rather than bother to change a lot of rules in Diplomacy. Today Diplomacy variants seem to usually be much closer to "the rules" than used to be the case. I suspect that's because:

- To make a game practically playable through electronic judges, you can't change many rules (and hence require programming changes), you can only change the map
- There are many multi-player wargames available to compete with Dipvars, as opposed to 30 years ago when there were very few multiplayer wargames
- People are generally less willing to put an effort into learning a game, so a variant without changed rules will be more viable than one with significant changes

I see also that nomenclature has changed. "Press" used to be "press releases", which necessarily went to everyone in the game. Now "press" seems to be used to describe (usually private) negotiations. I don't believe you can play a "no-press" game and fully test a Diplomacy variant. You've eliminated the possibility that one or more countries have much better prospects for cooperation than others, because cooperation is impossible in "no-press". The essence of the game is, after all, negotiation.

This brings me to the question, what IS the essence of Diplomacy? What characterizes Dip, what makes someone look at a game and say "that's a variant of Diplomacy"?

I have made two lists at various times. The first is very short:

- Negotiation
- Simultaneous movement
- Units directly related to territory controlled
- The support mechanism
- No overt chance mechanism in combat resolution

Another try is less terse:

- Always, simultaneous movement (but some people call *Game of Thrones:the*

Boardgame a Dipvariant, and it isn't exactly simultaneous movement; it uses a mechanism to avoid the need to write orders).

- Always, the support mechanism.
- Always, no overt chance mechanism in combat.
- Usually, centers maintain units in a **zero-sum** fashion--and while some games give economic points to spend in various ways, players still must pay maintenance for existing units.
- Usually, no-holds-barred negotiation.
- Usually, an area board and one unit per area.

Most of these elements appear in other games--I'm using the support mechanism in a couple prototypes--but the appearance of most or all of these is likely to be in a Dipvariant. One could try to use the same list and make a game that doesn't derive from Diplomacy, of course.

I offer the following general advice about maps for variant designers:

When you're trying to reproduce the aspects of Dip on a new map, you might want to consider the number of centers and spaces. Dip has 7 players and 34 centers (and 75 spaces altogether, 19 of them sea). You may want similar ratios for your game. The ratio of centers owned to neutrals at the start is 22 to 12; do you want a similar ratio?

Of course, the Dip board includes a number of stalemate lines. A variant designer should always look for stalemate lines on his board, and decide what he wants to do with them. Some people regard them as a "bad thing", some don't. Can you get rid of all stalemate lines?

Something that helps Dip succeed is that the configuration of Europe allows for fleets to reach most of the spaces, in particular, the spaces all around the edge (only MOS cannot be reached). When you come down to it, there aren't many spaces that cannot be reached by fleets. If the setting of your variant is a big mass of land, you might lose that "equality" between fleets and armies. (Has anyone tried to analyze a set of standard Dip games by counting the ratio of fleets to armies, and even more interesting, the ratio for the winning/drawing power(s)?)

Be aware also that fleets "move faster" in Dip. The sea spaces are much larger, in general, so the fleets get from one part of the board to another sooner, a compensation for the spaces the fleets cannot reach at all. Sometimes moving "around" in Dip is faster than moving through the center. A variant board should help accomplish the same thing to encourage fluidity. A great mass of armies pounding on each other in a large land mass is not generally regarded as very interesting.

Have you done a positional analysis of the player countries? I have seen articles describing this (Calhamer himself wrote one, I think) but I can't give you a reference. Represent each player country as a dot, and draw lines to show the strategic relationships between them. For example, Diplomacy itself shows two groups of three countries with strong interaction, plus Russia that has a potentially strong reaction with each of those groups of three, and there are weak interactions between Aus and Ger, and between Ita and Fra. (It is possible for those pairs of countries to go to war early in the game, but rarely productive and rarely very smart.) So early game strategy for most countries amounts to this: if I'm one of a group of three, I want to ally with a second against the third, and persuade Russia to mess with the OTHER group of three. Then my ally and I can dominate "half" the board, and at the same time there's a good chance the other "half" will devolve into a slow-to-change two vs two. (At least, that's the way it was when I played Dip in 1970-75.)

The positional diagram ought to help you see how things will go in your variant, and might help you recognize where board changes are needed. In fact, you might be well-advised to start with a positional analysis you desire, then divide your board into provinces to make it happen.

Another thing you could do that I cannot recall ever seeing (but remember, I'm over 20 years out of date). List each neutral center and the number of moves required for each country to reach it. List each country and the number of supply centers (separate neutral and home) that can be reached in one move, two moves, three moves, etc. (You could go further with enough time.) It would be fascinating to see how standard Dip comes out, and that might help you decide how you want your version to come out. Perhaps one of the judge programs has this information already embedded in it?

What I'm saying, I suppose, is that there's a lot you can do with your board other than look at it and say "that looks right". Or have others say "that looks right". Though that's certainly important.

Finally I'll describe a few of my recent game design efforts that have incorporated parts of Diplomacy:

1914. This was a five player game (Italy and Turkey as minor powers). Much of the play revolved around control of the minor powers using influence points, something like my Dipvar 1914 published long ago (in *The General*, I think). I only played once; it was quite realistic, as the Powers bogged down in a long trench war of economic exhaustion; but it wasn't much fun. So I've consigned it to the "dead ground".

Colonia. This uses the movement and support system of Diplomacy, but **not** *simultaneous* movement. It also uses a supply center system, again quite modified. It depicts colonization of the Mediterranean World fairly

abstractly. There are barbarians all around, Event Cards to help control barbarians, and many other non-Diplike facets. In fact, even the diplomatic part of the game is subject to rules: you can be forced into a non-aggression pact, for example, and you cannot attack someone with whom you have a pact. (Breaking one takes time.) Finally, it is a point game, and while I aimed for a one-hour game, this is nearly impossible for a strategic multi-player game, and it's more like two hours. This has been playtested a few times but not in the past year.

Age of Exploration. This simple game about the spread of Europeans and their colonies around the world also incorporates a form of supply center economics, and a form of support mechanism, but also does not use simultaneous movement.

DipModern with map. I call this DipModern because I started with the idea of "Diplomacy if it were designed today to meet today's preferences". That means, among many other things, a shorter game, no rules writing, and no player elimination. (And let's face it, in WW I the only nation "eliminated" before the end of the war was Russia.) But before I got to the point of playing, I went on to the one below.

Dipmodern with abstract map. The essence of Diplomacy is negotiation and strategy. So why mess with a lot of tactical details? The more-or-less abstract map de-emphasizes tactics in place of strategy. Again, much of the conflict is through attempts to control minor powers.

If you're interested in playtesting these games someday,

let me know at: [lew \(you know what\) pulsipher.net](mailto:lew (you know what) pulsipher.net). (See <http://www.pulsipher.net/gameindex.htm>.)

Science Fiction and Fantasy Variant Package

Lithograph printed, primarily 8 1/2" by 11" with some 8 1/2" by 14" maps. Maps are large enough for face-to-face play with Risk pieces or the like (e.g., two 8.5" by 14" pages), but are not printed full board size.

Includes (in alphabetical order):

Barsoom by Lew Pulsipher
Between Galaxies II by Lew Pulsipher
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The Dying Earth by Lew Pulsipher
Hyborean Age Diplomacy II by Burt Labelle
Lunatic Diplomacy II by Thomas Galloway
Middle Earth Diplomacy II by Don Miller
Middle Earth Diplomacy V (revised) by Lew Pulsipher
Quantum Space Diplomacy by T. A. McCloud
Simple Rules for Science Fiction/Fantasy Variants by Lew Pulsipher
The Star Kings by Lew Pulsipher
Timesteps by Lew Pulsipher

Published 1975. One charge for the entire package. For US/Canada residents, \$3.00 (much of that is first class postage). Lewis Pulsipher, 2441 Ramey Drive, Linden, NC 28356.

Why are you asking me to tell you about Lew? Didn't you just read the article? He told you himself! Now go away and stop bothering me.

Dip on the Rocks - a Vacation to "Weird Capital" PART 2: Reykjavík, Geysers, Glaciers, Imperial, and Actually Some Diplomacy

By Julian Ziesing

Here we were, in the country that doesn't get dark at night, where hot showers in the hotel come with a fine smell of sulfur, and where you never know what is expecting you next, a volcano (fire), a geyser (hot water), sulfur sources (stench), a glacier (ice) or one of these blond Icelandic beauties (fairytale). A country that, as we saw in the first part of this article, theoretically has the highest density of FTF diplomacy players in the world (at least 5 in 310,000 which would equal 1000 in France). Well, a bold calculation, but still. We were looking forward to meeting them.

Reykjavík is a calm, unspectacular town - the most Northern capital in the world, 117,000 citizens, grey streets, grey sky, grey buildings, some of them with colored roofs. A huge grey concrete church. Fancy

restaurants, clean streets, Western cars, well-filled supermarket shelves, the buses come on time. It's not Las Vegas, it's not Monte Carlo and it's not Hong Kong... but it's the only city of this size within a radius of 1000km, and a magnet for tourists. After one day my impression was, you must be either a tourist, a proud Viking or a *melancholic* to stay here. Is it unfair to say that? Maybe, because the people we met were neither, they proved that you can live a normal life even at this remote and – seemingly – inhospitable spot.

It was David who had found some Icelandic players in the judge database long before our trip. We wrote them an e-mail saying that we would like to play dip in Iceland, and if they could help us. This came unexpected for them, of course, and they didn't feel ready to organize an

entire “convention”, or even be a “tournament director” or any of that stuff. But they fixed a venue, a hotel with a gaming room, and invited enough people for one round, and that was all we wanted. For us it was mainly a vacation (thus, “European Diplomacy Vacation”, the official title of the event), with some dip on the way (“dip to go” so to say).



The Locals and the Tourists

Then came the weekend, and as they dropped in we found all of them to be really nice people: Victor, Einar, Jón Þór, Mike and his sons Paul and David. Board game fans just like us.

Mike is actually American and works for a company that scans people’s genome. They have pretty much already counted half the genes of the Icelandic population and traced their genealogical roots back to the days of the settlement, more than 1000 years ago. What fascinating work! Mike came to Reykjavík about 8 years ago, planning to stay a couple of years, but in the meantime he and his family have settled down. We were grateful for Mike’s invitation for dinner one night at one of those fancy restaurants I mentioned earlier, and for giving us a ride to the car rental. (Btw I can only recommend the food on Iceland, it’s expensive, but if you have no choice – even McDonald’s costs you – you will actually HAVE to enjoy it! Back on the European mainland, it makes you think whether food is really something you should save money on...)

Jón Þór on the other hand had family connections to a good hotel where we could sleep and play. That solved the venue problem. The atmosphere was casual and relaxed. People in Iceland don’t get easily upset. In fact, as long as there is no life-threatening volcanic eruption going on with lava running towards their houses, it seems like they are not easily impressed by anything. And that coolness might be an advantage when you play Diplomacy.

However, on Friday and Saturday we were not enough players for Diplomacy. Instead we played Imperial, something that looks like dip, but you don’t negotiate. And instead of playing one country from start to end you can buy shares and become leader of one or more countries during the game. At any given time, the person with the most shares in one country leads its builds and attacks. While a leader is the only player who is paid for the country’s growth, everybody who has shares will be paid a dividend every round – as long as there is enough cash in the treasury. Rob beat all of us with his strategy, which was not to become a leader too early, but to stay in the background as the second or third largest shareholder in several promising countries, and flexibly buy in here and there until time has come to take control and make the winning moves. I can only recommend this game if you are not enough to play dip or just look for something else. Some say it is similar to a diplomacy variant (Capitalist?).

On Sunday finally we played Diplomacy. Baaaaad game for me... but fun! There were no beginners, our Icelandic hosts knew what they were doing. Some of them had played for like hundreds of years via e-mail, snail mail, stage coach, cable telegraphy or whatever there was in the old days. In Iceland probably volcanic smoke signals, too.

Rob and Paul decided not to play, Rob had work to do (those New Zealanders, you never know when they’re on holiday and when they’re at work), and Paul preferred to watch.

I was England, Mike was France, David “2 solos in 1 season” Norman was Germany and Vincent “World Champion” Carry played my Northern neighbor Russia. I received offers from both David (“take Nwy with an army and move Nrg-Bar, then take StP”) and Mike (“bounce David in Hol”), and I felt like Vincent was not going after me with a Northern opening, but busy in the South (that guess was right at least).

In fall 1901 I had to choose: David who had made the better offer and was known as a relatively solid alliance player, or Mike of whom I didn’t know how experienced he was (or anything at all). At this point I thought it’s a good idea to be a nice guest and not team up with David to eliminate our host, but to play an EF alliance... to good future German-Icelandic relations so to say. But alas... bouncing David in Holland turned out bad for me. I didn’t gain anything with it, eventually David would still get Holland, and Mike... built 2 fleets anyway!

I tried to turn things around and offered my dearest neighbors (“we’re in this together aren’t we”) to go after Russia. If they only didn’t bother me in the Channel and left me alone in the North Sea, and Mike could perfectly well use his fleets against Italy, no? But they took me out... well, I didn’t deserve any better after such a bad opening. ☺ Mike was a tough negotiator, hiding his true

plans behind a perfect smile.

I don't remember exactly how the game developed in the East, but in 1906 they agreed to draw. David Norman won with 9 centers, Mike and whoever played Turkey (not sure, Victor or Einar?) had 8 centers.

We didn't have time for another round, so it was a short visit to the Icelandic Diplomacy community. There must be almost a dozen more players who didn't have time to join us this weekend. But we invited them to come over to one of our conventions any time, even though it was clear that they are not quite as "freaky" as we were, travelling thousands of kilometers for a dip event... then again, if they went on vacation to mainland Europe with their families, that could be a perfect opportunity to meet for a drink or even a game and return the favor. We will see.

The rest of the convention was sightseeing in this fascinating island. We saw a huge waterfall, a ridiculously, inconceivably gigantic glacier, hotspots that smelled like rotten eggs, geysers that erupted every 5 minutes as if the tourist bureau pushed a button, and the endless emptiness of Iceland's nature. No woods! Yellow stones or black grit as far as you can see. Dark beaches over hundreds of kilometers, and only one street going all around the island. We spent the rest of the week driving along the Southern coast line to Vík and the glacier, and back. We saw real Icebergs and how powerful they can be, and at the same time they look so glass and fragile... Back in Reykjavik, on the last day, we didn't miss the opportunity to go souvenir shopping. You might not come back ever again! So why bother that you pay EUR 40 for a shirt... The best buy was a kitchy oven cloth, cheap and handy... now it hangs at home over our oven and reminds me of our trip every day.



Gaming in Iceland

Guidebooks can describe Iceland better than me, but to summarize it: I can recommend going to Iceland to

anyone who hasn't been there yet and who feels even the slightest sensation about the Nordic nature. You don't see it like this anywhere else, the light, the prehistoric scenery, the loneliness. My highlight was the Blue Lagoon, a typical tourist attraction. No matter what season it is, they invite you to take a bath... outside!



The Blue Lagoon

The water shines in a magnificent blue, and it's filled with minerals and white sand. The pool is fed by a geothermal power plant which is fed from the ground of a lava flow. After the water has passed the turbines, it is channeled into the lagoon. Veeery relaxing...

Hope you liked the little excursion. Oh, and one evening in a guesthouse on the countryside, we had a vote. As the rules say, the participants of an EDV (European Diplomacy Vacation) shall decide on where the following EDV is to be held. As an EDV takes place in all years when there is no World DipCon in Europe, the next EDV will be in 2009. Unanimously (with 4:0 votes) we gave green light for David's idea to hold it as a skiing event in the Alps. He will organize it if he receives support, so we are looking forward to the first skidipcon in winter 2009. Maybe our new Icelandic friends will come?

Up until then, the next best thing to a dip vacation in Europe will most likely be the Ber-Vie trip in August that connects a local con (BerliCon) and the World Dip Con in Austria on 2 consecutive weekends (Aug 8-10, and 14-17) with a trip through middle Europe. For more information have a look at the Ber-Vie article in this issue.

If you would like to know more or comment on this article, feel free to contact Julian at Julian "of" diplomacy-bund.de or email us at Diplomacy World – diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com. Hopefully Julian will be willing to write up reports on the Skidipcon in 2009, especially if enough of us bug him about it!

The Early Years and other Vague Memories

By Richard J Walkerdine

Hmmm.... where to start? Well, call me old fashioned if you must, but why not start at the beginning?

I first heard about postal Diplomacy in the spring of 1972 when I happened to buy a glossy professional games magazine at the local stationers and, buried away in the classified ads section, saw an advert for an amateur postal Diplomacy zine (Hartley Patterson's War Bulletin). I was already a keen face-to-face games player, and had a copy of Diplomacy, so, intrigued by the concept, I wrote off for a sample copy. It arrived a few days later and I read it from cover to cover with a feeling almost of incredulity – here was a very clearly amateur publication, home produced using typewriter and mimeo machine, in which people were spending 2 years or more playing postal games of Diplomacy as well as writing about it, arguing about it and generally having a really good time! I signed up right away, and from ads and mentions in WB soon subscribed to, and started playing in, most of the other of the 5 or 6 zines that at that time made up the entire British postal Diplomacy hobby.

Just 5 or 6 zines? Well, the hobby at that time was only a few years old. Interestingly (and, as would later become apparent, very importantly) it had its origins in two rather different areas of fandom. On the one hand there was Hartley and Don Turnbull (of Albion and Courier fame) who were from the wargaming hobby, where the game and its analysis were the most important aspects. But on the other hand there were also people from Science Fiction fandom (most famously John Piggott and his zine Ethil the Frog) where chat, press releases, hobby politics, arguing and feuding were the norm. I am quite convinced that the cross-fertilisation of ideas and concepts from these two different sources gave the British hobby much of its strength and uniqueness in the following years.



But I am getting ahead of myself. Back in 1972 I was now playing several postal games in a variety of zines and loving it. Indeed, loving it so much that I wanted even more – so I decided to start my own zine. I was a keen crossword fan at the time and thought that some anagram of Diplomacy might make a good name for my

new zine – so in August of that year Mad Policy was born, and so died much of my spare time for most of the next twenty years!

As I said above the hobby in the early seventies was in its infancy – and nothing like the size it would develop to within the next decade. So there were no big semi-professional conventions attracting hundreds of games players. Instead we used to hold 'house-cons' where a dozen or so friends and fellow players would turn up for a weekend of gaming and (usually) drinking. I remember we held one at our house on one occasion and will never forget when Claire prepared a meal for our guests and John Piggott asked, "What are these little yellow peas?" (Even sweetcorn (maize) was fairly new in those days!)

Other memories of house-cons also come to mind. On one occasion we all travelled to Yorkshire to spend a weekend with Richard and Shirley Morris. Arriving on the Friday evening Richard told us that he had just bought a computer game (one of the very first) called 'The Quest for the Golden Baton'. It involved the usual scenario of a group of adventurers fighting off the bad guys, avoiding the hidden traps, finding the bits of treasure and slowly making progress – but of course if you made a mistake and got yourself killed the game ended and you had to start again. We played it all weekend, slowly making progress after each calamity. Eventually we got to the point where we killed off the bad guys, got down to the underground lake, launched the raft, floated out across the lake, blew the magic horn, saw the arm appear holding the golden baton, but as we reached to take it it moved away! Something else was needed. We decided what it was and started again, but with Shirley reminding us that it was now Sunday lunchtime and we were booked for a pub meal in a few minutes and then it was time to go home – so this was the last attempt! We went through all the previous twists and turns, got back out on the lake, blew the horn, did whatever we hadn't done before and then, just as we were reaching to finally take the golden baton, Richard's 5-year old son pulled the plug out of the computer!! My abiding memory is of Richard lying on the floor, screaming and chewing the carpet...

On another occasion we were again heading north to Yorkshire but this time our friend Pete Cousins had offered us a lift. One car is cheaper than two so we happily accepted and set off Friday afternoon. Half way there part of the exhaust fell off, turning a fairly quiet car into a very noisy one! "Not to worry," said Pete, "it's being serviced on Monday so I can get a new exhaust at the same time." We arrived that evening, had a great weekend and started our very noisy journey home Sunday afternoon. We got just beyond half way when the police finally pulled us over and an officer told Pete that

his exhaust was missing and what was he going to do about it. With a completely straight face Pete replied, "I'm really sorry officer, it happened about three miles back, but I'll get a new one fitted tomorrow when the car is serviced." The officer was satisfied with that and sent us on our way. But although Pete had been completely truthful in his reply I wonder what the reaction would have been if he had added that it actually fell off two days earlier while we were heading in the opposite direction?

As I touched on above, there was also a lot of hobby politics around in the 70s, mostly as a result of various organisations. In the UK we had the National Games Club (NGC) which had its origins in a professional glossy magazine and, during that decade, was responsible for bringing about a huge increase in UK zines, players and postal games. In the USA we had the International Diplomacy Association (IDA) which was more concerned with hobby infrastructure and support services. There was no real area of conflict between the two organisations but when I formed a UK branch of the IDA (called IDA/UK) in the mid 70s it certainly provided plenty of ammunition for some strongly worded editorials! Perhaps the most amusing episode (at least for my possibly warped sense of humour) concerned the 1977 elections for a new IDA governing council, in which for the first time overseas members (mainly members of IDA/UK) were eligible to vote. There were two candidates for the role of President, Len Lakofka and Ray Heuer. Len had previously advocated a sort of federalist IDA comprising essentially separate national organisations whereas Ray was more disposed to the then current global model. The American votes were marginally in favour of Len, but the UK votes, although only around 20 in number, were overwhelmingly in favour of Ray and were just enough to tip the overall result in his favour! Of course a big row then erupted, with Len claiming that only US votes should count and Ray claiming the opposite. Eventually the other newly elected council members (none of whose results were in dispute) took a vote on the matter and decided in favour of Ray by a margin of about 4 to 1. So that was that.... well... almost... The last I heard was that Len, who happened to be the outgoing Treasurer, was threatening to hold on to the IDA's funds unless he got his way.... Hopefully, in the intervening 30 years, the hobby has matured a little.

But enough of politics, let's return (sort of) to games – and as I'm aware that this article is already a good bit longer than Doug asked for I'll make this the last vague memory.

We move forward a decade to the mid 80s. The UK hobby is now far bigger than it was and is supporting several large face-to-face games conventions each year. I am involved with the organisation of one of them, Manorcon, held usually in July in one of the halls of residence at Birmingham University (vacated of students for the summer break). The layout is a large hall on the

ground floor (where most of the games playing is done), a bar area on a mezzanine floor just above, and then the bedrooms on several floors above that. The reason I explain this layout is to show that from the bar (my normal haunt after the rigours of organising several hundred rampant games players) you can look over the balcony down at the games tables below. On this particular occasion I was relaxing in the bar with a few friends (Pete Birks, Ronnie Fisher, Willy Haughan and Steve Doubleday (who helped me remember the names of the culprits – thanks Steve)). When I looked over the balcony at the games players below I noticed another of our friends, Brian Dolton, playing on one of the tables with a group of people which included a particularly attractive young lady. With a few nudges and whispers we were soon all watching what was clearly Brian's attempt to get to know this young lady rather more closely than the game required (if you catch my drift). I don't remember who had the idea (possibly Birks) but within a few minutes we had several sheets of card and some marker pens. On the cards we wrote '5.7, 5.9, 5.8' (like the scoring in ice skating) and all leaned over the balcony holding the cards. It only took a minute before Brian glanced up and saw us with our score cards – I'm not too good at lip reading but I think I got the message on that occasion...



I don't want to outstay my welcome so I will stop now. It would have been nice to add a bit about the birth of World Dip Con, the various hobby hoaxes and even the time I won the Manorcon Team Diplomacy Tournament without even playing! Perhaps Doug will let me do another article later in the year.

Thanks to Doug for asking me to contribute, many many congratulations to both him and his predecessors on achieving the three figures and my best regards to you all. Be seeing you?

If Richard is looking for a more mature hobby, he shouldn't look in my direction, as I generally spend 10% of my day making fart noises with my mouth of increasing vulgarity and then saying "Excuse me!" until someone (usually my wife) forces me to stop. Now everybody write in with praise for his piece, so we can convince Richard to follow it up with another!

How I Spent the Rest of My Life

By Conrad F. von Metzke

Diplomacy addiction wasn't my fault. I was a victim. Sad, how so very many of us were victims. (Amazing, isn't it, how few of us actually caused anything?)

In my case I was the victim of my ancestry. It has been written, many times (generally by me, by way of it not being my fault), that I discovered the game of Diplomacy in a classified ad in *Saturday Review* late in 1961. This is true, but it doesn't actually explain anything; it's mere mechanics. For the essence of my ensnarement by Diplomacy and the inner meaning of why the game dragged me into the addictive abyss for so long, we must go all the way back to the Paleozoic, or Mesozoic, or some such – sorry, I don't know my Zoics from a horse's rump, I was too busy playing games to bother with college – and find my specific distant biological ancestor, the little amphibian in my past who first crawled out of the primordial soup NOT because he was compelled by the imperatives of evolution, NOT because all the other little amphibian guys were doing it; no, my ancestor crawled onto the land because he knew *you can't publish a Dip 'zine underwater*. And he knew, somehow, that by emerging onto land, he was developing the genetic encoding that would one day set the stage for me. Rather advanced little salamander guy, don't'cha think?

I have not yet been able to trace my family back quite as far as those Zoic days; so far I've only made it to about the U.S. Civil War, so I figure it'll be at least another couple of months before I can tell you the amphibian's name. On an interim basis, let's just call him Pud. You know, after the character in the comics you used to get with your Fleer's Bubble Gum? You remember Fleer's, of course?

(Whaddaya mean, you don't? Am I that much closer in time to the amphibian than everyone else?)

Well, no matter. What it is critical that you derive from all you've been told is that Pud the Interim Amphibian provided me, umpty-ump squillion generations later, with the genetic predisposition for what medicine has now classified as *Compulsive Obsessive Non-Restrictive Addictive Disorder*.

The acronym, of course, being *CONRAD*. Which figures.

So way back in '61 I ordered the game set, it arrived, and everything else in my life flew right out the window and straight on 'til morning. Girlfriend? Pah! Studying? Attending class? Rubbish! And as for actual Life, as in Getting One, well, a handful of small wooden blocks, and a typewriter and duplicating machine, seem to have, um, effected an astonishingly lengthened Short-Term Substitute.

Now let me be honest. Obviously I've tossed in the wee bit of exaggeration once or twice. Not as much as you may think, actually, but some. For instance, I really did get a Life. It included a Career, a passable one with the post office, though hardly one that required a hell of a lot of work (which would have impacted my hobby). It included two marriages, the first destroyed in part by gaming addiction, the second merely threatened. (To this day I cannot tell you which wife I admire more: The one who had the sense to get out, or the one who chomped down *really hard* on the bullet and stayed.) It included two children, both of whom are now neurotic loons (but very *nice* ones). And, of course, it included publishing 'zines. LOTS of 'zines. Three and four at a time, for a while. I can't even remember the names of half of them, but in essence that doesn't much matter because my writing style has always been repetitive and therefore one 'zine is pretty much like the next one. A bit of veneer is all I ever changed: If it went to Brits I'd use Brit spellings; if for Canadians, I'd write "eh?" a lot; I even tried one in Spanish (but didn't really know enough of the language to fake it well) and another, a single issue, partially in French (for which I had help as I don't know two words of *that* language, n'est ce pas?)



Now You Know What a Leisure Suit Looks Like!

This went on for YEARS. Sometimes I'd take breaks, because (a) reality would intrude, and/or (b) I'd run out of money for postage and paper. But these were always temporary conditions; after a while, I'd reappear with a revival of old 'zines or a start-up of a new one, and go on from there until another break, and on, and on, and on....

(Imagine how many trees we'd have saved if there had

been a twelve-step program for this?)

Eventually, of course, all this 'zine publishing inevitably led to the Big One. Walt Buchanan wanted to give up his brainchild, *Diplomacy World*, and needed a sucker to take over. His first three hundred choices declined, so at long last I was asked, and – addict and fool that I was – I said yes. We started with a few issues with me as editor and Walt continuing as publisher, and then after some months the entire caboodle became mine.

I lasted one issue. I had completely misunderstood the financial situation, and after the single issue that I managed to get into the mail, I realized (with a good deal of help from my poor suffering wife, the second one, who should have been running for the hills but wasn't) that I had two choices: I could dump the whole project, or I could take the proverbial long walk on the short pier.

I dumped. Just as fast as I possibly could, I got the hell out of the 'zine and, in utter disgust and embarrassment at the fallout from the financial mess, out of the entire hobby for several years. Eventually I came back to the latter, but it was never the same; perhaps at long last I actually had grown up a little. I had certainly lost a lot of the spark I once had, and even when I tried doing a big 'zine again for a time, it had less of the challenging hobby about it, and more of the chore. So the concept of the big 'zine faded out fairly quickly, and for a few more years – quite a few actually – I carried on with a moderate 'zine and ultimately a little bitty one. And even that is over now; the final *Diplomacy* 'zine issue I ever published, about three years ago, was just about as bitty as one could get: One page, sent to three people. "Infinitesimal," that's the word I wanted....

That was Then. Now we come to Now.

"Now" does not involve *Diplomacy* at all. My last game as a GM, as just noted, ended a few years ago. My final game as a player was in Rob Lesco's *Northern Flame*, and though the game itself finished only recently, I was eliminated quite some while ago. I no longer even own a game set, nor do I sub to any 'zines at all (I get a few as comps, and yes I do read them all thank you very much).

And I do have to concede that, every once in a while, the bug for postal Dip can be seen buzzing round the light at my front door. But so far I've always gone out with a newspaper and smashed the little beast; still, who knows, maybe one of these days he'll sneak in the house, and then I'm possibly doomed.

But maybe not. The spark, really really really, seems to have hit the road.

When first Charles Roburn, and more recently Doug Kent, asked me if I'd mind cranking out some pile of verbiage for the current crop of on-line 'zines, I said no. Not to them, mind you; but to myself, I said no. No more. One, maybe two little bitty discourses on What It's Like

Being A Fossil, the sort of thing that can be cranked out in a quick hour between books or dog walks. And that's it. That's absolutely all I'm going to do, and never any more, never again, not one chance....



Still a Handsome Devil, Isn't He?

But there's one teensy flaw in all that denial of mine: *I contacted Charles first!* True, it wasn't to write an article; it was to correct a mistake in something about myself that I found in an article previously published in Charles's 'zine. A really important correction it was, too: Larry Peery had asserted that I had been to a DipCon in the state of Oregon. This is WRONG! and could not possibly stand unchallenged: Oregon is one of twenty-five U.S. States in which I have never set foot in my life. (I did fly over a couple of times, but that doesn't usually result in attendance at a DipCon there.) Did I want my reputation smeared by a falsehood of that magnitude? Why, NO WAY, JOSÉ...and therefore I sat down and wrote to Charles.

So why, Dr. Freud, was I compelled to deal with this point? (I am sadly afraid that I know the answer....)

And there is one other very minor point that I need to make, to avert any possibility that any reader (you do have readers, don't you, Doug?) will gain from all my forceful claims of hobby retirement, loss of interest in future participation, and utter withdrawal from the games scene for all time to come, a severe misapprehension – namely, that even one word of it is true. Because you see, the following confession is required at this time:

I'm still publishing.

Not much, and not *Diplomacy*, but yes I do still do a minuscule 'zine-type thingie, which actually appears as a subzine to David Oya's WIMM? in Oxford, England. In fact the entire 'zine is subzines: Apart from a title page, and the printing and posting, David does nothing. The games and the rest of the writing are carried by three subzine contributors: Fiona Campbell, a Scot; Allan Stagg, a Brit; and I, a native of the former California Republic. The subzine I do is called CALAFIA'S ISLAND

(an old legendary name for the land of gold that California was thought to have been) and runs a couple of games of Railway Rivals, and on and off a word thing called By Popular Demand, and then I write whatever suits my fancy.

And to my great joy, IT'S ACTUALLY A POSTAL 'ZINE! Actual paper, actual stamps and envelopes, actual staples.... just what I remember from my earlier incarnation as a games hobbyist, and one of the parts I remember most fondly. The plain fact is that I have never been able to gain any real pleasure out of on-line 'zines; if it's a short snippet or maybe a simple game report, fine, but much more than that and I shy away. I get headaches from reading on the computer screen – I've tried everything, glare filters, changing distance, new glasses, even special computer glasses: No luck. I'm sure it's psychological. I'm also too old to bother trying to

get past it. And therefore my roughly 30 issues of CALAFIA'S ISLAND thus far, and who knows how many more, will appear on paper or I, for one, won't read them!

All of which I think should be plenty for this re-emergence from behind the baseboards of my post-hobby life. No I do not have any Dip openings. No I do not want to play Austria in your 'zine. But apart from that, gee, I gotta admit, it's kind of nice to be however fleetingly back in touch.

Hi, everybody!

I can neither confirm nor deny the existence of Conrad von Metzke. Good luck Mr. Phelps. This sentence will self-destruct in five seconds.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

Australian Diplomacy Championship – Saturday January 26th, 2008 to Monday January 28th, 2008 - Sydney, Australia, Email thorinmunro "of" hotmail.com for more information

TempleCon – Friday February 1st, 2008 to Sunday February 3rd, 2008 – Providence, Rhode Island, <http://templecon.org>

PrezCon – Wednesday February 20th, 2008 to Sunday February 24th 2008 – Charlottesville, Virginia, <http://prezcon.com> – NOTE: actual dates and times for the Diplomacy tournament have not been set yet

GothCon XXXII – Thursday March 20th, 2008 to Monday March 24th, 2008 Gothenburg, Sweden <http://www.gothcon.se>

EDC 2008 "Diplomacy Over the Lake" – Friday April 11th, 2008 to Sunday April 13th, 2008 – Brunate – COMO, Italy, <http://diplomacy.cleosolutions.com>

CODCon Open – Saturday April 12th, 2008 to Sunday April 13th, 2008 – Glen Ellyn, Illinois, <http://codcon.com>

National Block Party – Friday May 16th, 2008 to Sunday May 18th, 2008 – New Albany, Indiana (a suburb of Louisville, Kentucky), <http://ohiovalleygamers.org/nationalblockparty.html>

Kubla Con – Friday May 23rd, 2008 to Sunday May 25th, 2008 – San Francisco, California, <http://www.kublacon.com>

DixieCon 22 – Friday May 23rd, 2008 to Sunday May 25th, 2008 – Hickory, North Carolina <http://www.dixiecon.com>

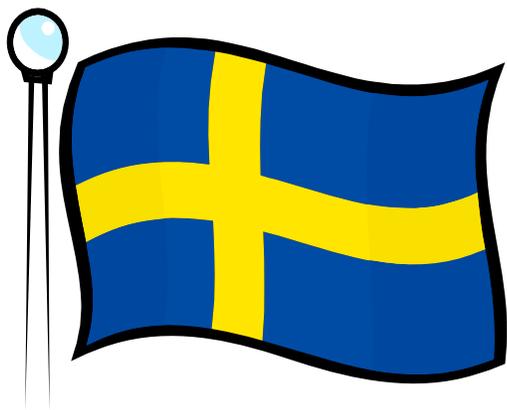
Origins Game Fair – Wednesday June 25th, 2008 to Sunday June 29th, 2008 – Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio <http://www.originsgamefair.com/2008>

Build Army Sweden, Remove Army Sweden

By Per Westling

So the time has come for DW #100... Looking back in time I find it hard to believe that it was less than 10 years ago I dropped out of the hobby. Seems like that was in a different age, which it of course was... I have had almost no contact with the Hobby since '99 and this is written without going back to the archives (which I donated to a general fanzine archive in Stockholm, and to Leif Bergman about that time) – so this is my recollection from the top of my head...

Looking back at my period (late 80s to late 90s) I can still remember the thrill of the initial period. This included finding Diplomacy World which has always had a serious (serious and constructive) touch. I quickly ordered those four big blue best-of-DW collections, and spent quite a lot of time reading. That also inspired me to develop my own fanzine Lepanto 4-ever (L4E).



The fanzine I started in '89 (L4E) quickly became international, produced in English. It also spurred some other Swedish hobbyists to produce fanzines, and during a couple of years the Swedish Hobby flourished with L4E as the main contact with the international hobby. This was of course possible with extensive trades, among them Diplomacy World. The trading, as well as the exchanges of thoughts in various letter columns, made it exciting to check the (snail) mail box every day. The feeling of a community, of international extensions, is something I miss today.

I and a few of the other Swedish hobbyists established some contacts with other Hobbies, mainly the English, but also with other European as well as the US. This led to quite a few trips to various conventions, mainly WorldDipCon and ManorCon, as well as hosting some conventions ourselves. Two events that I remember especially are actually WDCs:

- ManorCon in '94 where the Swedish team won the large team event. ManorCon always had the cozy feeling.

- Chapel Hill in '98. David Hood et al made the event a memorable experience.

Mentioning WDC brings back memories of the struggle I was involved in regarding the WDC charter. I guess this is just a reflection of the problems you encounter with international treaties... But the Hobby as a whole managed quite well even without any strict regulations.

I mentioned above the cozy atmosphere you could feel at ManorCon. This feeling was often reflected in the British fanzines. I suppose this is because of these being mainly more general in style, and having a broader spectrum of games. While the US style is more business, with Diplomacy as the main thing – and of course Diplomacy World as number one. But there are other reasons for this also; the UK is a (much) smaller country, giving more opportunities to meet. The friendliness of the UK Hobby is something that I remember fondly.

Ever wondered what happened with Lepanto 4-ever? I suppose not, as I got very few reactions after dropping out (which was a bit disappointing). Due to personal reasons and high work load, the time between issues became longer and longer. Eventually I changed jobs, moved to Linköping and stored the computer I used to produce the fanzine in the basement. Someone broke in there and stole the PC... At least I learnt that backups are a good idea ☺

So what would Lepanto 4-ever look like today? Well, I guess it would still have a batch of Diplomacy games, as well as the usual suspects of games like Railway Rivals. Of course, there would still be quite a lively letter column. One topic that has cropped up since I dropped out of the hobby, and which would probably be the "hot" issue of today, is global warming. Discussing why the US spews out more than three times pollution per person than Sweden would have been interesting, and why the latest administrations (both Rep and Dem) believe China is the big problem, when the difference here is five times! Myself, I try to do what I can, with no airplane flights for several years, choosing a Toyota Prius, commuting by bus (running on bio gas) and so on. I guess this would mean that the fanzine would be in electronic form only...

What I miss most after leaving the hobby is receiving all those (snail) mail zines and letters. But who knows – one day I might be back to pester y'all ☺

Anyway, I take this opportunity to thank all those Hobbyists I have had contact with over the year. Hope you are doing well!

My Life as a Diplomat

By Craig Reges

2008 will be my 32nd year in the hobby, in various levels of activity. I got here quite by accident. After joining Mensa, I was looking through a list of SIGs (Special Interest Groups) that were advertised to join. I was intrigued by several groups. One was run by Fred Davis, from Baltimore but a former Chicagoan (as I am), who advertised a group which played a game that was based on negotiations. They didn't give you a lot of room to go over what the group that was being advertised was about. So I sent Fred a letter and asked for more information. Fred, by the way, was a large contributor to the success of the hobby. In addition to bringing in many new faces like me, he was also a very successful variant designer, and invented or popularized many rules variations.

Once I got that information, the first thing to do was to try to acquire the game. Not every place sells Dip, but I duly got my 1976, brand spanking new version of the game. My first dip game was 1974F, in the old Boardman numbering system, as a replacement. It was carried in Claw and Fang, a zine run by Don Horton. Before I knew it, I was in a couple dozen games; a couple dozen games and moves every week or so, and several players to write to per game equals a pretty expensive hobby. We had to buy stamps after all.

Once you got into the games themselves, many of us wanted to follow on as GMs. Usually there were two ways of doing that. Less common, you would run a sub-zine that would be published along with another zine, running perhaps only one game or two. Then there were the full zines, where the publisher would run several games. Some ran twenty or thirty at a time. It was a lot of work, we had to adjudicate by hand (none of that software stuff), and type out without a word processor the results. (Underlining the failed orders was the biggest pain in the neck ever.....) I caught the bug twice, publishing Against the Odds in 1978 to 1980 and again from 1988 to 1991.

One organization that tried to promote and support the hobby was the IDANA, the International Diplomacy Association of North America. I was the Special Projects Editor, and my main responsibility during my term of office was to create a novice packet. The packet included information on the game, how to get started in the game, and other information to help new players ease into the hobby. Any requests for new player information went to me and I mailed it out (more stamps!). IDANA went out of business in 1980 or so I think.

These days I primarily GM games, and only occasionally play. My FTF play has been very infrequent, and I've probably played less than a half dozen games in person

in 32 years, although I've taken both my wife and my son to FTF games to play. She never lets me forget that she did better than I did, and my son was the proud recipient of a Marc Peters stab. I was Austria and was history after 1903 as I recall. My son was given England, and fared better until Marc, playing France, decided he needed some extra centers. I still enjoy the game, and I have met many wonderful people in the hobby, and made many friends. Fortunately, my relative lack of success hasn't dimmed my interest in the game.

Without a doubt, the biggest revolution in the hobby has been the internet: instant communications, rules and strategies available right away on line, and software that adjudicates and draws maps. No more expensive stamps, hooray, and you don't need a bunch of markers to put different colors by hand on a map! And when we were doing diplomacy by mail, you had to pay to receive the results by subscribing to the zines. All of these changes have made the hobby more accessible and easier to get into than it ever was before.

In my mind though, there has been one significant change that I lament. First of all, when you talk to another player by sending them an email, any of us old fogies will tell you that you are not sending "press". Unfortunately, the judges changed the whole meaning of the word. What you had done was sent a letter. If you submitted something to the GM to be published with the results, THAT was press. And I miss that. For whatever reason, the vast majority of games these days are results only. Press was always a great incentive to follow games, even if you were not playing in them. We had some terrific writers, who would pen some entertaining notes and stories, which sometimes were even serialized over several issues. I'm sure we still have some of those types of writers out there, but very few are motivated to put some press together...or asked to do so. If I could wave my magic wand, I'd like to bring that back to diplomacy. That and ban NMRs and drops from ever happening.

I joined an ICQ group, Stab, in one of my first internet group joinings, and then the Yahoo group Diplomacy World in 2000, and since then the Vermont Group and ACD. I was examining some of my old zines and picked out a few of them to scan a few pages. I selected a few pages for a short write-up about some Dip history to share with the DW group which you can find at <http://reges.net/DipHistory.html> if you wish to read it.

In closing, I look forward to reading Issue #100 and others' retrospectives of the hobby history. With any luck, I'll get another 32 years in the hobby. Maybe I'll even win another game. It may take me that long.

Memoirs of a South African Diplomat

By Dorian Love

I guess I first started playing wargames when I discovered Airfix plastic figures and started rolling marbles at them. I used to save up my bus money to buy the figures, by walking to school, and must have assembled a fairly comprehensive collection because I remember that I walked rather a lot in those days. I don't remember when I started using marbles as a way of inflicting casualties, but it was a serendipitous moment which transformed my outlook, and allowed a competitive edge to creep into what had previously been a fairly sedate affair which simply involved lining the plastic soldiers up in rows.

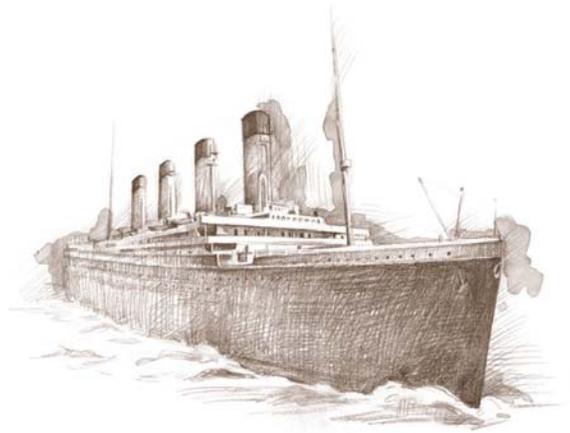
I remember on one occasion discovering that I had extra-sensory powers, being able to cause a marble to roll in the direction of a squad of Afrika Corps Germans entirely by the power of my mind, inflicting crippling losses on Rommel's men. For several minutes I experimented with my new found powers with a growing sense of excitement, before a sneaking suspicion that the floor might not be level dashed all my hopes of emulating Uri Geller. The loss of faith in marbles coincided with ground-breaking experiments using dice, initially as missiles, but subsequently, and rather more fruitfully as devices for determining how many men were affected by successive salvos from the airfix tanks which I had started to assemble.

Over time, and as I entered high school, various rules became codified and I used a checkered board to determine movement distances. The board was decorated with barbed wire entanglements and plaster-of-paris trenches. Each side had a flag square which had to be captured to win the game. My sister being five years younger than I was, and my friends being the sort who used their marbles to play marbles with, my wargaming activities remained a solitary pursuit until I reached University. I found a book by Donald Featherstone in the library and poured over the pictures of ancient battles depicted, dreaming of being able to replicate the battles in the book. All I needed was a partner in crime.

The Wits Wargames Club started in 1980 when I rather innocently asked another student in my second year Classics class, Colin Webster, whether he would be interested in playing some wargames. I do not remember why I asked him this, what made me think he would be interested. I guess he just seemed the type. In those days Colin wore a raincoat and tartan cap come rain, come shine, and perhaps it was this that qualified him in my eyes, for we hardly knew each other.

In any event he was interested, and we were soon joined by some other acquaintances of mine, Eric Lazarides and David Lasker. As I recall we used to play Donald

Featherstone rules with plastic Airfix and Atlanta figures. We also played *Kingmaker* and *Diplomacy*. The nascent club had no room of its own, but we used the roof of the Education Faculty Building, which adjoined the tiny office allocated to the Student members of the Education Faculty Council, which happened to include Eric, David and myself. We were joined by Abe Ableson, who used to answer the telephone with a cheery "Military Wing of the PFP, hello!" Since the PFP was a solidly middle class reformist political party, this occasioned much hilarity. Abe's main contribution to *Diplomacy* centred upon a firm belief that Tunis was geo-politically the most crucial dot on the board. So confirmed was he in this belief that he would refuse to play if he did not hold Tunis; this regardless of which power he was playing. In order to keep the game going, hostilities would often cease so that all powers could cooperate in setting up a convoy so that Abe could move a unit into Tunis!



A constitution was written, and the Wits Wargames Club was born at the beginning of 1981 with me as the first Chair. A few experienced, and many inexperienced wargamers joined at the beginning of that year, notably Alan Patrick and Bruce Gordon. Donald Featherstone rules gave way to WRG in its 5th, then 6th edition incarnations, and much of the focus of the club switched to figure-gaming. RPGs were also popular, although I have to say that the role play gamers who joined the club, foremost amongst them Stephen "Cess" Gill and Axel, hardly inspired confidence in the human race. But then again, they seldom pretended to impersonate the human race! We also played boardgames such as *Anzio* and *Squad leader*, with our games being played all over the Senate House concourse, and in any seminar room we could commandeer for an afternoon. We were given a shop-window style room at University corner at about this time, but thankfully this era did not last long for the room was cold and our activities open to the gaze of the passing public.

A proper club-room in the SRC building was granted in 1982, and Colin took over as Chair of the club. During this year Diplomacy took a back seat somewhat. However, it would have been at this time that Gavin Munro and Robert England played, if memory serves. These luminaries were very prominent, along with Colin, in forming the Transvaal Wargames Union and the South African Wargames Union. Gavin was famous for his scrupulous, almost painfully honest play. I honestly can't remember what Robert was famous for (Diplomatically), apart from his cheese rolls at our wargame tournaments, which had to count as rank meta-gaming, especially as he pretended his mother had made them! Colin says he remembers the Wits Club running a Diplomacy Tournament, but I have no recollection of this, other than that we played a lot in those days, and I obviously did not win the tournament or I would have remembered it! This, somewhat cold club-room was burned down in a fire, allegedly started by the right-wing Student Moderate Alliance. These were turbulent years politically! Colin left to serve his military service at this stage, and Diplomacy kind of faded from the scene again.

When the student union floor was rebuilt, the wargames club was granted another, altogether sunnier room overlooking the swimming-pool. At this stage RPGs started to dominate at the club. AD&D (of course), Traveller & Call of Cthullu all made sustained appearances. All sorts of odd creatures started invading the club-room, they masqueraded as club members, but tended to behave like trolls. The unspeakable Steven Kane replaced the unmentionable "Cess" Gill at about this time.

Under Scott Sutherland, who took over as Chairman in 1983, the club was put on a sound footing. The club-room, which offered free tea and coffee, and sold beer, was always full! This environment encouraged games-play. No doubt many first-years owe their failure, and drop-out to the club. Keith Krut replaced Scott as Chair, confirming the dominance of RPG, in 1984, but it was Scott and I who revived Diplomacy, and one wall of the new club-room was plastered with maps of Diplomacy games in progress and a large wooden ballot-box was affixed to the clubroom door. It had a slit for depositing orders and a large padlock to avoid dishonesty. Units were represented by coloured pins, and orders were resolved every afternoon when the orders box was cleared.



It was at this time that my own reputation was forged, with many victories, often, I recall, as Russia. Scott Sutherland also fared rather well, and I cannot think of him as anything other than the Arch-Duke, so he must have played the red pieces more often than not. We were quite untroubled by opening theory, although I distinctly remember worrying about what exactly the Lepanto was. I even remember scouring the University library for exact information on this, to me, arcane term. Sorry, Edi! I do remember that we often felt that England and Turkey had enormous potential, which rather dates our efforts, I guess. My own approach to Russian play was to steam-roller all opposition in the belief that by the time anyone reacted you were probably unstoppable. Strangely enough, this seemed to work at the time. I cannot claim to be as scrupulously honest as Gavin Munro or Scott Sutherland, but I do remember that my guiding motto used to be "stab once, and to win!" Since my theme tune these days is sung to the tune of "Staying Alive!" I guess the confidence of youth has been replaced by an altogether more sober realism. Come to think of it, I was seldom sober in those days, the result of a club room awash with beer.

The Avalon Hill Conference maps were stapled onto the club-room notice-board, and were adorned with colour-coded pins. Scott was very adept at painting, and the tiny pins had As and Fs on them to represent armies and fleets. These tended to wear thin, and the Black Sea in particular was often the scene of a keen forensic examination to determine if the fleet in question was more white than yellow, or yellow than white. Upon the result of this forensic investigation would often hinge an empire!

Meanwhile, on the table a board was set up, and furious arguments were often engaged over what Italy should have done to avoid the loss of Tunis. Since Abe was no longer around, Tunis was just another town, but probably vital to Italian fortunes anyway. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, we never thought to document these games. I seem to remember that we misread the rules somewhat and that supporting units did not have their support cut if they themselves were supported. This is an interesting rules variation, by the way.

We played mainly standard games, but did start a 3D variation in which several games were linked. A unit could move to another map (A Munich Board A - Munich Board C). All good fun. At this time, too, games such as *Machiavelli* and *Dune*, which have affinities with Diplomacy, were frightfully popular. I made an awfully good Bene Gesserit witch! Keith Krut was our usual Baron. At this time Grant Casey and Tim Ledgerwood were frequent sitters around the table, but Grant's Diplomacy exploits were in the future, I think.

Our staple of conversation was politics, and in particular our response to military conscription, an issue that faced us all. Scott had served in Angola, and was a mine of

information on all things military. On one occasion I remember him teaching us how to make a Molotov cocktail ahead of the countrywide protests over the tri-cameral elections. Rob England came armed for the demonstrations with a Gucci style gas-mask and scarf combo, and this fitted our level of political militancy rather more closely than the incendiary devices. At this time too, Sean Kopel was often in our club-room, more for the coffee I suspect than the gaming. Sean was a youth member of the main parliamentary opposition, the Progressive Federal Party (Abe's party), and was very active in opposing the National Party Student Moderate Alliance on campus. He was famous for his populist poster campaigns against conscription, such as "Kadets is Kak!" and "Boetie gaan Township toe!" I remember him responding to a policeman at a protest who had ordered him to move that he couldn't do it as that would mean he would come within 10 metres of another protester and that would make him illegal, and he didn't want to break the law. The policeman fumed and moved on.



In the end I was the only one actually arrested, mainly because my level of fitness and an uneven curb-stone let me down. Nevertheless, Scott says his commanding officer called him in and showed him photographs and asked him to identify us from the crowd, and a strange character called Craig Kotze joined us. He worked for The Star newspaper, but in 1990 was suddenly identified as a police captain, and became a media spokesman for the South African police. Quite a shock to us, and probably the main reason why we all had such unjustifiably fat files.

But enough about politics, back to the Diplomacy. The overall standard of play was probably never that high, but I do believe that, at the peak of its popularity in 1984/85 Diplomacy at Wits could have stood up to any examination. The memory of those games has stayed with me all these years, and I am convinced that when the history of Diplomacy in South Africa finally gets written, this little episode will feature prominently. Not least because one of the spin-offs of Diplomacy being played at Wits was when Colin, Gavin, Robert and myself started the Transvaal and the South African Wargames Union, Diplomacy was written into the Constitution explicitly. The government then went on to recognise the SAWU constitution. The ramification of this move means that any organized expression of the Diplomacy hobby needs to fall under the aegis of SAWU control. Diplomacy is thus officially recognised as a sport in South Africa, allowing National teams to be selected,

provided criteria are met.

I left the country finally in 1985 to avoid conscription and fighting an immoral war in Angola and in the townships. To my knowledge Diplomacy was played during my absence, but not a lot. There must have been other groups playing, but within SAWU Diplomacy was not taken up with much vigour. I know that Nick Smuts played a bit in Pretoria, and that Eugene Burger played while in the army, he claims under his bunk bed. There were certainly other groups that I do not know about. Copies of the game were sold in shops, and many may still rest at the bottom of cupboards gathering dust – so hard to find seven players, let's play Risk instead!

I returned to South Africa in 1990 as part of a party from the Committee on South African war Resisters (UK) testing the water to see if the government would enforce conscription. Thankfully they did not. I started teaching at a people's education college in Durban called Phambili, which was seeking to pilot democratic models of education. As an extra-mural I started a wargames club. No Diplomacy was played, but I did try to introduce a campaign game loosely based on Diplomacy, which never really took off. I then moved back to Johannesburg, having re-united with my University sweetheart. After a year at a girl's school, I moved to St Enda's Secondary School, and started a wargames club there. Again, no Diplomacy was played initially.

I didn't play much wargames at all during this period. I was too busy being married with young children! Also, to be frank, the increasing size and detail of the rules were off-putting to me. I enjoyed playing Scott Sutherland's Napoleonic rules which used a variable bound system, something I also used with my own English Civil War rules called Push of Pike. I found the Wargames Research Group rules sets increasingly tedious to play, so bereft of ideas and, well, fun. Donald Featherstone, how I longed for those Halcyon days. Even the marbles method seemed preferable to modern rules sets.



In 2002, however, remembering, as I often did my glory days at Wits, I idly typed Diplomacy into a search engine, and discovered the PBEM hobby! I joined a game on a judge and had a real ball. I had a flame war with the Russian, and was reduced to a single unit, recovering to second spot after a solo was narrowly averted. I was

instantly hooked on the e-mail hobby. It could be done between nappy changes!

I decided to try and get Diplomacy played again within the South African Wargames Union championship circuit. My main problem was lack of a board. The shops in South Africa no longer carried Diplomacy, and buying one from overseas was prohibitively expensive. Colin still had a set, probably my old board, donated to the Wits Club so many years before, but half the pieces were missing.

In 2003 I organised a Diplomacy Tournament at the Old Edwardian Club, jointly hosted by Old Eds and by my school wargames club, the St Enda's Eagles. The tournament was played on two boards scrounged from somewhere with tooth pick flag units, one flag for armies, two for fleets, stuck to the board with press-stick. Scott Sutherland and Richard Ligault jointly shared the victory, and sixteen people participated. Not a bad re-launch for Diplomacy.



In the meantime I had been speaking to Edi Birsan, and had invited him over to play in our inaugural National Championships. He very graciously agreed. Thirteen players were to participate in the Tournament, which Edi won. Edi donated several Diplomacy sets to the South African hobby, which have been very useful indeed. Edi also attended the tournament being played at the school club, a tournament which ran for the next four years until I left the school last year. 2003 Was a bumper year as a Gauteng Championship won by Matthew Strachan and an SA Schools Championships won by Rory Strachan were both staged.

While the face to face hobby seemed well launched, the seeds of its undoing were already sown. Overwhelmingly Diplomacy players were also wargamers, and to a man preferred to play figure-gaming at the SAWU Championships. SAWU rules prohibited a separate Diplomacy Championship on another day, and so, when efforts to persuade wargamers to play Diplomacy failed,

so did any really credible tournament under SAWU aegis. On top of this, apart from a KwaZulu Natal Schools Championships in 2004, no tournament was to be played outside Gauteng. Given these difficulties in launching a sustainable face-to-face hobby, efforts moved to the Internet to try and recruit sufficient players to fuel a championship circuit.

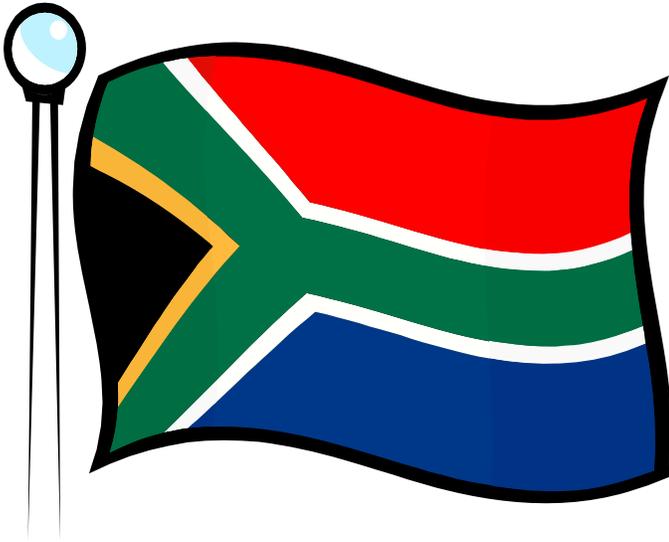
Kevin Hoyle, Grant Casey and myself GMed a series of games on the USDP judge called Witzblitz. These games were used to draw in a number of new players such as Ingo Haferung, Thomas Huang and Nick Smuts. A series of PBEM games was also started including a few variant games which drew in players such as Pavel Rabiner, a youngster from the Wits glory days and new players such as Harry Parker, Richard Tyrer, Reenen Laurie, Johan Steyn and Eugene Burger. While never over-subscribed, these games helped to keep Diplomacy in the eye and to provide an opportunity for South Africans to play whenever they wanted.

A web portal was set up at www.embassysa.co.za with a relational database allowing for games to be tracked and a ranking system employed based on the MasterPoints system. The funding of this domain is my major contribution to Diplomacy in South Africa. I also set up a virtual Diplomacy Club, called The Embassy which could be used to bring players into Diplomacy via the web portal, and into the SAWU system.

The site also selected teams to play in International PBEM tournaments such as the World Masters, DipWorld, Patriot Games and most recently the World Cup. The chosen name of the team was the Diplomatic Corpse, and while South African players have generally been chosen, a few Australians and a Singaporean have also played. We have never performed very well, but the team has developed an identity and a sense of being the expression of the hobby in South Africa, (www.embassysa.co.za/dc.htm). The Corpse team has also helped raise the profile of South African involvement in the game internationally. Most of all it has been a great deal of fun!

In 2006 I raised the issue of a World Cup of Diplomacy tournament within the DipWorld community. The idea was for a team tournament in which each team was made up of nationals, so that there might be an English, a French, a Brazilian, an American team, for example battling it out just as they do in other sports which have a World Cup. The idea was generally rejected, but a separate discussion group was set up on yahoogroups to see if the idea was viable. While some participants were to point out potential problems, generally speaking it was decided to try the idea out. I got the ball rolling by establishing a World Cup Charter document which was adopted with amendment and a World Cup Council was elected. Bids were called for and Jérémie Lefrançois won the right to host the inaugural World Cup on his Stabberfou site. He has done a magnificent job, and the

tournament seems to be working well, despite some teething problems.



In South Africa, however, the simple act of having a team to play in the World Cup was to prove a fraught issue. SAWU had been re-named Mind Sports South Africa (MSSA) and efforts to get Diplomacy played at official tournaments were continuing. With the face to face game in South Africa struggling to live up to its early promise, by 2007 it had become clear that the way to go might be to take the proposed Grand Prix Circuit online. This meant restructuring the PBEM game, getting the Embassy Club registered under the new federation, and getting a proposal for a new online tournament circuit accepted. While these initiatives were being set in motion, I was hit by severe financial constraints. After leaving teaching I had joined my wife to work for Sotheby's Realty, just in time for a severe slump in the market brought on by successive interest rate hikes and a new Credit Act which saw bank acceptance of new mortgages drop to 2% in the first month. I simply could not afford to register the new club and pay affiliation fees! The affiliation and the new online league proposal had to sit on the shelf, and will only now go in in January.

The World Cup was thus launched well before Diplomacy had got its house in order.

On top of this, all year the media was buzzing with stories of the New Sports Bill which was working its way through parliament. While innocuous enough on paper, apparently the sting was in the bureaucratic interpretations which headlines screamed would lead to a "Bill to Kill Sport". The media was particularly worried about the rugby world cup and the fact that the bill, if signed by President Mbeki, would mean rigid racial quotas in team selection. Quotas are a hot political issue in South Africa where much sport is still seen to be divided along racial lines.

Diplomacy itself is also divided. Most senior players are

white, while most junior players, as a result of my efforts at St Enda's school, are black. While time might heal these divisions, with the best intentions, the natural authority of senior over junior ensures that Diplomacy is perceived as a "white" sport, and until some of our young black players take the hobby beyond school, it will continue to be seen as such. The online league is seen as a possible solution in this regard, providing a vehicle for school players to continue playing.

In 2006 three youngsters from Soweto, Dominic Aphane, Musa Mnisi and Phumla Mpili were chosen for the Diplomatic Corpse team in the World Masters. None of these youngsters adapted well to a change from face to face to email, and tended not to write press, and to be eliminated quickly. The same fate met Thato Ntema and Katlego Maaba in the World Cup tournament, and both were replaced when they stopped entering orders. While we felt that we were making every effort to meet quotas voluntarily, obviously we feared running foul of the new law.

In any event the bill was not signed until after the rugby world cup, which also gave the Diplomatic Corpse team an excuse to quickly enter the Diplomacy World Cup before its provisions became enforceable. Apart from quotas, these included fines of R30 000 apparently for individuals participating in any international event without permission of their sporting federation. According to Colin Webster, President of Mind Sports South Africa this would include any social Diplomacy game which happened to involve a non-South African citizen. While this interpretation seems unlikely to me, as the Internet is not mentioned in the act, and I doubt had been thought of as a vehicle for international sport, it is clear that we will need to ensure that Diplomacy quickly falls under MSSA supervision and that all players register their games with the federation to protect themselves from possible prosecution.

I know that people from outside South Africa cannot understand why such a bill might be perceived as needed, but one must remember that many sports codes, not including Mind Sports I hasten to add, are seeking to exploit loopholes in the law to continue to practice a form of ongoing Apartheid in sport, and that the law does much to encourage development, something we should all welcome. Race is a huge issue even today in South Africa, and not something to be wished away. The deep divides in our society need to be tackled in every sphere of life. In our own small way I hope that Diplomacy is seen to part of the solution and not the problem.

If you would like to send feedback on this article, you can do so by writing a Letter to the Editor for Diplomacy World, or if you prefer a private communication you can always contact Dorian Love directly at Leogends "of" iafrica.com.

Ruminations on 100 issues of Diplomacy World or The Life Span of My Hobby

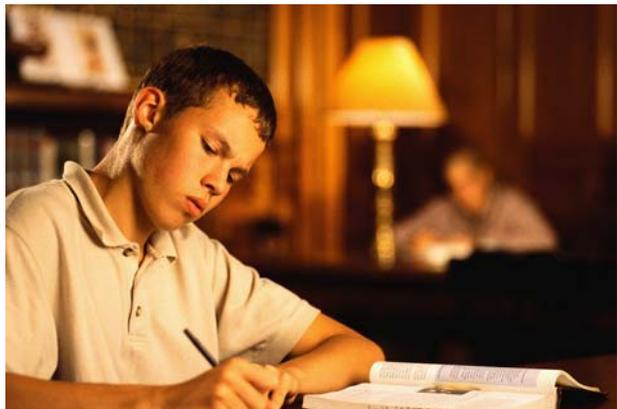
By Gary Behnen

Doug was nice enough to send me a note (and 13+ reminders) asking for my thoughts of the hobby over the last 100 issues and anything I thought worthy of mention. This will be a rambling reminiscence and by no means complete, so please do not feel funny if you are or are not included...

You might have guessed from the title that my awareness of and involvement in the hobby coincided within a few months of the 1st issue of Diplomacy World. That Albatross Press Publication emanating from beautiful Lebanon, IN inspired my fevered hobby participation. My sincere thanks to my friend for introducing me to this life long enjoyment and providing my first year's subscription. My sincere apologies to anyone I may have offended by the play of the game (er, stabbing) especially you Don!

Diplomacy, wow what an interesting game for a hardcore wargamer. That 1st issue had insight from Birsan, Tom Hubbard, Rod Walker, Steve Brooks, Lew Pulsipher, David Lagerson, the CPCRL Rating System (some of these guys were rated!) but the real jewels were the Hoosier Archives Demonstration Game and the News of the Realm (zines and game openings)!!! Press, tactics, analysis by Beyerlein and a chance to get started!

Walt gave me a chance to be the "Novice Instruction Editor" and I was able to pen a few decent articles and a couple real laughers! Thanks Walt for adding me to the staff! One of my favorite opportunities was when I was included in a DW Demo Game. For a fairly new gamer that was a blast but one that let me know I needed to keep working on my craft...



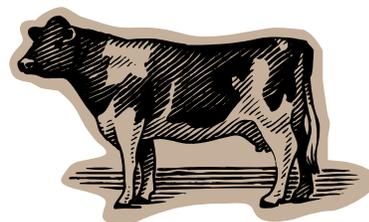
So, what zine to pick? Many looked good and I actually picked a few, but the one that really got my attention was Don Horton's Claw & Fang! Don ran a tight ship and his zine was timely, had fun articles and featured great

games. He was also accepting of an overzealous teen that wanted to try his hand at a subzine and GMing a game. Although it was rewarding it became clear that I should leave publishing to the truly passionate. From that point on my focus was on playing the game and I dove in. At one point I was in over 50 games and despite this I STILL had days with no Dip mail, aarrggggghh!

My active time in the hobby came to a close in the late 90's but there were a few individuals and events that really made an impact on me. After a brief hiatus for college, fraternity life and starting a career I dusted off my Diplomacy Game and reached out to a few old names. One thing led to another and I found out that there was a House Con just 3 hours away each summer called "Pudgecon." Now, if ever there was a con aptly named...well, if you knew Bob Olsen! I called Bob and explained I was a past player from the 70's. Bob immediately said I therefore had to be a "Golden Ager" and would I please come to his con if he paid me an appearance fee of \$250. Now back in '86 that was real money so I could hardly say no. I packed up my faithful wife Ginger and off we went.



The drive through the Flint Hills of Kansas is mesmerizing but Bob accurately told me which cow to turn at and into the drive we parked the Conestoga.



Ginger and I cautiously approached his abode and as we neared the door we heard all manner of yelling and screaming. Having never experienced a housecon at this point Ginger and I considered just backing down the drive but a young lady (Julie Martin???) opened the door and greeted us with a simple "Who are you?" Well I told her our names and she turned and yelled to Bob some

Gary guy and his wife are here. Shortly thereafter Bob poked his head out and declared "...you're a Golden Ager? You're too young!" Never the less he invited us in and I ignorantly took the plunge into housecons. It was quite a cast of characters from the Langleys to Pete Gaughan, Jason Bergmann, Tallman, the Martin's and others and one guy engrossed in a Titan game by the name of Mark Frueh. Mark would teach me Titan one rule per game until I finally learned about Warlock range striking and Titan teleportation over the next 6 months. He permitted the occasional friend to destroy me (Scheifler, Russnak, Peters, etc.) but one day my lessons were complete. Mark would become a valued friend and gaming opponent...right up until that fateful mistake during Dipcon San Antonio...Mark, for the last time I REALLY just forgot what I was doing with that army!!!



Now Pudgecon was the best con and only con I went to until the last year Bob said he was ending it and I met my partner in crime Vince Lutterbie. Not only did Vince live within 2 hours of me but he was completely absorbed into the hobby as well. Not knowing what he was getting into my best hobby move was convincing him and Melody to begin Poolcon! I had another con to attend and I even cut down on the drive!!! Seriously Poolcon would lead to many years of gaming enjoyment and many new games not to mention Acquirecon!!! But we didn't stop there. In '91 we were on our way to Toronto for Cancon Dipcon and a chance to bring Dipcon XXV to KC. Well, we won and spent the next 9 months planning. We had a great con and had the distinction of having the last 6 Dipcon winners present, the 6th being Marc Peters as he grabbed the title that year. Pete Gaughan's 100th issue of Perelandra has a full write-up if you're interested. Pere was simply the best zine of it's time, thanks Pete!



One of the really fun things for Vince and me was that Allan and Hilda Calhmer accepted our invitation and Allan came in 2nd to Marc! The trip earlier that year to meet him and convince them to come was a treat and Allan showed us the original map and game/rules. Allan, thanks for creating such a wonderful game!

Rex Martin from Avalon-Hill was also present at Dipcon XXV and wanted to market the game. I willingly decided to GM my 2nd game named Leviathan a demo game for the new Gamer's Guide. We ran it through Fiat Bellum one of my favorite zines by Don Williams. The players were a tough group: Mazzer, Holley, Frueh, Fassio, Caruso, Martin and Quinn. The winner was Melinda Holley England as she stabbed Kathy's Italy. Great win Melinda and thank you for publishing Everything for me!



Poolcon over the years brought many of the hobby personalities into our lives. It was a pleasure to meet and play with each and every one. Vince & Mel, thanks for making those years unforgettable fun!!!

Lastly I'd be remiss if I didn't mention one of my favorite hobby personalities. Kathy Caruso was a force of her own. I came back into the hobby after the last great feud so I had no preconceived notions of anyone. I found Kathy to be a soul mate when it came to playing the game. We didn't compete against each other often, but I thoroughly enjoyed watching her play and discussing our games. We did hash it out over baseball and ultimately John's baseball game. We really do miss her.

Doug, thanks for letting me take a quick trip down memory lane. DW is now "posted" rather than printed, I do miss the feel of the zine. Thank you for picking up the mantle and thank you for your patience! Happy New Year and may it be a great one for Diplomacy!

Eric and Cathy's Alliance at DipCon '83

By Eric Ozog

Dad, please tell me about how you and Mom met: the tale of Eric & Cathy and the Love Alliance? Ah, that is an interesting story.

I never would have expected to have met my future wife- to- be from playing a boardgame of subterfuge, deception, and betrayal; where one pushes a bunch of colored wooden blocks around on a map of Europe, but stranger things happen in this world. Usually, a Diplomacy convention is the most unlikely place where a man would meet (and ally with...I mean *really* ally with) a member of the female persuasion. The Diplomacy hobby isn't your typical bar scene. I wasn't looking for a girl-friend at the time, certainly not through playing Diplomacy, and at 22 I was unskilled and naive in the ways of romance. I suppose that once a woman sets her sights on you, watch out, lest you get smitten. I can say that your mother, then Cathy Cuning, was determined and persistent. I never asked her this, but wonder if she became involved with the Dip hobby to find Mr. Right. She got started in playing games by hanging out with her college boys playing D&D. She certainly had her pick of the litter in this male-dominated hobby.

named *Cathy Cuning* be real? Well, I supposed she *could* be real. After all, John Boardman thought I was a "Tretick, or Linsey, or Lakofka, or whoever" pseudonym until I first appeared at Gen-Con 1981 in Camden, New Jersey and showed him my driver's license. I wasn't even seriously considering any relationship at that time, and here Ms. Cuning actually *responded* and sent back a filled-out questionnaire, including some hand-written details about her personality under the "OTHER - PLEASE SPECIFY" section: "I could go on and list all my great talents but that wouldn't be modest, which I am also. Just think all this perfection is just waiting for you to come to Phoenix!"

"Now my poor, poor Eric will no one fill out your date form? I can't let you go on being unloved now can I? Why do people refer to you as an elf? I'm not saying it's bad, some of my friends say I look like an elf too." -Cathy Cuning, October 5, 1982

Joking around, I published Cathy's completed "date" form in DBM #45. Cathy was actually quite embarrassed that I had printed it. How was I to know that she was serious?

"Those letters from Cathy Cuning are certainly interesting. Also, I might add that her handwriting looks awfully familiar, in fact, it looks a lot like Andy's [Lischett]. Now, Eric, are you trying to pull a Dixie Grey on the hobby, or is someone trying to pull a Dixie Grey on you?! I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll promise to keep my mouth shut if you'll fill me in on what's happening here. One thing that especially bothers me is that she really knows what zines to sub to (Irksome, Europa Express, DBM, Change of Address), or is this just the effect of dealing with a "man's hobby"?? We shall see. If this is just a farce, I'm sure I can be useful in helping to perpetuate it." -Mark Luedi, from DBM#45, March 1983



The notorious "Love Alliance" at DipCon '83

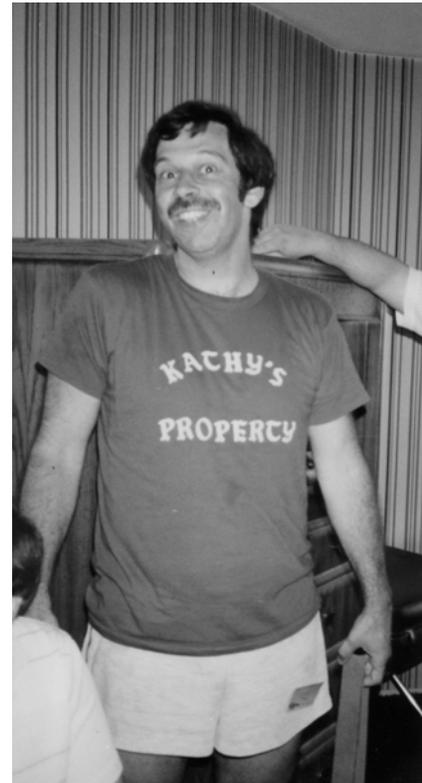
I believe the wheels were set in motion sometime toward the end of 1982, when Russ Rusnak circulated and published in his zine *Who Cares* a questionnaire for any young lady to fill out to win a first date with Eric Ozog. I had been publishing my own Dip zine at the time, *Diplomacy By Moonlight*, and when this person named Cathy Cuning wrote me requesting a sample of my zine, I jokingly sent her a sample of DBM, along with a copy of Rusnak's questionnaire. During this period of the postal dip hobby, pranks, feuding, pseudonyms and fake zines were commonplace- how could a Diplomacy player

Some months had passed, and there wasn't much contact between Cathy and I except for brief notes. Then at one of Paul Rauterberg's Midwest Mob house cons in Milwaukee, sometime during the winter of 1982/83 (was it the Con when Chuck Kaplan wrestled with Paul in the snow?), then Kathy Byrne clued me in over the phone, bluntly in her New York manner: "That girl *loves* you!" Well, when the "mom" of the Diplomacy hobby beats you over the head with a revelation like that, there must be some truth to it. In the meantime, John Caruso and Jim Burgess had also been incubating things with Cathy, telling her about me- as they had met me at DipCon in Baltimore, 1982. Cathy considered John as her Diplomacy Dad. Jim had told Cathy that I was into the comic Elfquest. The first time I talked with Cathy over

the phone was at one of Russ Rusnak's house cons in Burbank, Illinois (the house with the toady wallpaper around the bathroom tub).



Mark Luedi



John Caruso

"He [Mark Luedi] said you turned red when you were handed the phone to talk to me. I'm glad I got to talk to you, but I wish I had waited for you to call. Oh well- next time I'll wait for you to call. Caruso called me back. I didn't get to talk to him too much the first time. He was in a game and by the time he was free- I had hung-up! Oh well, he said that he'll send me a picture of you. I think he was serious. What else did he say about you. Oh he told me that you called at midnight on New Year's but he didn't realize it was you for awhile. He said that Kathy told him it was Terry Tallman? I don't see how Kathy can confuse your voice with Tallman's but John did say that you sounded different. You were louder and not so soft spoken. Let's see what else- John might say something to you about being my room-mate at Origins. I told him what Woody [Steve Arnawoodian] said about me being his roommate! I told John he had to be a good Dad and protect me. So he said, "Oh you want to be a roommate with me and Kathy?" I said no- of course. Then he kept asking me, "who do you want to be roommates with?" over and over again. I finally slipped out your name. He said, "fine, it's settled, Ozog will be your roommate." He said he had ways of convincing you like twisting your arm till it almost broke. I told John not to do that. It's your choice and not someone elses. Besides I'm not even sure if I'll be able to go! The future is so uncertain. But like you said, who needs money? Anyways, if I do make it to Origins and you don't mind having a preppy-witch for a roommate- then the offer is open." - Cathy Cunning, 1/2/83, from DBM #45

There was the offer, in black and white, directly from Ms. Cunning herself, and she was seeking out information about me. I had hardly even written replies to her letters; nor sent a photo, and was shy talking with her on the phone at Rusnak's. It didn't occur to me that she was serious. But by the time DipCon 1983 was to roll around, Cathy and I had gotten to know each other well enough through exchanging letters (which we still have, but won't go through the mushy details) and phone calls, that by the time we met in person, it was as if we were old friends. Even though Cathy sent me her photo, you never truly knew what to expect meeting someone in person, but when I met Cathy at the gate at O'Hare Airport, I confirmed that she did indeed look like an elf, petite, and cute too! On my first impression she *seemed* right. But after driving together to my house, where my family gave her a warm welcome, I wasn't prepared for that first kiss in the stairwell leading upstairs, initiated *by her!* I actually drew back. Whoa, I was really caught off my guard by her forwardness and thought to myself: oh my God, what did I get myself into? The next morning I had to pinch myself- yes, Cathy was still here! We drove east on I-94 to Detroit in my green 1978 Mercury Cougar, which I still drive today (now with 288,000 miles, after several paint jobs, two replacement vinyl tops, two transmission rebuilds, an engine overhaul, and re-chromed bumpers, among other ongoing repairs). This dinosaur is the famous *Toadmobile*, which has been to many a Con, from Baltimore to Wichita, and Madison and Kalamazoo in between. During the five-hour drive we talked and played elf-music (what else?) on the way, including Fairport Convention, Genesis, Renaissance,

and Steeleye Span, which Andy Lischett referred to as "Sheriff of Nottingham music." We also played some Elton John and U2. Cathy and I discovered that our taste in music is almost identical. Cathy Cunning wrote:

"Origins- for me it started in Chicago, in the house of a supposed elf, who has now admitted to being Orcish. I will spare you all the details of that long wait and that first kiss between me and Eric. You can thank me by subbing. Sleep was lost the first night due to the time change and the fact that Eric had to wash the Toadmobile at 12:00 AM! At some silly time in the morning we were off to Detroit. What a wonderful town. We checked into the hotel at about 12:00 pm. Eric was a bit dazed, but we managed to get to the rooms on top of the hotel. Quite a nice view at that too." -Cathy Cunning, Cathy's Ramblings #1

It was partly the freeway daze, finding our way into downtown Detroit, the summer heat rising off the pavement, and a new experience of pulling up to a major big-city hotel (the Hotel Pontchartrain), surrendering my prized personal car to a parking valet, your "date" at your side at the front desk, and then... the awkward but innocent moment of bringing out my Sears Card to pay for the room! "Wrong card, sir." This probably told Cathy more about me than she could have ever hoped to learn through correspondence, phone conversations, and a photo. Cathy just smiled- She undoubtedly knew at that point the real person she was going to get to know this weekend!



Tom Swider, Pat Conlon, Mike Barno

"Then we were off to Cobo Hall to find all the hobby big names. The only problem about being with Eric is that everyone knew who I was before I knew who they were. I mean how many strange auburn haired females hang out with Ozog? Anyways, where was I? Oh yes the first people we run into are Kathy Byrne and Julie Martin. Julie was so tan!! I'm so white. Has something to do with living in Seattle I bet. They inform me that Woody is looking for me and I better not find him for my own sake. They went off to find some sun and get even better tans. Could that be possible?"

We ran into Tom Swider and company. I can't remember who all was there! Oh Mike Barno was with them and Carl Russell. We talk and try to figure out where to go next. This is what took the most time whenever we were with a big group- "What should we do?" "Where should we go?" Finally it was decided to go find Kathy and Julie- I wonder why they wanted to find Julie? There was a crowd with Kathy and Julie by the time we got there. There was my Dad! [John Caruso]. What a hunk he is too! And was god himself, Mark Berch. Hey I liked Mark, why for being short he wasn't so bad. Why he even made me laugh. I was also introduced to John Kador. Now I don't catch this guy's name and he acts like I should know him and he's trying to be so nice to me. Later I find out it's Kador - the one who had stabbed me not once but twice! Oh well I still like smiling John. Woody shows up and [Pat] Conlan and a few more faces, whose names escape me at the moment. We decide after some more time that (a) It's hot outside and (B) we want something to drink. Once this was figured out it was simple committee work. Soon we took over Don's room and we got some beer. I'm overwhelmed by the whole thing and just stay by Eric. All these big names and little me." - Cathy Cunning, Cathy's Ramblings #1



John Kador & James Wall



Left to right: Brad Wilson, Dave Kleiman, Jim Williams & Steve Knight

Indeed, there were many Big Names at the Detroit DipCon in 1983. This was the Con in which most of the "uppity" Midwest Mob (or Mad Lads, from the Wisconsin-Illinois-Indiana-Michigan region, centered around Russ Rusnak) met the "establishment" East Coast Clique (of the New York to Philly to Baltimore corridor, centered around Kathy Byrne)! And here were several of the Hobby Big Names, sitting on the burning concrete steps and planters of the outside plaza at Cobol Hall, in the cut-it-with-a-knife 90+ degree city heat, literally wilting away. I think everyone got carried away talking Hobby celebrity gossip and the feuding going on at the time, rather than practical thinking about retreating to air conditioned comfort. The heat finally drove us all indoors. Woody wanted to hold Cathy's hand in the hallway in the worst way so I put his hand in hers (for about a minute). People always naturally gravitated to Kathy Byrne-she was quite the spark plug- there always seemed to be a circle of toadies around her wherever she went! And now I was "in" with the "in crowd." After having been skewered by Kathy back in '81 and '82 (something about being Bernie Oaklyn's "buddy"), it was actually nice now to be accepted by the Hobby's Main Mom. Maybe she was being easier on me now with Cathy here, but after all, it was Kathy who had a hand in nudging us forward. Friday was the Gunboat tournament, where Cathy had played on a Round One board with Derwood Bowen and myself, followed by a Round Two game including Tom Mainardi and Dave Carter, sharing a 3-way draw with Kathy and Chuck Kaplan. Chuck was beside himself: "God, I can't believe she (Cathy) is winning."

hookers, etc. Why did I get the feeling that that wasn't the place that I wanted to be? The walk was too much for me too and so me and Eric quietly slipped away in an elfish manner.

"The next day we spent some time checking Detroit out. I think Eric liked it more than me. I'll never quite get the feel for the Midwestern cities. But then I'm always amazed by any big cities.



L toR: Fred Davis, Bill Becker, Allan Calhamer, Kathy Byrne, Steve Arnawoodian & Mark Berch

"We missed the panel discussion and Allan Calhamer. Well thanks to my Dad, John Caruso, I did get to meet Mr. Calhamer. That was neat, but I didn't quite know what to say. The Mad Mob had gotten there by then. I found out they had come in at around 3:00 AM and had wanted to say 'hello' to me and Eric, but sadly didn't have our room # and had to go bother someone else. Lucky for us! Still it was nice meeting Marc Peters, Mark Frueh, Russ Rusnak, etc. Frueh really does look like a Puppy!" -Cathy Cunning, CR#1



Jeff Bohner, Tom Mainardi & Porter Wightman

"That night was the beer blast that wasn't. For that matter I wasn't either. I just wanted to go to sleep. Well that was almost all that I wanted to do. I did get to meet Mark Luedi, my big brother. That was nice and many others like Jim 'The Wall' Wall and Steve [Cupcake] Knight. Anyways after quite some time of trying to figure out what we were going to do, someone decided that Greek Town was the place to go and mentioned something about



Derwood Bowen & Mark Frueh

My memory is dim on where Cathy and I slipped away to on that Friday evening, but I remember walking with the entourage to find Greek Town, but decided to rein back,

falling behind the group and then doing an about-face. Something about my urban hackles rising up about wandering a strange neighborhood in downtown Detroit at night. I can't recall exactly where Cathy and I went at that point (this was 24 years ago)- either we had a quiet dinner together or joined some other group closer to the hotel. And while we may have been lucky on the first night that the Mad Lads couldn't find our hotel room, our luck wouldn't hold for the following night.

[On Saturday] "The real Dip tournament begins. Once again I'm on a table with Kathy Byrne. You would think with all the guys here that me and Kathy would get split up, but no. Greg Stewart was also on that board. He could have pulled a win or close to it in that game, but he was too kind to his puppets. He let them live!, either that or he liked having them between him and Kathy and me. That game was a forced 7-way draw! Oh but it was fun getting that draw and the officials coming about saying, "You do realize this will give you no points?" And Kathy, "Yes, who wants points? We're here to have fun!" - Cathy Cunning, CR#1

I usually tend to forget most of the face-to-face dip games I've played (a subconscious protective reflex?), while James Wall would remember every game and every detail, down to the countries we played, and the season that I stabbed him (he made his list and checked it twice for future reference, and would remind me of my past transgressions). One face-to-face game I do remember fondly was here in Detroit, where I had the pleasure of playing face-to-face with Kathy Byrne--my highlight of the dip tournament--and perhaps one of the best games I ever played. Kathy's Italy and my France stayed allied to the finish with a 2-way draw. No 'Ozog Triple Flips' this time. Did you ever experience one of those dip games where you and your ally just 'click', stay true from the beginning, and the other players seem to fall like dominos? Thanks to my alliance with Kathy, I was riding high that day, and placed second overall at DipCon.

"That evening was the official Dipcon society meeting. A long affair, but [Honest] Al Pearson did a hell of a job keeping it moving. I mean who's going to mess with Al? Afterwards, Eric, Dan [The Sleaze] Stafford, Derwood [Booper] Bowen, Porter Wightman and myself went in search of food. We found it in the shape of the ethnic festival. It was nice just to sit outside and relax or talk for a change and not have to worry if someone was going to stab you. Eric and Dan talk about music and life, and me and Porter listened to Derwood's tales from the wonderful world of pizza! And who says that Derwood isn't an exciting guy? Done with food we went back to the hotel and said our good-byes to Dan, Derwood and Porter." -Cathy Cunning



Marc Peters & Mark Larzelere

But Dad, what about 'The Love Alliance' with Mom?

Read on- Rusnak and the Mad Lads weren't going to let us get away with a moment's rest, they crashed our hotel room that night. But they meant well. Cathy continues:

"Ah alone at last and I was so tired, I thought I would fall asleep where I was standing. Me and Eric settle down for a nice romantic evening alone, when the phone rings. It's James Wall and the Mad-mob and they want to come up and play games or something like that. It's either 1:00 am or 2:00 am. I forget which it was, I was in such a daze. I tell them they can come up. I don't remember much of what was going on- just little pieces here and there. I remember someone- Mark Luedi or Tom Swider? Talking about the games we could play. Russ Rusnak laying down on the other bed and informing me that if he's still there at 3:00, he will be staying the night and he hoped I didn't mind. Seeing Paul Rauterberg [Roadworm] keep falling to sleep and waking up as he sat in one of the chairs and thinking that I wish I could do the same. Finally, Mark Frueh gives me his best puppy dog look and says, "Cathy, You don't really want us to spend the night here do you?" Well to be quite honest I didn't and told them to piss off, and so Mark Frueh managed to get them to leave. Even Rusnak, after all it wasn't quite 3:00 am yet. Sleep was the next thing I remember until Eric couldn't stand staying in one place and had to find the boys. So off he went and I got to sleep at last."
-Cathy Cunning, CR #1

I'll leave the rest to your imagination. I will say that my accommodations were more favorable than Rusnak's,

who (so the story goes) slept outside in the hotel parking lot on the roof of the motor home that the group rented. I have no idea why I wanted to go seek out the MadLads to play yet another game at that hour (I suppose it was because I hadn't spent as much time with the MadLad group during this Dipcon) but I had the youthful energy to spare back then. These days I am more likely to opt for the sleep.



Left to Right: Bruce Linsey, Chuck Kaplan, Russ Rusnak & Steve Knight

The term "Love Alliance" was coined back in the postal diplomacy game 1983 P, run by Bob Osuch in his zine *Mass Murders*. In that game, Cathy was France, I was Italy, Mike Mazzer was Austria, Gary Coughlan was Germany, Mike Barno (England), John Michalski (Russia) and Daphne Fritz (Turkey). The press was hilarious and on the crass side. You can guess who Cathy and I allied with:

"LONGDONG, er, LONDON: Once, long ago, there was elven life on this world...but it was duller than shit (Sorry John and Pat). So a demon named Rusnak (GASP! Goes the audience. He named the demon!) disguised himself as Cupid and led a virginal elf to a cunning witch. She did cast a spell upon his soul and entrap him. Together, dominant and submissive, they set out to conquer the world. But the Witch stole a glance at the List compiled by Daf of Mount Venus and found that her elf did not have what it takes to conquer the world. They would have to make it a threesome. Another was found, and the world was divided up into three parts. The elf got Ozogland awarded to him, the cunning one would reign in Cathy Kingdom, and Gary would receive the Box Behind Curtain #3. Realizing that this was So Much Bullshit, Gary did talk. And somewhere in the Northlands, a husky used its leash to control its mistress. And lo, the threat to the world soon was ended, and everyone started playing games once more."

-Mass Murders, Fall 1904 press

DipCon '83 was an extraordinary event. The Hobby was vibrant and in its heyday with dozens of zines, Cathy and I met for the first time (we married in May, 1985), and we were introduced to a huge assortment of new friends from coast to coast. Nowhere else would you find such a collection of disparate personalities under one roof who all had one important thing in common: the passion for the game of Diplomacy. Today I can still say that I'm glad to have discovered the Dip hobby; it changed my life. Cathy changed my life for the better. And although I had frankly stumbled unwittingly into a relationship with the cunning witch and future Mrs. Ozog (I was gregarious at the Dip board but shy with women), it was worth it. The Love Alliance is still going strong 22 years later. Thanks to all who made it possible!



Eric Ozog, Dan Stafford & Paul Rauterberg

If you ever plan to visit the Seattle area in the future, let the Ozogs know! Contact Eric & Cathy at: elferic@juno.com. Remember to bring a gift to your kind and considerate hosts – at the very least some sort of appropriate tribute to Cathy for keeping Eric in line! Happy gaming!

Make Him an Offer He Can't Refuse....

(The 2007 DON Challenge Cup)

By Bill Brown

It was a bright sunny day, the sort that guys like us tend to avoid, as our Cadillac pulled up outside the joint. Kinda dark, a hole in the wall, the best kinda place to meet ya maker....

"Bear" Mischlewski and me cased da joint but there was no takers, it was locked up tighter than a nun's ass, so we maloiked up to the diner on da hill, and who does we run into but "Da Skunk" Munro who was kinda malingerin', ya know, on da prowl for some action. All the way from Sin City he was, fresh from skinning some rabbits he said, said he sent em "packin' back to where they came from".... Da Skunk was kinda forgettin' that I was one of em bunnies.... I think I'd have ta watch dat one....

Anywaze, after knockin' back a cup a joe we maloiked it back to da pub, and whose do we find waitin' onda doorstep but "Baby Face" Goff and a kinda new guy to da business Grant "Sausages" Szuveges. A mean lookin' fella from da north side of town, part of da Chess Club Gang, sooner look at ya than he'd steal a pawn or two I bet....Baby Face was all grins and smiles seein' how he'd brought us here and was expectin' a big pay off.

No sooner had we sized each other up but who pulls up in his Oldsmobile but Mr Lee from Wattletree, leader of the Eastern Triads, down on his luck, lookin' for a quick fix. They say he'd sell his own ma for a quick centre or two....

So dare we waz, six shifty lookin' guys standin' on da sidewalk, man I waz expectin' a driveby to take us out if we didn't get some cover soon...

Anywaze, finally Baby Face pulled a shifty and we waz all inside ina minute – he's pretty good at the breakin' in lark, dats for shure. Baby Face tells us that he's made a deal with the joint and we can have everything we want, drinks, food, broads, whateva for nuthin'. Jeez, he knows how to put on a party. Afta waitin' it out for a hour or so we got down to business.... Dats what we were der for, init?

Anywaze, seein' as we woz only six, Germany is given da shaft and every turn we draw ta see who takes over his turf. Fair 'nough, eh? Sausages pulls a malarkey and comes up with the Channel, like where does he get off? So I pull a knife on him and he quickly skedaddles back, and then when he's got his back turned Pow! I hit him with a baseball bat and go there meself!

Meantime da rest are fightin' over who gets da Turkey leg and Mr Lee from Wattletree comes up trumps, like

he's all over da place. Dat's when Sausages and me cut a deal and we knife em when der not lookin', boy did that knock em down flat. Then da Turk makes a play and da next thing we know we've called it a day cause wez all had enough.... I won't say it woz a fair fight, and Da Skunk and Baby Face are left lookin' sore and sorry.... But we decide to call it quits and meet up again da next day, same joint, same time....



Rear left to right: Grant Szuveges, Andrew Goff, Bill Brown, David Blom. Front left to right: Guy Mischlewski, Thorin Munro, Gary Bekker

Da next day finds us at the diner havin' a cup a joe, sizin' up the opposition. Mr Lee from Wattletree is a no show, rumour is he got lucky last night and we play second fiddle to dat, dat's for shure! So Baby Face and Sausages call in a coupla favours and we seez Gary "Da Baker" Bekker and Dave "Glasses" Blom make a show. Dez guys are da type of guys you'd not want to meet down a dark alley, I'm tellin' ya.

Bear, Sausages and me find out wez all go for da same footy team. I'm not sayin' dat it changes everythin', but man it shure doesn't hurt! And who should we be but EFG? A bid-a-bing here, a bid-a bing dere and we're all over da board like a cold. Bear pulls a nifty trick in da middle ta take Boh and I skin Da Skunk in da North, like, what's not ta like? Dere screamin' for mercy, I'm tellin' ya. Yella and Black!

Dats whens I make me first mistake..... Here wez are, sittin' pretty and all dat, and dere cryin' like babes, and whot dos I do? ACCEPT DA DRAW! Look, I'm not sayin' it's a smart move, it's really a f#\$@in' dum one, but I wanted a big payoff, and playin' with dez bums was child's play. Another game? I sez shure!! A chance ta send Da Skunk back to where he came from with his tail between his legs, shure!

Anywaze, my second mistake was trustin' Bear, man what for Bear? Ya let Baby Face and Da Skunk walk all over us wit dare own EFG! My turd mistake was blowin' any chance we had as I don' build as Austria and we don' get any chance of stoppin' em. Den Da Baker steps in wit his own form of punishment and fires a coupla shots at Sausages and me when were not lookin'. Sausages is left lying dead on da floor....

Den Baby Face makes 'is own mistake. Da Skunk takes offence dat Baby Face is makin' da play, wantsa be da DON, ya know? Da Skunk don' like it, ya know? Da Skunk makes Baby Face an offa he can't refuse, ya

know? And Baby Face is left Baby "Red" Face as Da Skunk shows 'im whos boss, whos da DON ya know?

Anywaze, dat's how it finished. Wez are made to look like bums by Da Skunk, Sausages is carried out in da body bag and wez flee da joint with our tails between our legs. BUT just wait Skunk, wez are comin' ta youse neck of da woods soon and wez will be ready next time... just youse wait and seez...

Whata youse lookin at? Dats da story, get movin to da next ting or I'll haf yaz kneecaps broken.

Welcome to My Place – a Diplomaticorp Report

By Michael Sims

The Past

It was about 5 years ago that I was in the local hobby store browsing thru the board games in search of a new strategy challenge, when I caught a glimpse of the Diplomacy box... a game I'd never played growing up, but always had a curiosity for how it worked. What the heck, into the cart it went. It only took a quick reading of the manual to realize this was my game: no dice, no chance... just 7 players all trying to outwit each other.

From there it didnt take long to figure out I would crush all my friends at this after 2 or 3 playings, and so it was time to find some challenging opposition. I searched high and low on Yahoo, and came across a small group that played PBEM Diplomacy. I tried to join a game run by someone named Pooky, a game called "dc62". After a bit of emailing and a lot of questions, I didn't get in. I was too late, or didn't make the cut... so I left in search of other clubs. There was a lot of archived information to be found on the subject of Diplomacy, but nowhere could I find a place to easily join a game. There were mostly judges with cryptic command lines and plenty of automated systems -- not exactly what I was looking for. Searching around more and more eventually I wiggled my way into a game... and from there I was hooked.

About a year later I heard from my friend about a 17-player World game being run at a club called Diplomaticorp... a name that was vaguely familiar. I checked it out, got in the game, stabbed about 12 players, and sneaked my way to my first solo victory! About half way thru the game, I realized this was the club I tried to get into long ago --chance had brought me full circle, and here is where I came to stay.

The Present

That's how I came to find Diplomaticorp, and since then I've become quite involved with running games, many first-time variants (Pericles, Stonehenge, Seismic) and creating my own Fog of War game, now running its 4th

edition in the increasingly inaccurately named Fog of War Trilogy.

Aside from playing and running games, one of my main goals in the club has been to fill what I perceived as some major voids in the online Diplomacy hobby. Namely, the mechanisms out there for playing were not very inviting, easy to use, or apparent to interested players, and the information that was out there was largely from the 70's, written by old-school postal players, and out of date. This is where we began work on the diplomaticorp.com website... a site designed to be clear, inviting, and full of everything Diplomacy in one friendly place.

So Steve, Kevin, Tony, and myself (the dc moderators) set out to take Diplomaticorp from a Yahoo Group to become the best darn Dip site there is.

Our first goal was to create a database of games that made it super easy to see what games are available, how to join them, and one that tracks the results thereof - all presented in an attractive, simple layout. And that's what we have now on the Open Games page: www.diplomaticorp.com/recruiting.



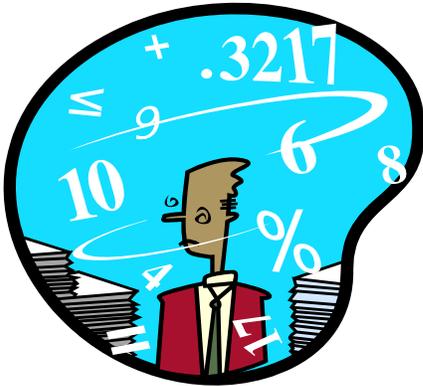
The 2nd goal was to create the first ever Diplomacy Rating system that addresses all the caveats of playing Diplomacy... Full of obstacles, this proved to be a huge challenge to incorporate the existing ratings, player

expectations, replacement players, center-counts, survivals, eliminations, draws, and solos, into one system that accounts for all this information, to yield - a rating. A rating that can measure the relative accomplishment of one player compared to the others, and provide a system of ranking.

Our 3rd goal was to present all this information to the public in an automated, easy-to-maintain real-time fashion. That's where our statistics come into play, some of them at:

www.diplomaticcorp.com/country_stats.

All stats are dynamically generated in real time, so you're always seeing the most up-to-date information on games played. Wins, losses, charts by country, and an individual summary / profile page for each player have all become a reality.



Whew. That was a busy 6 months, and since then dc has undergone some major transformations... from around 5-10 games to the current level of 34 active games being run by 18 GMs. In addition we've gone thru a changing of the guard, and are now joined by Former Trout, making our current leadership team of three:

Steve - The original deathblade_penguin, the guy that was here since dc1 who helped to start it all. Today, Steve is instrumental in maintaining the overall flow of games at diplomaticcorp, ensuring everything moves along like clockwork. Most of his work is done behind the scenes, and leads to the seamless impression a player gets when joining a game in the club.

Trout - Our newest mod, coming to us from the ranks of Cat-23 around the time the website started to take shape... has been a key player in taking the website to the next level... Trout has been ensuring the site is constantly filled with exciting dynamic data, maintaining the game pages, online data, and ensuring the accuracy of everything you see. Trout has also founded the Companion Knights and Light Brigade!

Mike - Me, myself, doing all I can to help Steve and

Trout, and putting together most of the web mechanics.



The Future

What's next: Everything!

I have come to love the club we've put together... it is always my first stop on the internet, and has truly become my home on the web. Our players are an awesome bunch, and seeing the rate of new players and standard games that start almost weekly is the best thing anyone could hope for.

Coming up this winter is the first annual DC Winter Blitz - a two-round tournament, starting in January and complete by summer... it is designed once again, to address what's lacking out there in the Diplomacy world. That is, a tournament that you can enter, play, and walk away from without committing a year or two to join. Add to this the stats and ratings that go along with any dc game and you've got an event that I cant wait to get started.

Also in the early phases is the new DipWiki (www.dipwiki.com), the first online Diplomacy community collaboration and information sharing database. Any Diplomacy player anywhere can create a login and begin posting articles on whatever Diplomacy concept they fancy. It is my goal then that instead of the traditional strategy articles on the web that show the same content written many years ago, we'll now facilitate commentary, replies, and new ideas about them, ideas that may pertain to PBEM games or new variants!

All in all I can't wait to see where the club will go next, and I'd like to personally invite you to visit sometime... to my place, and make it your place too.

You can learn all about the Diplomaticcorp community, as well as these upcoming projects, at their home page:

www.diplomaticcorp.com

Diplomacy World Word Search

By John Paul Ried

(If you need the answer file, email us at [diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@yahoo.com))

Find each of the following words.

GUNBOAT
AVALON HILL
BERLIN
PARIS
BULGARIA
BUILDS
STAB
KENNEDY
ALLIANCE
FALL
HASBRO
GAMEMASTER
DIPLOMACY

AUSTRIA
ORDERS
STALEMATE LINE
TURKEY
SWEDEN
BOUNCE
WORLD WAR I
NEGOTIATE
CONSTANTINOPLE
OPPONENT
RUSSIA
ARMIES
HUNGARY

SEVASTAPOL
SPRING
MOSCOW
FRANCE
DENMARK
FLEETS
SUPPLY CENTERS
YORK
VENICE
KISSINGER
LONDON
SPAIN
ENGLAND

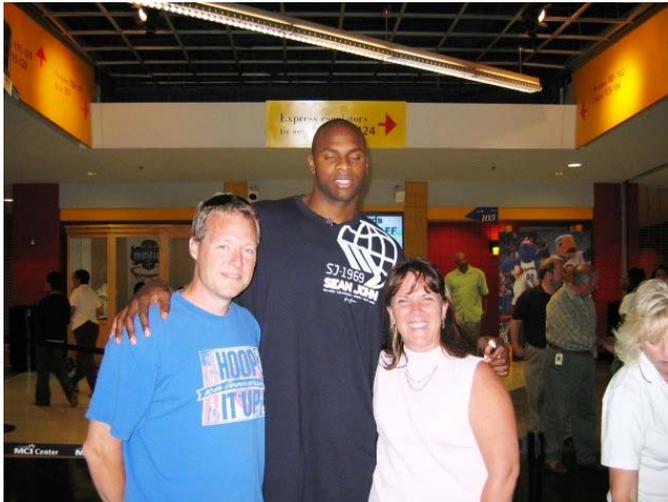
GERMANY
CRONKITE
KIEL
PIEDMONT
BETRAYAL
GASCONY
EDINBURGH
ANKARA
ITALY
EIGHTEEN

A G A L L O P E T S A V E S I G E O A O N S D L I U B E I G H T T N
N L L K I A E G M O W T O L A D C N O D U I I E T K O U S W E D E N
K S P A E S H A D Y N O C S A G Y S G E N O T T N U M U S R R G I T
A N R Y O R K M N C G O O E K E N N E A E A A A A E D R O T O S Y N
R L I A L V N E A R N R A W D L R O W A N Y S A L F E I E C E E O N
S A L S G D R M L O P P O N E O T N O W M D U I T Y I N S I T E N E
O S R S S S M A G O A B G I E N R D A V A D I R F A P O M A Y O L N
O R N U E I R S N Y D E N N E K R A M N E D T A C I M R I A N T G F
O S D R C E E T E I R S E N B A L L I A N C E G R U A L B K Y I N N
P E P E P E G E E P G A O A Y C E M O L P I D L G U N B O A T C I R
F T R E R O A R N I I P K T A A I E T S D D T U E M O S C O E O T A
I H M E W S R L I L P S H T B O U N C E A M I B L N W O C S O M L K
R D O S T N M E L O B K I S S I N G E R A U S R A I S L A L M L L B
E A E I A P A A E A A E O R P A I N L T I L N U M P O T I A I F I L
A K I N N A Y I T R I A A R A G E M W L H U N G A R Y I A I C A H T
H M B A N I S R A B I N R R B P R E E E F R A N C E C E L N I L N W
O N L A R E A A M L V T E N K S T U D B L C I O I S A A D R N L O N
I T A T L F K W E G K T N E N A A A B K D E S A B E Y U E L E R L O
B E R L I N A D L N A S L T I O T H R N I P I C O A A E S I V R A B
A D Y E K T N L A I A L U T Y O E R I B I P E K R S E E R E E G V T
A T O T A Y P R T R C N O E N E I U S I H D D T L T G A E L E A A A
C P L N D I M O S P T G H N P O B V C G A A E A N E G R P N R M E V
T A N N N L S W T S E R H B T L P E R A T B N L I L E O A E Y I I C
S G O R E S T A B N S I U N E E D U R U S S I A U C N S N E N M T R
F L S P A I N Y C A M O L P I D B L O N O N G B F I R S E T A A I I
R D A I R T S U A N A E P T I N C D R U I R G I T E D N C H M S K S
N N E D E W S S Y B T D N U I E R L N T N U L N T S I K A G R T N N
R U M O L E G N S I E O W D P A T O T A D N A N E L S L P I E E O I
P L S E N Y O I K E S Y E N O Y E K R U T T E I E A A N M E G R R O
I Y A D A D D N T T U E B N A G I N A C S C M T A W N I A T S A C R
E A E E N E O I E O N E I S Y A G P O N Y R A R D K K L N P U N N A
D R F O N R I S N C G D N U O B R R O L A M E R O Y A N Y O K M M I
M T L P C I U N A N I E O L H A B C P G E I E S A E R R S R O G P A
O E S M Y R I T S C E N N E E A Y P T L A N K A R R A R N T E E L F
N B E I L I A S R A M K E Y H E U B E S A V A L O N H I L O I M P Y
T H S E V A S T A P O L R V S S S T T R R N O N C M R I I B C C W N
S O H D W C P L E K R L A O A I S L E R L E L L W T T B G M N A S O

a jack rabbit start

by richard martin

it's been a long time since i've done anything directly involving the game of diplomacy, but it's still clear to me how much the game and the postal community have had an effect on my life. i was introduced to diplomacy in 9th grade, and was hooked immediately. fortunately i had about a dozen friends who also fell in love with the game to varying degrees, so it wasn't too hard to get a game (or two, or three) together every weekend. but playing dip also had a transformative effect on every other multiplayer game i played - suddenly everything became negotiable. our gang merrily stabbed our way through high school; alternating periods of diplomacy addiction with d&d binges (where that negotiating practice came in very handy). a couple of us would spend hours looking over the map and figuring out stalemate lines and cool tactical tricks. and we always played to win - we'd agree on a "dual win" if one player couldn't establish a clear winning shot, but rarely would we go higher than that. draws....feh!



richard "dick" martin, his wife becky, and brendan haywood (that's richard in the middle on the left)

when we graduated a couple of the guys thought it'd be cool to stay in touch by playing dip by mail. i'd never heard of that before but i didn't mind writing an occasional postcard, so took a standby spot. that game never really went anywhere - i think the gm folded after a couple issues, but somehow i latched onto john boardman's graustark and got into a game with all strangers - 1978id, I was germany. that game also was over quickly, but this time it was because i'd snagged 23 dots by 1906. i managed to win a few more games before my playing days were over (i was particularly proud of my 2 center austrian standby position that i won with, and my 17 center "stab" of mark lew (it was his idea!)), but that was about as good a game as i've ever played. kinda sad that the peak of my career was my first game! but it was enough to hook me for another half

dozen years or so, and I keep toying with the idea of 20th or 25th or 30th year comeback game. as long as there's a graustark, i suppose it's possible, though with email, instant messengers, webcams, and free long distance calls it'd hardly be the same game.

it was one thing to gleefully backstab high school friends, and another to stab perfect strangers, or worse yet to befriend someone just to stab them later. eventually i just couldn't bring myself to do it anymore - i lost the will to lie to my fellow players. and as you probably know, a dipper who can't lie is doomed to being the guy with five dots in 1905 that gets taken out by the bigger fish. oh well, it was fun while it lasted. i'd become more interested in other multiplayer games anyways, like titan and especially 1830 (which is still my all-time favorite board game)...plenty of room for negotiation, without the need to lie - perfect.

along the way i started a zeen, because i thought i could gm as well as anybody else i'd seen. i did ok for quite a while, putting out somewhere over a hundred issues (though many of them were 30+ page "double issues"), and not screwing up the games, while promoting a press-friendly environment. the players seemed to have a good time, for the most part. the zeen started semi-seriously, quickly becoming silly as i stopped titling it the same thing twice (except, of course, for the issue called "the same thing twice"), then veered off into too-serious, and finally burning out totally when it stopped being fun. when john daly, jack brawner and i created/revived the orphan service for placing abandoned games, i could never understand why a folded gm wouldn't be more helpful placing games. having experienced it from the other side, i at least know what happened with me - a deadly combination of procrastination, enjoying not having the burden of having to give a 72 hour sleepless weekend to putting out silly game reports, and just not caring anymore. i hope all the games found good homes, as i know the players put a lot of effort into them, but i don't know and don't care what happened to them to this day.

i also published a zeen for publishers for a while, that i thought was pretty decent and different. i tried pbm 1830 for a while, but even though that had potential, it wasn't really practical by mail. that might be more workable now with email and putting the map on a web page, if anybody still plays 1830. we tried to do two 7x7 gunboat dip tournaments. they started out well, but sank due to a lack of standby players and my imminent burnout.

but what is dipdom without the personalities? it's hard to give everyone proper credit, but a few people need to be mentioned. first and foremost, of course, is kathy byrne caruso, simply the most charismatic person i've ever met

and someone i still miss. john caruso, a good friend and fellow crazy monster gamer. playing titan with kathy's daughter phyllis and hanging with the twins frank & francine at byrnecons (yes, frank, pro wrestling is still staged!). bob olsen, simply the funniest writer i've come across. the philly gang - brad wilson, tom mainardi, woody, and tom swider. locals mark larzelere, ed wrobel, and ken peel who are just enjoyable people to game with. robt sacks...i still am not sure if he was for real or an andy kaufman-like creation. mark lew, for showing that capitalization really is an optional thing. my ex-wife julie, for perfecting the "prize game" and as a major contributor to most of my efforts and for humoring me for many years. gary coughlin...i'm not sure anymore what

went so wrong, but i'm sorry it did. Yes, i did enjoy playing in europa express. ☺

and too many others to name. i love you, long time!

No, Richard's shift and Caps Lock keys are not broken, so don't email me and ask about it...just accept that this hobby can be a lot of fun if you just LET IT...and if you don't take everything so seriously all the time (just part of the time, like when you steal my dots – THAT'S serious) Richard's numerous hobby publications include House of Lords, Retaliation, and Thorazeen.

Selected News Items From Universe 1966-AA

By Rod Walker

(Dates and names may differ from earlier printed sources in order to protect the guilty and in accordance with faulty old-fart memory.)

Forward: In its early years, postal Diplomacy was particularly blessed in the people who participated in it. The hobby tended not to attract people who were primarily gamers, so much as people for whom Diplomacy was simply one interest among many. This was a highly literate bunch. Unlike 95% of the people whose compositional lack of skill I encounter daily on the Internet, they understood grammar, spelling, punctuation, dialogue, description – and had excellent vocabularies. The result was the embellishment of many postal games with so-called press releases. My own first postal game came to be almost overwhelmed with these. Even the Gamesmaster, John Boardman, contributed many hilarious items based on the old newspaper comic and animated theater cartoon, the Katzenjammer ("Cats' Howls") Kids.



By way of background, this game was dominated by a classic configuration: an Austro-Italian alliance facing an Anglo-German one. In time, England and Italy were betrayed by their allies and the end-game saw a massive Austria facing a massive Germany, with a few minor powers thrown in. I was playing Austria. It became clear that, while holding a solid 16-center "stalemate" position

(see John Beshara's excellent studies on that subject), Germany already had 17 and had a probable lock on the 18th. I was never quite sure why – perhaps my subtle and clever diplomacy (beg, beg, grovel, faith, loyalty, please, please) – the Kaiser actually agreed to a draw.

What follows is designed to give the reader some idea of the "press" ambience that surrounded the game. I could just at this point reprint a number of releases that appeared in GRAUSTARK. However, nobody loves a clip show, least of all me, so you're going to be blessed with essentially original material...with many of the original characters, of course.

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ROME (18 September 1900): As the 19th Century nears its close, His Holiness, Pope Innocent XVII, Apostolic King of Italy, today stunned the world by announcing that all outstanding issues with the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been settled. Symbolic of the new friendship between the two Great Powers will be the marriage of His Holiness' daughter, Principessa Lucrezia di Borgia to the new Emperor. The marriage is to follow the coronation of Friedrich the Surprisingly Healthy, who unexpectedly succeeded after the death of Emperor Franz-Josef and most of the Imperial family after they had been invited to a warm, sunny picnic of tinned meat and aged gourmet mayonnaise sandwiches. Newspapers in Austria-Hungary and Italy which spoke murkily of poison and/or secret treaties all fell victim to unexpectedly coincidental explosions and fires caused by faulty gas mains.

SALZBURG (1 January 1901): The first day of the 20th Century saw the lavish nuptials of Italy's Principessa Lucrezia and Austria's Emperor Friedrich. The gala affair was attended by most of the crowned heads of Europe. Representing Queen Victoria was Crown Prince Edward, accompanied by his good friend Dorian Grey (the art critic) and by their mutual companion Lady Bawdy-Bustle. The continued absence of Viscount Bawdy-Bustle, now lasting 17 years, remains unexplained – despite constant but unsuccessful court actions by his brother and presumed heir, Lord Poof-Throttle, to have him declared dead.

Also attending are Kaiser Wilhelm III Wormtongue of Germany, Napoleon VI the Nasty of France, Tsar Feodor II the Feckless of Russia, and Sultan Timbur the Shivered of Turkey.

The appearance of dignitaries from more distant lands excited much comment from the public and in the press. Conspicuous in the crowd was the portly frame of Wan Phat Bhut, the Crown Prince of China.

Equally conspicuous (and portly) was a great crowd favorite, Queen Lotta Huuhah of Hawaii, Tahiti, and Samoa. With her was her brother Huuboi Huuhah. The happy couple were also celebrating the 10th anniversary of their wedding, an event at which the last living Howlee missionary was roasted and eaten. This great feast was almost spoilt when the apple in the main entrée's mouth caught fire. The Huuhahs held court in their pavilion, flying a flag with the national motto of Hawaii, "In We Cest".

Also attending was the Zulu Emperor, Softshoe III; the High King of Ireland, Brian Boring; Cesare Borgia, the Principessa's brother; the U.S. President, George Butch (he wishes!); and the Crown Prince of the Mexican Empire, Maximillian Moctezuma.

Prince Maximillian was asked to comment on the career of his father, Moctezuma IV – who, having already been on the throne for 9 years, has had the longest reign of any Mexican ruler in the 19th Century. "Well," replied the Prince, "once they ran out of junior Hapsburgs willing to risk life and limb, not to mention obscure cousins of Victoria willing to do the same, plus a couple of unusually stupid Bonapartes, they had to turn to an original Mexican royal family. Grandpa Moctezuma was already 91 when he was crowned, so he didn't last long. Daddy's in excellent health and to boot he's wildly popular from the Rio Grande to Honduras (except our colony of Cuba) – especially after he started building the new pyramids."

Finally the main attraction appeared. The bride was wearing white silk brocade – at which many in the audience reacted with a nudge, nudge, wink, wink. The groom was in blue bombazine and velour, with his great red beard gathered into a gold mesh snood. As the

crowd cried lustily, "Long live Emperor Friedrich!", Principessa Lucrezia was heard to remark, "In a pig's eye" – or possibly "When pigs fly".



VIENNA (12 October 1901): Rumors abound that Emperor Friedrich the Surprisingly Healthy has taken to his bed with an undiagnosed illness are being pooh-pooed by the Austrian Foreign Office. The pooh-pooing was done by Foreign Minister Rückhol Siegreiches himself. "Pooh," said His Excellency, "pooh."

VIENNA (26 August 1903): The nation is in mourning for the late Emperor Friedrich the Surprisingly ... um, whatever. After several bouts with an undiagnosed illness, His Imperial Majesty succumbed shortly before 10 PM. In the Imperial Opera House, a performance of PDQ Bach's masterpiece, "The Abduction of Figaro", was interrupted by an announcement of the sad tidings. This was followed by a performance of the same composer's Missa Hilarious. The audience spontaneously stood during the Ho-ho-hosanna. There is no truth whatever to the rumor that palace guards used bayonets to prompt the spontaneity. Really. Pinkie-swear.

At midnight Principessa Lucrezia assumed the title of Empress. The few remaining members of the Hapsburg dynasty who might have protested this action seem all to be out of the capital and unreachable by any means. A few newspapers which, in their morning editions, used the term "possible food poisoning" in connection with the death, have all voluntarily ceased publication.

At 8 this morning, Schonbrunn Palace announced a suspension of the Reichstag and a wholesale replacement of the Cabinet. Replacing Prime Minister Josef Niemand-Schläft will be Giuseppe Nessun-Dorma. In place of the unpopular foreign minister, Graf Rückhol Siegreiches, is Her Imperial Majesty's dearest ... um, friend, Count Ritorno Vincitore. And so on – the replacement with so many good German names with operatic-sounding Italian names has the inhabitants of the Waltz capital worried they may soon be doing the tarantella instead.

VIENNA (9 April 1904): Count Vincitore, in one of his regular foreign policy briefings, afforded the press with an overview of the current military situation. After an amusing story involving a rabbi, a priest, a Mormon, a contortionist, and a couple of milkmaids, the Foreign Minister continued, "As you know, our German and

English allies have destroyed the Russian Empire, leaving only a rump state at Sevastopol under the control of some distant Romanov cousin.” (Applause) “With the fall of Sofia and Philippopolis, we now control the Balkans, save for some sectors around Constantinople. Turkey’s back is against the wall and, with Italian help, we shall wrest control of Anatolia from the Sultan’s enfeebled hands.” (Applause) “Our great allies, the Italians, have routed French imperial forces from northern Africa, Provence, and Iberia – leaving the Bonapartes holed up in Paris.” (Applause) Meanwhile, Anglo-German forces have been uniformly victorious in the Atlantic, the Low Countries, and Scandinavia. As a result, the Grand Quadruple Alliance has all but won the Great War in Europe.” (Applause) “God save the Empress, the Pope, the Kaiser, and the King!” (Applause, cries of “God save them all!”)



VIENNA (10 April 1904): Jubilant crowds from Trieste to Budapest are celebrating fresh Imperial victories. Late last night the Imperial First and Second Armies swarmed into Italy, taking Venice immediately and terminally compromising the positions of Milan and Modena. The Italian fleet is in full rout from the Ionian Sea and predictions are that Rome will fall within 6 months. Pope Innocent XVII, seemingly close to apoplexy, appeared to the faithful on his Vatican balcony this afternoon to condemn the Austrian attack. “Sputter,” he proclaimed, “sputter, sputter, yell, shriek!”

BERLIN (10 April 1904): Today’s declaration of war by the Kaiser against England seems to have caught few people by surprise, despite the fact that official rumors have been rife in the German capital for weeks. Already the Imperial fleet has entered the North Sea, while the Imperial armies have crossed the borders into Belgium and Burgundy. King Brian of Ireland, always having an eye on the main chance, has already offered asylum to King Edward.

ROME (16 June 1905): Mopping-up operations have pretty much wound down in the far-flung regions of the Greater Austro-Hungarian Empire. The total and unconditional surrender of all Italian forces last Fall was

completely unexpected but very welcome. Pope Innocent XVII was captured by a unit of Hungarian hussars near Monte Cassino, a name which had an irresistible allure to the roulette-loving pontiff. His ex-Holiness had been disguised as a large frog wearing goggles and driving gloves.

ROME (17 July 1905): Following the abdication of Pope Innocent, the College of Cardinals met today to elect his successor. Empress Lucrezia has been in Rome to greet the arrival of the holy fathers for the last 2 weeks, affording each of them a private audience of a couple of hours or so – about which each of them also refused to say anything. The odds-on favorite has long been Cardinal Gatto di Spumoni, who has accumulated a war-chest of 100 million lire in the event of an actual free papal election. Fat chance. The vote was unanimous – amazing! – even on the part of Cardinals whose personal inclinations seemed not to allow for such a result. (Note: A few days later, Hedda Gabber revealed in her *Gazetto di Roma* gossip column that most of the Cardinals’ private audiences were actually with Her Holiness’ younger brother Cesare, which explains everything.)



ROME (20 July 1905): The coronation of Austrian Empress Lucrezia (“Lucy”) di Borgia as Pope today was the most lavish spectacle held in Christendom since the Hallowe’en of the Six Emperors in 1345. Her Holiness took the name of Joan II, in memory of the recently sainted Pope Joan (9th Century or thereabouts). “After all,” the Principessa had explained earlier, “She was getting ready to give virgin birth. Clearly she had been celibate, although technically she only vowed to observe male celibacy.”

Performing the coronation ceremony was Cardinal Gatto di Spumoni, who grumbled a lot during the procedure – although he did seem to enjoy rubbing holy oil (that is, olive oil, which is officially holy in Italy) on Her Holiness’ breasts. Twice. Escorting Her Holiness to the coronation dais was her current *amico di mezzanotte*, the Imperial Zulu ambassador, Chief Rumpa-Mpumpa XVI. “He’s the only one of that name, actually,” confided Her Holiness’ brother Cesare. “The number’s in inches.” Meanwhile, Pope Joan’s deposed father, the ex-Innocent XVII, has been exiled to a really tiny island somewhere.

No, not Elba. That never works. "You have to remember," commented Her Holiness, "that Diplomacy's no game for Innocents."

Dear Kindly Reader: You may at this point imagine more of this sort of thing going on for about 10 game-years. This would include the exploits of the notorious English detective, Sir Henry Orfal-Dorfal and his amanuensis, Dr. John Whatwhatwhat, as well as more wonderful music by PDQ Bach. The war drags on. The Empire of Sevastopol survives. Germany has 17 centers; Austria, 16. Finally:

SALZBURG (29 February 1916) (byline: Truman

Compote): Bells are ringing everywhere in this Archiepiscopal city. A personal meeting between Kaiser Wilhelm and Imperial Pope Joan (with Tsar Rostislav hanging around, hoping) has resulted in a declaration of peace! The settlement was made on the basis of *status quo post bellum*. (Tsar Rostislav breathes a sigh of relief.) Sevastopol becomes an autonomous Papal State. (Ex-Tsar Rostislav shrugs his shoulders – he gets a billion Kronen and half of Hong Kong. Hong, I think.)

After the formal signing of the Holy Instrument of Peace, this reporter attended a private interview with Her Holiness. Afterward, I asked Her some questions.

POPE JOAN: Ah well! It turns out not to have been a gun, after all, thank Zeus. You cheeky devil! And you certainly were glad to see Us.

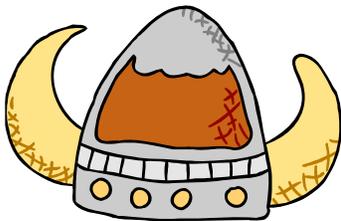
TRUMAN: Your Holiness

POPE JOAN: You may call Us "Lucy".

TRUMAN: Lucy, one of our readers asks what your favorite breakfast is.

LUCY: Spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, eggs, bacon, and spam.

VIKINGS (singing): Spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam,



TRUMAN: How long do you expect this peace will last?

LUCY: (Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.)

TRUMAN: Do you now plan to get married, or will you continue to ... well, you know?

LUCY: Oh, well, probably both.

TRUMAN: Is Ambassador Rumpa-Mpumpa your top choice?

LUCY: Um,

TRUMAN: So to speak

LUCY: (Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.)

TRUMAN: What are Kaiser Wormtongue's chances?

LUCY: Um,

TRUMAN: For marriage, that is.

LUCY: (Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.)

TRUMAN: What are your plans for the future?

LUCY: (Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.)

TRUMAN: For tonight?

LUCY: (Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.)]

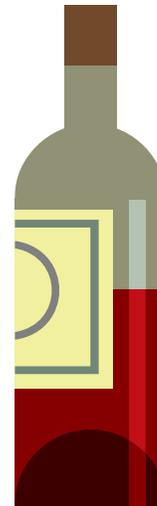
TRUMAN: Dinner?

LUCY: Well, We have asked Kaiser Wormtongue to drop by for a late-night snack. Oh, that reminds Us. Have to go – last-minute shopping.

TRUMAN: May I ask for what?

LUCY: Oh, some fava beans and a nice chiaanti.

TRUMAN: (Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.)



THE END

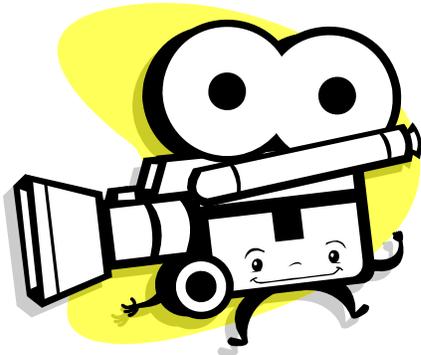
(Why don't we see that at the ends of movies nowadays?)

One of the original founders of the postal Diplomacy hobby, Rod Walker's accomplishments are too many to list completely. Besides being a former publisher of Diplomacy World, Rod can also list zines like Blefescu, The Diplomat, Pontevedria, Erehwon, and Utopia in his resume. Plus, if you haven't figured it out from this article, Rod is a fan and aficionado of the lost art of Diplomacy Press writing...something I would love to see return to some segment of the hobby one of these days. Another reason to long for the "good old days" I suppose.

Diplomacy on the Little Screen: The “Diplomats” Movie

By Ray Setzer

The movie “Diplomats” was filmed back in 2002 at a tournament in Baltimore, MD. This particular tournament had in the past been the World Boardgame Championships, held yearly at the Hunt Valley Marriot, just outside Baltimore MD. The Diplomacy portion of this tournament was modest in comparison to the convention as whole, but it was always a delight to meet up once a year with old friends.



I'd been wanting to produce some sort of Diplomacy video for a long time, so I brought my gear to Baltimore one summer and just started talking and shooting. Jim Yerkey, the Diplomacy tournament gamesmaster, was fantastically helpful and allowed me the run of the room. One of the boards during the final day's round even allowed me full access, letting me follow all the players around and be directly in the middle of the negotiation process. The board leaned heavily towards well known players. David Hood, Chris Martin, Hudson Defoe, Andy Bartalone, Graham Woodring were all familiar faces.

All these players were fantastically cooperative, and gave detailed and very candid reports on their progress and impressions of the game. My goal was to provide a video that would allow new players to get an idea of what a Diplomacy game was really like. It's one thing to read and understand the rules, but fully another to get an understanding of the complex give-and-take that goes on during a game without actually seeing it done.

Since the target audience was not necessarily just Diplomacy players, I felt it was necessary to add some lighter moments to keep the production from just being a half hour of talking heads. I put together a music video section, using an old Doris Day song – “Perhaps” - which I felt really expressed the whole concept of what was going on. After all, in Diplomacy no agreement is ever written in stone, it's always - perhaps.

One player who is really animated is Hudson Defoe.

Towards the end of the game, as he was getting excited about a possible solo victory, he gave me a spontaneous diatribe that was just a delight. I put down the Patton theme behind it to really enhance the moment.

In addition to the players' post-game comments, I thought it would be useful to present a short video summary of how the game went, and for this I came up with the “Board Of Hindsight” concept where I pulled out a few selected pre-game predictions from players, and matched them up with post-game actual results to further illustrate how a game goes from initial expectations and strategy to a final conclusion.



I also just set up the camera at a table and asked as many people as I could to explain why they play Diplomacy. Not surprisingly, the most common answer was, “Because of the people.” To be a Diplomacy player one has to enjoy lively conversation, and perhaps most importantly, they have to not be easily offended or prone to hold grudges. If you do, then a game where people lie to each other all the time is not for you. One might think that in a room full of people all lying to each other, you would not see these consistent statements that these people all gather for the camaraderie, but clearly, each and every one of these people feel a strong bond with each other.

The video “Diplomats” is available for download at <http://www.cat23.com>, freely available in the Downloads section. The file is in Ipod video format. Current versions of the Quicktime player should play it on any computer. The file is just under 100Meg.

Ray Setzer is a founder of the Cat23 Diplomacy group...and looks good in a director's beret.

A Review of RRGT & 7x7x7 Games

By Melinda Holley

The object of every game is to win. After all, we are a very competitive breed. We would rather win than lose, and Diplomacy is no exception. Back in the days of Postal Diplomacy there were 7x7 Round Robin Gunboat Tournaments (RRGT). In the last couple of years, I've seen e-versions of this called 7x7x7 Flights.

A rose by any other name, you have seven players in seven gunboat games. Each player takes a different country in each game allowing all seven players to play all seven positions. A scoring system is developed, and you're off to the races. This makes for interesting strategies since you look at the overall picture rather than one game. For instance, you've been eliminated as Austria; you're barely hanging on as Italy; your England and Turkey will at least survive; and your France, Russia, and Germany can probably pull out a 3-way draw (or better).

So do you play more conservatively to protect your overall position? Do you play more aggressively to make up for Austria and Italy's poor showing? Or do you stay with each individual plan of action in each game hoping some other player(s) will get reckless and allow you to sneak up in the rankings? Because it's not so much how you finish in one game but how you finish overall in seven games that determines the winner.

Back in the Postal Diplomacy days, I did an analysis of each country based on twelve 7x7 RRGTs. Using these 84 games, the average final year of a game was 1910. Using that year, I determined the average game for each country through 1910. This was compared with the average game (as of 1910) won by each country.

Have things changed from the old Postal Dip days? Has overall strategy remained the same? Let's see. Taking the data from Diplomacy World #75, I've compared it with several 7x7x7 Flights.

AUSTRIA

In these twelve RRGT tournaments, Austria had the following overall finishes.

First – 1
 Second – 1
 Third – 4
 Fourth – 1
 Fifth – 2
 Sixth – 2
 Seventh – 1

In these 84 postal RRGT tournaments, Austria posted the following completions.

Survival – 29
 Elimination – 39
 Wins – 8
 2Way Draws – 4
 3Way Draws -3
 4Way Draws – 1

Although eliminated as early as 1902, this centrally-placed power also lasted as long as 1918. Game year 1909 was fatal in a great many of the 39 eliminations. The following chart shows a typical Austria game through 1910 (calculated typical length of game) as compared to a typical Austrian win (as of 1910).

Austria	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	09	09	10
Typical	04	05	05	05	05	05	06	06	07	08
Win	04	06	06	07	09	10	12	13	14	15

Looking at this data, prior to 1904 the center count is very close. However, by 1905, Austria has obtained half the centers needed for a win. By Winter 1905, Austria owns his home centers, Venice, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Warsaw (see Austria 1905 map).

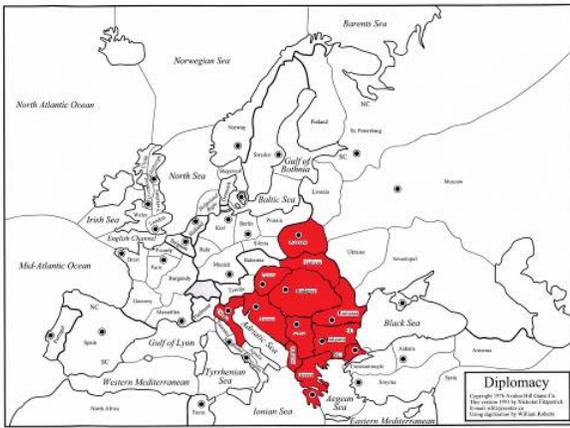
By our statistical game-end year of 1910, Austria is just 3 centers away from a win. An 18-center Austria win shows control of the home centers, Venice, Rome, Naples, Tunis, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, Ankara, Constantinople, Smyrna, Warsaw, Moscow, Sevastopol, and Munich (see Austria 1910 map).

In these Postal Diplomacy tournament games, Austria picked up one neutral center (Serbia) 55% of the time in 1901. In 40%, Serbia and Greece were picked up in

1901. In 1% of the games, Austria was gang-tackled and lost a center in 1901. In the remaining games, Austria picked up three neutral centers or stayed even.

In looking at the nine 7x7x7 Flights and keeping in mind the differences mentioned above, Austria had the following overall finishes.

First – 2
 Second – 0
 Third – 1
 Fourth – 1
 Fifth – 1
 Sixth – 0
 Seventh – 4



Austria 1905



Austria 1910

In these 63 games, Austria obtained these completions.

- Survival – 26
- Elimination – 28
- Top Board – 7
- 2Way Draw – 2

This gives Austria an overall finish of 6th place.

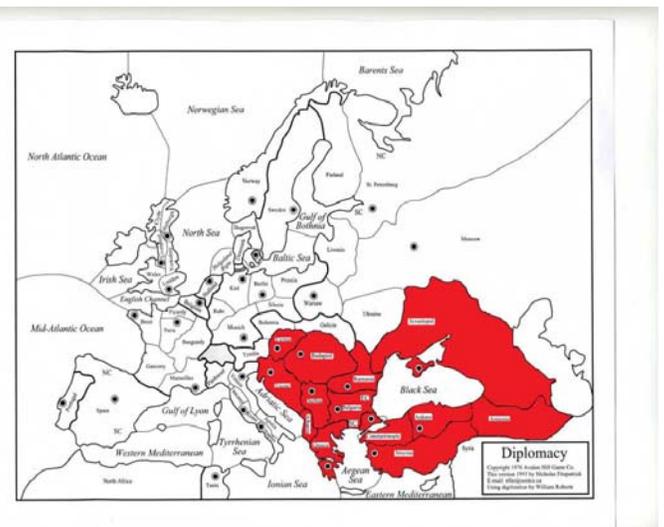
Eliminated as early as 1903, Austria still managed to survive in 26 of the games. The game years of 1904 and 1905 saw the most Austrian 28 eliminations. The following chart shows a typical Austrian top board in 1907 (predetermined end of game) as compared to a typical Austrian game through 1907.

Austria	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Typical	4	4	4	3	3	3	2
Win	5	6	7	8	8	10	11

It's evident by this data that Austria's geographical weaknesses can be easily exploited even in gunboat with no negotiation between the players. Yet, Austria manages to hold onto two centers and a survival in 1907 thereby indicating an innate tenacity in this position. By mid-game (1904), Austria typically is reduced to the home centers.

Austria is at 12 centers.

As for the typical win, Austria takes two centers in 1901 (most probably Greece and Serbia). At that point, Austria is in (at least) an equal position of strength with his neighbors. Being an almost completely land-locked country, Austria can concentrate on supporting its armies to nearby centers rather than relying on potentially unsupported convoys. By the end of the game (1907), Austria typically owns the home centers, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, Constantinople, Ankara, Smyrna, and Sevastopol (see Austria 1907).



Austria 1907

In these 7x7x7 Flights, Austria picked up one center in 1901 in 27% of the games. In 67% of the games, Austria picked up two centers in 1901 (Serbia and Greece most often). In the remaining 6% of the games, Austria picked up no centers in 1901.

However, in comparing the typical non-winning games, we find a vast difference in 1907. In the 7x7x7 Flights, Austria is only at two centers while in the RRGT tournaments, Austria is at seven centers. One reason for this could be the predetermined end game year. With all players knowing the game will end in 1907, Austria's geographical vulnerability becomes a definite liability.

If we look at typical wins under both systems, we find there's not much difference. In the 7x7x7 Flights, Austria is at 11 centers in 1907 while in the RRGT tournaments,

The country becomes an easy target with centers pretty much up for grabs. In a longer game, however, there is no reason for a mad dash for centers and long-term strategy comes into play. This allows Austria the necessary time to build both defensively and offensively.

ENGLAND

In the 12 postal tournaments, the Northern Wicked Witch had the following finishes.

First – 0
 Second – 2
 Third – 3
 Fourth – 0
 Fifth – 3
 Sixth – 3

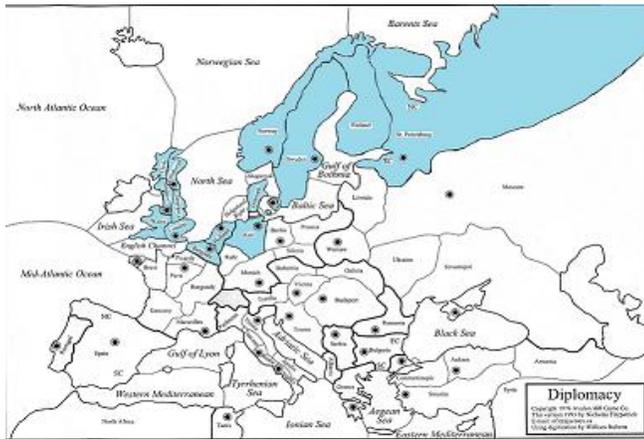
Seventh – 1

In these 84 postal games, England posted the following completions.

Survival – 32
 Elimination – 36
 Wins – 5
 2Way Draws – 8
 3Way Draws – 2
 4 Way Draws – 1

This gives England an overall finish of 5th place. While England was eliminated as early as 1904, this country lasted as long as 1919. Elimination occurred most often in 1907. The following chart shows a typical English game through 1910 (calculated typical length of game) as compared to a typical English win (as of 1910).

England	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Typical	04	04	04	04	05	05	06	06	07	09
Win	04	05	06	08	08	08	09	10	12	14



England 1907 (Typical)

often these are the home centers, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, St. Petersburg, Belgium, and Brest. By our statistical game-end year of 1910, England is sitting with 14 centers; and if he hasn't done so already, he's ready to cross the stalemate line. Most likely controlled by an 18-center England are the home centers, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Berlin, Kiel, Munich, Holland, Belgium, Brest, Paris, Marseilles, Spain, and Portugal.

In looking at the nine 7x7x7 Flights and keeping in mind the differences mentioned above, England had the following overall finishes.

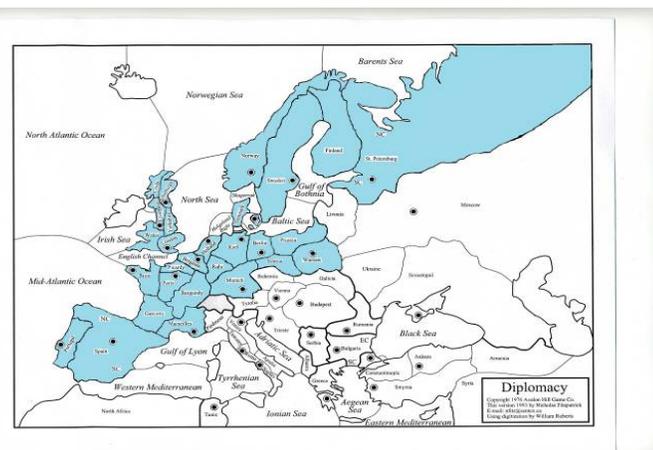
First – 0
 Second – 0
 Third – 1
 Fourth – 1
 Fifth – 3
 Sixth – 2
 Seventh – 2

In these games, England had the following completions.

Survival – 46
 Eliminations – 12
 Wins – 4
 2Way Draw – 1

With no wins or 2way draws, this gives England an uncontested 7th place overall finish. England was only eliminated once before 1905 and only three times in 1905 which reflects the high number of survivals.

The following chart shows a typical English game versus typical English win through 1907 (predetermined end of game).



England 18 Centers

What does this data show? It appears that 1903-1904 are the 'destiny' years for England while playing for position is the rule of thumb between 1904 and 1906. By 1907, a winning England possesses nine centers. Most

England	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Typical	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Win	4	5	6	7	8	10	10

In a typical game, England starts out rather impressively by picking up two centers (most likely Belgium and Norway). However, the English advance gets stalled; but its advantageous position requires an enemy to mount an aggressive naval campaign which is difficult and time consuming. With the game predetermined to end in 1907, England seems able to mount a successful defense to avoid elimination.

A typical English win shows steady growth which isn't likely to draw undue attention or upset an existing alliance. However, a 10-center by 1907 (in a longer-running game) might force the creation of a 'stop the leader alliance' since England typically owns the home centers, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, St. Petersburg, Belgium, Holland, and Kiel.

However, as opposed to Austria, comparing a typical non-win under both systems also shows very little difference (six centers in 1907 under the RRGT system versus five centers under the 7x7x7 Flights). Therefore, it appears that the predetermined end of 1907 in the 7x7x7 Flights did not affect England's center count.

However, the rate of survivals and eliminations vary drastically under the two systems. Under the RRGT system, England survived in 32 of the 84 games (38%) and was eliminated in 36 of the 84 games (43%). Under the 7x7x7 Flights, England survived in 46 of the 63 games (73%) and was eliminated in 12 of the 63 games (19%).

This indicates that although the center counts do not vary in 1907 (the predetermined end of the 7x7x7 Flights) what happens after that dramatically varies between the two systems.

FRANCE

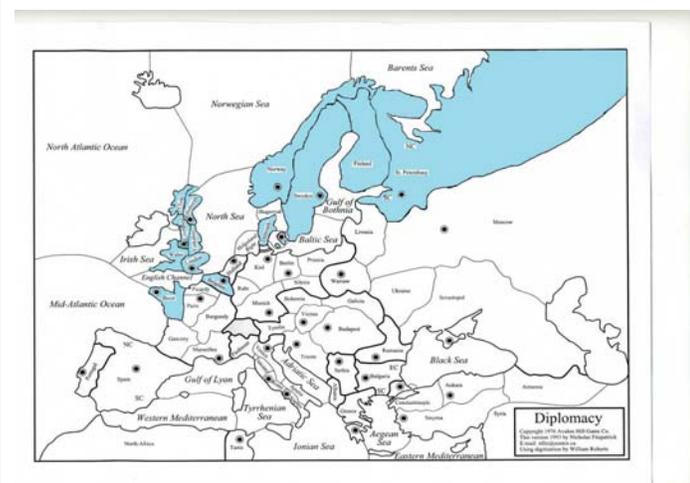
In the 12 postal tournaments, France had the following finishes.

- First – 6
- Second – 2
- Third – 1
- Fourth – 1
- Fifth – 1
- Sixth – 1
- Seventh – 0

In these 84 games, La Bell France posted the following completions.

- Survival – 37
- Elimination – 15
- Wins – 14
- 2Way Draws – 8
- 3Way Draws – 8
- 4 Way Draws – 2

This gives France an overall finish of 1st place. France was eliminated as early as 1904 but managed to last as long as 1919. When eliminated, France departed the most in 1909. The following chart shows a typical French game through 1910 (calculated typical length of game) as compared to a typical French win (as of 1910).

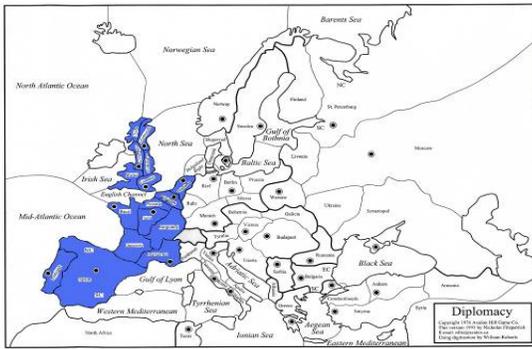


England 1907

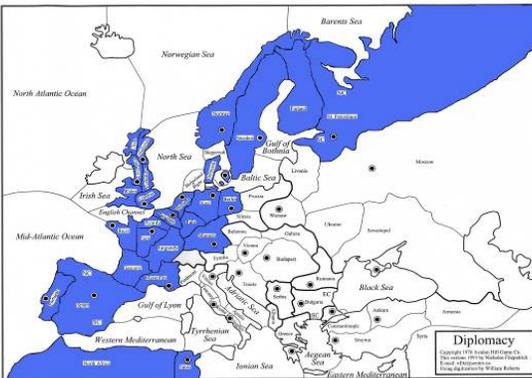
It's a no-brainer that England goes for Norway in 1901. Unless Russia opens Moscow-St. Petersburg or England misorders (or is feeling especially frisky), it's a given that an English unit will be sitting in Norway in Fall 1901. And in 71% of the game, that's exactly what happened. However, in 18% of the games, England picked up a second center by successfully negotiating with either France or Germany over Belgium. But in 11% of the time, England stayed even in 1901 by either miswriting an order, NMRing, or having an unwelcome visitor to the homeland.

As with Austria, comparing a typical win under both systems does not reveal a great deal of difference. In 1907 in the RRGT tournaments, the center count was nine. Under the 7x7x7 Flights, the center count in 1907 is ten.

France	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Typical	05	05	05	06	06	07	07	07	08	08
Win	05	05	06	07	08	10	11	12	13	15



France 1906



France (18 centers)

From this data, it appears that France doesn't kick into high gear until relatively late (1905-1906). By 1906, however, France owns ten centers (home centers, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Belgium, Holland, Spain, and Portugal) and is well on the way to a more than respectable finish. By 1910, the fat lady is warming up.

An 18-center France most likely will own the home centers, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Kiel, Munich, Berlin, Tunis, and St. Petersburg.

In looking at the nine 7x7x7 Flights and keeping in mind the differences mentioned above, France posted the following finishes.

- First – 2
- Second – 2
- Third – 3
- Fourth – 1
- Fifth – 0
- Sixth – 1
- Seventh – 0

In these games, France had the following completions.

- Survival – 48
- Eliminations – 3
- Wins – 10
- 2Way Draws – 1
- 3Way Draws – 1

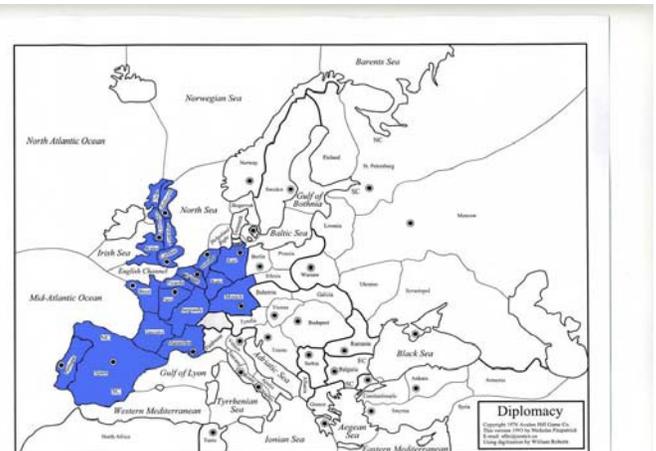
With only two finishes in less than third place, is it any surprise that France takes 1st place? The earliest France was eliminated was in 1906 and was only eliminated in 4% of the games. This indicates that France is an extremely strong country for most players (I hold myself to be the exception).

The following chart shows a typical French game versus a typical French win through 1907 (predetermined end of game).

France	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Typical	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Win	5	5	6	7	8	10	12

It appears that France is restrained enough to only pick up two of the three potential centers in 1901 (most likely Portugal and Spain). However, with a survival rate of 76% and an elimination rate of 4%, it appears that even if France can be contained within the territory of those five centers, it's hard to knock France out of the game.

As with England, France's winning strategy appears to be slow and easy. This might not be the case in a longer-running game. By 1907, France is two-thirds of the way to an outright win by owning the home centers, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Munich, and Kiel.



France 1907

In 56% of the games, France picks up two neutral centers (most often Spain and Portugal). The only reason this would not happen (outside of a miswritten order or NMR) is if France is being gang-tackled by England, Germany, and Italy and decides to protect the home centers. Of course, a crafty France can negotiate for ownership of Belgium by promising to forgo taking one of the Iberian centers in 1901. In 19% of the games, France only picked up one center while in 18% of the games, France picked up three centers. Only in 75 of the games did France remain even in 1901.

Comparing a typical win under both systems reveals only a one-center difference. Although a typical non-win shows a two-center difference, this is also not a distinguishable difference. Therefore, apparently, there is little change in strategy as far as France and her opponents are concerned.

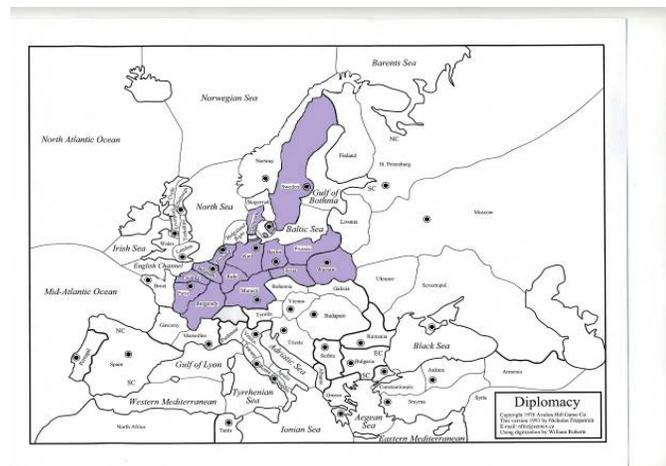
GERMANY

In the 12 postal tournaments, Germany has the following finishes.

First – 1

Germany	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Typical	05	05	05	05	05	06	06	05	05	06
Win	05	06	07	08	09	11	13	13	13	13

From this data, we can see that even a typical game for Germany allows him to be influential through 1910. The most likely centers owned after 1905 for Germany include the home centers, Denmark, Sweden, Warsaw, Holland, Belgium, and Paris. Although 13 centers are owned by 1910, a win is certainly not guaranteed. However, a 13-center Germany in 1910 is certainly in a very powerful position. An 18-center German win shows the most likely owned centers as the home dots, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Moscow, Vienna, Budapest, Holland, Belgium, Paris, Brest, Marseilles, Spain, and Portugal.



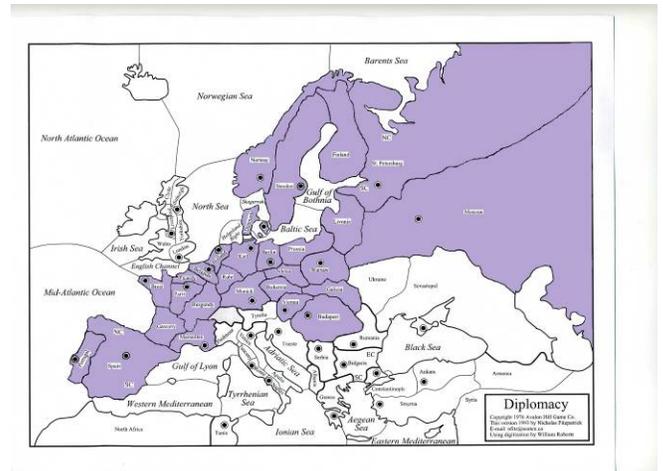
Germany 1905

- Second – 1
- Third – 0
- Fourth – 5
- Fifth - 2
- Sixth – 2
- Seventh – 1

In these 84 games, Germany posted the following completions.

- Survival – 26
- Elimination – 38
- Wins – 7
- 2Way Draws – 5
- 3Way Draws – 5
- 4Way Draws – 3

Germany earned an overall finish of 4th place. Despite the above statistics, Germany was not eliminated until 1905 and lasted as long as 1918 with the most eliminations occurring in 1909. The following chart shows a typical German game through 1910 (calculated typical length of game) as compared to a typical German win (as of 1910).



Germany (18 Centers)

In looking at the nine 7x7x7 Flights and keeping in mind the differences mentioned above, Germany had the following overall finishes.

- First – 2
- Second – 2
- Third – 1
- Fourth - 0
- Fifth – 0
- Sixth – 3
- Seventh – 1

In these games, Germany posted the following completions.

Survival – 47
 Eliminations – 5
 Wins – 10
 2Way Draw – 1

It appears that Germany either does very well or very bad. Germany earns a tie (with Italy) for 3rd place. It

doesn't appear this ranking is because Germany has done very well but more because other countries did statistically poor. With only 5 eliminations, Germany was never eliminated earlier than 1906. With a survival rate of 75%, this centrally-located country proves to be a hard nut to crack.

The following chart shows a typical German game versus a typical German win as of 1907 (predetermined end of game).

Germany	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Typical	05	06	06	06	05	05	04
Win	05	06	07	08	09	09	11

From this data, it seems that the rest of the board recognizes the difficulty of eliminating Germany and doesn't allow any growth past 1904. However, an aggressive Germany on the march starts rolling early by picking up two centers in 1901 (most probably Denmark and Holland) and a third in 1902 (possibly either Belgium or Sweden). By mid-game in 1904, Germany is an influential and dangerous part of the game. In a longer-running game, an 11-center Germany in 1907 would be hard pressed to hold onto any existing alliances unless there was a second equally powerful country on the board. At this point, the centers most likely owned by Germany would be the home centers, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Warsaw, Brest, and Paris.

A German win under the 7x7 RRGT system shows only a two-center difference by 1907 (13 versus 11) over the 7x7x7 Flight system. A non-win review also shows only a two-center difference between the two systems. The rate of gaining centers (or losing them) is extremely steady under both systems. From this data, it appears that the best strategy (both long-term and short-term) is the slow-and-steady approach.

ITALY

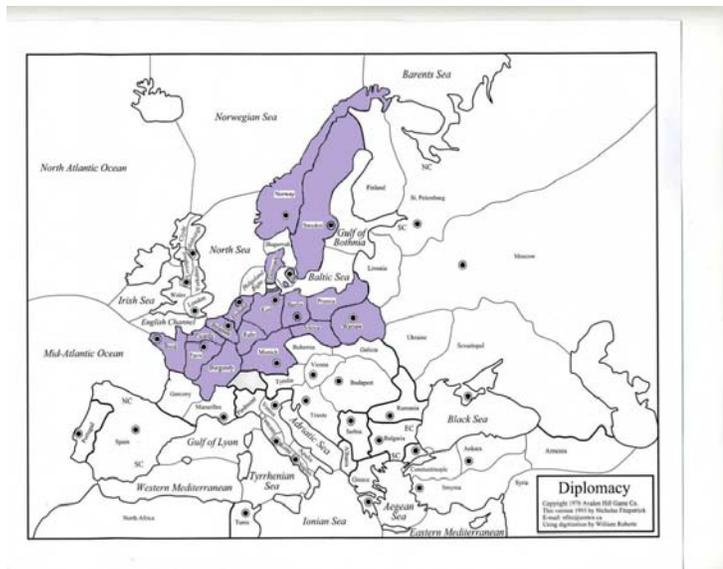
In the 12 postal tournaments, Italy had the following finishes.

First – 0
 Second – 0
 Third – 1
 Fourth – 2
 Fifth – 2
 Sixth – 3
 Seventh – 4

In these 84 games, Italy posted the following completions.

Survival – 44
 Elimination – 28
 Wins – 1
 2Way Draws – 4
 3Way Draws – 5
 4Way Draws – 2

Italy manages to come in dead last in 7th place. However, like Germany, Italy was not eliminated until 1905. Also, like England and France, Italy managed to last until 1919. And, as with most other countries, the most eliminations occurred in 1909. The following chart shows a typical Italian game through 1910 (calculated typical length of game) as compared to a typical Italian win (as of 1910).



Germany 1907

Germany considers Denmark and Holland as part of the Fatherland. Unless deciding on a riskier and more aggressive opening, these are the targets for Germany in 1901 in 59% of the games. Only one center was gained in 24% of the games. However, a frisky Germany picked up three centers in 1901 (14%) but stayed even at three centers in 3% of the games.

Italy	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Typical	04	04	04	04	04	05	05	05	05	05
Win	04	04	04	04	06	07	07	07	07	07

Since Italy only won 1 game, a comparison between “typical” and “winning” is virtually impossible. There is not enough data within these referenced tournaments to determine such a comparison. However, the dots owned by Italy in its one win included the home centers, Tunis, Ankara, Smyrna, Constantinople, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Marseilles, Paris, Brest, Spain, Portugal, London, Liverpool, and Edinburgh.

overall finishes.

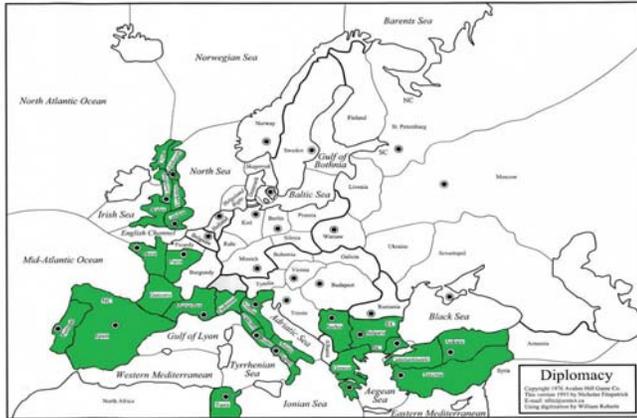
- First – 2
- Second – 1
- Third – 2
- Fourth – 1
- Fifth – 0
- Sixth – 2
- Seventh – 1

In these games, Italy had the following completions.

- Survival – 40
- Eliminations – 10
- Wins – 11
- 2Way Draw – 1
- 3Way Draw – 1

These rather balanced finishes put Italy in a tie (with Germany) for 3rd place. Although eliminated as early as 1903, Italy managed to survive 63% of the time which, considering Italy is vulnerable to attack from three countries in 1901 and equally vulnerable to slow growth.

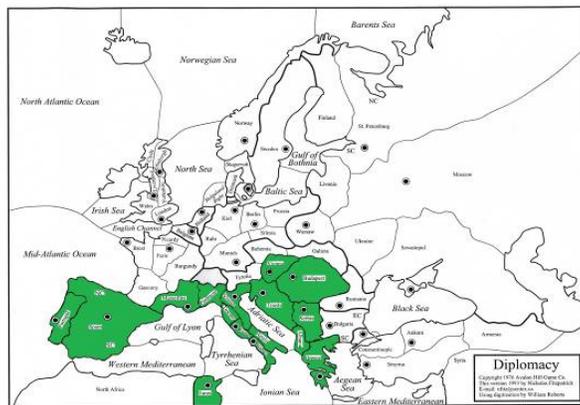
The following chart shows a typical Italian game versus a typical Italian win through 1907 (predetermined end of game).



Italy Win (RRGT)

In looking at the nine 7x7x7 Flights and keeping in mind the differences mentioned above, Italy had the following

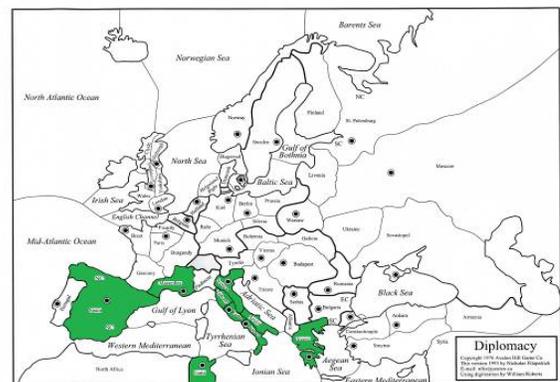
Italy	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Typical	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
Win	5	5	7	8	9	10	12



1907 (7x7x7)

Italy has to love Tunis. Barring a disorder or a gang attack, it's the only center that Italy can count on in 1901 and (it seems) for several years. However, an aggressive Italy appears to be a successful Italy. A

second center of Marseilles, Munich, or Trieste is usually followed by a larger-scale assault on whatever country Italy has targeted. A successful alliance in this attack seems to pay impressive dividends.



1907 (RRGT)

In comparing the two systems, there is a significant difference between the center counts in 1907 when it comes to Italian wins. Under the RRG system, the center count in 1907 is 7. However, under the 7x7x7 system, the center count in 1907 is 12 with the owned centers most likely the home centers, Tunis, Spain, Marseilles, Trieste, Greece, Portugal, Serbia, Vienna, and Budapest.

Italy is a slow starter based upon its geographical position unless there is an extremely aggressive expansion policy in place. Tunis, Italy's traditional 1901 gain, was obtained as the only new center in 1901 in 70% of the games. In 21% of the games, Italy gains two centers (the second coming at the expense of France, Germany, or Austria). In 9% of the games, Italy stayed even at three centers (most often because of an attack by Austria).

It appears that knowing the game will end at a predetermined time encourages Italy to play more aggressively than usual.

RUSSIA

In these 12 postal tournaments, Russia had the following finishes.

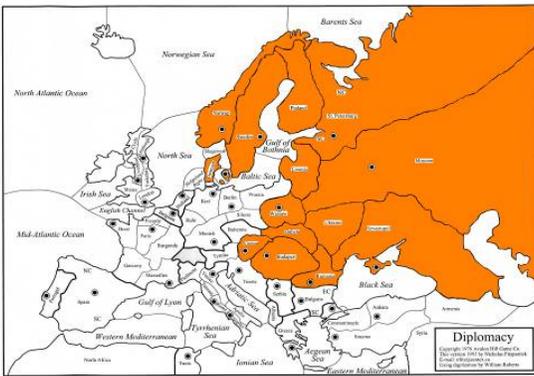
- First – 0
- Second – 1
- Third – 2
- Fourth – 3
- Fifth – 2
- Sixth – 1
- Seventh – 3

In these 84 games, Russia posted the following completions.

- Survival – 37
- Elimination – 35
- Wins – 6
- 2Way Draws – 1
- 3Way Draws – 4
- 4Way Draws – 1

Russia managed an overall finish of 6th place. Eliminated as early as 1903, Russia also lasted as late as 1919. Again, 1909 held the most eliminations. The following chart shows a typical Russian game through 1910 (calculated typical length of game) as compared to a typical Russian win (as of 1910).

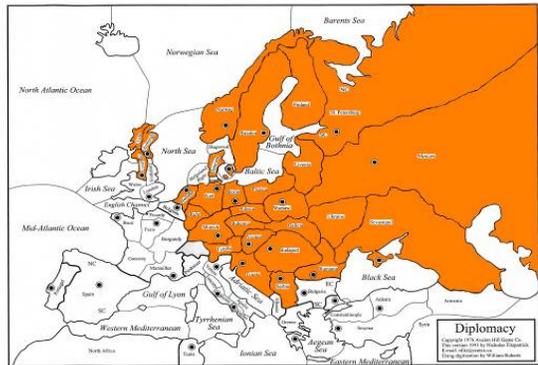
Russia	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Typical	05	05	05	05	05	05	05	04	04	05
Win	05	06	07	07	08	10	10	10	11	12



Russia 1906

The relatively slow start indicated by this data reflects that Russia's survivals and draws tend to come in long protracted games. As far as winning games, by 1906 Russia has passed the halfway mark to winning by owning his home centers, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Rumania, Vienna, and Budapest. By 1910, Russia only owns 12 centers which once again indicates that a Russian win occurs in a lengthy game. An 18-center Russia is most likely to possess the home centers, Sweden, Norway, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Holland, Denmark, Kiel, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Budapest,

Trieste, Serbia, and Rumania.



Russia 18 Centers

In looking at the nine 7x7x7 Flights and keeping in mind the differences mentioned above, Russia had the following overall finishes.

- First – 1
- Second – 0
- Third – 0
- Fourth – 3
- Fifth – 4
- Sixth – 1
- Seventh – 0

In these games, Russia had the following completions.

Survival – 47
 Eliminations – 7
 Wins – 6
 2Way Draw – 3

Given that all but two of Russia's completions were either fourth or fifth places, it's not surprising that Russia managed a 5th place ranking. The earliest elimination

occurred in 1904. However, Russia's massive geography helped to achieve only a 12% elimination rate. Like Napoleon and Hitler, many Diplomacy players have found it extremely difficult to eliminate Mother Russia.

The following chart shows a typical Russian game versus a typical Russian win as of 1907 (predetermined end of game).

Russia	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Typical	05	05	05	05	05	05	05
Win	06	06	07	08	08	08	08

It seems that Russia is a county to be played for the long-haul. While a relatively short game (such as a 1907 ending) allows for Russia to survive basically intact, this same short game does not allow Russia to grow as impressively as other countries (such as Austria and France). As you can see, by mid-game (1904) Russia has maxed his growth at 8 centers (most likely the home centers, Rumania, Sweden, Vienna, and Budapest). This allows the Russian player to be influential but certainly not the 'big dog' of the board. It seems that the length of the game (either predetermined or played to the bitter end) has a powerful affect on Russia's performance.

bouncing with Germany in Sweden). In 4% of the games, an exceptionally aggressive Russia picked up three centers in 1901. However, in 17% of the games, Russia stayed even at four centers while in 2% of the games, Russia lost a center (most always vulnerable Sevastopol).

From this we can deduce that with a predetermined end of the game set at game year 1907, Russia's opponents are very careful to limit the growth of this gigantic country since eight centers are reached in 1904 with no further growth allowed. The longer game seems to allow Russia the necessary time to find a chink in his opponent's armor.

TURKEY

In the 12 postal tournaments, Turkey had the following finishes.

First – 4
 Second - 5
 Third – 1
 Fourth – 0
 Fifth – 0
 Sixth – 0
 Seventh – 2

In these 84 games, Turkey posted the following completions.

Survival – 34
 Elimination – 20
 Wins – 9
 2Way Draws – 10
 3Way Draws – 9
 4Way Draws – 2

The Southern Wicked Witch obtains an overall finish of 2nd place. Although Turkey was eliminated as early as 1903, she lasted as long as 1919 while being eliminated the most is 1910. The following chart shows a typical Turkish game through 1910 (calculated typical length of game) as compared to a typical Turkish win (as of 1910).

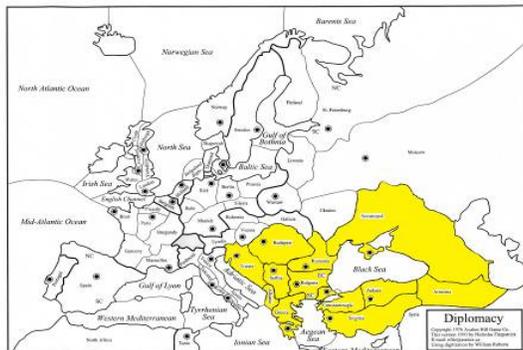


Russia 1904

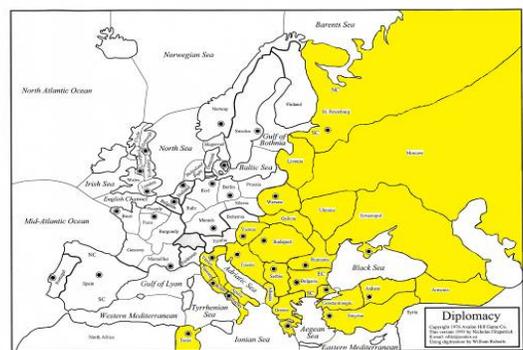
In comparing Russia under these two systems, we find no difference in a typical game under both systems (center count of five). However, under the RRGT system, Russia in 1907 owns ten centers as compared to eight under the 7x7x7 system.

Russia generally concentrates on Rumania and Sweden in 1901. In only 31% of the games, however, Russia picked up both centers. In 46% of these games, Russia picked up only one center (usually Rumania while

Turkey	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Typical	04	04	05	05	06	06	07	08	08	08
Win	04	05	06	07	08	10	12	13	14	14



Turkey 1906



Turkey (18 centers)

center Turkey is most likely to own the home dots, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Rumania, Budapest, Trieste, Vienna, Venice, Rome, Naples, Tunis, Sevastopol, Moscow, Warsaw, and St. Petersburg.

In looking at the nine 7x7x7 Flights and keeping in mind the differences mentioned above, Turkey had the following overall finishes.

- First – 0
- Second – 4
- Third – 1
- Fourth – 3
- Fifth – 0
- Sixth – 0
- Seventh – 1

In these games, Turkey had the following completions.

- Survival – 45
- Eliminations – 6
- Wins – 10
- 2Way Draw – 1
- 3-Way Draw -1

With an impressive set of finishes, Turkey comes in with a 2nd place ranking. With only 6 eliminations in 63 games, this country lives up to its geographical promise of being hard to take out (although eliminated as early as 1904).

The following chart shows a typical Turkish game versus a typical Turkish win in 1907 (predetermined end of game).

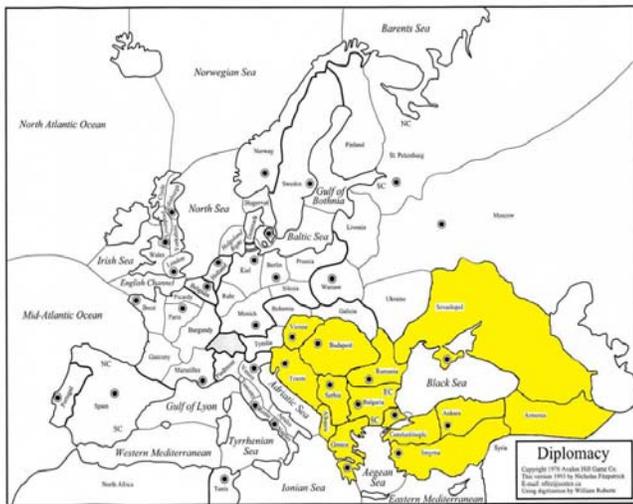
Turkey	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Typical	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
Win	4	5	7	7	9	10	11

In both cases, Turkey starts out gaining one center in 1901 (most probably Bulgaria). However, a typical game shows that Turkey only gains one additional center before being reduced back to 4 centers for the remainder of the game. On the other hand, a typical Turkish win shows steady growth by taking dots from his neighbors until reaching 11 centers in 1907 (most likely the home centers, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Rumania, Budapest, Trieste, Sevastopol, and Vienna). At this point, the Turkish player is certain to be considered a threat by the other players on the board.

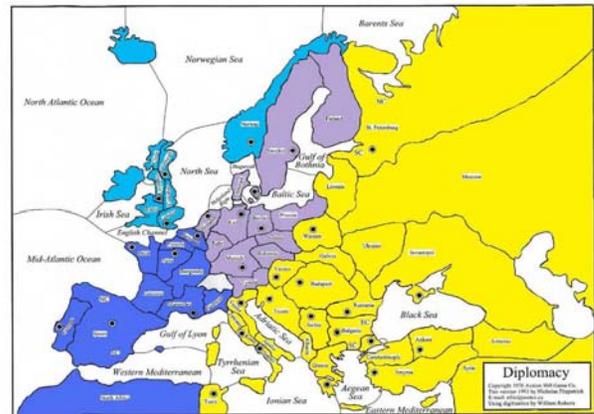
In comparing Turkey's performance, there is not much difference in the center count in 1907 for the winning games (12 versus 11). However, the non-win games show a three-center difference in 1907 (7 versus 4). It appears from this data that in a game with a predetermined end of 1907, Turkey's opponents do not allow this country to break out of the corner. With a longer game, Turkey's opponents apparently do not see the Eastern Wicked Witch as a primary threat to them. This allows Turkey to get a foothold out of the corner and become a successful power on the board.

Turkey remained traditional in 73% of the games by picking up Bulgaria in 1901. Bulgaria is to Turkey what Tunis is to Italy – a safe (and rarely contested) center. In Turkey's case, however, there is no way to prevent Turkey from taking that center in 1901 except by several misorders. In a bit of a surprise, Turkey picked up two centers in 1901 (25%). While this may not be much of a surprise in regular Diplomacy, accomplishing this in one-quarter of the gunboat games is an admirable achievement. In only 1% of the games, Turkey either picked up three centers (being incredibly aggressive) or stayed even at three centers (facing an aggressive Austro-Russian alliance).

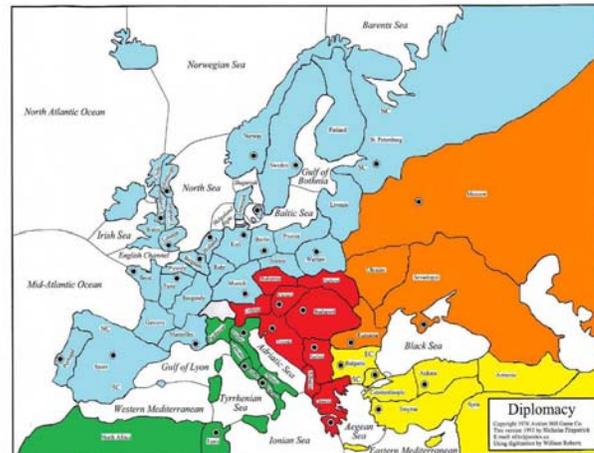
My thanks to the following people for their contributions to/assistance with this article: B. D. Holley (Vandalia Graphic & Web Design), David Norman, Barry Johnson, and Peter Richardson.



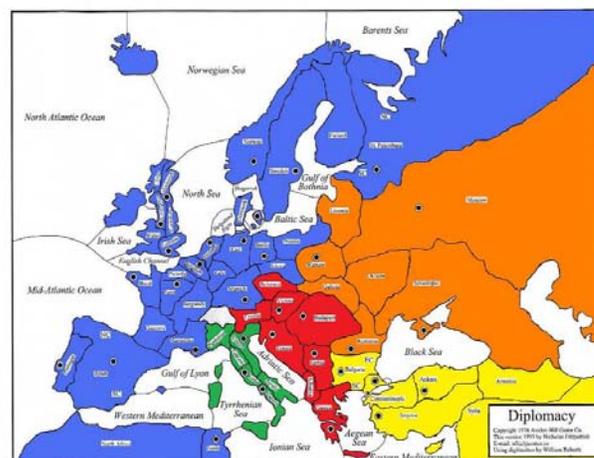
Turkey 1907



Turkey Win



England Win



France Win

SUMMARY

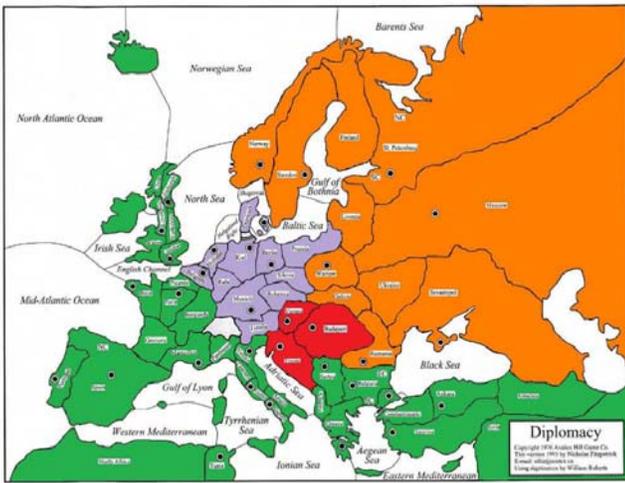
So what does all this mean? According to these numbers, the best-to-worst countries to play are:

France – Turkey – Austria – Germany – England – Russia – Italy

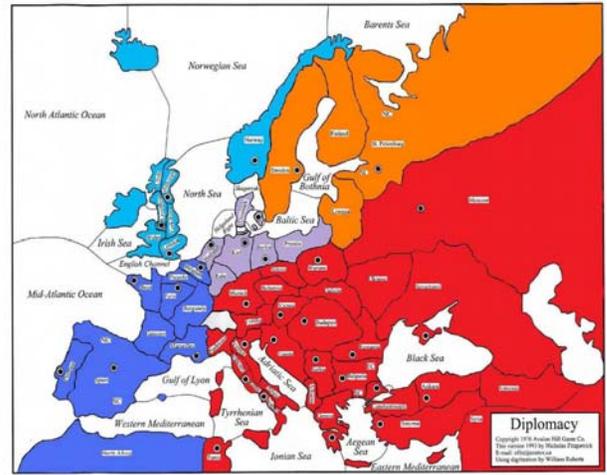
Compare that to your own personal preference list. Italy, ranked as last, actually had more survivals than any other country while Germany (not Austria as might be expected) had the least. Perhaps not surprising is that Austria was eliminated the most and France the least.

In one respect, gunboat and regular Diplomacy mirror each other in 1901. The strategy is to gain those all important 'neutral centers'. Each country has at least one neutral center they consider part of their home territory. If we can grab more, all the better. As I said, we are a competitive breed.

It's said that a picture is worth a thousand words. While this article isn't 7,000 words, perhaps the seven pictures below will give aspiring 7x7x7 players a nice visual guide...while they sharpen the knives.

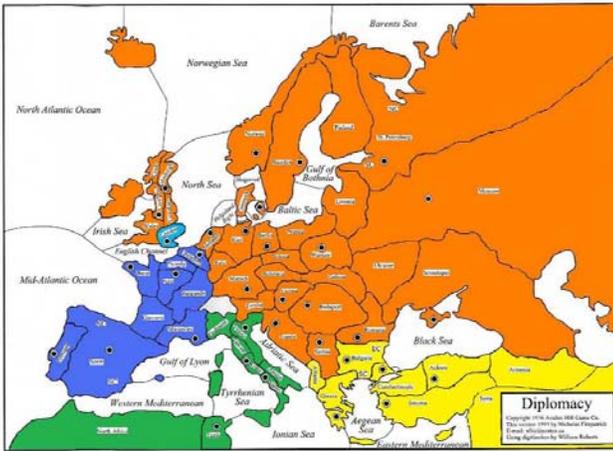


Italy Win

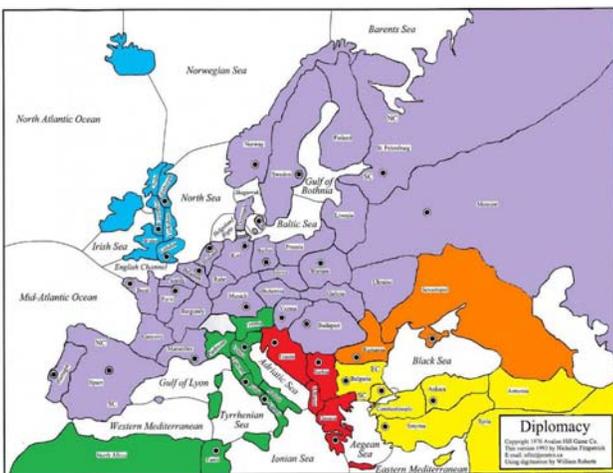


Austria Win

And, for those of you wondering, here is a photo of the lovely and talented Diplomacy Goddess Melinda Holley herself (pictured with an adoring fan).



Russia Win



Germany Win

Melinda Holley was for many years a major force in the play-by-mail Diplomacy hobby. Her zine Rebel was noted for its reliability, and her zine Starwood was a center of Round Robin Gunboat Tournament activity. She even appeared in a Diplomacy game which was covered in the Avalon Hill magazine The General (I don't think Rex Martin ever forgave her for not allying with him). These days you can find her dipping her toe carefully into the internet Diplomacy world.



Diplomacy World Demo Game

Regular Diplomacy – “After the Rapture”

Cast of Characters:

GM: Rick Desper
Austria: Adam Silverman
England: Dan Lester
France: Jake Mannix
Germany: Mike Hall
Italy: Doug Moore

Russia: Mark Zoffel
Turkey: Andy Marshall

Commentators: **Jim Burgess (Bold)**,
Eric Hunter (Italics)

Pre-Game Character Profiles and Commentary:

Rick Desper (GM) – Rick says “I never did get any name suggestions for this game, so we're going with ‘After the Rapture’, as in ‘After the Rapture, I get David Hood's Dots’”.

Rick Desper first encountered the game of Diplomacy while a freshman in the mid-1980s at Georgetown's School of Foreign Studies. Intimidated by the sheer viciousness of America's future diplomats*, Rick fled Georgetown but has been an avid Dipper since. Highlights include a lot of email Diplomacy in the 90s and a lot of FTF in the new millenium, with a couple tournament wins in there, most notably what we think is the only instance of a worst-to-first sequence at Dipcon (last in 2004, first in 2005).

Rick prefers wacky alliance play and dislikes draw whittling, stalemate-line squatting and people who use threats of physical violence to get what they want on the Diplomacy board. (People who use actual physical violence are applauded for their single-mindedness, though the police may be called depending on the circumstances.) Rick has been a member of the Potomac Tea & Knife Society since 2001 and has been one of the more avid travelling Dippers among Americans in recent years.

*not really true, Hoyas are pussycats

Adam Silverman (Austria) - Like many others, I first learned Diplomacy in high school, and while in college I attended my first tournament in 2000 (which happened to be World Dip Con in Maryland). I got eliminated in 2 of 3 rounds and coughed up a solo to the guy who eventually won the tournament, but from that day forward I was forever hooked on the game. I moved out to the Bay Area of California in 2002 and with the help of Edi Birsan started up a local club for face-to-face games. In 2004 I directed the first Whipping Diplomacy Tournament, which I've been running every year since.

I know Adam primarily (exclusively?) as the GM of 'Prometheus', a comments-style game in which I played Germany. Other than his novel definition of DIAS, he did a fine job there. I know he is a West-coast player, as is

Mark Zoffel, but I don't know how strong a Carebear streak he has. Primarily a F2F player.

Adam used to live and go to school in Boston for many years, so I know Adam personally the best of anyone here. His "visibility" in the hobby has increased much more since moving to the West Coast and underneath the estimable Edi Birsan's wing. From knowing Adam before and knowing him now, I think he's still growing as a Diplomacy player and seeing the wider sides of the hobby. But I know him to be a diligent communicator, which is what is needed in Austria. I expect Adam to fare well in this game.

Dan Lester (England) – Dan spends his days running a yarn store, and in the evening attends support groups for those who become emotionally attached to their dirty socks.

I've played several games with Dan, and he is an excellent F2F and PBeM player. His PBeM games sometimes suffer from inattention, though. He is from England, so the time differential could hurt him. He played Italy in 'Prometheus'.

I agree with Eric on all counts here. Dan is quite far away in a time zone sense from most of the other players. This is regrettable, I think (more on that below), and Dan is a player who much prefers playing with good players. He wasn't effective in the recent Prometheus until the two players who "really didn't measure up" were gone. Here there are no weak links, so in that sense Dan will shine. The time zone and tendency for inattention could affect that. We'll be able to see that early, if it occurs.

Jake Mannix (France) – Jake is currently on the road, covering the Poconos Mountains and eastern Pennsylvania dinner theatre circuit for a Santa Fe newspaper. His dream is to one day produce and star in a mime version of Man of La Mancha, complete with pantomime horses.

Another West-coast F2F player. I know the name, but

not the person.

I know Jake least well here, except by reputation. Jake runs "yetanotheruseless.com" Diplomacy results website, which is not especially useful as far as I can tell -- but hey, Jake doesn't promise anything by it. Jake did finish second at World DipCon, and soloed in a game, as did a number of the other guys here (more on that below too). I don't think of Jake as a good player, but we'll see how things develop here, it's possible he's really much better than I think he is.

Mike Hall (Germany) – Mike is a big fan of old SCTV shows and hosts a local Farm Report at 4:30 every morning.

I know of Mike from the PTKS mailing list. He's Canadian, and I believe he is from the Vancouver area, so he may know Mark and the other West-coasters.

Eric is correct, on location etc. Mike also is an active guy in the "Real Time Dip" forum, at least he used to be back when I used to check in there a lot. Like Jake Mannix, I don't have a good sense of Mike as a player with a style.

Doug Moore (Italy) – Doug is too important for you not to know who he is. If you have to ask, you're not really supposed to know.

Doug "Gimme" Moore, one of the best East-coast F2F players. An active member of the PTKS. I don't know how much PBeM experience he has.

Doug has been trying to win World DipCon and any other tournament or title he can for some time. Vancouver (which he won!) is a pinnacle for him. And all these guys know it. There is something to be said for the people that are obsessed by winning the titles, and they play differently than others do. Doug can handle the pressure, he's on top of his game, he assesses players and boards well. And he played a lot of these guys just recently at Vancouver and beat them. He can beat them again. On all this, he must be the initial favorite going in.

Mark Zoffel (Russia) – Married 5 years, two Children 4 months and 2.5 year old. 40 years old myself, do investment sales for worlds largest commercial real estate company. Regarding Diplomacy, played in college, forgot about it, picked it up 5 years ago, and enjoy the game itself and the people in the hobby, though am not that active. Host a FTF tourney in Seattle every year with Nathan Barnes called WacCon, which generally is the highest rated tourney of the year in terms of player quality. In FTF hobby have back to back 4th place finishes at WDC in the states, (2005 and 2007) and am known for being aggressive and imaginative, and very good at strategy and tactics. Last e-mail game was

a 2-way draw, IT, with Dan Lester in Adam Silverman's demo game that started in 2006 and lasted a year. Known to like to drink with the likes of Jim O'Kelley, Eric Mead, Nathan Barnes, Dan Lester and of course David Maletsky.

Mark is another West-coast F2F player. He played Turkey in 'Prometheus' and passed up a forced-win to take a two-way Draw with Dan Lester's Italy. His manner in 'Prometheus' struck me as arrogant, though given the strength of his position, I suppose he had the right to be. ☺

Mark Zoffel and Dan Lester played this game in Prometheus that they thought were setting them up for challenging for the title at this Summer's World Dip Con. Mark finished fourth, Dan finished fifth. I didn't come away from Prometheus with that high an opinion of Mark's play, especially when he was challenged by people who were good. On the other hand, he was masterful at manipulating people who were not good players. As our GM in this game, Rick Desper, likes to say, so what? I'd rather be good at playing people who are good.

Andy Marshall (Turkey) - Andy Marshall is a goalkeeper with the Coventry City football club in England. The word most often used to describe his playing style is "rubbish." Oddly enough, this parallels the Diplomacy playing style of the Andy Marshall involved in this game, whose hobbies include keeping dots warm for Jim-Bob Burgess, inventing lies about English football players, fetching Chris Martin's dry cleaning, and being retired from Diplomacy.

Satan. (That's his PTKS nickname) He certainly knows everyone on the board, but he hasn't played much since his heart attack and marriage. Once again, an East-coast/PTKS/F2F player. Will he ally with Doug, or be out for his blood?

Andy Marshall is a great player, in my view, and a really neat person as well. But he's the only player in this game who wasn't at World Dip Con this year. I don't think anyone is going to ally on pure "friendship" grounds, but there could be an initial Italy-Turkey relationship. We will see. I'm not sure what Andy's current work schedule is like, but he's always been too busy to be a good E-Mail player in the past. I worry about that here.

Jim Burgess (Commentator) – Remember that movie about that guy and nobody knew what he really did for a living, but it turned out he did that stuff for that covert agency? You know, with the invisible guns and the stealth helicopters and the men who like to wear ladies underwear? That was based on Jim's life. Except for the exciting parts, as Jim works in a Styrofoam factory, stuffing long stacks of cups into cardboard boxes all day. The women's underwear part was accurate though.

Eric Hunter (Commentator) - I was a Computer Science/Theatre Double-Major in college, and I have always been a game player. I began playing Diplomacy in the mid-Eighties, so I've been playing The Game for about 20 years. I discovered the Judges through rec.games.diplomacy around 1990, and joined the Vermont Group in the mid to late 90's. Virtually all of my games have taken place within the VG or the Dipsters group since then, though I recently branched out and joined the Academy of Creative Destruction. I have played in half a dozen games where people like Jim-Bob

commented on the game as it went on, so I look forward to the chance to do the commenting this time. I have played in six of the Top-50 highest JDPR games of all time, and was the 17th ranked Judge Full-Press player in 2001. According to Jim-Bob, 'Eric is analytical in his approach, plays almost "too well" in the sense that he knows tactics possibly better than any players in the world, [but] he still seems to get himself in trouble with relationships'. Oh, and I wrote "What Skills Are Needed to Play Diplomacy Well" for Diplomacy World #91, and several articles for the Diplomatic Pouch.

Pre-Game General Commentary

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

I'm not sure what this game is intended to demonstrate. Perhaps that F2F Dip and PbeM Dip are different games, and skill at the first does not necessarily translate to skill at the second. Not surprisingly, a [floc.net](#) search shows no games in which any of these players have faced each other. I'll leave it to Jim-Bob to track down common F2F games. Dan is clearly the class of the field with respect to PbeM, but the question is, will he devote the time that is needed to succeed in this format

(presumably working together at some point, attacking each other at others?) while Chris Martin (again) dominated the board as France, ending with 11 centers.

I could try to track this down in general, but I'm just going to do it for World Dip Con this year in Vancouver, the most recent set of games. Here's the story.....

3) Dan Lester was Turkey and Adam Silverman was France in another game where they both survived and Adam doubled up Dan 10 centers to 5. Jack Twilley, Yann Clouet, and Rick Desper were the other three in a five way.

1) Dan Lester was Italy to Adam Silverman's Turkey in one game where Adam was eliminated and Dan ended with an 11 center draw with Chris Martin and Tom Kobrin (I'd have kind of preferred to see either of these two in this game over Andy, not that Andy's isn't a good player, but it defeats what seems like the purpose of recreating relationships from a recent FTF tournament).

4) Then, of course, we have the top board. Previous World Champion Yann Clouet was Austria and the only one eliminated. Chris Martin (Russia) and Tom Kobrin (Italy) also were here and played pretty well in the middle of the pack. But as you can tell from what I said above, Doug Moore in France and Jake Mannix in Turkey were the big winners and Dan Lester in England and Adam Silverman in Germany barely survived with two centers each.

2) Jake Mannix was Italy and Mike Hall was Austria in a game where they both survived with two centers

So, as stated, Andy is a bit of a wild card, but presumably some of these others were offered a slot and turned it down (Tom Kobrin in particular really doesn't like to play anything but FTF). Let the game begin!!!

Spring 1901 Results:

Austria: A Budapest – Serbia, F Trieste – Albania, A Vienna - Galicia (*Bounce*)

England: F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea, A Liverpool – Yorkshire, F London - English Channel (*Bounce*)

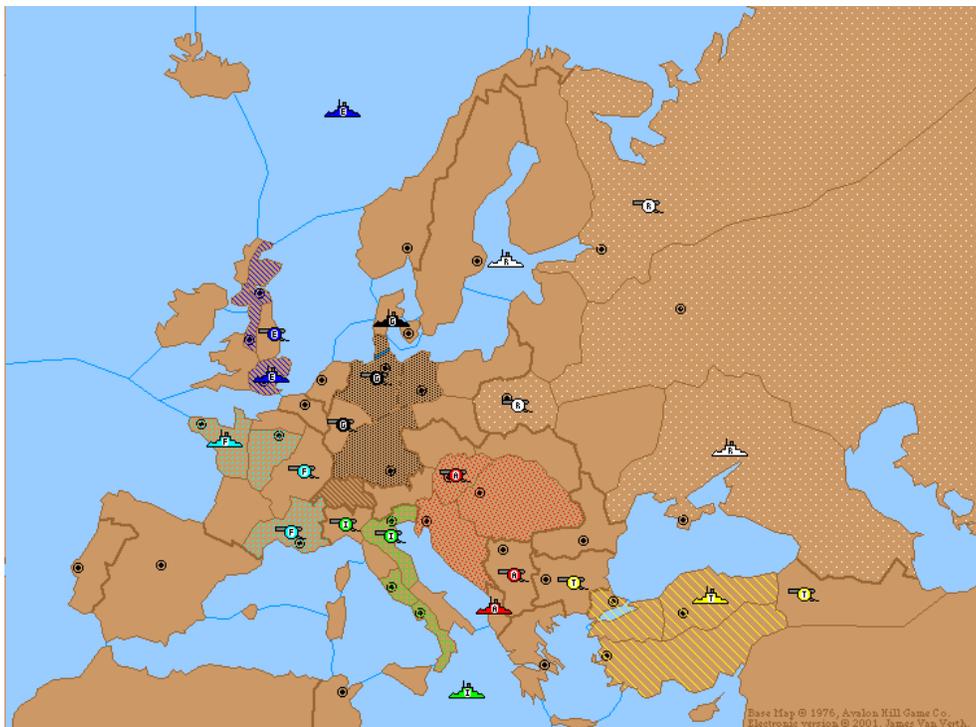
France: F Brest - English Channel (*Bounce*), A Marseilles Supports A Paris – Burgundy, A Paris - Burgundy

Germany: A Berlin – Kiel, F Kiel – Denmark, A Munich - Ruhr

Italy: F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Rome – Venice, A Venice - Piedmont

Russia: A Moscow - St Petersburg, F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*), F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, A Warsaw - Galicia (*Bounce*)

Turkey: F Ankara - Black Sea (*Bounce*), A Constantinople – Bulgaria, A Smyrna - Armenia



Spring 1901 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

Opening names and initial descriptions from "The Diplomacy Openings Library":
www.diplom.org/Online/Openings/interactive.html

Austria - BALKAN GAMBIT, GALICIAN VARIATION -
The Balkan Gambit with A Vie-Gal. The opening defends against Russian entry into Galicia, and when the Austrian succeeds in taking Galicia, he has two units on Rumania plus the threat to Warsaw – which may well distract a Ukraine army away from Rumania. On the down side, this opening risks the loss of Trieste. But if the move to Galicia fails, Austria has shielded two home centres from attack, and is in a decent position to limit further mischief from any Italian army that does get into Trieste. The Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy notes that, "here the object of distrust is Russia."

The Italian opening will pose some potential problems for Adam.

I agree with Eric that the ultimate goal of Doug Moore's Italian opening could be Austria, but given the French opening, there also is the very real possibility of stealing Marseilles for Italy which would distract him from an Austrian attack. While Adam should easily be able to take Greece this fall, I smell Italian/Turkish deals in the ether.

Doug could very easily have an arrangement with Andy to attack Austria and Russia, and with Dan to attack/hinder France. The beauty of the Alpine Chicken,

in my view, is the flexibility. Knowing Doug, I'm sure he views the Austrian dots as his, sooner or later, but I'm equally sure that he's not committed to a time-table for taking them, either.

I completely agree about the flexibility of the Alpine Chicken, it is my second favorite Italian opening. Doug also understands the importance of ARMIES to Italy, which is the insight that I first got from Toby Harris. Once you think of Italy as a land power, primarily, eventually, in order to win, then you see that the simplistic view many people have of Austrian/Italian relations is just not correct (Italy can't help attack Austria because then Italy is next). Austria must understand this, and of course by the "standard opening" we cannot tell if Austria is fooled into complacency by Italian moves or not. I know I'm not shy about speculating, and Eric isn't either, and I'm sure we will be wrong sometimes, and right others. Austrian negotiations, as always, are more important than her moves. Austria MUST actively be engaging the whole board at this moment, not merely feeling relaxed about getting her two builds. Another comment on thinking ahead is warranted. It is precisely when you know exactly what you're going to do next turn that you should be putting the

most energy into setting up the board for two or three seasons hence. The key is not in extending that certainty of movement, but in expanding the options that you face at those points.

England - THE YORKSHIRE SPLITS. Richard Sharp's name for the opening F Lon-ENG and F Edi-NWG.

I would guess that Dan started with a pure Northern Opening, (Lon-Nth, Edi-Nwg, Lvp-Yor), and then changed the F Lon order due to word on what Jake was doing, or at Jake's request. It may be the most interesting opening, but it is probably also the weakest.

I agree, also by reputation and experience Dan seems to make last minute decisions on many of his moves, this smacks of that. There really isn't too much point in not taking the North Sea. Germany could bounce him out of there now unless he wants to assist in denying Russia any builds. In any case, the English will have lots to talk about with Italy, France, Germany and Russia, at the least. I think Eric's comment about "Jake's request" is worth exploring. One argument for it is that they are trying to lull Germany into not seeing their alliance, but still, Germany can bounce North Sea and leave London stuck. I don't think it make a great deal of sense. We'll see, though.

I neglected to mention the more obvious explanation for the change to Lon-Eng. Doug could have told Dan, "I'll move to Pie, if you move to Eng", and then warned Jake about it, with, "I hear Dan is opening to the Channel. I'm ordering Ven-Pie, Rom-Ven, and then Pie-Tyr in the Fall." Dan thinks Doug is on his side, and Jake is thankful for the warning.

Yes, quite possible. And Doug may or may not decide to follow through. If this is the way it happened, I see Doug only as setting up options. From knowing Jake a little bit, and the players in this game, I think Jake may be too concerned about playing cute rather than putting the pedal to the metal. When France gives up the two Iberian builds in 1901, that's OK, it can be adventurous play, but there's a reason for those "safe" builds in the structure of the board too. Pass it up at your peril unless you have another good plan. The current plan doesn't look that good unless it is the other option, the stealth EF vs. G. That's what France wants, but Dan just wants the flexibility.

France – Unnamed opening.

This opening is actually unnamed. As such, I propose "The French Hedgehog". Like the Austrian or Turkish Hedgehog, this opening protects against attacks from any, or indeed all, of France's neighbors. Did Jake suspect an EGI shotgun attack (Ven-Pie, Lon-Eng, Mun-Bur)? Will he risk Mar-Spa, expecting Pie-Tyr from Italy?

Should he?

French Hedgehog is an excellent name for this.

Nuts. It turns out that the Interactive Openings Library has it backwards. Bre-Eng, Mar S Par-Bur is the English Maginot, not Bre-Eng, Par S Mar-Bur, which is rightfully unnamed.

Yeah, English Maginot is a good name for this.

Jake is trying to play too cute by half. Doug Moore in Italy can easily take Marseilles since I can't see France moving Bur-Mar without completely ruining a not too excellent position.

No. Bur-Bel is very nearly certain with no Fleet in Nth.

Yes, and since so is Mar-Spa, it is purely Doug's choice. Sweet, sweet options.

Marseilles pretty much has to go to Spain, doesn't it? Maybe not.....

In Jake's shoes, I wouldn't order Mar-Spa. Bur-Bel should succeed, giving him a build. Mar-Spa gives him a small chance of a second build, but a much greater chance of one build and an Italian Army in Mar. Mar HOLD, Bre-MAO, Bur-Bel, B F Bre seems clearly superior.

We really disagree here, why does Germany allow Bur-Bel to succeed now?

Well, it really depends on the diplomacy, and the relationship between Jake and Mike. If the weak English opening encourages FG, then Den-Nth, Kie-Den (in case Den-Nth succeeds), Ruh-Hol, Bur-Bel, Bre-Eng/MAO seems likely. If France and Germany are at odds, then Germany has to be concerned about Bur-Mun, so I still don't see Ruh-Bel as likely.

Uh, slight "never mind" here. I wasn't looking at a map, or the orders, carefully enough, if I had I would realize that when Germany moves F Kie-Den, then A Ber-Kie is not in Holland..... but still, as Germany I would definitely not bother defending Munich, it is Belgium or Burgundy, depending on the Diplomacy.

I might agree if you think Germany allows it (remember that Ruh-Bur also is possible!) but why does Germany play so passive. I do think Jake is capable of being sweettalked by Doug into Mar-Spa so Doug can take Mar. BUT, it is still an "if he wants to", Doug could be "offered Mar" and pass it up, very definitely. Doug will play the whole board on the question, as he should.

If I'm playing France next to the World Champion as Italy, there's no way I'm giving him a shot at three builds

in 1901. I'd order Mar Hold, or Mar-Pie. Jake may play it differently, but I see Mar-Spa as a 5% chance of a second build, and a 95% chance of an Italian Army in Mar.

Germany – BLITZKREIG OPENING, DANISH VARIANT - This is the most popular German opening, and also the most popular opening for any country. It guarantees two neutrals against any offense, gives Germany leverage in Sweden and Belgium, and usually will offend no one. If no one has moved adjacent to him, he will have great flexibility in Fall, and all home centres will be open for builds. This is the basic opening where France is an ally, Russia is neutral or suspect, and England is the objective. The Denmark fleet can deny Sweden to Russia. Germany also has a lock on Holland (A Kie-Hol, A Ruh S A Kie-Hol), and can defend Berlin and still take Holland (so long as England does not stop him).

Might we see, Bre-MAO, Bur-Bel, Ruh-Hol, Kie-Den, Den-Nth?

We could, the question is whether France (Jake) is really in a stealth alliance with England (Dan). If I were Germany, seeing what is going on in the Balkans etc., would definitely bounce England in the North Sea while supporting myself to Belgium. Eric's suggestion is the alternative, I suppose. Then again, maybe Jake doesn't know what he's doing.

The unasked question is, given Lon-Eng, Ven-Pie, Mar S Par-Bur, why didn't we see Mun-Bur? Jake was obviously expecting it, and it seems odd that IE would attack France in S'01 without Germany.

You suggested that France was "tipped" to Dan's channel move, well, so might Germany have been. That's why I don't get your A Bur-Bel as a success for France. I agree he will likely try it, but then Germany has the choice of trying to slip into Bur behind or just blasting into Bel for three builds. If it were me, and I thought France were going for Belgium, I might slip into Burgundy, but then France can likely build the A Par. I do not see firm alliances here, and Germany can have more options with the three builds, including building two fleets ☺

Italy – ALPINE CHICKEN - This is a somewhat temporizing opening, generally seen as pro-Turkey and anti-France. Both east and west options are preserved. Often followed in Fall by a Konigratz Freakout. Stephen Agar describes this opening more completely in his article: "Is The Alpine Chicken A Tasty Bird?" Also see ITALIAN SHUFFLE - A fall continuation of the Alpine Chicken opening. With Pie-Tyr and Ven-Tri, the point is to confuse or delay France, while delaying the attack on Austria for a season, allowing Italy the chance to see if the diplomatic and tactical position is right, and to persuade Austria that he is friendly. The risks are that the failure to attack Austria

right off may antagonize Russia or Turkey, and that by violating Piedmont without disabling France Italy may have stirred the hornet's nest without setting it afire.

As with so many of the Openings, this one was named by Richard Sharp, and I happen to feel that he did this opening a disservice. So long as Italy is confident that Turkey will not open F Ank-Con, the Alpine Chicken can slow France's growth, and give Italy options to expand westward early in the game, while still providing an opportunity to attack Austria if the French coast seems out of reach. This sort of flexibility is almost always a good thing.

Great moves by Doug, he's got loads of options.

Russia – NORTHERN SYSTEM, OCTOPUS VARIANT - This opening appears to be very belligerent, but the southern moves can be sold as defensive measures to compensate for the fact that only one army is sent south. Neither Turkey nor Austria should feel seriously threatened, as Russia has apparently moved on the other as well, and a joint attack on both Austria and Turkey hardly seems likely if Russia also opens to StP. Often, at least one of the southern moves will be an arranged standoff.

Named by (and a favorite of) Richard Sharp, the Octopus combines a strong defense in the south with an uncommonly powerful assault on Scandinavia. The name presumably derives from the way the opening exploits Russia's interests in so many spheres, spreading tentacles into several areas. The Russian player who opens with this can expect to upset England, who usually looks to Norway as his only guaranteed build -- in a game with an Octopus, only a full blown Northern Opening (F Lon-NTH, F Edi-NWG, A Lon-Yor) from England will do. A variation of this opening, also named by Richard Sharp, is the Squid, which takes on both the corner powers with A War-Ukr.

I opened with the Squid in 'titleist', the Championship Round of the 2000 Vermont Group Full-Press Tournament:

www.hagenah.de/diplomacy/vgfp2000/thirdround/titleist/index.html, and it was the Winter of '08 before I had more than four Centers.

Mark could face similar difficulties, here. Nwg-Nwy, Den-Swe, Bul-Rum, Arm-Sev, Ank-Bla leaves him with no builds, and two Units in position to attack Sev in S'02. While I think it is important for Russia to keep the northern front open, sending A Mos south, and building in StP seems the better way to do it, unless Russia is sure that Turkey is headed west, and not north.

I have nothing to add to Eric's detailed analysis except to say that I do think he will get a build in Sweden (see above).

It's certainly possible, but it depends on the western alliance structure. EG - No. FG - Yes. EF - Yes, probably. Undetermined - Possibly yes.

I agree with that assessment, and I'm putting heavier weight on the likelihood of undetermined, and I like Germany trying to move to North Sea. Dan doesn't play strong EG alliance early, I don't think.

Turkey – CRIMEAN CRUSHER- Turkey opening to Bul, BLA, and Arm is an aggressive opening that allows all three pieces to be used against Russia in the fall. Even if the fleet move succeeds, though, if Russia is in Rum, Ukr and Sev, Turkey must still second guess Russia for a second center if Austrian help is unavailable, and may lose BLA in the process. This opening poses all sorts of problems for Russia. If she has trustingly ordered F Sev-Rum she is in real trouble. Even if she ordered, F Sev-BLA, she is going to have difficulty maintaining her position.

England, France, and Russia could all end 1901 without a build, though I would say that the odds favor France gaining at least one build. If I were to rank the Powers from "First to Worst", I would say, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Austria, France, England, and Russia.

I think it depends how much Turkey has an understanding with Italy vs. Austria. I do not like

the overly aggressive initial Turkish moves, it's too easy for them to backfire.

The Italian and Turkish openings do suggest that Andy and Doug have an understanding. No possibility of a Lepanto and a full-bore Russian attack from Turkey. Do you agree with my Power rankings?

No, not really, I go for Italy, Germany, England, Turkey, Austria, Russia, France, but Italy, Germany are well out in front, England is there because I know Dan likes these kinds of openings, and Austria/Russia are right together. I think Andy is playing with fire with his opening, but this is surely a matter of opinion that can change if Austria doesn't play the board well.

Based on our discussions, I think Germany, Italy, Turkey is a better top-3. Germany would seem to have his choice of allies, two sure builds, and no obvious enemies at this point. Italy has the flexibility, but both France and Austria may be unhappy with his moves. Turkey has put all his eggs in one basket, but it seems as though the move paid off for him.

OK, I think that England also is in a good place because France is so weak, but that's because I know Dan plays these sorts of positions really well. From the pure board positions, you're right.

Fall 1901 Results:

Austria: F Albania – Greece, A Serbia Supports F Albania – Greece, A Vienna - Trieste

England: F London - North Sea, F Norwegian Sea Supports F London - North Sea, A Yorkshire Hold

France: F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Burgundy – Munich, A Marseilles Hold

Germany: F Denmark - North Sea (*Fails*), A Kiel - Denmark (*Fails*), A Ruhr - Holland

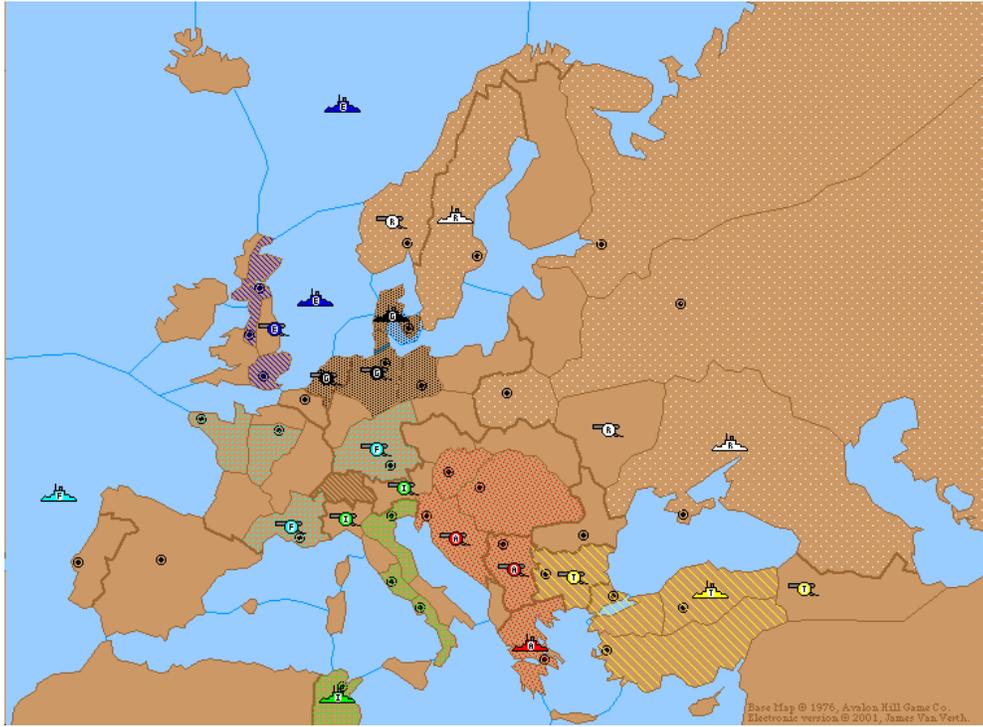
Italy: F Ionian Sea – Tunis, A Piedmont Hold, A Venice - Tyrolia

Russia: F Gulf of Bothnia – Sweden, F Sevastopol - Black Sea (*Bounce*), A St Petersburg – Norway, A Warsaw - Ukraine

Turkey: F Ankara - Black Sea (*Bounce*), A Armenia - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Bulgaria Hold

Ownership:

Austria:	Budapest, Greece, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.
England:	Edinburgh, Liverpool, London.
France:	Brest, Marseilles, Munich, Paris.
Germany:	Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel.
Italy:	Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice.
Russia:	Moscow, Norway, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Smyrna.
Unowned:	Belgium, Portugal, Rumania, Spain.



Adjustments:

Austria:	Supp 5 Unit 3 Build 2
England:	Supp 3 Unit 3 Build 0
France:	Supp 4 Unit 3 Build 1
Germany:	Supp 4 Unit 3 Build 1
Italy:	Supp 4 Unit 3 Build 1
Russia:	Supp 6 Unit 4 Build 2
Turkey:	Supp 4 Unit 3 Build 1

Fall 1901 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

As an overall statement, this shows what happens when cutthroat players, who know each other pretty well, stab and counterstab. Four neutrals are unowned, including all of Iberia. Lots of tricky moves, including ANOTHER Black Sea bounce in Fall 1901, and England gets no builds at all. The overall balance of the board is heavily weighted to the East, as France only gets Munich and Russia gets both Norway and Sweden. Eric started last turn a rating of where everyone is at this point, I'll pick up on that and start first this time.

Agreed. Five builds in the East to two in the West is unusual.

Ordering of Powers at this point: Austria, Italy, Germany, Russia, France, Turkey, England...

Hmm, I'd say Russia, Germany, England, Austria, Italy, France, Turkey.

Russia has two builds, control of Scandinavia, England isn't building, and Germany is building an Army to deal with the French in Munich. The south is more problematic, but a deal like Bul & Ukr S Sev-Rum, Mos-Sev, War-Gal, Ank-Bla, Con-Aeg, followed by Arm-Bla-Rum (RF Rum popped), B F StP could really get the Juggernaut rolling.

I rank Germany second because even though France took Mun, he really can't hold it, and Germany could easily gain Bel and take back Mun this year, even if he does lose Den. Alternately, he could support Yor-Bel in exchange for an alliance against a weak France.

England has no builds, but not visible enemies, either. The Russian Army in Nwy isn't a threat, and the French Army in Munich means both France and Germany will want Dan on their side.

Austria has two builds, but he has an Italian problem, particularly if we see Doug build A Ven. Still RT are at

odds right now, so it is unclear where Italy will get the help to pluck Adam's hedgehog.

Italy open with the Alpine Chicken, but only took Tunis, and there is no clear fifth Center available to him, so I would call the Fall a diplomatic failure for Doug. We'll have to see what he builds, and where he goes from here.

France got only one build, and he'll lose Munich next Spring. With A Pie still eying Mar, it is uncertain whether Jake will be able to pick up both Iberian Centers for a build this year. Bur-Bel would have left him in much better position.

Andy's failure to move to Rum, and AR's two builds each, hurts Turkey. As I pointed out in my Russian comments, it could be turned around, but that's a diplomatic question, and the tactical picture is not pretty, right now.

...though England is last only because she has lost those builds and Germany/Russia have the basis for an alliance to keep going. If England can split GR at this point there are many potential gains.

The fact that Dan gave Mark Nwy and their relationship from Prometheus, plus the French distraction of Germany make ER more likely than GR, I think.

Now country by country, I'll let Eric do the stats if he wants to, I'm just going to comment.

(AUSTRIA): It is good when Austria gets two builds, Rumania is still untaken, and RT are bitterly at war. All Austria has to do now is to take a side in that battle, and can play the two off against each other to get the best deal. I was concerned that Austria wasn't talking enough with the way the Spring moves went. Probably that was dead wrong, and I push the Austrians to the top of the heap this time as recompense. There still is lots of evidence that the RT battle is really being supported by Italy and Italy let Austria back into Trieste to ensure no fleet build. So Doug is not your friend, but at the same time, there is no basis for a relationship. A key will be what Turkey's build is and Austria should try to influence that in his favor, he wants it to be the fleet Constantinople, I think. Though even that is dependent on HOW Austria wants to take sides. Keeping a few options open will be helpful. And of course, everyone knows what YOUR builds will be, since Doug made that choice. What will Doug build now is also a key. Italy is set up to build in Venice, an army. Remember I said last season about the status of Italy as a land power? Austria must try to stay that hand and this is why I put Italy third above. I think he will build the A Venice, but without help from the East that is not forthcoming, it isn't clear where Italian support comes from next. Lastly, AND

most importantly, there needs to be a very strong Anschluss AG going for quite some time. That Anschluss need not be too explicit, but it could be, that would lean toward an initial temporary alliance on both sides of the board with Russia. Russia, of course, can be dealt with later if AG remains strong. That is what the pieces say. The people may say differently.

Not trusting Italy. Army builds, obviously.

No kidding.... ☺

(ENGLAND): Boy, Dan had a devil's choice there, I'm not sure I would have made the choice he made. Bouncing Germany out of the North Sea and Russia out of Norway would seem to have been the better bet. Perhaps there is a strong EF alliance now that he is basing this on? If so, why did they battle over English Channel so catastrophically? Lots of questions here, and Dan may have been playing too cute by half again (to continue to use what may be a continuing metaphor in this game). There seems to be an obvious advantage for RG to work together now against England, the only downside is that the German fleet needs to be built in Berlin. He must have fooled Germany into thinking that the attack on North Sea might have been successful (though I don't see how that is possible. Germany wanted to bounce in North Sea, keep England out. Then he could have moved Kie-Hol and taken Belgium (or tried to bounce, or defended Munich, as France went there somewhat unexpectedly). I expected Germany to take Belgium, that's what I was expecting. This protected against what France did do (taking Munich). This just spells MORE trouble for Dan. Wizardwork is needed now. Dan better go find Dumbledore at Hogwarts and enlist his aid, or he is toast.

Dan gives Mark Nwy. Did he make a deal for no build of F StP/NC and support into Den next year? Is this a carry-over from Prometheus?

I admit, I didn't think of that. No, I really don't think so, how can Mark do anything except build STP(NC)? Adding to my other comments, Mark is congenitally incapable of patience. He had to go to the wall on this one. No, I think we're looking at Russia going for England.

Mark is incapable of patience? The same Mark who NEVER stabbed Dan in Prometheus, when EVERYONE knew he was going to at any moment? I can easily see these two agreeing to StP-Nwy, B F StP/SC or even B War, B Mos, and then Swe S Yor-Den.

Late game, yes, but early on he is a tiger. Remember how he repeatedly steamrolled Austria and Russia as

Turkey in that game?? As I said in commentary on Prometheus, Mark still was impatient in the WAY he executed not stabbing Dan. A fine point, perhaps, but I really think Mark plays in a very aggressive way in general.

Yes, but not Dan, who is playing England, here. I'm certainly not saying that an ER two-way is in the works, or that Mark won't build F StP/NC, but my suspicion is that Dan asked for and received certain assurances in exchange for not bouncing StP-Nwy, and no build of StP/NC would certainly be the first thing I asked for.

We shall see momentarily, might even be elsewhere in my in-box as we move on to Winter 1901. The Russian builds will tell a lot (if you're right, do you even see A War/A Mos? If there really is another Mark/Dan act, that's what Mark should build.

Given the tactical weakness of Mos-StP in S'01, and the Turkish threat, I can see B A Mos, B A War even if Dan and Mark only agreed to StP-Nwy, Nrg S Lon-Nth, and no build of F StP/NC. Unless Mark can negotiate a Juggernaut jump-start with Andy, I don't think a build in StP is in Russia's best interest, right now. I'd say I'm ready to move on to the builds, as well.

(FRANCE): My assertion is that Jake is overmatched here. As France, I know *I*** would have tried to convince Doug that I was holding (and note Doug held in Piedmont) and then sneak to Spain. From the board positions that would have worked. Of course, we may be missing some side Diplomacy. On the other hand, kudos for getting Munich, as noted above, if I were Germany, I'd have taken Belgium and tried to get BOTH England/France without any builds. That wouldn't have worked, but Germany would still have had two builds. We'll see if France builds F Brest. I like F Brest, F Mid-Iri, F Brest-Mid for spring. But he probably has to build A Paris. Then best for France is eventually working with Russia in RF vs. AG as the main late game situation. That of course ignores Italy though, and Doug won't be ignored. Italy remains France's greatest danger. That's why right now Jake wants AG to start stuffing Italy so Italy has its back turned and France can get into the Med after England is neutralized/out. That's the best case scenario. The English move suggests that possibly France is now siding with Dan. That would be a mistake in my view. Take advantage of the fact that England is aligned East and attack.**

Jake goes for Munich, rather than the open Belgium. Only two builds in the west. Is this the best the F2F crowd can manage? ☺ The move to Munich forces a build of A Paris.

Jake is overmatched and he's flailing. As I said, he should have taken Spain.

No, he should have taken Bel and built F Bre. ☺

(GERMANY): I've basically commented all around Germany by now. Anschluss, Anschluss, ANSCHLUSS! That's Germany's ticket to long term success as this is playing out. But that doesn't mean you trumpet it to the board. I find that Americans, less influenced by Richard Sharp theory, sometimes miss the strength of this. It will be to their advantage if they can do that here too. I think they can.

As predicted, but it seems France isn't interested in an alliance. Berlin is Mike's only open Home Center, and an Army to retake Munich is certain.

I don't see why this is as predicted??? There is no way Mike can have possibly thought he actually would get into North Sea, there was nothing else worthwhile for the English fleet London to do. He could have bounced Mark/Russia, but I think the right move was the one he tried. The wrong one was Kiel-Denmark rather than Kiel-Holland. I guess you're right, he can't build the fleet.

France tells England he's ordering Bre-Eng again. Germany tells England he's ordering Den-Swe, and asks England to order Nrg-Nwy to keep Russia from building. Dan orders Lon-Eng to bounce Bre-Eng, Jake orders Bre-MAO, Bur-Bel, builds F Bre, Mike orders what he ordered, and build F Kie, F Ber. England collapses, Germany takes Scandinavia, FG rolls.

Eric, I think you're trying to have it both ways here, perhaps I am too. But this last scenario is only if there is a FG arrangement. And wouldn't Germany know that? Now, perhaps you're saying that Germany THOUGHT there was a FG, Jake TOLD him that he told England he was going to Eng, and TOLD him that England was going to bounce him. Then Jake double crossed Germany, went to Munich instead of Belgium, and told England to go ahead and deal with the German move to North Sea, he was moving to Mid. That's all possible. Otherwise, I'm rather confused by your analysis in the last three comments above.

Looking at the Spring results, I saw FG vs. E as the natural Fall continuation, and Mike's moves this Fall were exactly what I would have moved as Germany if I believed France and I were allied. If I thought there was an FG vs. E, and that England might think Bre-Eng was possible, then I would order Den-Nth, Kie-Den since if England orders Lon-Eng, then Den-Nth would succeed, and Kie-Den would be needed to secure my second build. Mike's moves make perfect sense if he was expecting FG vs. E. Otherwise, they make no sense.

I will grant you that to a degree.



(ITALY): I still like Doug's position. He's set to build the army, or the fleet if he wants it, but there is ZERO threat to him from the sea (well, I suppose Austrian F Greece, you do have to move F Tun-Ion and probably bounce). The danger to him is Anschluss and the German/Austrian/French armies coordinating against him. This is unlikely with France in Munich, you think, but NOOOO, it could be a deal with Germany later. Build the A Venice, and it's a tough nut to crack. Build elsewhere and the opportunity beckons. Doug knows all this and is playing a smart game. His build is key to the board.

Pie Hold, Ven-Tyr? Isn't that backwards? Yes, Doug can build A Ven, but that seems unbalanced.

It's possible he decided this last minute after realizing Ven-Tri would bounce. I also don't get Pie hold and France not taking Spain. Maybe Doug just did this trying to build good will with Jake for the future. Maybe he's planning on taking Marseilles in 1902 and was trying to lull Jake. In any case, not as good as it first seemed, but he is set to be the land power that Italy needs to be.

(RUSSIA): Russia always needs to be tight with France, and especially in a game like this. I must admit, I'm not a big fan of this type of opening for Russia. I've been convinced by the Allen Schweinberg school of play by Russia that demands lots of patience. I also don't like Russia being so aggressively north. BUT, once you do it, you must keep going, build the F NC and pedal to the metal, balls to the wall, keep going. I will not be surprised if it collapses which is why I put Russia squarely in the middle of the pack at this point. I take the devil's dare and ally with the Anschluss, but with great trepidation.

Mark gains two builds, and Rumania is still open. A War & F StP/SC, perhaps?

Could be A Moscow. What does A War do? I think

he wants to WORK with Germany to go after England. Warsaw just makes Germany nervous.

Yes, A Mos is more likely. I was thinking in terms of a full-blown ER vs. G scenario, and that is unlikely at this point.

I still think it's GR vs. E and then perhaps F.

This provides a crystal-clear example to the readers of the challenge of Diplomacy. What each of them sees as obvious and logical may not make any sense to someone else, based on their perspective, experience, and available information. Jim and I both know quite a lot about Diplomacy, and we have almost identical information about this particular game, and yet we are reaching radically different conclusions about what is happening.

Quite true, quite true. And we still disagree, even after this debate.

(TURKEY): OK, OK, I suppose Andy belongs in the game, but sheesh, what now? He can build F Con and force North Sea and work with Austria against Russia, but see above, it is much more likely that Austria and Russia work against him. Andy has a tough set of choices. And is Doug a strong ally, or not? I think he took too much effort that Doug already wanted anyway, to avoid Lepanto moves. I think Turkey is in big long term trouble. This year is key for avoiding that.

I don't agree with Bul Hold. Bul-Rum would have given him Rumania and position against Russia. Yes, A Rum would have been exposed, and he could have lost Bul to Austria, but since he has committed to the Russian attack, Andy should have pushed forward. B F Con followed by Con S Ank-Bla seems likely.

That's probably right. I don't think Andy is in very good shape. I agree, I would have hit Rumania. Everyone knew what Austria was going to do.

I hope you've enjoyed the first installment of the new Diplomacy World Demo Game. Stay tuned next issue for more backstabbing, tactical majesty, diplomatic magic, and prize-winning commentary. Or, you might just get more of this foolishness – you never can tell!

The Beav and The Shmed

By Jim O'Kelley

In high school, my multi-player strategy game of choice was Risk. We didn't play it a lot, but when we were in the mood for an all-night war game, that's what hit the table.

In my freshman year of college at the Harvard of the Midwest, a guy we called the Beav introduced us to Axis & Allies. He brought it back from a weekend home in Evansville, and we played it on a Monday night when we should have been studying. I was hooked.

I eventually bought the game, and taught it to my friends from home. They took to it as well, and we played it quite a bit during our college breaks. (We've only played Risk maybe twice since discovering Axis & Allies.)

Back at school, during an A&A game shortly before our Thanksgiving break, my roommate the Shmed told us about a game he had called Diplomacy. He agreed to bring it back with him.

This was fall 1985, my freshman year at IU, so my memory is a bit hazy, but as I recall, we set up a game sometime between Thanksgiving and our finals. Given the crowd, it very well could have been finals week.

We could only muster six players, so Italy was neutral. The Shmed volunteered to play Germany, which he said was the most difficult country to play. I was England, and Rambo was France. The Beav played Turkey, and Reggie, who was also from Evansville and whom we sometimes called Psycho because he was psychotic, was Russia. Scott Yahne was Austria.

I don't remember much about the game. In what probably is a time-honored Diplomacy tradition, we all ganged up on the Shmed because he was the only guy who knew the rules. We eliminated him in 1903, and he said, "Have fun playing my game" as he stormed out of the room. (We were in Rambo's room, which was next to ours on the first floor of Ferguson House in Wright Quad.)

Reggie eventually flipped out and quit and had to be replaced by this guy Dale, a sophomore who lived down the hall. The rest of us played well into the night. We probably stopped around 3 a.m. with Beaver and me topping the board at 11 or 12 centers apiece.

We might have played one more time, I'm not sure. But it was much easier to find five for Axis & Allies, so we set Diplomacy aside, and I pretty much forgot about it.

Until I had graduated and was browsing in the hobby shop in downtown LaGrange. I picked up the *General*, Avalon Hill's old magazine, flipped through it, and saw an

article by, I think, Mark Berch on triple alliances. I bought the issue, read the article, and recalled how much I liked the game. So I quickly bought the game and also Avalon Hill's computer version.

After a couple of months, I was able to convince three of my friends to give it a try, and we used the computer to play three of the powers. My friends ganged up on me, and I remember at one point, I was actually able to support a computer-controlled unit into St. Petersburg, which was fun.

A few months later, in December 1991, I organized an actual seven-player game, the first one I had ever played. We played the day after I had proposed to my ex-wife. We used the computer game to log and adjudicate our moves. I still have the printout from that game. It was a lot of fun, but looking back, our orders were rife with rookie mistakes.

I went on to organize five more games with my friends, and then one game of Colonial Diplomacy, before we switched to Junta. We got together twice a year to play these games, but that tradition stopped in 1997 or so.

Meanwhile, I think I had subscribed to the *General*, which followed up Mark Berch's article with a two-parter by Rex Martin on a famous postal game called Leviathan. Reading that article convinced me to give the postal hobby a try, and in June 1992, I started games in Vince Lutterbie's Down at the Mouth and Doug Kent's Maniac's Paradise.

I played England in both, soloing in the first and finishing in a two-way draw with Stan Johnson in the second.

I've been playing postally ever since I dabbled in the email hobby a bit a few years ago, but now my medium of choice is face-to-face Diplomacy, either with the Windy City Weasels or on the Grand Prix circuit.

I've lost touch with most of my college friends, losing some in the divorce and others to time and distance, but I'm still close with Scott Yahne. We see each other at Sox games, and he also plays with the Weasels a couple of times a year.

I never had much of a friendship with the Shmed. In fact, a couple of weeks into my second semester, I moved in with Rambo, and Rambo's new roommate moved in with the Shmed. Like me, the Shmed grew up in a Western suburb, and I'm pretty sure he lives in Chicago now, but I haven't considered looking him up. I'll always be grateful to him, though, for introducing me to this great game.

Sometimes a Plan Does Come Together: A Tempest 2007 Report

By Andy Bartalone

As I reflect on Tempest 2007, and all the work that went into it, from so many people. I understand why it was such a great weekend.

Friday afternoon was a bit of a whirlwind until I actually got to the hotel. The Westin Tysons Corner is a fabulous hotel. I have stayed in many hotels in my life. My work takes me all over North America to meet with clients and I can say with little hesitation that it was great, and the staff was fantastic. I was against this venue because of its location. Unless our tournament committee comes up with some sort of venue that includes open bar, my vote will be to go back to the Westin for Tempest 2008.

As I got to the hotel and checked in, I started seeing a lot of people that I consider great friends. For all of you out there that have never traveled to a face to face tournament, you really don't know what you are missing. Diplomacy is great and all, but a weekend hanging out with great people off the boards is simply outstanding. Don and Graham Woodring, Melissa Nicholson and I went out to find food; Falls Church is a short drive and it has all kinds of amazing ethnic cuisine, we ended up at a Peruvian restaurant that used to be a Chinese place, and the food was great, especially the cervache. We made it back to the hotel around 5pm and the first poker game had broken out, which I sat in on and played a few hands. Up until the time of the first round to be called, I got a shower, changed clothes and just chilled out.



There are a couple of things that we had going on during the weekend. We held a raffle, \$1 per ticket, the winner

got to build a board for the third (and final) round, that they were not on. This was a very popular way to spend five, ten or even twenty bucks. Mark Zoffel from his evil mastermind hideout in suburban Seattle was so amused that he threw in a C-note.... guess who won? (We will get back to that later).

The second thing you need to know is that David Maletsky is one of the nicest, most generous people I have ever met in my life, unless he is your Tournament Director, and then he is a sadistic bastard. Many tournaments have a random program to generate placements and board positions; this is NOT the case when Dave is the Tournament Director. Dave builds boards on the principle of "How fun is this going to be to watch".

So, it's about 7:10 and everyone is gathered in our conference room. Announcements are made and Dave starts to call boards and the following words leave his mouth "I want to call this first board, **the board of champions**, everyone on it has won a tournament" and at this point I knew that this weekend was going to be challenging. The board included Doug Moore (current World Champion), Chris Martin (Former World Champion), Chris Mazza (Origins winner at least twice), Graham Woodring (Carnage 2006), Tim Yocum (HuskyCon Champion 2003?) and Jim O'Kelley (Current Grand Prix Champion, he won 3 tournaments last year). I typically don't work well with any of these guys, hell, none of us really works well with each other and I think I am the only person that has even shared a board with Chris Mazza. I tried to tell people not to under-estimate Chris Mazza. All parties consider it a pathetic ploy to remove one of the targets from myself and in some ways it is, but mostly it's a warning that he is a damn good player. Most people don't heed that warning and he tops the board.

Chris Mazza	11
Doug Moore	7
Andy Bartalone	7
Jim O'Kelley	6
Graham Woodring	2
Chris Martin	1
Tim Yokum	0

We played quickly and the game finished early, which anyone who has every played a face to face tournament will tell you, is a good thing, especially on Friday night. We were done around midnight.

Other games, particularly poker were played well into the night, I am pretty sure it didn't break up until about 6am. I

socialized and played a little bit of poker. I got to bed around 2am, knowing that I had an OK score on the board, but definitely nothing special.

This might be a good time to explain Dave Maletsky's scoring system; Its tiered, and after tiering its position-based, then center-based and can be explained most easily by the below rules.

1. It's a tiered system. If you solo, you go up a tier. If you are the only person to solo, you win the tournament. At the end of the tournament, you count the number of people who have soloed and they are the ones that are eligible to win the tournament. If no one has soloed, everyone is eligible to win the tournament.
2. The position-based element is simple. When the game is voted to end, the person with the most centers gets 7000 points, plus their center count. So, if you were to top the board at 12, your score would be 7012. Second position earns 6000 points plus their center count and so on. If two players tie for a position they split the difference. Its easier to show you by the example of my first board, as shown above;

- Chris Mazza got 7011 points
- Doug Moore and I each got 5507 points, 2nd (6000) and 3rd (5000) positions combined for 11000/2.
- Jim O'Kelley got 4006 points.
- Graham Woodring got 3002 points.
- Chris Martin got 2001 points
- Tim Yokum got 1000 points

If more than 1 person is eliminated, they are scored by when they were eliminated.

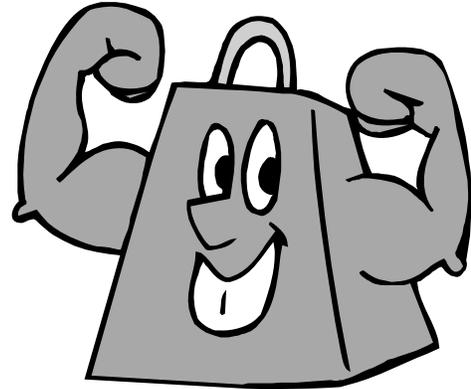
Morning came early for many people, especially those that played poker and drank until 6am. I got up early and Chris Martin and I went and got breakfast at the golden arches. If we (the PTKS) use this venue again next year, the one thing that we have to do is get a better handle on food options for breakfast on Saturday, it was the only meal that was lacking options a little bit. This could also be an opinion shared only by myself; I tend to like to eat a real breakfast (yes...I am describing the golden arches as real in this case). Whereas most of those places in the area of the hotel opened at 6am during the week, they didn't open until 8:30 on Saturday, and that just didn't work with a 9am start.

People filed in and Dave put together boards, and at about 9:30 boards were called and I began wondering what I had done to Dave to deserve this special brand of prison love. My board is called in alphabetical sequence of the countries (as they usually are at tournaments);

Austria: Mike McMillie; England: Tim Richardson;
France: Rich O'Brien; Germany: Andy Bartalone; Italy:

Christian Pedone; Russia: Steve Emmert and Turkey: Brian Shelden.

My immediate thoughts are **I am Germany, with PoD and Big Rich in the west. Chris and Smacko as my other central powers, and Steve Emmert in Russia. Not to mention Shelden in Turkey; there are no weak players on this board.**



PoD is England (Prince of Darkness, Tim Richardson to his ultra-conservative cronies and a very solid player). (Big) Rich O'Brien in France; Rich is tactically pretty sound, diplomatically he is a total question mark, and he and I have history of me leaving his guts for garters. This will be tough to work out, but it is workable. Christian Pedone in Italy and Smacko in Austria, both are very good players, and I can work with both of them, looks like a central alliance is what I am going to propose. Steve Emmert is another very good player, a fine southern gentleman and he makes the best mint julep I have ever had. Brian Shelden is a very good player in Turkey. Brian is one of my best friends, but as with good friends off the board, we both know what we are both capable of on the board, and I am VERY glad he is in Turkey and not touching my border.

The game begins and I start negotiating with folks, both PoD and Rich are being extremely non-committal, Rich says he is going to the Channel, but I know he is lying to me. PoD says that he doesn't know what he wants to do and is just going to open non-aggressively. This is all very bad in my book. I speak to Chris and Smacko and they agree to do a Central Triple and I move on to Brian, we talk briefly about who is more dangerous and then I speak to Steve Emmert, who informs me that he and Austria are good and that he is opening NORTH.....Hallelujah.....this is music to my ears.

Spring 1901 happens and Rich and PoD don't fight. PoD even moves to Edinburgh to make sure that Rich is comfortable. Christian attacks Smacko, Shelden plays it tight to the vest and Steve Emmert keeps to his word and opens NORTH.... which gave me one of my most entertaining moments of the tournament when Steve, an attorney by profession and PoD, a lobbyist by profession (for those of you reading out there, who don't know what

a lobbyist does, the short form is that they lie to the Congress of the United States). So when PoD approaches Steve with complete indignation at the position that Steve has put him in; Steve politely and with slight southern drawl, points out that the army in Edinburgh confirms his suspicions and walks away. I will not be bouncing Steve in Sweden. Rich and I have left Burgundy open and things are going much better than I would have expected. In Fall of 1901 I bounce Rich in Belgium, Tim supports himself to Norway with the army. Christian confirms that he isn't going through with what I thought might be a Key Lepanto, and takes Tunis and stays in Trieste as well as leaving an army in Piedmont, . Shelden tries to bounce Smacko in Greece and Steve gets to 6 with Sweden and Rumania.

Builds are somewhat interesting; There are the expected and mundane, Smacko puts an army in Vienna , Shelden puts down a fleet in Smyrna, Christian puts down an army in Venice and fleet in Naples, PoD puts down a fleet in London, I build fleet Kiel and army Munich but Big Rich puts down two fleets and Steve puts down a army in Moscow and a fleet North Coast. Evidently Steve is very comfortable with the east being in the mess it is in and seems to want PoD's head on a pike. Which I am totally ok with.

Negotiations for Spring 1902 were pretty fun. There was a lot of finger pointing and recriminations; PoD to Rich, Rich to PoD but the ones that stood out the most were Christian and Rich (evidently there was an agreement about no southern fleets) and PoD and Steve where PoD walked away smug about convincing Steve to back off.

Orders were read and some interesting things happened. Norway was dislodged, Piedmont walked into Marseilles, Munich walked to Burgundy, London went to the Channel and Picardy made it to Belgium, unsupported (it was blocked in by Ruhr and Holland, but for the meantime it was French).

Negotiations for Fall 1902 were equally interesting. Steve and I arranged a bounce in Sweden so that PoD couldn't walk Finland back to Sweden. I spent time telling Rich that I went to Burgundy as a defensive move and that I wasn't going to attack him in Belgium. Rich is clearly in a place where he doesn't care what happens to his position because evidently the entirety of he and PoD's negotiations for spring were centered around London, and it NOT going to the Channel. He doesn't even care that there is an Italian army and fleet in Marseilles and Tyrennean Sea.

Orders were read and at the end of it all, it read Austria 3, England 4 (losing Norway, taking Brest), France 2 (losing all 3 home centers), Germany 7 (adding Belgium and Paris), Italy 7 (adding Marseilles and Greece), Russia 7 (adding Norway) and Turkey 4.

The next 4 years are a constant flow of positioning and

negotiations leaving the board at the following center counts: England 6 Germany 8 Italy 10 Russia 6 and Turkey 4. Shelden has had incredible bad luck in getting traction anywhere. And PoD calls for an end of the game vote. The vote is taken and Dave Maletsky almost gleefully says **Play on**.

The consensus across the board is that Christian voted it down, my suspicion is that Brian voted it down because he wants to hurt Christian and finally seems to have worked out something with Steve in the south.



Spring 1907, I make my move and at the end of 1907 the center counts look like this;

England 5 (walking into Portugal, losing Brest and Sweden), Germany 11 (Getting Marseilles, Spain, Brest and Sweden, losing Portugal) Italy 8 (Losing Marseilles and Spain) , Russia 6 and Turkey 4.

Positions on the board were pretty clear cut that I didn't have a solo bid, unless IRT kept fighting, and PoD again offered an end of game vote. Which passed.

Most of the games in Round 2 were still playing and then the great search for food began. It was about 2pm on a Saturday afternoon. The tourney venue was located in Tysons Corner, Virginia. During the week this area is the center of business and industry in the DC Area. I have had offices within blocks of the venue on three occasions in my life. On a Saturday afternoon, if you are not looking to sit down for a 2-hour meal, I was clearly looking in all the wrong places. I eventually found a deli and picked up food for few others and myself; after eating too much food, I got a nap, a shower and chilled out before the final round. I had a top and a tie for second, I was doing ok. But the raffle was going to get pulled and that would likely play a part in the final standings.

Around 6:15, Dave announce (as a reminder) that the cutoff time for buying raffle tickets is 6:30 and that brings a few more people to the TD's table to shell out a few more dollars. He also announces a reminder that Andy Marshall (NADF All-Star, and retired from the hobby) is visiting and if selected would play on the board of the raffle winner. At 6:30, Dave pulls a ticket and announces that Mark Zoffel (who is in Seattle and has phoned in his

raffle ticket buy to Dave) has won the raffle and walks over to me to borrow my cellphone, so that he can call Zoffel. The call is made and Dave announces aloud the names he is given and the countries they are assigned;

Andy Marshall – Turkey
Dave Maletsky – Russia
Doug Moore – Italy
Andy Bartalone – France
Chris Martin – England
Jim O’Kelley – Germany

Zoffel pauses, asks Dave a question, which I don’t hear the answer.

Mike Hall – Austria

Mike is from Canada, Vancouver to be exact and the only non-American at the tournament.



I have been sitting here thinking about a proper analogy to describe the overall view of this board and I will take it from British history. I would describe the players as members of the Admiralty Board (for those of you that don’t know. In the 19th century this was the ruling committee in the British Navy that gave out promotions, anytime you were to be promoted, you had to go before them for review).

The common statement about the Admiralty Board was “Seven men who were incapable of agreeing on what color an orange is”

All of the people listed travel or have traveled extensively in their Diplomacy careers and there is long history between all of us, not to mention that everyone playing is very good. Lets talk about that for a moment; 2 world champions, 4 people who have won the Grand Prix, 3 NADF All-Stars and anyone who would try to describe Dave or Mike as weak players couldn’t be more wrong.

The game started out in some ways as expected. Dave and Marshall not fighting but maneuvering for position, Doug and Mike fighting, Chris and I foregoing our typical

exchanges and jumping on Jim.

By the end of 1903; Mike had become a janissary of the RT, Chris and I had finished off Jim and were both playing close to the vest on what exactly was going to happen next, I think Doug was expecting Dave and Marshall to be more aggressive and take down Mike, but it wasn’t happening, they were propping up his position.

The next three years were a constant ebb and flow of shifting alliances, Chris and I don’t trust each other enough to go full out at our respective **other** targets (Russia and Italy) . In 1906, Chris moves away and I take advantage of it. Dave and Marshall are still propping up Mike and playing balance of power, and Doug is keeping all three of them at bay.

I’m not revealing any secrets when I say “Diplomacy players are a competitive lot”. And most of the time you can read the board and see what is going on, the much harder part is understanding their motives for playing the game. And very occasionally, someone has a meltdown on the board and all parties take a break for a few minutes while the effected player discusses his/her issue with the TD. We got through that and in 1908 we called an end of game with me topping the board at 10.

Saturday night after I finished playing was great. Much poker was played. Many beverages were consumed. And outrageous things were said. I crashed about 3:30am and it was a great night.

Open gaming has been going on since sometime Friday afternoon and there has always been one or two side games being played, this went on through Sunday afternoon.

Sunday was a day for open gaming and general socializing. The day started with a catered breakfast, followed by the awards ceremony. Chris Mazza won Tempest; he played great and topped all three of his boards. Brian Shelden was the closest to soloing, in round one. Thom Comstock finished third in his first experience travelling for a Diplomacy event. Doug Moore was crowned Eastern Swing champion and won the Grand Prix for the 2nd time (noone has ever won the North American Grand Prix twice, until this year).

Tempest in a Teapot happens each year on Columbus Day weekend. We hope to see you there next year. If you have questions about the event, you can email me at [buffalo “of” guisarme.net](mailto:buffalo@ofguisarme.net).

I mean come on, what else are going to do on Columbus Day next year? Burn a few burgers and belch a few beers? You can do that any weekend. Make plans to attend Tempest in a Teapot instead!

But What the Hell Were They Doing in Marseilles at the End of Summer?

The EDC 2007 on the Frioul Islands, a Masterpiece in 24 Scenes
by Gwen Maggi and Cyrille Sevin

Scene 1

The sun was already high in the azure sky of this morning in September when the incoming flight from Madrid landed at the Marseilles-Provence airport. Passengers were rushing towards the luggage carousel, and all were in a hurry to walk out of the terminal and enjoy this nice day. All? No, not all! Among the crowd of tourists, a man about fifty years old walked slowly towards the meeting point, with his Scottish cap. One could notice on his face the utter exhaustion from a trip much longer than the simple journey from the Spanish capital city. And there was a reason for that, as Gwen recognized he was none other than Edi Birsan, the mythic Californian player just arriving from San Francisco...

But what the hell was he doing in Marseilles at the end of summer?

Scene 2

The boarding on the Edmond Dantès¹ had just started, but Gwen was already eager to be on the Frioul Islands. As he was carrying several parcels he was bringing back home, he took the first available seat he could find. Otherwise, taking advantage of the beautiful sky, and as the tourists were less intrusive now than a few days earlier, he would have preferred sitting on the upper deck with its magnificent view that nobody grows tired of, not even the natives. Only then did he see a familiar face among the crowd just boarding. Bright, slightly refined, a kind of gentle father giving sweets to his child, but yes indeed... it was Philippe Clavaud, also on his way to the Frioul Islands...

But what the hell was he doing in Marseilles at the end of summer?

Scene 3

The afternoon had been cheerful, the water was sweet, the girls too. They were just swimming slightly further out, in order to not let the boys catch them, something like those fish that we never succeed in catching by hand.

Gentle Father² and Gwen were just coming back from the Saint-Estève beach³ along the coastal road, taking

¹ From the name of the hero in Alexandre Dumas's famous novel *The Count of Monte-Cristo*.

² Nickname given to Philippe Clavaud.

³ The most famous beach of the Frioul Islands.

time between two jokes to turn on the cell phones they had turned off for two hours. And then suddenly upon arrival at the holiday camp Centre Léo Lagrange, they met a squadron of happy pilgrims just disembarked that they vaguely knew: there was Edi Birsan, David Norman, Frédégonne Hendrake, Philippe Coïc and Fabrice Essner. Mmm... Strange that all those diplomats were gathering on our doorstep. It was beyond a coincidence. Something was up...

But what the hell were they doing in Marseilles at the end of summer?



What a Terrible Way to Spend a Day!

Scene 4

The sea air having given them an appetite, they quickly sit down to eat while others - like Philippe Coïc (also known as Miguel's Daddy⁴) - were taking care about appeasing their thirst. Probably it was the smell of the Pastis⁵ as, having just opened the bar, they saw a bunch of Belgian guys led by Nico Ianiri, who was accompanied by Jean-Louis Delattre, Benjamin Grenier and Bernard Mohymont. The Belgians were grabbing the last empty glasses with an astonishing dexterity. This time, no doubt was permitted; something was hiding in the shadow of the Marseilles twilight, something that some people had been unaware of...

⁴ Nickname given to Philippe Coïc by Toby Harris in his internet zine "The Fungus".

⁵ Anise-based alcoholic beverage, typically from Marseilles.

But what the hell were those guys all doing here?

Scene 5

This was it, one had to react. Gwen decided to appoint his old chap Cyrille to the task, and just after the meal he jumped in the first boat for the continent. It became urgent to warn him about the recent events. As soon as the boat reached the quay, Gwen jumped to go to the Shamrock Café: an Irish Pub close to the Bar de la Marine⁶. One minute later he was at the doorstep of the pub; Cyrille was coming outside, looking downcast despite the Guinness. Considering that, guessing that the French XV had lost to the Pumas was an easy conclusion... the same conclusion which separated Cyrille from Rob Schöne and André Ilievics.

“Tu quoque mi amici, you are in on it? What on earth is all this about? Why am I not aware of anything?”

“No, my friend, you’re crazy, Rob just went to support the All Blacks against the Italians tomorrow afternoon at the Vélodrome Stadium of Marseilles. You should stop playing Dip chap, it brings you nothing, and you start being paranoid...”

“And what about André?”

“Hey, you know André, he was thirsty... He thinks Rugby is just a British city... and as Igor paid him a beer..”

“Igor Kurt?”

“He had a headache and went home; you know he can’t stand alcohol...”

“Indeed!”

“Let’s go to bed now, you look tired, everything’s just fine.”

“OK.”

Scene 6

Gwen was not convinced, as Cyrille was not the most reliable man on earth, and could he still be worried about the final board of the Garibaldi Cup⁷?... Wouldn’t be surprised to have him preparing something funny. Hmmm, he decided to return to the airport to see whether there was a Flying Dutchman (for instance) who dawdled in the area.

Bingo! One good guess! And there he was, Frank

⁶ The most famous bar in Marseilles, immortalized by Marcel Pagnol.

⁷ Tournament organized by Fabrice Essner at the *Palais des Festivals* in Cannes during the *Festival des Jeux*, which counted this year as the MedDipCon III.

Oosterom. This time Gwen understood what was happening. It was as clear as the water: they wanted him to organize a pétanque⁸ tournament.



The Accommodations

Scene 7

Considering the turn of events, Gwen thought he would have to play it tight. Many people could arrive without any warning. Gwen decided to go to the main station early.

Fuck, nobody was there, despite Gwen’s strange feeling...but it might be because it was 5 am after all. Nobody but this foreigner over there, parked as badly as he could with his expensive car. Gwen thought he had no choice but to talk to this phony guy.

“Hey you! Foreigner!”



Ruben, the Foreigner

On that, the intruder turned around and... yes, Gwen recognized him.

“Hold on!”

It was no less than Ruben “Speedy Gonzales” Sanchez⁹.

⁸ Game typically from Marseilles, whose aim is to send metal bowls as close as possible to the Jack, a small cork bowl called *cochonnet*.

⁹ Nickname given to Ruben Sanchez.

"Are you also here for the tournament of ...?"

Before he could end his sentence that he felt a knock on his shoulder. Coming from nowhere, (from the station Saint-Charles), it's David Thomae who had just arrived.

Scene 8

No time for laughing; this is serious. Gwen needed reinforcements. Considering Ruben's shape, he needed a bed, otherwise he'd be nothing but a millstone. On the other hand, Gwen took David with him. With the experience he got from his dart tournament one week ago, he could bring plenty of help.

Let's go folks! With a remake of Taxi¹⁰, version "Peugeot 106¹¹" in the streets of Marseilles. All traffic lights are green this morning. With a co-pilot coming straight from the city of the Propelled Sequentially Memphis¹²; they'd better let them pass if they want to keep the integrity of their cars.

There are now pétanque players everywhere, and Gwen began to see the point where he would miss pétanque bowls. In case of necessity he could always organize a belote¹³ tournament, and for some other guys a poker tournament as well. With bizarre individuals like Fabrice Essner and Michel Lacroix from one side, Jean-Mathieu Malouch and Gaël Le Lidec from the other, there was enough material for both.

Scene 9

(Phone ringing – Gwen picks the phone)

"Allo? Yeah Joël,, I'm aware of the tournament. What do you mean it would be better so? No, I have no time to pick you up at the station... you know the way, get out of this mess alone."

(Gwen whispers alone after the conversation)

"Grrr... would be better, would be better... Fuck the "would be better". After all, I'm not a tourist guide..."

(Phone ringing – Gwen picks the phone)

"Allo? Lolo¹⁴? You happened to call just at the wrong

¹⁰ Famous French comedy with a 200 Mph crazy Taxi in Marseilles.

¹¹ In case you wondered, this is probably the smallest car you've ever seen

¹² Nickname of Gwen's last car.

¹³ Card game, specialty of Marseilles, immortalized by Marcel Pagnol.

¹⁴ Nickname of Laurent Joly.

moment old chap. What do you mean, you're at the station? Since when do you play pétanque? I would know about that, you must take me for a fool!"

Nevertheless, Gwen thought he should not be sectarian, and Lolo after all deserved his tour.



Lolo, From His Good Side

"OK, because it is you and because it's still early, let's go and make a rodeo show on the cliff road at sundown. So, even if you get a hammering playing pétanque you won't be so disappointed."

This kind of privilege is normally for VIP's only. By the way, Gwen thought a VIP was indeed expected. No sooner had he thought that, he drove to the airport and saw the man who played pétanque with rhythmic gymnastics and his inimitable style. In all of his generosity and slenderness, it was no less than the favorite for the tournament, Lionel Luthin.

Scene 10

With all this activity, Gwen and his co-pilot had turned away from their main mission. A solution really had to be found before things became a problem.

So Gwen drove to see his mate Cyrille who could have arranged everything already, if only he had kept his sense of priorities.

"Hi Cyrille, sorry, but we're missing something really important here."

"What's missing? Don't tell me that you still haven't finished the tournament rules?"

"Please be serious! We don't care about the rules; everyone knows you just have to throw the bowl as close to the target as possible, tournament rules are unnecessary... No, we're missing something much more important."

"No, I can't see..."

"Fuck! It's gonna be so warm that we had to fill up with Pastis right now or I will be killed soon."

"Shit, you're right."

“Come on, gimme some!”

Cyrille stood up and went to his bar.

“How many cartons do you want?”

“Mmm... Fred Berthelot will be there...”

“OK, take as many as you can then...”

Scene 11

Now they had enough drink for the whole weekend. They could quietly go to the harbour station to reach the Frioul. Just a few minutes to drop the car into the sea.

(Announcement from the boat's speaker)

“Ladies and gentlemen: If Castle¹⁵.”

Here was an idea! If someone disagrees with the tournament they could always be sent directly to the If Castle and let him swim. With such a plan they can rest assured they won't have problems.



If Castle

Scene 12

“So let's go to eat! Pastis at 1€, wine at will...let's eat. We need strength for the afternoon.”

But it looks like they were a larger group than expected. This pétanque tournament will definitely last a long time. How many were they? Precisely 46 pilgrims and 1 depressed organizer, including the guys in the water a few meters back. So, how many for a belote? And for poker?

A decision had to be made... Gwen thought a bit and said:

“Well, sorry guys, but it won't happen. I'm not gonna have enough bowls nor enough cards... Sorry but you

¹⁵ Former State prison located on the If island, at the entrance of the Frioul archipelago, where the political prisoners were kept. Legend says that Edmond Dantès, best known under the name of Count of Monte-Cristo, was jailed there 15 years before successfully escaping.

should have advised me before, it would have been easier. I'm really sorry but we'll have to play Dip...”

The crowd seemed dismayed by such news. Lionel Luthin looked downcast as he had worked to improve his playing style the whole summer; Laurent Joly, realized secretly that he was even worse at Diplomacy than at pétanque. Only Michel Lacroix stood as firm a rock, with nothing to say, seemingly happy to be there. He was probably severely ill; one could see no other explanation...

Some other guy, namely Rob Schöne, was smart to just sit his ass on the stadium bleachers, watching guys wearing black crushing the poor guys wearing blue¹⁶. It was probably more fun then watching guys push wood pieces on a table, while the beach was waiting for them a few meters away...

Scene 13

And there it was.



Christine Torres Takes the Game

The local players, more used to sun and Pastis, fired first. Christine Torres shared the glory (with Romain Gagnier) on the beginner-friendly game, while Cyrille won with his favourite Germany. Gwen, even if not playing for the title¹⁷, made the first break of the tournament with England. The players from Nice held up as Colin Becker, as a good player defending his local trophy, won with a French-English alliance, while Ludo Legrand wasn't far behind in a promising game... just behind Jérôme Charon playing the tightrope walker, gaining by a small advance. Also to be noted were the win by Vincent Carry with Italy, while Yan Calibet and Fabien Grellier could not decide between them, ahead of

¹⁶ It was nothing less than the All Blacks from New Zealand, beating Italy 76 to 14 during the Rugby World Cup.

¹⁷ Gwen did play in the tournament, but didn't play for the title (forbidding himself to play on the Top Board).

a vexed Ruben Sanchez.

The four players from the top 7 of the last European WDC¹⁸ all won: the big players (no Vincent, we don't mean only you) are there...

Scene 14

Ouch, it seemed the Italians were looking for revenge... between Davide Cleopadre not winning, despite having scored 3 times more supply centres than the Squadra Azzura, and Daniele Belardinelli arriving late after having missed his train in Rome, the atmosphere for the Italy-France qualifying match for the 2008 Soccer European Championship is expected to be all keyed-up. By chance, the revenge, on the grass of San Siro, of the final game of the last World Cup, didn't see anyone emerging as the winner... The diplomatic incident had been avoided.

Scene 15

Nothing could keep people from enjoying a game of cards in the meantime, and who played the local game: the *contrée marseillaise*¹⁹. They all went fiercely to the challenge. We were eventually treated to the bizarre team of Philippe Clavaud (the good) and of Fabrice Essner (the bad AND the ugly).



The Poker Legends

Scene 16

Nothing could disturb the poker table either, where the players (partially focused on their drinks and on their smoke) were struggling more than was sensible. This led to a final between a David Norman (Zen as ever), and Jean-Mathieu Malouch. By constantly chattering, he managed to win. I doubted that the following day on a Diplomacy board the strategy would be as efficient...

Scene 17

It was getting late. No one paid attention to the time, but

¹⁸ Cyrille, Gwen, Vincent and Fabien ended respectively 2nd, 5th, 6th and 7th at the WDC 2006 in Berlin.

¹⁹ Variant of the *belote*

according to the alcoholic degree of some individuals, it was definitely time to go to bed. Gwen decided to slip away, to avoid any drunken people jumping on him...

"Hey you over there, are you trying to escape?"

Shit, he got caught.

"So what about this *pétanque*? Should we finally play it?"

Those guys were definitely bizarre, throwing bowls in the middle of the night! Gwen had to put the bowls under the spotlights. Anyway, as late as it was already, a difference of one or two hours of sleep would not make much of a difference.

"Hey guys, got a problem, I just can't find the jack²⁰."

They just had to improvise. They found a red plastic bowl, 10 times lighter and ten times bigger than a normal jack, but let's say that all in all, considering the state of the players, this did fit. Nico Ianiri suggested using the can of Heineken he had just finished, but they didn't adopt that idea.

And talking about cans, one can hardly describe the scene. Except for Gwen, nobody was really fit. Actually, Gwen was not very fit either, just maybe not for the same reasons.



Nico and Michel

The first step was to build the teams, and that's not an easy job. Nico, recalling a famous night trip in the streets of Milan last December²¹ and wanting to put some players out of the running, proposed choosing the teams by selecting the who had the shortest "thing", but Colin

²⁰ Target that one tires to get as close as possible to when playing *pétanque*.

²¹ Laurent Dumont and Domitien Gilet were the two other members of this journey.

and Gwen, remembering the same trip, refused, obviously upsetting Lolo. Ben, Fred and Michel were undecided on the subject.

Due to self-censorship, one cannot go deeper into details of the peregrination of bowl players out for a good time, but History will only remember that the victory went to the southern threesome of Colin, Ludo and Gwen... and that this victory was fiercely celebrated, the night still crowing with songs of victory...

Scene 18

You can figure out the state of the main players when they awoke a few hours later...

There were a few chickens who had gone to bed early like Polo²², Ruben and Bernard. But as for the rest... Even Philemon (the 4-years old son of Gaël) had slept badly in his hammock and was sulking a bit, unless this was a trick to get consoled by Romane... (the little daughter of Pierre-Yves). Hmm, there are some very single-minded...

So it was time for everybody to wake up now.

To encourage the crowd, we played threesomes that morning. It had worked the day before, and its more fun if you have a lot of winners.

Once again, the Belgians distinguished themselves... In the "millstone" category, the Golden Globe went to: Benjamin Grenier who managed to spring out of his bed with one leg in his pants, the other in his boxer shorts, and his shirt on backwards. He is clocked at the Dip board in 15 seconds. What a feat...



Cyrille Makes His Shopping List

²² Nickname of Paul Berbegal.

Scene 19

Let's go for another round. This time the fight for the team title, and the possibility of ensuring a seat at the final board, are on the line.

Suffice to say that the expected suspense did materialize. Two teams broke away from the others, but stayed neck and neck until the last turn. Knives were sharp between the French Connection of Lionel Luthin and the A HOL S A MUN-MAR of Igor Kurt, both owning their National team title. The two main protagonists in the race for victory fought at the same board, with Igor being on the inside with his 10 supply centres as Germany looking for his 11th, while Lionel had a 9-center Turkey. But this was without counting on the fighting spirit of the Alsatian giant who added 3 centers in the last year to bring his team to the top.. And this was necessary, as on the other boards the team mates of A HOL S A MUN-MAR did brilliantly. Frank Oosterom achieved the only solo of the round, also with Turkey, while Andre Ilievics and his Russia shared a win with Yan Calibet's Germany, already owner of a another shared-win. But it had been foretold that the French Connection would not be beaten on its own land, as Lionel's Baraka did reach his team mates, with Fabien Grellier lifting his victory in a 3-way struggle against Alexis Pain and Philippe Clavaud, while Fabrice Essner took a 2-way with Cédric Joets in a knife-game. The 3rd place went to the French Foreign Legion, led by Edi Birsan winning a superb game under Vincent Carry's very nose. Vincent got his consolation prize by putting a first step in the final.

Scene 20

3rd Round...

Last chance to qualify for the final... Knives are sharp. This is a round which is usually not for cowards. The struggle was fierce on all boards, and some survived with blood on their mouths. To reach the seventh sky, each team has its own tactics. There are those who attack, those who suffer, and those who crack up...

There are also those who manage, or even serve the soup! Vincent Carry was more lucid and perceptive than ever, as he qualified for his 3rd final board in a row in a great championship, after the WDC and the French NDC last season. Not content with that, he also managed to secure a place on the board for his ally of the day Alex Godfroy, despite an early elimination in the morning.

In the same category, but in a more offensive way, Fabien Grellier, with his full western Italy in an Eastern Triple, ensured a nice shared 2nd place with his Turkish colleague Philippe Coïc., all the scene being mastered by a Manu du Pontavice just like himself, winning respect with a country (Austria) where his diplomatic ability works wonders.

And what can you say about the performances of Jérôme Charon and Lionel Luthin playing Russia, who fly to the

Final board in a safe and relaxed way, both with one centre more? Jérôme ended ahead of an unlucky André Ilievics who, 4 years after his Final in the French Championship, would have well deserved to reach another Final Board in a big Championship. Lionel ended ahead of Fabrice Essner who also has potential to go higher. Let's bet that those two, even if they missed the final this year, will soon reach it.

There are also the irregular troops : Pierre-Yves Franzetti, who skipped the early round to have a walk with his wife and his daughter, took advantage of his freshness and led a nice alliance between his France and the England of Ludo Legrand, who confirms with another good score. Andrea Cossutta played Turkey, ruining the efforts of Yan Calibet, for once being among the victims. And finally Rob Schöne who, probably motivated by the All Black's victory on Marseilles's ground, secures himself a prestigious victory in a high level board, one centre ahead of Gwen (who, playing on two boards, misorders the last autumn's orders) and Franck Oosterom (who nevertheless suffered what had to be suffered to ensure his seat for the Final), and two centres ahead of Philippe Clavaud and Edi Birsan (solid enough, even if not as brilliant as in the morning, to ensure the last seat for the final).

Scene 21

Monday morning.

Some players had decided to leave, having finally given up on the pétanque tournament...and therefore worrying about what their employer could say concerning their trip. They managed to get one just day off (everybody knows that French are the fiercest workers in the world) by saying they were going to compete for the most prestigious pétanque tournament in the Universe, the Marseillaise. How would they explain bringing back some Diplomacy trophy, or even worse, no trophy at all?!?!?



The Prizes

For the others, it's time to go grab those f-ing trophies! All players in the Final board hope to get the biggest trophy. Even if they already have done a lot of the work by making it to the final, they still had to get over the

hump and win!

So, who among Jérôme Charon (France), Lionel Luthin (Germany), Fabien Grellier (England), Vincent Carry (Russia), Alex Godfroy (Turkey), Frank Oosterom (Austria) or Edi Birsan (Italy) would play his cards right? Rien ne va plus!

In the meantime, the heavies were looking for revenge. Starting with the abhorrent²³ Yan Calibet, who took comfort from barely missing the Final with a big victory with England ahead of Davide Cleopadre's Italy. In the "not handy style", Cyrille is also not too bad: after all, a good Turk is a dead Turk, and André Ilievics pays the price for this. Cyrille wins with his Italy ahead of Germany (Daniele Belardinelli) and England (Igor Kurt) who share the second and third places. In another game, maybe the most perverse, Druk Dzongkhâ recalls the good (bad?) souvenir of his French Champion title, and wins ahead of Ruben Sanchez who once again lets the win pass him by. The only exception to the rule is Ludo Legrand, winning the alcoholic board (no, no, we'll name nobody else in that game) offering himself his first victory in the tournament, a pleasant ending a very nice week-end. He finished ahead of Cédric Joets, who had a very admirable performance for his first tournament.



How Do You Concentrate on the Board?

And what about the Final board? Well, it was hard time to play a central country. Lionel's Germany was attacked (not surprisingly) by Fabien's England (who moves to HEL as soon as Spring 1902) and by Jérôme's France, while Frank's Austria was attacked by the remade double Vincent/Alex, with an Edi Birsan Italy who apparently doesn't believe in using the Lepanto in a seven-year game.

After that there were only five players racing for the title...and soon only four, as Edi Birsan, rapidly found himself like the ham in a sandwich between a FRA/ENG on one hand and a RUS/TUR on another hand.

²³ Nickname given to Yan Calibet

It remained to be seen which of the two alliances would be the faster, and inside each alliance who will be the best. The West gained a fast advantage ; Fabien seemed likely to win. But in Autumn 1907, if they are still only two for the win, it was Jérôme who had the cards in hand. But then inexplicably, while victory was in his grasp, Jérôme misses a guess (which was not really a guess anyway) and lets the victory go to his ally of the day, who just one year after losing the WDC final, uses his experience to gain a title that confirms his talent.

Scene 22

And then came the announcement of the Mediterranean Combined Trophy. Everybody stopped, wondering what this could be. Was this a combination of Diplomacy and pétanque? Had the pétanque tournament occurred after all? No way!!! Most all the players shouted, as after all they came mostly just for the pétanque tournament in the first place. So Gwen and Cyrille, once again proving their diplomatic talent, found a solution.

“No worries guys, this is only to prize the best Diplomacy and... let's say, best Go player... “

As there should be no Go players (who plays Go anyway?), the trophy will go unawarded. But what's this? Some guy started yelling that he used to play Go. So without letting on that this was unexpected, they gave him the trophy. Cyrille and Gwen will find a way to stab him and take it back someday.



The Champ and the Runner-Up

So next they tried to just “invent” trophies that they should easily win, in order to fill in the emptiness of their trophy gallery. Why not the Garibaldi prize for the best player among the Mediterranean's tournaments? As both the Italians and the players from Nice did not succeed being in the Top 10 this year, they should keep this one. So that settles that...

“But what the hell? Ludo ? Don't tell me he finished 10th? Shit.OK, let's give it to him!”

Now they really had to do something. So, if there was at least one prize that they were sure to win, this was this one of the most infamous: the best alcoholic. Unfortunately the most infamous stabber was out of reach, since even Cyrille and Gwen weren't able to compete with Fabrice Essner. But nobody would contest the Alcoholic trophy, would they? Yet once again, they had forgotten the Belgians... Well, they couldn't keep their credibility without giving them this trophy. They just gave it to the craziest of them, Ben...

To make all of this more discrete, they also organized a Diplomacy trophy ceremony. Who could they pick to win? OK, let's say that this Fabien Grellier, who seemed so happy winning his game that morning, will be the European Champion. After all, he was in Final of the last WDC in Europe, so nobody would be surprised about this. And for second, who? They picked this funny big guy, Jérôme Charon. He was always with the Belgians, and lived in London for a year, so he seems a good choice to counter people that say that people from the south of France are not foreigner friendly. To complete the podium, they picked the abhorrent Yan Calibet. Maybe he'd be less nasty with them the next time, who knows?

For best countries...nobody cared anyway, so they decided to just help themselves. Cyrille picked first, and took Best Germany and Best Italy, while Gwen picked Best England and... (he stopped just before picking up Best Austria)..shit too late, the guys were paying attention now, Hmmm, so Best Austria is for... Manu (he wasn't there anymore, he had to leave the prior evening, so Gwen can keep it for himself...). So, now it becomes hazardous, as the guys are suspecting something. So, sorry for Lolo, let's just drop the last remaining in the pack, we'll see who jumps the highest. So Best France, who wants it? Bingo, it's for Alex Godfroy, not really a surprise according to his height. Best Russia is for Jérôme Charon who takes advantage of his lock²⁴ build right under Lionel Luthin's very nose. Best Turkey is for ... Frank Oosterom, also not the smallest, once again under Lionel Luthin's very nose (considering Lionel's size... some people like to live dangerously!)

They had talked about Diplomacy, so they had to figure a winner for Diplomatic and Tactics skill. They picked this beautiful young French lady (Karine F..., sorry Funkiewiez) and this old guy from America (Edi something, oh yes, Birsan²⁵). A lady and an old man playing Diplomacy? Everybody may laugh about their tournament, but at least they will talk about it!

²⁴ Tallest of the rugby players, a lock is around 2m15 for 120 kg !

²⁵ Edi was announced 1st shared as Best Tactician, but due to some mistake in the award ranking he is actually 2nd. Fabien Grellier wins the award.

Scene 23

Finally it's time to send all these people back home. If they stay one or two days more they will get addicted to Pastis and sun. And what will we do with them? Gwen already has the monopoly of the Farniente on the Frioul Islands, and he doesn't accept any challengers. Let's pack them all at Denis place in Marseilles, enjoy them for one or two more days, and finally send them back home. Concerning the legendary Edi Birsan, he might detect something odd about the experience, so it was better to send him back home immediately. Cyrille gave him a ride, and ensured that the hotel Gwen booked for Edi has no connection to the outside world. And it did work perfectly, as is proved by the letter Edi sent afterwards (see Appendix below).

Of course this story is just a nightmare. Something like that could not really happen in France ☺

Scene 24 - Appendix

A Journey Home in 48 steps by Bilbo "Edi Birsan" Baggins.

Or: NEVER EVER have anyone stay at the Première Classe again.



Edi "Godfather" Birsan

The following is a quick summary of the situation after Cyrille left :

1. I go to the reception which is only available from 5:30PM to 7:30PM and ask them to arrange for a taxi for a 5AM pick up.
2. The young girl who does speak English 'petite' says no. I have to call the taxi myself. She gives me a phone number. And says that I have to call the taxi one hour before it is to come so

that means at 4AM. I decide to test this out.

3. The phone in the reception area does not take any American based credit cards.



4. I ask where another phone is and she says outside to the right.
5. I go outside to the right to where the check-in computer screen was that we used to check in, and it says that the terminal is closed, and I notice that there is no phone there.
6. I go back inside to the girl, who says "no go outside by the Campanile hotel across the parking lot."
7. I go across the parking lot and there is no phone booth or phone.
8. I go back to the girl receptionist and say there is no phone there.
9. She says yes there is. There is some French talk between her and another person in line.
10. The person in line takes me outside and points to a green machine outside the Campanile hotel across the parking lot.
11. I go to that green box and it is a computer screen which says it is closed and to go to reception of the Campanile hotel.
12. I go into the Campanile hotel and start again.
13. The women at the Campanile says the terminal outside is not a phone, it is the check-in terminal when there is no reception.
14. She cannot call a taxi. She thinks only taxis that can come will come if you call 40 minutes before.
15. I ask where the phone is, she says there is a phone outside on the street around the corner.

16. I go outside on the street around the corner and there is a phone booth, with a phone!
17. The phone will not accept any credit cards or cash coins.
18. I go back to the hotel Campanile and ask if I can buy a French phone card. The Women says these can only be bought in Marseilles but you can only get to Marseilles if you call a taxi.
19. I go back outside to the corner and see a third hotel Ballard.
20. I go to that reception where there is a man receptionist and he speaks English. He asks if I am in this hotel and I say no.
21. I ask if sells phone cards, he says no.
22. I explain that my cards do not work and I cannot get a phone card.
23. He says why not use the phone in your room.
24. I explain that there is no phone in the room.
25. He says that what do I expect for 40 Euro a night? (I do not explain that in America I have never had a hotel/motel etc room ever without a phone.)
26. I ask him if he would call a taxi for pick up tomorrow at 5AM.
27. He says it is not his job.
28. I ask if he knows a taxi company that does such.
29. He says yes.
30. At this point there are now 6 people behind me in line with a lot of French talk in whispers and people laughing a little as I refuse to accept each of his responses.
31. I ask him how much is a room.... 61€
32. I said I will give him 61€ to call a taxi for tomorrow.
33. He says it is not his job to call people taxi's who are not staying at the hotel.
34. Now there are 10 people behind me in line and I suspect that they are taking bets as to who is going to win this argument.
35. So I say book me a room for tonight, we will

pretend that I sleep in it and call a taxi for tomorrow to pick me up at 5AM.

36. There is some laughter behind me and some more French talk.
37. He says OK I will call a taxi and you can pay me.
38. He calls a taxi company and I give him my information, he relays it and confirms the pick up.
39. I ask him how much do I owe him for this. There is great silence behind me.
40. He says 1 Euro... I give him a 5 Euro note and say keep the change and Merci Beaucoup...



41. I go back to the Première Classe girl receptionist and tell her that the receptionist at the Ballard has a number of a taxi company that you can book in advance and she should get the number for future guests.
42. She says she has a headache.
43. I go back to my room...
44. The air conditioner does not work.
45. The window does not lock or close, I have to leave it open because it is hot.
46. My neighbour decides to have a fight with his wife most of the night on the balcony and smoke smelly French cigars while yelling merde and assorted other French talk.
47. I get asleep at 2AM for one hour, waking up with the thought that maybe the alarm also does not work, and what if the Receptionist was lying to me?
48. Finally at 5AM I go downstairs and find the taxi which costs 25€ to go the 1 KM to the Airport, only to find out that my morning flight was delayed.

Doesn't Edi sort of remind you of Steve Martin in "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles"? You're messing with the wrong guy!

Knives and Daggers

The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Jason Koelewyn – You're missing a clue [in the Deductive Reasoning puzzle]. As written, there is no way to determine who is playing Germany or Russia.

Yes, but isn't it more fun that way? Sort of like doing a jigsaw puzzle but missing two corner pieces!



Clayton McQuiston – I have been reading through back issues of DW (btw: thanks for reprinting them online) looking in vain for articles on Stalemate lines. Do you know if any such articles have been written anywhere? It seems that there must be some natural stalemate arrangements in various parts of the board, and these would be good to know about -- either to take advantage of if needed, or to make sure they are disabled if that is your desire. A reference would be good, a reprint even better.

According to expert Jim Burgess, the two best places to look are Mark Nelson's compilation at <http://www.diplom.org/Online/StalematesAtoY/> and Edi Birsan's Diplomatic Pouch article at <http://devel.diplom.org/Zine/S2002R/Birsan/WesternWall.html>. Take a look!



Mark "Faz" Fassio – At the risk of being over-melodramatic, I am afraid I'm going to have to give a negative RSVP on an article submission, and to Dip in general. I've had a series of brownouts over my 31 years of hobby involvement, and always bounced back. And with my dabbling on-line and at Con's following The Great Break of 2005, I honestly thought my enthusiasm would be rekindled. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Not sure if it's because my kids' activities now take center stage (University concerts, band weekends, soccer weekends, or my JROTC cadets activities over same). But whatever it is, both time and desire are factors affecting my continued enthusiasm for Dip; it just isn't there anymore.

Who's to say that I won't get the bug again when the kids are gone and I'm a retired old coot watching myself get gray(er)...but rumors of my old cootness are greatly exaggerated, and right now, Dip isn't even on my "let die" triage of activities, which is both sad and somewhat liberating.

Anyway, excuse the long-windedness just to say, "sorry." I truly am (sorry) that I feel this way and am declaring writing bankruptcy for Issue #100, for I expect it to be a "shazam!" issue of greatness and reminiscences. Start

the party without me, old chap.

Of course, in effect, by writing to say you couldn't write anything, you wrote something. Quite a paradox. Sort of the "if you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice" problem.



Edi Birsan – When I hit issue #100 with The Arena, (my postal zine), it was a goal that upon achievement I then decided to wind the zine down. Then again, at those times it only took 3 years to do so and it seemed appropriate to close things down as part of what would be my decades-long policy of turning on and off my involvement in hobby projects as a means to avoid burn out. So now that I heard that you are hitting 100 I want to congratulate you as well as offer you some advice to temper your involvement in the hobby with an active plan to shift your focus now and again so as to avoid the problems of burn out.

Fortunately, in my case, it would be impossible to find myself as involved in the hobby as I once was. I probably spend about as much time now doing Diplomacy World and my subzine Eternal Sunshine as I used to simply printing copies of my zines, stuffing envelopes, licking stamps, and going to the post office! The electronic age, complete with these awesome pdf formats, has truly changed the way amateur publishing works.



Lee A. Kendter, Jr. – Congrats on DW finally hitting issue number #100. At this point DW is my only connection left to the diplomacy hobby, and even here I am several issues behind as it is in my eventual reading pile. I've pretty much cleaned out my dip years. All my zines with a few exceptions (DW, Alpha & Omega, Get Them Dots Now, and Everything) were given away to the popular culture museum in Ohio.

I think I pretty much faded away as the postal version of Diplomacy faded away. I hope whoever took over A&O got it back on track. There was so little activity I couldn't get motivated at the end. I don't see myself ever getting back into the hobby again. The whole time I played it never clicked that Diplomacy is primarily a people manipulation game. I still play some gaming, but it is the war gaming side with things such as Axis and Allies, War at Sea, Victory in the Pacific, etc. I would like to play some more complex war games, but I simply don't have the time.

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