

Diplomacy World

Issue 103 - Fall 2008

www.diplomacyworld.net



Science Fiction and Fantasy in Diplomacy

Notes from the Editor

Welcome back to Diplomacy World, your hobby flagship since Walt Buchanan founded the zine in 1974! And, despite numerous near-death experiences, close calls, financial insolvency, and predictions of doom, we're still here, more than 100 issues later, bringing you the best articles, hobby news, and opinions that we know how to produce.

Speaking of Diplomacy World's past glories, this is as good a place as any to mention that we have FINALLY completed the task of scanning and posting every single issue of Diplomacy World ever produced. This includes every issue from #1 through #103 (the one you're reading now) plus the fake issue #40 and the full results of the Demo Game "Flapjack" which were never completely published. We also convert one classic article to html every week, as the Article of the Week, which allows you to get better results when doing a site or web search. I think this is a tremendous asset to have available to the Diplomacy community, and thanks are certainly due to Walt Buchanan for working with me, sending me a few of his personal copies at a time (at his own expense) until I could scan them and return them. Great job Walt! I bet that when you founded Diplomacy World all those years ago you never expected it to still be thriving in the 21st century, did you? Anyone who wants to can view and download these pdf files from the Diplomacy World website at:

<http://www.diplomacyworld.net>

And while I am on the subject of scanning Diplomacy zines, I'll go ahead and plug a personal project of mine I have been working on. With the assistance of people such as Edi Birsan and Craig Reges, I have been building an on-line archive of postal Diplomacy zines (in Adobe pdf format). The idea is to archive and preserve the history of the postal hobby (which is where the email and internet Diplomacy hobbies grew from initially) in a manner which will eliminate the dangers of a flood or fire or trash pickup depriving us from access to the games, creativity, and personality which flourished for so many years. The project itself actually started for me when William Christian announced he had two boxes of old Diplomacy zines which were to be thrown away if somebody didn't want them. I paid to have them shipped from Canada to Texas, and the contents really renewed my interest in the history of the hobby. I found classic zines galore, starting with John Boardman's Graustark #1, (the very first Diplomacy zine ever). Now I've got boxes more from nearly every era, courtesy of the work Edi Birsan is doing going through Tim Haffey's archive material. The personality really shines through in many of these zines, from the editorials to the letter

columns to the sense of community and family so many segments of the hobby had. Fiction, hilarious press, take-offs and send-ups, serious debate, triumph and tragedy; they can all be found here, along with un-obscured looks at the world as it changed over the last 40+ years. I'm not sure how much I'll be writing about this project in future issues of Diplomacy World, but if nothing else it gave me the material for an article this time, about the first real hobby scandal. If you'd like to read some of these zines, you can find them in the Postal Diplomacy Zine Archive section at:

<http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>

Incidentally, if you'd like to be kept up-to-date on what zines are added to the on-line collection (I seem to be posting new zines numerous times a week lately) you can join the Yahoo group formed for that purpose, at:

<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/postalzine/>

Finally, while we are on the subject, I have this late-breaking development: partially as my own enthusiasm sparked his dormant energy, Stephen Agar has resumed work on his UK Diplomacy Postal Zine Archive! This is terrific news, especially as Stephen has a near-complete set of UK Diplomacy zines. He'll be posting update messages to the forum listed above (giving you another reason to join it), and you can view the results of his efforts directly at:

<http://www.diplomacyzines.org.uk/>

I wanted to be sure and remind everyone that, while we are now announcing themes for upcoming issues far in advance, **those themes IN NO WAY** mean we only want to publish articles that match those topics. The themes are meant to take up only a portion of each issue. The rest of the pages need to be filled by non-theme articles of any description: strategy and tactics, variants, humor, puzzles, history (both hobby and real-world), convention reports, demo games, personal experiences, and anything else you can think of. So ***please*** don't ever feel an article you are considering is inappropriate for a particular issue. Just write it and send it in. If it really doesn't fit for some unknown reason, we'll simply hold it until the following issue!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is January 1st, 2009.

Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me! See you in the New Year, and happy stabbing!

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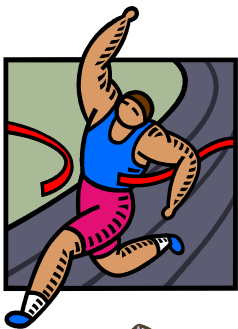
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Contributions are welcomed and will earn you accolades and infinite thanks. Persons interested in the vacant staff positions may contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming 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.

Themes for Upcoming Diplomacy World Issues:



Diplomacy World #104: Worldwide Variants
Deadline for #104 Submissions – January 1, 2009



Diplomacy World #105: The Endgame
Deadline for #105 Submissions – April 1, 2009



Diplomacy World #106: Historical Diplomacy Variants (pre-1900)
Deadline for #106 Submissions – July 1, 2009

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The Bohemian Crusher

By Joshua Danker-Dake

Italy

Italy is typically an unpopular draw because of its perceived lack of growth potential. The favored Italian openings tend to be conservative, wait-and-see strategies. The Italy who plays this strategy must hope that some table scrap will fall into his lap, or that some fantastic alliance will present itself. But this rarely happens. And since Italy has a solid defensive position and is hard to destroy early, this means that Italy often piddles along at four supply centers (VEN, ROM, NAP, TUN) with little prospect for betterment. The Bohemian Crusher is an opportunity for the Italian to take charge of his own destiny.

Opening

A popular Italian opening is the Obriani Attack: A VEN-TYR, A ROM-VEN, F NAP-ION. This is a strongly anti-Austrian set of moves: it offers a supported attack against TRI and threatens VIE and MUN. It is also probably Italy's most versatile opening, as Italy can move against France, Germany or Austria.

The rarely-seen but very powerful follow-up to the Obriani is the Bohemian Crusher: TYR-BOH, VEN-TYR, ION-TUN in Fall 1901. This is the logical, aggressive conclusion to the Obriani opening; most anything else is digging for scraps.

Following a successful Bohemian Crusher, a third army is built in VEN at the end of 1901, which lets Italy threaten Austria with two armies on VIE, two on TRI, and the ability to mount a supported attack on either while cutting Austrian support. The Bohemian Crusher nearly always succeeds if the Obriani was successful, as Austria is typically more concerned with covering his home centers. Thus Italy picks up one build in 1901, but is virtually guaranteed one or two more in 1902, and also gains excellent position to dominate the Balkans.

The Bohemian Crusher works best against Austria, but it can also be used against Germany, as it provides for a supported attack on MUN. Even the most dedicated anti-Austrian Italy must therefore establish good relations with Germany, who will be eminently suspicious in any case and will most likely be upset at continually having to cover MUN.

The Bohemian Crusher is susceptible to the Austrian Hedgehog opening that includes F TRI-VEN, as well as to the rare moves to TYR by Austria and Germany. If Austria does move TRI-VEN (which bounces) in the spring, Italy is looking at A TYR and A ROM in the fall. The Bohemian Crusher can still be effective in 1902 – Austria can be fended off with little difficulty, and armies can be supported into place. Unless Austria has

inexplicably made peace with both Russia and Turkey, he will have better things to do than continue to strike at Italian territories.

A successful Bohemian Crusher typically puts Italy at 5-6 supply centers after 1902, with outstanding possibilities for more. This makes Italy a viable mid-game power with multiple options: to continue eastward into Turkey, to move north against Germany, or to open up a second front against France. At this point Italy should not be wanting for allies, either. Ultimately, then, the Bohemian Crusher gives Italy the best chance for expansion and for becoming a late-game contender.

Alliances and the Mid-Game

While the Bohemian Crusher is the best way to break out with Italy (and it can be guilty at times of even breaking out too fast, attracting the initial attack-the-leader barrage; even so, early leader syndrome is a nice problem to have, especially for Italy), soloing proves more difficult. As a central power, Italy suffers from the same end-game problem Germany and Austria do – there are a lot of people that can come after you and wear you down. In most cases, every power but England can take a direct whack at Italy.

With the Bohemian Crusher, Italy does not, for the most part, depend on the active assistance of allies; instead, Italy is much more dependent on how the rest of the board shakes out. Thus an Italy attempting the Bohemian Crusher is an Italy who is planning long-term. He does not, as some players like to do, foment chaos and mistrust for its own sake wherever possible. Rather, he is working toward several specific goals.

In the east, Italy typically runs into a wall against Turkey with three or four centers (the home centers plus BUL). Without Russian intervention, Turkey can usually hold out indefinitely. Thus the ideal eastern partner is Russia, who can bring help through BLA and ARM. The ultimate goal here is not to gobble up all the Turkish supply centers, but to eliminate Turkey at any cost, giving Russia what is necessary, in order to free up the bulk of the Italian navy for use against France.

In rare cases an alliance with Turkey may work – here Turkey receives BUL and RUM, and agrees not to build fleets and to go north while Italy focuses on France. But here, Turkey is constantly funneling armies through Italy's backyard, which is problematic at best. Such an alliance is rarely in Turkey's best interests.

In the west, an Italian-French demilitarization of PIE, LYO, WES and NAF is typically agreeable and beneficial to both parties. This setup broadcasts treachery from

both parties well in advance of supply centers being lost, although it is always easier for France to stab Italy by sea than vice versa.

A thriving France is the worst scenario Italy faces, as it doesn't take many French units to bog Italy down. Italy needs France occupied in the north. Italy is best served, then, by promoting an England-Germany alliance, and by working to see England (which has the least ability to attack Italy) come out on top. No matter how the north works out, an Italian-English alliance is not a high priority, as England typically takes some time to develop, at which point Italy may be perceived to be running away with the game.

A two-front war against France and Turkey typically sees Italy's progress grind to a halt. Prolonged time in this state leaves Italy spread too thin in the Balkans, making the erstwhile Austrian home centers ripe for attack from either Germany or Russia.

The Bohemian Crusher opening has Italy building armies early, but Italy must commit to building fleets in the mid-

game in order to control the Mediterranean. Five, sometimes four, will get the job done; builds approximating a 2:1 army to fleet ratio will generally keep Italy balanced. Certainly Italy should never have fewer fleets than that.

The Verdict

The Bohemian Crusher is the future of Italian Diplomacy. It puts an aggressive Italy in control of his own destiny and gives him an unstoppable leg up on Austria. The opening is low-risk and has no significant weaknesses. In the mid-game, Italy is strong and versatile. In the end-game, Italy has as good a chance at a solo as anybody.

Italy is relevant again.

Joshua is a writer, and lives in Tulsa, OK. He came to Diplomacy via the internet judges a few years back, and plays predominantly via email. He stumbled upon the Bohemian Crusher more because it seemed like a good idea at the time than out of any sort of plan, and because when confronted with options, he typically chooses the more exciting one.

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Dear GM:

I want to play Diplomacy games all the time. I can't stop thinking about Diplomacy constantly, even when doing other activities. Last week I called in sick so I could play a game in real time online. This week I'm more interested in Diplomacy than my love life? What's wrong with me? Is there any cure for this???

Diploaholic

Dear Diploaholic,

You're a Diplomacy Geek whose personal life is incredibly boring so that Diplomacy only looks exciting in comparison. That's the bad news; the good news is there is a cure for even losers like you: You need to find something else in your life.

First, of all get a new job—any job that makes Diplomacy seem exciting must be slow death by boredom. Second, find some friends to socialize with who aren't Diplomacy players—stop hanging around with all the gaming nerds and meet some real people. Finally, get a girl (or a man, if that is your thing) to have a physical relationship with you gaming geek!

*Your pal,
The GM*

Dear GM:

I keep getting pounded in all the games I am in. I don't understand it; I'm a good ally and very rarely stab. I always try and stay allied but yet people keep stabbing me—why??!!

A Good Ally

Dear Good Ally,

You such an incredible sap I don't know where to begin with you. First of all, have you even read the rules to Diplomacy???! You have to win by screwing over the other players. You do this by LYING to them and STEALING their centers for yourself. If you are uncomfortable with this perhaps you should stop playing Diplomacy and start playing a game more your speed—like Candy Land and Mousetrap, you nit-wit!

*Your pal,
The GM*

Got a question for Game Master? Send it to gamemaster "of" diplomacyworld.net and maybe it will appear in a future issue of Diplomacy World!

Diplomacy and the Internet Community

Commentary on and a rebuttal of the 100-user-limit theory in our hobby

By Jason Koelewyn, Jr Moderator @ www.DiplomaticCorp.com

"We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests it is our duty to follow." Lord Palmerston, 19th century British Prime Minister

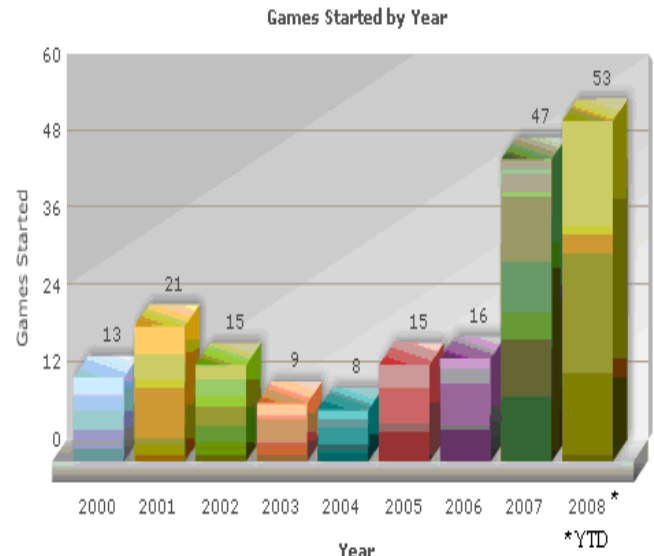
In Diplomacy World #101, Chris Babcock wrote an article (Diplomacy, the Internet and Community, p 16-17) discussing some of the issues facing the Diplomacy community. I agree with many of the points raised in this article, but not its thesis (the 100 user limit of Dip groups) or the analytical angle taken to reach most of its conclusions. To support my arguments, I have data and charts from DiplomaticCorp.com, a Dip community currently hosting 40 games with 233 distinct active players.

First, I would like to make a note on Metrics. All metrics have been pulled from the DiplomaticCorp database, and are current as of July 9th, 2008. As with any data, understanding the context is key. Chris's article was very vague on what constituted 100 users. For example, I can say that DiplomaticCorp has 798 members. 798 people have registered themselves as players on the DiplomaticCorp site. Of those registered 555 have played in at least one game, and 233 are playing a game right now. We also have 23 Active GMs running those 40 active games, with 5 games recruiting. But 53 GMs have run at least one game at DC. So how many members does DC have? Personally I go with 357, the number of players who have been active in a game in the last 6 months. I will try to be explicit with the meaning of any numbers I quote throughout this article. Also, my focus is on games and groups that use human GMs, rather than those with automated judges.

So obviously DiplomaticCorp has surpassed the 100 user limit. Why? Chris laid out several ways a group could exceed 100 users, and we will examine those in just a bit. But first I want to make a few comments on the medium we use for our Hobby. Chris made an excellent argument when he stated that Dip players are not as likely to fall prey to the negative values the game instills ("conspiracy, paranoia and betrayal" [sic]) or the small group clique mentality. The Internet itself also fosters these negative values often in groups who use it. The anonymity it brings lets people remove themselves from the basics of human interaction. In my experience with DiplomaticCorp, this has not been a problem. I have had numerous conversations with other players post-stab (from both sides) that ended with well wishes and a desire to play together again. So how do you keep the majority of players in a group from falling into these traps? Community. A term Chris used ten times in his

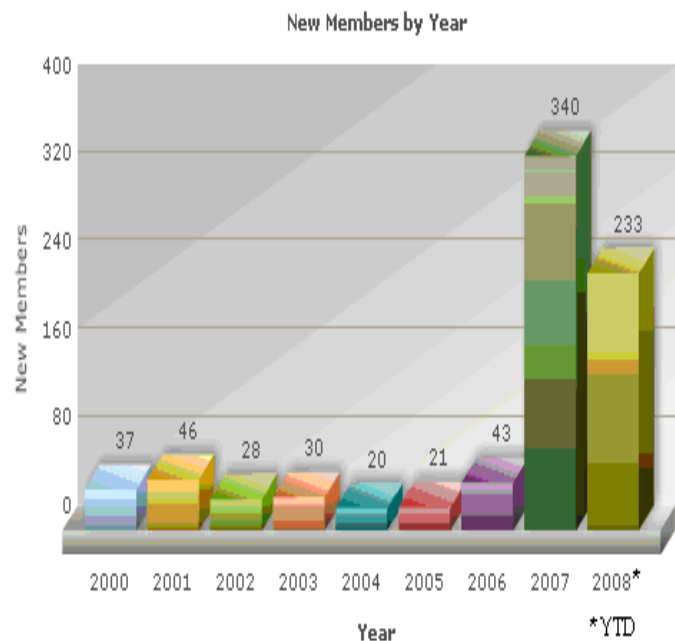
article, but never really defined or developed.

So what is a community? Why is it the bulwark to keep a group strong and growing? There are two kinds of community here, and the separation is very important. There is the larger Dip Community we all belong to, all players of Diplomacy and its variants. This is a very large but loose community bound by our interest in this game. Then there are the smaller communities. These are the groups where we play our games. They vary greatly in size, style, structure, and tools. Players move freely between them finding games to play and people to play with. The larger community has several weaknesses, one being the splintered nature of the smaller groups. The ease the internet gives to anyone wanting to start a new club (which is a great thing in and of itself) means the larger community has no central point of reference, no global repository of knowledge. Attempts such as www.DipWiki.com are only as good as the material players upload. When the community supports such resources and takes ownership by adding information, the whole community benefits. When each local group develops its data and keeps it locally, whether it is variants or strategy articles or game metrics, it makes it more difficult for the community at large to share that information. A central repository can bring the greater community (on-line, e-mail, post, and F2F) together in a way few other things can.



Some of these communities are strong, and others are weak. But why? A strong community is one in which the members feel they have a stake and a reason to remain and help build the community. In a strong community, players who reach a no-win position will remain in a

game knowing the other players are counting on them to keep the game alive. They will give their time to continue in the game because they know that next time when they are racing for a solo, another player will stick out their losing position to keep the game moving. There is a large variant (American Empire) being played at DiplomaticCorp with three players (out of seven remaining) who have been down to one or two SCs for up to six turns. A group where someone joins a game, does poorly, and drops out with no ramifications will struggle to build a sense of community. Players who drop games can be banned, but excluding them will either send them to another group where they are likely to do the same thing or out of the community all together. That only works as a deterrent when you are the only game in town. So how do you get people to Want to play the game out and then play another, and another? Well most of us are geeks of one flavor or another, and geeks love numbers and rankings, right? This is part of the solution DiplomaticCorp has found. When you are penalized more for dropping a game then for being eliminated, most players will be willing to stick it out to the end. This is one way of implementing Chris's suggestions around communication and enforcing consequences.



Making players feel included in the running of the community is another critical part of keeping players involved. One way to do that is to recruit players to GM games. At any given time, about 10% of DiplomaticCorp's active members are GMing games as well as playing them. Players are always reminded that our games are volunteer run and encouraged to run a game as well. As games on DiplomaticCorp tend to fill quickly (standard games average ten days to fill and start), the number of GMs is one of the biggest curbs on growth. There is also a sub group called the Light Brigade. This group is open to all players, and joining

indicates a player's willingness to be called on to fill an abandoned place in a game. This furthers the feeling of ownership, and keeps games from stagnating or going into Civil Disorder.

Another facet that affects the strength of a Dip community is its approach to rules. When rules are rigid and unenforceable it is a lure to be broken, just as Chris mentioned in his Wet Paint example. House rules are the generally accepted method for defining a set of rules, but again, any rigid set of rules will limit flexibility and breed resentment. DiplomaticCorp has a set of site House Rules, but encourages each GM to create their own as well, detailing how specifics such as NMRs, deadlines, formats, and votes will be handled in games they run. This not only allows flexibility for many game styles and variants, but reduces friction and argument. There is no need for protracted 'discussion' over the best way to handle NMRs. The house rules clearly state how each GM will deal with the issue. If a player does not like the method used, the next game will be starting only a few days later.



DiplomaticCorp's Home Page Screen Shot

Abandons are a part of life when playing Diplomacy, when a game stretches 6 to 8 months real life is bound to interfere. In my personal experience, half the abandons I have seen resulted from real life issues rather than a desire to leave a sinking ship. Still, abandons are large issue facing Dip communities. DiplomaticCorp sees about a 15.5% abandon rate impacting 62% of games played. This represents a large impact to gameplay. Even if you manage to eliminate all cowardly abandons, games will still be

impacted as people drop due to family issues, new jobs, or prison time. So all you can do is try to keep the abandon rate low, and make sure you have a mechanism to replace players who drop.

DiplomaticCorp has the ability to place an open game back into the recruiting queue. Most positions fill in just a few days allowing the game to progress. But some abandons leave such bad positions that most players do not want to even try. Why jump in as Austria with just 2 SCs? Enter the Light Brigade! As previously mentioned, this sub-group, currently consisting of 14 members, stands ready to fill abandoned spots. The Brigade is open to all but tends to attract experienced players who don't mind playing out a difficult position for the good of the community. The notion of the Light Brigade group stemmed from the DipKnights of the CAT-23 community – another very successful Dip community in its time. The rating and merits systems also take replacements into account. A replacement player who is eliminated sees a much smaller ranking hit than someone who started the game as an original player, and a replacement player gains an extra merit point regardless of his/her finishing position.

The highest rank ever achieved is: **Order of the Rose**

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My Profile Other Profiles:

Member ID: Gibtraine
Name: Jason K
Rating: 1215.43
Merits: 37
Rank: 2 Esquire
Location: 2 Haverhill, PA, US [EDIT](#)
Email Address: Gibtraine@yahoo.com [EDIT](#)
[Change Password](#)

FusionCharts Evaluation - An InfoSoft Global Creation

My Results

Draws: 2
Survivals: 2
Active/Recruiting: 3
Eliminations: 1

HIDE Games I'm GM'ing (2)

Game	Type	Variant	Map	Notes	Next Due
dcl64	R	Standard	Standard	Arctic Warriors - New Germany required	2008-08-14 @ 21:00:00 GMT
dcl60	R	Standard	Standard	Nightstalkers	2008-08-14 @ 21:00:00 GMT

HIDE Games I'm GM'd (1)

Game	Type	Variant	Map	Notes
dcl34	R	Standard	Wheel of Time	Wheel of Time

HIDE Games I'm Playing (3)

Game	Country	Orig/Repl	Result	Type	Variant	Map	Notes	Next Due
dcl86	Russia	Original	Open	R	Standard	Colonial		2008-07-07 @ 13:00:00 GMT
dcl58	Archers (Blue)	Original	Open	R	Fog of War	Haven	Once Within a Fog so Dreary	2008-07-11 @ 17:00:00 GMT
dcl38	Cuba	Replacement	Open	R	Standard	American Empire	Winter Of Our Discontent	2008-07-10 @ 23:59:00 GMT

HIDE Games I've played (5)

Game	Country	Orig/Repl	Result	Type	Variant	Map	Notes
dcl70	Austria	Original	Draw	T	Standard	Standard	WB0825
dcl51	England	Original	Survival	T	Standard	Standard	WB0816
dcl16	England	Original	Draw	R	Standard	Standard	Vogons Revenge
dcl15	England - Turkey	Original	Survival	R	Double	Double	
dcl11	Russia	Replacement	Eliminated	R	Standard	Standard	

Sample Player Profile

Respect is a big issue in on-line play. You do not (generally) respect someone you do not know. Chris mentions several people expressing they do not know the people they play with like they used to. While part of the reason is the community is growing, most of the culpability lies with the complainers. Respect and relationships take effort. If you do not put the effort into

learning who the people you play with are, you cannot complain that you do not know them and do not respect them. Conversely you cannot expect them to respect you! Social issues aside, this is a game where understanding your opponents and allies is critical to success. In my experience, there is a direct correlation between the skill and volume of correspondence, and the finish a player manages. In the end, you get out what you put in.

This brings me to my biggest contention with the article Chris wrote. The conclusions drawn refer to several theories from the realm of organizational management and leadership. A community does not require management the way a business does (and Dippers seem to be more resistant than most). A community manages itself, usually with minimal oversight from some small governing body made up of community members. The ability of a person to manage a certain number of people has no relevance to the functioning of a vibrant community. The 80/20 rule, while it may be correct in most applications of human interaction, has no bearing on the size a group can grow to. In the smallest sense, that of a single game, the person doing the least amount of actual work is the GM. Players spend much more time communicating and planning than the GM needs to adjudicate each turn. The keys to a successful community are flexible structure and involvement of the community at large.

Exposure and tools are the final pieces of the puzzle. Most groups use e-mail and some sort of on-line forum. DiplomaticCorp was no different, and no larger, until June of 2007. That is when the DiplomaticCorp website, with it's with its merits and ratings, colorful maps and rich content, was launched. Within a month active membership surged across the 100 player mark and in the next month 6 more games began and the active count reached 133 players. Since then the growth has been very steady with several new games starting most weeks.

In conclusion, DiplomaticCorp fits the criteria Chris laid out for a group to pass 100 members. I maintain however, that his evaluation of the community aspect of Diplomacy is off base. Any group should be able to succeed in the way DiplomaticCorp has, and there is no limit in sight for how large any group might grow. DiplomaticCorp is still growing at a rate of 37 new members per month, and with a new game launching every 4 days. As long as its members are willing to play, and put time in to this hobby, I expect that it will continue to grow.

Jason Koelewyn is a junior Moderator at DiplomaticCorp.com, and developed the new Wheel of Time Variant (which will soon be play-testing version 2 on DiplomaticCorp.com)

Space, the Final Frontier

By Gerald Todd

"Space, the final frontier." Those words opened every television episode and movie in the science fiction universe of Gene Roddenberry's creation *Star Trek*.

In our world of Diplomacy, variants have been created on many subjects, including Star Trek. My attempt was aimed at a nice map, simple play, and easy to GM (using the RealWorld version of the RealPolitik adjudication software). I felt the popular theme and the ease to GM would help the variant get some play.

It all started when I saw a conceptual image of the Milky Way galaxy depicting it as a barred-spiral type based on the latest research, oh, astronomy is one of my other hobbies. This prompted an Internet search for more information when a map of the Star Trek galaxy showed up in the hit list that showed the locations of the civilizations in the latest of the TV series. About now I was thinking 'hmmm, Diplomacy variant.'

Using the barred-spiral image, I commenced to figuring out who the major powers would be and where. I decided to keep the game to seven players. Obviously the first three were the Federation, the Romulans, and the Klingons. Then I had to decide on *when* the variant would take place, namely in the Original Series or the later series; *The Next Generation*, and *DeepSpace Nine*. I went for the later series so I could use the entire galactic image, involving the Gamma and Delta quadrants; ie: The Dominion and The Borg. The Cardassians and the Ferengi rounded things out at 7 player powers.

Scale became a problem. The area of the galaxy occupied by the original civilizations of ST:TNG was actually miniscule on a map of the whole galaxy. Worst, the Borg and Dominion areas were also small and very far away on the galactic map. The Bajoran wormhole helped a little, but that didn't cover the Borg. I didn't want to concoct a lot of special rules to handle the Borg "trans-warp system," or add a bunch of wormholes to the map, getting away from the provenance of the TV series – and I really wanted to use that image of the galaxy.

What I decided to do was reduce the size of the galaxy and stylize the area covered by the seven player powers on the map.

Another dilemma in the design of this variant was what to do about armies. At first I went with an all fleet game, but working on porting an existing Babylon 5 variant to RealWorld made me decide to keep them in. In both variants, armies can move between any adjacent supply centers, but have to be convoyed across open space.

Putting in the Bajoran wormhole was pretty straight forward. Bajor is simply adjacent to the spaces around it in the Alpha Quadrant AND to Idran. Inversely, Idran is adjacent the spaces around it in the Gamma Quadrant AND to Bajor. This didn't require any special rules at all.

One special rule did seem in order; Borg Assimilation. The Borg, therefore, can build in any unoccupied supply center they own representing their "assimilation" of the place, while everyone else can only build in their own unoccupied home centers.

Besides the map, I had to make up a set of icons to be used for each power's armies and fleets in RealWorld. The fleet icons are plan views of a Star Ship distinctively recognizable as that power's. The army icons are that power's symbol or seal. I think the icons capture the theme pretty well, especially the Borg cubes. The color assigned to each power was an attempt to maintain the theme as well.

Overall, I think the variant meets the goals I had; to create a Diplomacy variant that was playable with the RealWorld software by the standard rules (with a minor exception) and captured the flavor of the Star Trek universe.

Gerald Todd can be found around The Diplomacy Tribune or at <http://mainecav.org/diplomacy> (which is where you can find all of the RealWorld files needed to play this variant on that system, as well as the icons and other material).

Star Trek Diplomacy

by Gerald Todd ~ sgttodd@mainecav.org

Space, the Final Frontier - yada yada yada. Here is yet another attempt at a Star Trek themed Diplomacy Variant. So far as I know, this is the first design to run within RealWorld. A few ideas for a grander version of this theme came to mind while putting this together, so think of this as Star Trek Lite.

Peculiar to this Variant:

- Units: There are armies but movement for them is very limited. Armies may move between adjacent supply centers, for instance Sol and Alp, but to move anywhere else will required they be convoyed.

Starting Positions (with Abbreviations)

- Map Spaces: All the map spaces are "sea" or "coastal" spaces. A unit may move in and out of any space into any adjacent space.
- The Bajoran Wormhole: The Bajor space is adjacent not only to the spaces surrounding it, but also to the Idran space in the Dominion for both armies and fleets. The Idran space is likewise adjacent to the spaces surrounding it AND Bajor, by virtue of the wormhole.
- Borg Assimilation: Any captured SCs can be built in by the Borg as if they were home SCs. Only the Borg have this ability. RealWorld is set up for Chaos Builds to accommodate that, so the GM must be sure to only allow the Borg player to build outside of his home centers.
- Icons: RealWorld requires the presence of "army" icons, so they exist to fulfill that requirement.

Borg Collective: Borg Unicomplex, uni (A); 3249, (F);

Cardassian Union: Cardassia Prime, car (A); Chin'Toka, chi (F); Lazon, laz (F)

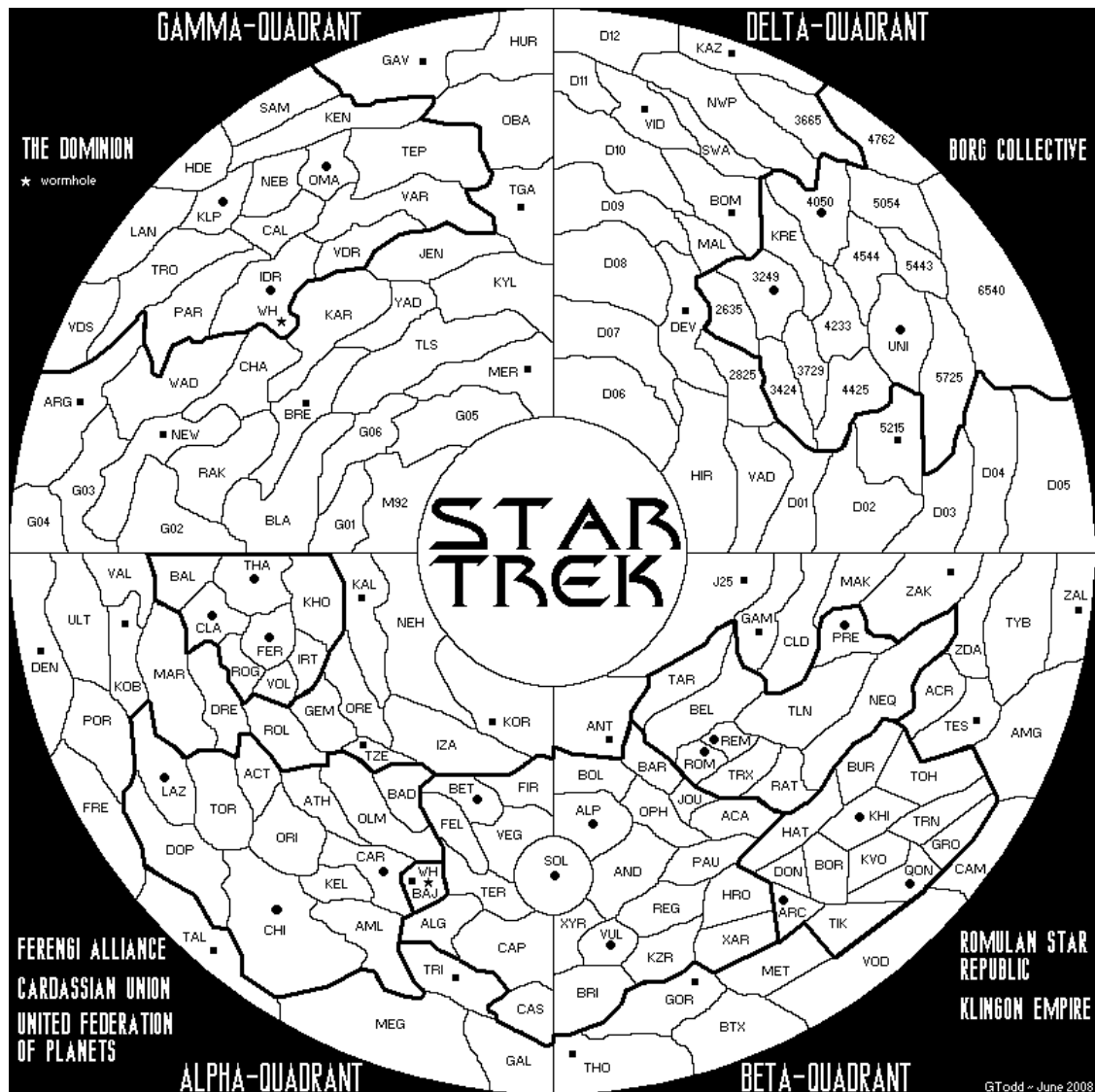
Dominion: Idran, idr (A); Korill Prime, kor (F); Omarion, oma (F)

Ferengi Alliance: Feringinar, fer (A); Thalos, tha (F); Clarus, cla (F)

Klingon Empire: Archanis, arc (F); Khitomer, khi (F); Q'onos, qon (A)

Romulan Star Republic: Romulus, rom (A); Remus, rem (F); Pretorian, pre (F)

United Federation of Planets: Sol, sol (A); Betazed, bet (F); Alpha Centauri, alp (F); Vulcan, vul (F)



Truth in Fiction: Diplomacy Lessons Learned from Dune and Starship Troopers

By Douglas Kent

When we decided to make Science Fiction and Fantasy a theme for this issue, I was a bit at a loss trying to figure out whether I would make any contribution to that theme. I've read and enjoyed quite a bit of science fiction in my day, but not nearly as much as many hobby members (and don't forget that in part this hobby grew out of science fiction fandom). So I started thinking about my options. I could take a closer look at some of the better-known variants; or I could try and design a variant based on Robert Adam's Horseclans book series, or Patrick McGoochan's Prisoner TV-series; or I could try and find some related material in old Diplomacy World issues and reprint it.

Looking at our bookshelves here at home, my eyes wandered to a section of well-read paperbacks, containing a few books I read over and over again, at least once a year. And two titles popped out at me: Frank Herbert's classic Dune, and Robert Heinlein's Starship Troopers (and if you've only seen the movie – which I hated – you've done yourself a disservice). And suddenly I realized that each book has influenced my outlook on Diplomacy and the way I play it. Within the pages of each book, there are many lessons to be learned which apply directly to both the strategic and tactical aspects of the game; too many to list in this article, anyway. If you've got any favorites, why don't you send them in? In the meantime, here are four lessons learned from each book. Millions of readers can't be wrong!

Lessons from Starship Troopers

Those who haven't read this tale of humans battling an intelligent arachnid species, or who haven't enjoyed Robert Heinlein at all before, might be surprised at how much philosophy and politics he puts into his writing. While the novel concentrates on the single soldier, there is still plenty to be learned and applied to your next Diplomacy game.

"Violence, naked force, has settled more issues in history than any other factor...Breeds that forget this basic truth have always paid for it with their lives and their freedom."

The name of the game is Diplomacy. And without skill in negotiations, you're likely to do poorly. But when it is all said and done, whether acting alone or with your allies, the Diplomacy system of combat is simple and direct: the greater force wins. You cannot grow without strength, without force, without attacking. So don't just spend your time building demilitarized zones and non-aggression pacts. You don't have to attack everybody,

but you have GOT to attack SOMEBODY. Or else victory will always elude you.



"Any group is weaker than a man alone unless they are perfectly trained to work together."

Diplomacy requires cooperation between allies, but often that can be used to your advantage when you're on the defensive side of the battle. Supports need to be coordinated perfectly, as do convoys. Look for ways to disrupt your collective enemies' movements. Also, be aware of their experience level and their understanding of the rules. I've encountered quite a bit of misunderstanding of support and convoy rules among players lately, and this too can be used to your advantage. A common misconception is that, like supports, a convoy is cut simply by a failed move into that space (in other words, F Nth C A Den – Yor is "cut" by ordering F Ech – Nth). The support order is also frequently misunderstood. You take advantage of such misunderstandings by threatening to cut convoys or

supports which you actually cut. Or, you can correct the enemy's misconception, and accuse his ally of trying to set him up for the stab. The fact that your enemies don't fully trust each other makes them weaker as a group.

"War is controlled violence, for a purpose. The purpose of war is to support your government's decisions by force. The purpose is never to kill your enemy just to be killing them, but to make him do what you want him to do."

Diplomacy can be used in two ways: you can ally with someone, explaining that it is mutually beneficial. Or, if you are the stronger nation in the equation, you can simply offer the lesser of two evils: work with me and survive, or work against me and perish. The "deterrent factor" can be a powerful motivating force.

"Value has two factors for a human being: first, what he can do with a thing, its use to him...and second, what he must do to get it, its cost to him."

Growth in Diplomacy is based on two factors: what supply centers can you acquire, and at what cost. Cost, in this case, can be measured in units occupied, or seasons lost, or enemies made, or opportunities passed up. Learning the most accurate ways to measure the cost of your actions, or at least the potential cost, can be the key to success. If you tie up three of your units to attack in a region where your enemy already had two units anyway, in effect you're spending three units to tie up one of his. The old adage "never stab for one center" also applies to this lesson. Finally, remember that in Diplomacy, non-supply centers (and sea spaces) have value as well. Never overlook that.

Lessons from Dune

Certainly few novels can match Dune for its collection of devious and exciting characters, clashing cultures, power struggles, and mixture of religion, government, self-determination, long-range planning, and philosophy. Certainly numerous articles could be written on lessons culled from the first book in the series alone, but I've selected four simple ones to start the process. Maybe one of you kind readers would like to continue this in a second article?

"A powerful man arouses the jealousy of the powerful."

This is one lesson anyone who built three in 1901 learned quickly. Diplomacy is, in part, a game of balance. If you grow too quickly, you acquire enemies

just as quickly. Some you earn by attacking them, but the others may see you as a threat that needs to be dealt with before it is too late.

"I know as a Mentat when you will send the executioner. You will hold back just so long as I am useful. To move sooner would be wasteful, and I am yet of much use."

Put simply, don't stab for one center. Don't dispense of an ally unless you have a reason. Either you desire hit supply centers, or you are going to replace him with a more valuable ally. But don't be wasteful; an ally is not something to be tossed aside without cause. In Diplomacy, of course, suspicion could be considered cause...but whatever your reason, make sure you **have** one!

"In politics, the tripod is the most unstable of all structures."

A three-way alliance is very difficult to construct long-term. Even if there is mutual benefit early on, the expression "two's company, three's a crowd" proves to be true far too often. The three allies inevitably spend as much time watching their own backs as they do attacking their enemies. Just make sure that when this unstable structure topples, you don't find yourself on the bottom of the pile. There are no rescue dogs in Diplomacy.

"Knowing where the trap is – that's the first step in evading it."

More than any other lesson, this one should be memorized and lived by. It is impossible to defend yourself against all attacks, or to prevent all stabs. But by making an effort to look at the map from each other player's point of view, you are that much more likely to see the attack before it happens. If your ally is forever trying to convince you how important it is for you to move that fleet hanging around your home centers, but seems to lack any urgent reason for doing so, trust your instincts. And remember, sometimes it is in your own best interests, rather than avoiding the trap altogether, to allow your enemy to spring their trap...only, because you saw it long ago, he finds himself ensnared in his own plot (maybe by way of someone who he thought was an ally).

As I said, this is just a small collection of lessons you can learn from Dune, Starship Troopers, or other science fiction books. Next time you enjoy a good read, keep your eyes open for ideas that can be applied the next time you sit down across from six other Great Powers, ready to battle for control of Europe.

WELCOME TO MIDDLE ITALY!

Italian EGP step

Fossombrone 8/9 November 2008

I am proud to announce that this year the Italian EGP step will be played in Fossombrone (Marche Region), a little town in the Metauro Valley close at the Adriatic Sea. The date is 8/9 November 2008. You will be hosted in a new and comfortable 3 star Hotel in which we will still play the tournament : www.hotelflaminiotavernelle.com

My association will host free for two nights **THE FIRST 5 FOREIGN PLAYERS**. So, please register your name as soon as possible! The price of a double room is 70 € (35 € per person) with breakfast included. You will find very good food (BTW: in this date will be the Italian Truffle Fest in Acqualagna, about 15 km from Fossombrone), a really good atmosphere with the strong colors of the Metauro Valley autumn.

THE TOURNAMENT

We will play 3 games until 1907 (2 on Saturday, 1 on Sunday); Award ceremony will be in the first afternoon of Sunday.

TIMES

Saturday 8 November

09:00 - 10:00 Registration Game 01
10:00 - 14:00 Game 01
Lunch break
16:00 - 16:30 Registration Game 02
16:30 – 20:30 Game 02
21:30 Dinner

Sunday 9 November

09:00 - 09:30 Registration
9:30 – 13:30 Game 03
14:00 Award ceremony

HOW TO GET HERE

By Plane

If you inform Fossombrone has not an airport, the nearest airports are Ancona/Falconara and Forlì. See the sites below. If you inform me about your time of arrival I will probably pick you at the airport.

<http://www.ancona-airport.com/>

http://www.forliaairport.com/main/index.php?id_pag=12&page=home&ban=y

By Car

You need to take the autoroute A14 and exit in Fano. Then go right for 15 km (exit Calcinelli) and you have arrived.

For registration: please add your name below:

For Info : Luca Pazzaglia – luicapazzaglia@alice.it – Mob: +39 338 9980385

To register with the ItDip group - Italian Grand Prix tournament group - Italian discussion group responsible for managing participations in the European and Italian Diplomacy tournaments send an email to ItDip-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

A Klingon, a Stormtrooper and an Orc Walk into a Bar: Considerations for Variants Based on Speculative Fiction

By Chris Sham

You can't negotiate with someone who literally only understands violence; anyone who's played Diplomacy against someone who just doesn't get it should be aware of that. And, due to a variety of factors, most antagonist groups in fantasy and science fiction settings are essentially that sort of adiplomatic creature. After all, if the hero could just sit down with the bad guys and negotiate a mutually acceptable solution, then he or she would never get the chance to heroically bound about amid dramatic explosions and rivers of blood and other things that sell to a popular audience. Black and white divisions between the good guys and bad guys can make for a convenient plot device, but it's still a bit of a lazy shortcut.

Real life and Diplomacy are not that simple. Every side has its share of valid claims to existence and perhaps even dominance, but the universe itself doesn't care if you're Austro-Hungarian or Italian, Israeli or Palestinian, or any other side of any conflict. All the universe offers us are the laws of physics and the opportunity to use these laws to resolve our disputes ourselves. Similarly, Diplomacy just gives us its impartial set of rules, and leaves us to fight it out to 18 SCs. And there's no rule, either in the real world or the board game, which says you can't change sides whenever you like, which effectively nullifies the good guy/bad guy distinction. There's just you and everyone else.

So, when designing or running a variant based on an established fantasy or science fiction setting, how do you make the impartial rules of the game fit comfortably with the decidedly unbalanced and inflexible nature of the powers found in most of these kinds of stories? Surely it will never make sense for the Galactic Empire to be friendly with the Rebel Alliance? The whole point of the Organians in Star Trek was that the Federation and Klingons were totally incapable of making peace without the intervention of an overpowered *deus ex machina*? And Stargate Command might ally itself with one or more rogue Goa'uld lords, but you'd never expect that alliance to last more than a round or two, whereas Earth's alliance with the Asgard should be nigh unbreakable. After all, the Goa'uld are all sneaky bastards who just can't be trusted, while the Asgard are natural and loyal allies of the SGC. Aren't they? All of these powers already have well-established personalities and relationships that most players will already be quite familiar with, and it may be difficult to uncouple these artificial attitudes from what the players really need to do to win.

Mr Calhamer's original 1901 Europe board might seem

just as loaded with pre-conceived ideas about who should trust whom, if you're already familiar with the politics of the time. But over a century later, most people don't actually remember who was friendly and who was hostile, and why that was so. There may be a higher percentage of people who know this stuff among Diplomacy players, but I'm willing to bet that if you do know it, you probably only learned about it after discovering the game. By that point, you understand the intended nature of the game well enough that you aren't as strongly influenced by mere history. But what happens when you come into the game knowing exactly who's "supposed" to work with whom, as you would in a popular sci-fi or fantasy variant? Perhaps such things will not influence most serious Diplomacy players at all, but more casual players could easily be influenced in that way, and new players almost certainly will be. As I see it, there are two possible ways of dealing with this: Incorporating the fictional relationships into the game, or specifically excluding them.



Excluding the setting's established relationships is easier to explain and execute, but probably not entirely reliable. To accomplish this, it needs to be made clear to all the players right from the start that they're just playing Diplomacy, with some amusing sci-fi themed names in place of the usual European map. Nobody should take this too far, though, because you're not really representing the actual powers in their real setting, and virtually no suspension of disbelief should be permitted. Just play the game as a game and don't worry too much about the fluff. Of course, that's not as much fun, and if you overemphasise that point, you'll either spoil it for people who enjoy getting into character, or perhaps even cause them to intentionally go to the opposite extreme and climb right into the standard role of their assigned power, as seen on TV, just to enjoy some escapism.

Incorporating these standard roles into the game is much trickier, but can make the transition from non-

interactive fiction to the entirely-interactive board game easier for those who're struggling to separate the two. Perhaps the best way of doing this is by positing that the board game represents an alternate reality, wherein the starting conditions are roughly the same as those in the book/film/series/opera in question, and where the players each get a chance to run their assigned empire in a new and interesting way, to see if they could have done it better (which is, of course, the premise of all history-based gaming, applied to a fictional history). If it helps, players can also assume that the established alliances and wars are already in place at the start of the game, with the option to change sides whenever they're ready for it. However, that's a poor compromise, and the players (especially new players) should be weaned off of it as soon as possible, or they'll just be forever trapped in the same inflexible re-enactments, which will almost certainly make the game very dull.

From the variant designer's point of view, there is another way of handling the incorporation of established relationships in fiction-based variants: Build them into the underlying design of your variant. The *Middle Earth* series of variants accomplished this by adding a variety of new rules to force changes in the balance of power, by changing the importance of fleets, the value of home defence, control over specific resources/units and a string of other changes. The *Babylon 5* variant by Theo Kermanidis solves the problem more subtly, with a well thought-out map that will tend to encourage the players to do similar things to the events seen in the series on which the variant is based*. But, and this is important,

the design of the map never explicitly forces anyone to do anything that normal 1901 European Diplomacy wouldn't, however much it may encourage it. I'm much more in favour of that subtle map-design method of variant design, because it accomplishes more or less the same goal, without messing with the basic Diplomacy rules too much (which are already pretty damn good). And that's important, because special rules and anything else that directly and explicitly forces the players into a particular diplomatic arrangement are likely to spoil the players' enjoyment of the game. Not only do special rules make it trickier to balance a variant properly, but they also make it one notch harder for players to suspend their disbelief, and that's no fun.

There are many fine science fiction and fantasy settings to base Diplomacy variants on, and some of these do include some pretty realistic political and diplomatic arrangements. But for the most part, fictional settings are not quite as diplomatically flexible as we need them to be for our game, and whether you agree with my particular solutions to that problem or not, it is something important to bear in mind when playing or designing a variant based on your favourite speculative fiction.

**To be completely fair, the Babylon 5 variant does include some optional special rules, involving the Babylon 5 Station region. But this variant stands up primarily on its map design, and not on this one optional special region rule.*

Quick question: True or False – Chris Sham is a Star Trek fan?

DipCon in Maine: What Happened

By Rick Desper

Last year in Vancouver, two bids were presented for the right/duty to host DipCon in 2008. With most of the well-known major cons begging off, and many of the most well-known tournament directors looking for a year or two off, the only bids were HuskyCon, hosted by the Woodrings at their house on Long Island, and BangorCon (what is this called?). David Webster presented the bid for the latter con.

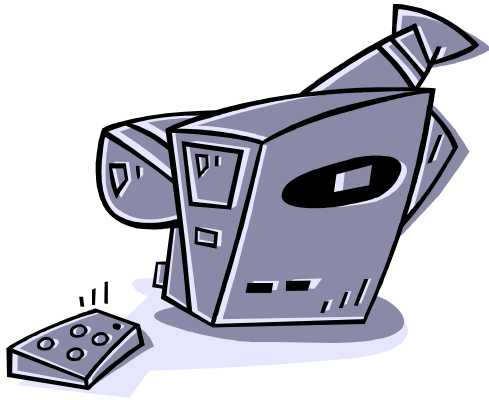
There were some concerns at the time about the Bangor bid. For starters, nobody at WDC had ever attended. And several voters thought it was odd that a con with "five boards per round" could be held in Maine without anybody having heard of it. But David made a good presentation, complete with PowerPoint and promising photos of the venue. It was to be held at the University of Maine in Orono. From my perspective, the Maine bid was offering the type of venue I was comfortable with, that could presumably host 100 or more people if necessary. I didn't feel HuskyCon could, and voted accordingly.

After the bid was awarded, MaineCon disappeared off the map for well over a half year. Typically a tournament director will make appearances and other cons, advertising his con, trying to drum up interest. David Webster did not do this. Indeed, there were complaints about his lack of communication early in the year, with gamers trying to get information about dates and accommodations.

Anyway, in spite of my waning interest in playing Diplomacy competitively, I felt an obligation to go to DipCon in Maine. I made my plans to fly up and visit friends in Waldo County and then go up to the Con after.

I did not feel like playing four days of Diplomacy, so I planned to show up Friday and play Friday-Sunday. I showed during the second round and discovered to my surprise that there were only going to be four rounds counting for DipCon, with a fifth "team round" on Sunday. But that was a minor problem compared to the

real issue: there were only two boards being played. And Tournament Director David Webster had just soloed on one of the two.



I am hoping somebody else can fill in the details of what happened during Round Two. As David had promised in Vancouver, he was videotaping one of the two boards. And, as it turned out, almost all of the big-name travelling players were on that board. The only travellers on the other board were Jim Burgess and Chris Campbell, who played Russia and Turkey. As Jim related it to me, they faced a five-way alliance headed east, all driven by Webster in France. And when Webster stabbed and took his the SCs from “allies”, they didn’t fight back.

At least, that’s how it was explained to me.

The real sticky point was this: at one point during the negotiations, Jim said it would be a bit of a waste to let David Webster solo, since as the tournament director he would not be eligible to receive any points. At which point David explained that he was, in fact, playing in the tournament just like anybody else. Moreover, he continued to make TD rulings in a game where he was winning, and was intending to count in the standings.

Well, this development did not go well with the travellers on the other board. People thought that it was bad form for the TD to be playing in his own tournament. One attendee, Steve Cooley, was so annoyed he left then and there.

Although I was a new player joining the tournament for Round Three, we were still short on players. Although many people were unenthusiastic about playing at all, David finally convinced people to play two boards, with me playing on two boards at once. I had played two boards at once at Tempest in 2002 (or was it 2001?) and had fared reasonably well.

Things did not go as well this time. On one board, I got to play France next to Chris Martin’s England, Chris Campbell in Italy, and a local player in Germany (whose name I forget) who split his forces in various directions and was quickly stomped. On the other board, I got

Germany, next to Jim Burgess in Russia, David Webster in England, “Father Mike” in France, and had various visits from Edi Birsan playing Turkey.

My first time playing two boards at once, I also had the joy of playing with Chris and Edi at the same time. Somehow I had managed that one – largely because not a single person had wanted to see Edi Birsan grow as England. This time, it was way too much for me.

At the start, both positions seemed decent. In 1901, my France took Belgium and Portugal while my southern army wandered through Piedmont to Tyrolia. With England in Holland, we were positioned to clobber Germany in 1902. Brian Sheldon (Russia) was keen to join in. On the other board, there did not appear to be any E/F, and Jim was quite happy to be peaceful in the North.

Things started to go bad in 1902. Feeling the time pressure of trying to play two boards at once, I wrote “Ruh – Bur” where I meant “Ruh – Mun” and thereby failed to take a center that would have easily fallen. On the other board, I was having difficulties with Father Mike. Edi was trying hard to get the two of us to work together against David, and I was inclined to go along since David was at that point the tournament leader. Mike did eventually build fleets and go north, but he was uninterested in sharing dots. In the southern part of that board, Edi had worked with Jim and Don Williams’ Turkey to make short work of Carl Ellis’s Austria-Hungary.



Catching up on the French position: in 1903, as I was finally taking Munich and putting pressure on Italy, Chris 1-dotted me in Belgium. This was again a move where the stresses of playing two boards at once was getting to me. I did not, in fact, need to leave Belgium undefended, and my first instinct was to defend it. But when I finally got to writing orders, I was short on time, and had to write the orders quickly, and simply left it undefended.

In my mind, at that point people should have worked together against board-leader Chris Martin, who was certainly the most dangerous player on the board, if not in the tournament. Not only had he taken Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Kiel, he had taken Sweden from Brian and was in a position where he could take St

Petersburg whenever he wished.

The following game year, I was distracted by the other board, where Edi had decided to go north and attack Munich with the help of Father Mike. Mike had made progress into England, but David was still holding the North Sea against attacks from Jim and myself. I had to deal with a rogue Austria unit in Silesia while trying to get on board with the R/T alliance.

After spending about ten minutes dealing with that, I went back to the other board, where not a single player had tried to talk to me, other than Chris. And in the Fall move, I saw the Austrian and Russian players support Chris from Kiel to Munich.

I found this development mind-boggling. The scoring system used in Maine was very simple: each player received a number of points equal to their SC count, and there was a bonus of X points for topping the board. At the time, Chris was the board leader. Ordinarily, when a player is in that situation, where the scoring system rewards board leadership, other players tend to organize against the board leader. That is what one typically sees in European C-Diplo tournaments, for example. Many C-Diplo games end with the board leader having only 8 or 9 SCs. And here we had two players supporting England into his 9th center, with two more centers (Berlin and St Petersburg) that he could pick up easily at any time he wanted to.

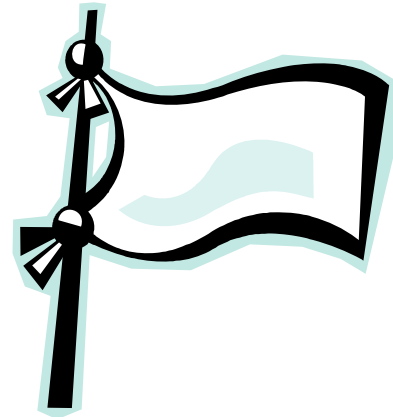
I found this development offensive. Apparently everybody else on the board had decided to concede the majority of the points in play to Chris, and were going to let him get 27 points while they squabbled over 5 or 6 points that they might get in 2nd place. I don't see the point of playing Dip if you're not going to play to win, and dislike people who help leaders, with very few exceptions. One of those exceptions is if a player has decided to throw the game.

Anyway, I was stressed from trying to play two boards at once, so I decided to focus my thinking on my game as Germany while I threw the other board to Chris. I used the Fall retreat to disband two armies, and then dropped another fleet in Marseilles. Italy had sent his fleets east and was in a poor position to defend Tunis. I knew that was the only SC over the line that I would have to throw to Chris to help him win. As I saw it, everybody else was content to let my 5-SC France be beaten up by a 9-SC England. Indeed, they had just helped him take a SC from me!

So I threw the game.

On the other board, I ended up sticking around as a minor power while France and Italy beat on my western holdings, with the help of Webster's last English force. Eventually the tide turned against Italy, with Russia and

Turkey putting themselves in a position to break down his defenses. We eventually had a draw, with David Webster eliminated.



The net effect of Round Three was to put Chris Martin in the lead of the tournament, a few points ahead of David Webster.

In Round Four, the final round, David put himself in Turkey, had local friends in Italy and Russia, and put Chris in Austria-Hungary. And none of them made any pretence of playing to any purpose other than flattening him, to help David "win" the tournament.

As I see it, there were two different major problems with the DipCon in Maine. One is the problem of light attendance. We were told that the local con regularly provided four to five boards per round. These players never manifested themselves. Worse, there was never any serious effort to get the national hobby to attend, and it seemed at the time that David was being so reticent that many players who had been in Vancouver and wanted to attend were discouraged at the lack of organization. Players from Europe who had wanted to attend were not given adequate notice of the dates to be able to schedule their flights appropriately.

And the second problem was a bit more obvious: the TD let himself win his own tournament, even while he was assigning powers and making in-game rulings. David contended that he had seen other TDs do this, but my experience has been the opposite. Indeed, I saw Yann Clouet take himself out of the standings of the tournament in Parthenay, which he would have won.

I will let others comment on the post-DipCon politics. I supported the effort to annul the DipCon status of Maine, since it had turned farcical. But I was not directly involved in the conference call the following week, as I was visiting with family in Kansas.

Rick Desper is the current Demo Game Editor for Diplomacy World...and a hell of a nice guy.

DOUG, YOU CAN PLEAD ALL YOU WANT TO. YOU CAN EVEN PROMISE TO GET ME A DATE WITH TOM CRUISE. FORGET IT. A CONTRACT IS A CONTRACT, SO YOU'RE STUCK WITH MY BRILLIANT PROSE (OR POETRY OR OTHER FORMS ON WHICH I LAVISH MY BRILLIANCE). REMEMBER, I'M UP FOR THIS YEAR'S PUKITZER PRIZE FOR TRASHINESS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

By the way, the total response to my question about the problem with using "frottage" in this story came from Edi Birsan. Period. It read, "The error in the story about frottage relates to the song of Tick when we all know that Crayfish are Ticked Off so there is not need of Frottage." Edi, Edi, Edi. Is it strictly wise to play Arnie Schwarzenegger to my P. G. Wodehouse? By Jeeves, you are a cheeky chap. (If there is anyone who didn't get THAT reference, I despair for Western Civilization.) Anyway, the answer actually is very simple: the term "frottage" didn't enter the English vocabulary until 1931. This story is set more than 2 decades earlier. (Forty years ago, the anal retentives who played Diplomacy would have killed and maimed for the opportunity to catch me out on that one.)

THE ADVENTURES OF FATMAN AND FROTTAGE

THE CASE OF LADY WINDBOTTOM'S FAN

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Fit the Third: The Fellowship of the Fan

PART 1: THE REVIEW

At the Flicks by Lenny Malted

D W Griffith's new blockbuster film, "Fellowship of the Fan" is packing audiences into theaters from Catalina to Long Guyland. Griffith had originally considered making a film of an absurd novel called "The Clansman", but gave it up when he found that the script was even more ridiculous. Somehow, his good sense deserted him when presented with the even more improbable script for this turkey. Still, it's making money as if every day were Thanksgiving.

The premise here is that, back during the Great War of 1901, an evil and arcane artifact – a fan – became the focus of attention of a large number of people in Vienna. Barbara Bushwyck (usually known as Barbed Schwyck) plays the current owner of the Fan, Lady Windbottom – who has lost it. This ... um ... lady, formerly the infamous Jenny the Pirate, is well known in Vienna for her stout left hook – also her right hook, which in this case is her best punch for riots and other civic events. Her husband, Lord Windbottom, is portrayed by Barbara's brother, Francis X. Bushwyck (often referred to as Frankenschwyck). He is much less concerned with mere "wimmen's doodads" and may actually be eager to ally with the evil horror that is seeking the Fan ... whenever it's figured out who that is.

Also hot on the trail of the Fan are Fatman and Frottage – respectively played by John and Ethel Barrymore.

Aside from the least awful acting in the film, the Barrymores provide a wonderful bit of shtick that almost makes up for the awfulness of the rest of the film. The Terrycloth Twosome are in the Fatflat in their hotel doing some heavy-duty exposition. John (Fatman) has arranged with a stagehand to ring the Fatphone, which is next to Ethel (Frottage). We don't hear it, of course, but Ethel does, and she's highly annoyed at the interruption of the scene and looks daggers at John when she answers. John smirks, knowing he's upstaged Ethel. She answers the Fatphone, says a few words, and then hand the phone to John while the caption flashes, "It's for you." Big smirk.



Whew! The set-up on that one always takes some effort. The film generally goes downhill from there ... and, in fact, pretty much goes downhill from the opening title. The main characters and their allies, loosely collected as "The Fellowship of The Fan", continue to search for this artifact without uncovering much more

than the occasional cryptic clue. Meanwhile, the Great War continues apace. At least Griffith more or less follows the history books here. The not-unexpected but suspicious death of Friedrich the Surprisingly Unhealthy – and of all other senior Hapsburg heirs – in Fall 1904 unleashes his wife Empress Lucrezia on the Austrians (and, of course, Hungarians, Croats, Transylvanians, Slovaks, Czechs, and all that). In Spring 1905, the Austrian invasion of Italy and capture of Venice gives the Fellowship a chance to follow up a lead indicating that the Fan is in Italy.

The story of the Austrian conquest of Italy, and the deposition of Innocent XIV, has been told many times. Griffith tells it about as badly as anyone. He shows Lucrezia Borgia-Hapsburg's almost unopposed march on Rome in Fall 1905. Ahead of Empress Lucrezia and her minions, the Fellowship of the Ring forges on toward the Holy City. This extended scene, though not terribly historical, is at least one of the least ineffective parts of the flick.

PART 2: THE SCENE

As the Fellowship nears Rome, they can see fevered preparations being made in the face of the onrushing Lucrezian army. They observe messengers running here and there, carrying commands from Innocent XIV to dig trenches, build fortifications, and blow up bridges. They also see Papal armed forces erecting welcome banners, strewing flowers on the great Via Yellow Brick, and setting up grandstands for viewing the ceremony in which Empress Lucrezia would receive the keys to the city. Nobody seems very concerned with the approaching band of strangers. "What?" asks Frottag. "Don't we get any body searches?"



"I wish I could believe you were making a joke," comments the Fellowship's leader, Lady Windbottom. For the Fellowship, she has resumed her real name, Jenny the Pirate. The group had quickly grown to appreciate her stout right hook to something's jaw – and her stout left hook in something's jaw. She is now a vision of buccaneering ferocity: the eye patch, the handkerchief on the head, the peg leg, the metal breastplate and greaves, the rippling musculature, the

big ... yeah. Behind her strides Lord Windbottom, known in some areas by his given name, Malvolio Mugwump, and known in many areas as "Wanted". His elaborate Louis XXI peg leg nicely sets off his crocheted Restoration wig and fur-bordered jump suit.

Next in line are Fatman and Frottage, known through tales of their adventures in penny dreadfuls distributed throughout the Empire and the United States. They are wearing Venetian carnival masks. Fatman's depicts a crudely drawn face, one eye larger than the other. Frottage sports a mask of a Midwestern farm girl. Behind them are some minor companions. They're wearing red shirts, signifying their status as Fellowship cannon fodder. (In fact, by the time the Fellowship reaches Rome, the cannon fodder had been used up anyway, so we can ignore them.)



Entering the great jewel-studded gate of Rome, the Fellowship pauses while Frottage pries loose a number of the emeralds in the ornate Paisley design of gems. It doesn't surprise them that the guards had vanished, leaving an "Out to Lunch" sign scrawled on the interior wall. A little further on they encounter a group of provocatively clad nuns of the Order of Our Lady of Perpetual Indulgence. They seem to be from many nations – especially the green – um, lady – with three eyes and antennae. "Now there," observes Frottage, "is a whore of a different color."

The Fellowship finally arrives at the Royal-Papal Palace in the Vatican – after spending a few moments watching a skywriter on a smoking broom write "**Suvvetlr Durotny**" overhead. At the Palace gate, they try in vain to get the guard looking out a small widow to speak, when they finally discover the head had been detached from the body. When they open the unbarred gate, they find the body decorated with a beautifully rotogravure placard reading "HERETIC".

Inside, the King-Pope's residence is classic chaos. Patriarchs, Cardinals, priests, Cardinal-Priests, Prince-Cardinals, Mafiosi, Senators, nuns, Abesses, Mothers Superior, exotic dancers, Swiss Guards, Privy Secretaries, Big Cheeses, Swiss Cheeses, Provolones, and Mozzarellas (not to mention a stray Cheddar or

Gouda now and then) are running hither and thither, screaming and yelling. Some, thoroughly sloshed on sacramental wine, are chasing boy toys and girl toys (not to mention whazzat? toys) or singing rousing choruses of “Gaudeamus Igatur” or “Adeste Infideles”.



Off to one side the Fellowship notices a set of double doors. Above them is a neon sign that flashes: “Audienza con Il Papa, 5000 Lire”. Over the last 2 words is pasted a sheet of paper reading, “25 Kroner”. Paying the last amount to a nun of the Order of St. Lucre the Filthy sitting by the doors, the Fellowship enters into ... “Wait!” said the nun. “That’s 25 Kroner – each. His Holiness expects a lot of, um, vacation expenses.” They paid, and then, finally entered into ... “Wait!” says the nun. “These are Hungarian Kroner, not Austrian. Pony up!” They all have to borrow from Frottage, who always seems to have plenty of small change. Then, finally, the Fellowship enter into ... “Wait!” says the nun. “Are you foreigners?”

“Of course not,” huffs Lord Windbottom indignantly; “we’re British. Well, those two,” he points at the F’ing Duo, “are Colonials, so I suppose they’re semi-foreigners.”

The nun sneers. “It’s Italy here. You’re all foreigners and that’s 50 Kroner extra.” They pay. “Each.” They paid more. Then at last they enter into ...

...a fairly spacious auditorium. On the stage is an ornate throne surrounded by hundreds of burning candles. At quarter of 11, Royal-Papal Major Domo, Archcardinal Caro Nome announces, “His Royal Holiness, the King of All Italy, Pope Innocent XIV.”

A giant green head appears on the throne, and a thunderous voice announces, “I am Innocent the Great and Infallible; Infallible in Matters of Faith, Infallible in Matters of Morals, Infallible in Matters of Authenticity of Holy Relics. Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!” Just at that moment, the giant green head explodes.

Well, pops, actually ... and standing next to the throne is a grinning Frottage, holding a hat pin.

With a great sigh, Pope Innocent – a handsome and aristocratic man in late middle age – comes from behind the throne and sits in it. He is wearing the famous Black Forest Tiara, which is even then striking the hour of 12 ... *cuckoo ... cuckoo ... cuckoo ... cuckoo ...* all that. “Well, OK,” His Royal Holiness says in a tone of extreme resignation, “which one of you is it that wants a brain?” We shall pass over the embarrassing show of hands.

Next: *Fit the Fourth, “Enter Clark Seder”, or “Whoosh-whoosh, whoosh-whoosh, whoosh-whoosh, ...,” or “Trying to FORCE the Issue”. (Titles may change without notice.)*

Oooooops! And here you thought I had settled on a single source to do my stealing from. Well, if you can’t be creative in your material, there’s also a certain (admittedly small) degree of originality in selection of a source to crib from. After all, JS Bach stole from Tony Vivaldi (and stole, and stole, and....), and Pyotr Chaikovskiy (“Tchaikovsky”) picked Wolfie Mozart’s pocket from time to time, PDQ Bach stole from: (his father JS and all his brothers, Vivaldi, Mozart, Beethoven, Chaikovskiy, Bernstein, the Beatles, Peter Schickele, and on and on and on and on...), and everyone who isn’t poaching off Shakespeare is digging in the Agatha Christie mine ...



OK, I guess we will have a little brain teaser. Question: What is the actual name of Mary Shelley’s monster and why? Send answer to (as usual): catu11us@pacbell.net (that’s “one-one”, not “LL”). Each correct answer will merit a prize guaranteed to be absolutely worthless and possibly personally dangerous.

Hmmm... Mary Shelley. Her stuff’s pretty good and gets plagiarized only a few dozen times a week ...

What Does a 16-Year-Old Supple Chinese Gymnast Have That You Need?

By Mark Zoffel

The answer? Flexibility and staying power!



All too often in a beginners game of Diplomacy, as well as in high level games, whether it be FTF or E-Mail, I am constantly astonished how many games end. For beginners it is somewhat understandable, as many don't know what they have gotten themselves into, and just throw up their hands and walk away after 5 hours of mental torture, or will vote for anything brought up. I accept their response as adequate. For those intermediate or advanced, I call it lack of flexibility and staying power. This article will be the first of many that discusses what makes a good Dip player, both Strategically, Tactically, and Diplomatically, better.

Playing Diplomacy requires many skills other than knowing how and where to move, persuading people to go along with your ideas, etc., etc.. Many players become good players due to their understanding of the correct moves to make, the best alliances to form, and the short and long term implications of each move turn by turn. Many play this way game after game, year after year, and become good, sometimes great. My object in this article is to try and add the word flexibility to one's arsenal as well as a never give up attitude when playing. There are exceptions, but in general I find too many good to great players lacking in these two very important parts of the game of Diplomacy.

Example #1-Actual game

World Class Board filled with world champions and the best minds in the game. Play begins with everyone doing what they do best: discussion, observations, and

strategy. Fast forward 4 hours; 3 players have pulled out in front from a unit count, but everyone is still playing and having a chance to win. The player playing Germany is down to 2 centers, but is still fighting tooth and nail to achieve his goal. He played that way until the end. He showed a flexibility to change his long term goals of winning, to the short term goals of surviving, then the possibility to go back to his long term goals. He also showed true grit (John Wayne style) toward the game, as it was going to be a long haul, and his chances were low. Across the board in Turkey, another quality and distinguished player down to three centers, has mentally given up and begun to talk with another eastern power, also down to three units, about everything but Diplomacy and this game. This wasn't tactics by either player, but simply throwing in the towel. What happened? Their plans and goals at some point became in their minds, unattainable. Their problem? The flexibility to change their plans and the lack of staying power to stick it out.

This scenario plays itself out over and over again throughout the hobby, and if players would learn to come into the game with an open mind and the flexibility to change their play throughout the game, their overall success rate would increase...especially when combined with the fortitude to fight on to the end, even when the outcome looks unchanging or hopeless. The best gamblers in Vegas win a little over 50% of the time, depending on their game. The temperature of water becoming steam is 212 degrees. At 211 nothing. At 212 Steam. One degree more. In Diplomacy, giving yourself that last percent will often change the outcome of the game, so why not do it? That is what the best of the best do and should be a road map for the rest of us, as you never know what will happen unless you try. Nothing ventured nothing gained. Preparing yourself for this doesn't just happen at the point of decision, but can be consciously thought about prior to beginning the game, and even prior to showing up for the game. Make it apart of your overall strategy, and that one time it works and you turn a game around that you and others thought unchangeable in its outcome, you will feel more accomplishment than any mere win, and the knowledge that you have attained the highest level of play.

Next edition: Players who are overrated, and why.

Mark Zoffel is the Diplomacy World Strategy & Tactics Editor.

Bangor 2008 – The North American DipCon That Wasn't

By Jim-Bob Burgess

I have been playing Diplomacy for nearly 40 years now, and I have been going to Diplomacy conventions for nearly 30. I am not one of the hobby's more consistent FTF travelers, but I have been to Diplomacy conventions in at least seven states (from what quickly comes to mind) in the US, as well as conventions in the UK and France in four different decades. I have seen a lot of pain and hurt but also immense fun and joys at these events. One of the things in this hobby I like to think I can do, having seen so much, is to try to help us learn from mistakes and keep the fun growing and crowding out where we seem to have an amazing capacity to hurt each other and make mistakes. To the extent I was involved and engaged in this particular sad story, I want to document what happened to the best of my ability, in hopes that we (speaking collectively) will not allow this sort of thing to happen again. Yet, I am convinced that NO story in the hobby ever will have quite the levels of irony that this one has. Come along with me and see what you think. Some of it might be tedious, but I want to do all I can to make this article a one stop shop for how the hobby as a whole engaged this event. I'm sure Doug will edit me viciously if it is too long. They call it Diplomacy, but are we diplomats? Occasionally...



Like most of us, I have a busy life into which I try to fit my favorite hobby. I'd love to go to more Diplomacy conventions, but I have two jobs, two houses, two cars, two wives.... no check that, one wife, Charlotte, but she seems like two wives sometimes. When I heard that Bangor had been selected to host the 2008 DipCon, given that one of those houses is in Maine, only a few hours from Bangor, I resolved that I would take two weeks of vacation sandwiching the tournament and would go. I also decided to try to get my dear friend Don Williams to come, as he had been asking to visit my Maine lake camp again and combining the two activities seemed to make sense. Since Don's divorce, he had been making an effort to go to more tournaments and whip his FTF game up into tournament winning shape. After some of my exploits at previous DipCons (World and North American) assisting tournament winners such as Vincent Carry and Simon Bouton, I started joking to Don how he would surely win DipCon 41 in Bangor, with

my eminent assistance and wide experience as a game thrower. I had met tournament organizer David Webster once at the Boston Massacre in Boston, and had one of those eerie feelings about him, though I liked his son Peyton. At this time, the only other thing I knew about the bids was this statement that we published in *DW* by Matt Shields about the previous DipCon in Vancouver:

"The first was a proposal to host by HuskyCon on Long Island in New York. The second was a proposal that DipCon be held at the University of Maine in Bangor. There were obvious merits to both proposals, and in most years I suspect either bid would have won easily over most others. In this case, since a choice had to be made, Bangor was selected largely as an effort to incorporate into the mainstream North American hobby an apparently large group of Diplomacy players who have up until now remained largely unknown outside of New England."

I recall thinking at that time that I didn't really get a sense from David and Peyton about this "apparently large group of Diplomacy players" and recall being surprised when I met David at Boston Massacre that he didn't know any of the Maine players that I knew who liked to play FTF, like Tim Goodwin or John Reuter, but hey, John and Tim were more in Southern Maine, and Bangor really is far away from nearly everything, so what did I know? I began to communicate with David Webster in November of 2007 about the event (first getting straight the date so I could plan to take the correct two weeks off from work the following summer and make plans with Don Williams) and also asking about "Maine group FTF events". I really did NOT know at the time that David had pressed in his Vancouver bid that they did lots of FTF get-togethers, but Rick Desper and I and others engaged him in discussion about a possible event before the end of 2007. Rick was going to be in Maine in mid-December and I thought if I could get together with Rick and come up and meet some of the Maine diplomats, I might make the trek. I like to try to check out my summer house in Limington during the winter when I can, and this might have been a good time before the snow got too deep.

I was getting excited by now and started to try to talk up the Bangor (actually Orono, since it was at the University of Maine campus, but at this time that also was unclear to me, perhaps not to others) event and Dave Webster was writing friendly notes to the MADip yahoogroup to keep us and the event on the radar screen. I remember VERY distinctly when I first began to wonder what really was going on. Though as I said, I was first confused

about the date, Dave Webster quickly corrected me to the correct weekend, but at the end of November Edi Birsan started a discussion E-Mail that also included Steve Cooley and Buz Eddy who eventually came to Bangor and a number of people who did not. I don't know what came before this, but presume I was added to it because I was being very public about planning to go and helping to organize people to go. This discussion was around those who were planning frequent flier trips and needed to know when the games were going to start. Dave responded to me, and only to me, after I chimed in that I might be able to help people convoy in for the event, that the start time would be 5PM on Thursday, July 24th. But this response did not come for two full months, at the end of January. It was this two month delay in any information, over the holidays, that I think raised the most concerns among the hobby as a whole regarding the event. David has said repeatedly that he had an injury during this time and that he was an accountant and was going to be very busy until April 15th. The proposed mid-December get-together with Rick Desper never happened, Edi got very upset when his attempt to use frequent flier miles fell through, and I believe that it was during this period, six months before the event, that things went horribly wrong. Even that single E-Mail to me in late January told me nothing about (a) where the event actually was going to be held precisely; (b) what the scoring system or ground rules for the tournament were going to be; or (c) anything about how we were going to publicize this. Jim O'Kelley (to my knowledge) was the first to raise questions about what "Plan B" was if Bangor fell through, he did this at the end of December. I'll come back to this, but I think this is the point where some steps needed to have been taken, with some deadlines for arrangements, in order to have the event be DipCon. It needs to be clear to everyone, David Webster had every right to run a tournament at the end of July any way he wanted to, but if it were to be DipCon, a North American wide event, we needed answers to (a), (b), and (c) by some deadline. The actions taken too late could have been the model.



The next phase of concerns arose with me starting at that point in discussion with Doug Kent, *DW's* Lead Editor about how we were going to print information about DipCon. We wanted to do publicity for Dave, but

he was not cooperating. We tried to be as diplomatic and conciliatory as we could be in this. But we saw two key places that needed to have DipCon publicity, the Pouch FTF tournament list and our *DW* by our April 1st deadline for the Spring issue. For whatever reason, David never, ever, acknowledged to me in any forum that he ever accepted the existence and usefulness of the FTF tournament list. Any time I mentioned it (including volunteering to place the announcement myself) that E-Mail was ignored. As I told Edi Birsan, Dave Maletsky, and others repeatedly all through the spring, David did this repeatedly by omission, he never acknowledged the existence of the Pouch FTF list. Finally, Doug and I found that he was accepting of the idea that DipCon should be publicized in *DW*, and we did get enough information from David by April 2, 2008 to at least put a publicity note in the Spring *DW*. Whereas by this point David Webster was not too happy with some of the other people pressuring him, Doug and I managed to coordinate our two-timing and get something approaching an information flow started, but it was too late for many, and as I said, it never made it in the Pouch list. We were so desperate for organizing information, that in retrospect I realized that I also should have been worried about the fact that I had precisely ZERO information about tournament rules and the scoring system. But I just started engaging him on what he was willing to engage on. Perhaps this is a lesson on Diplomacy in general? My next neat trick was that David Webster and I both are gmail users and I can see when he is logged into gmail (as I write this sentence he is logged in). This allowed me to see (since I am on line way too much) that he logged on very, very frequently. He must have figured out that I started E-mailing him just as he would log on. Slowly but surely these strategies extracted that the event would take place on the University of Maine at Orono campus, that we would have dorm rooms ready to stay in (and I knew that hotel rooms would be quite inconvenient, so we would want to use the dorm rooms), and that there would be four rounds starting on Thursday night, followed by a Sunday team round. It seemed confusing, as it seemed that the team round would be completely separate, but hey, at least I now thought I knew what was going to happen.

Next pre-event issue, yes, there are more, was regarding prizes from Hasbro/Wizards of the Coast. At this same time this spring, Hasbro/Wizards of the Coast were preparing to release the new edition of Diplomacy and Edi Birsan had done a great job of engaging the publicity department in the idea that the FTF tournament circuit was a key inroad into the hobby. I was identified as the official contact for TempleCon (Providence in February, which I run, the games arrived too late for that, so I've saved some for February 2009), Boston Massacre (June 2008), and the Bangor DipCon. I also tried to discuss this with David Webster repeatedly over this period and again learned that it was one of the issues that guaranteed an E-Mail non-response since he would not acknowledge that I was bringing these game

awards (not just the new Diplomacy, but also other games). Again, to get the information I really needed, I dropped that question from my E-Mails as well. Then, the Massacre itself came up. Melissa Call had to have it (to meet other desires and needs) on a weekend when I had to fly out first thing Sunday morning to a professional conference in my field. I had thought I would play on Saturday, but ended up running late with my conference presentation and couldn't go on Saturday and was working on it instead. I had the games for Mel though. So Mel was having a barbeque for early arrivals on Friday night at her condo and I went by to drop off the games and talk. We talked for awhile about how Dave Webster was coming down for the event and would tell people more about DipCon, I reminded Mel that I also had games for Dave too. But I didn't stay. For whatever reason, I heard nothing about what happened at Boston Massacre regarding David Webster's presentation on what was going to go on at DipCon. Others will have to speak to the record on that, but I gather he did not make people feel warm and comfortable that he had all items under control. Some people present resolved not to come to Bangor at that point. This seems to me to have been another key decision point, an opportunity passed up in retrospect. If "the hobby" wasn't going to come, then it really wasn't going to be DipCon, was it? Knowing me, even if it wasn't DipCon, I already had made the arrangements; Don Williams was coming, so I would have gone. It also seems that other people who had plane tickets were locked in (though at least one person ripped up plane tickets rather than attend). But to finish the "free games story", I brought the free games to Bangor, showed them to attendees and to David Webster, and he told me I could not distribute them officially at the DipCon, but only as a *DW* activity. That was not the arrangement I (or Edi) had with Hasbro/Wizards of the Coast since it was not supposed to be *DW* publicity but DipCon publicity, so I took them back and will distribute them at other events next year. This is one of the many, many bizarre things that happened at the event, and I actually am finally about to get to the event itself, which I will tell more or less chronologically.



The first stop in my late July tour of northern New England airports began at Manchester, NH on Wednesday, July 23rd. Don Williams flew in from California in the early evening and I was there to pick him up. I had never directly driven from Manchester to Limington, ME, where my lakeside camp is, before. And it was getting dark. I think Don thought I was driving like a crazy person, we got off my MapQuest directions and rather than stop (hey, I am male!) I used my excellent sense of direction and rough understanding of the road patterns in that part of the country (knowing eventually I would run into a road I knew) to drive around back roads at that high rate of speed that one does in northern New England to get us back on track. Eventually, we were back on roads that I knew. I could claim Don was a poor navigator, but part of it was that usual problem with MapQuest, there was construction going on and the directions did not entirely make sense any more. It was dark, but I think Don was getting pretty pale and worried. But, hey, I wasn't, it was an adventure, and the first of many such adventures to come in the weekend. In the end, we lost less than half an hour from the diversion. On Thursday, we headed out from Limington toward Bangor. We were in touch with Steve Cooley, who was driving separately. We had talked about convoying in some way, dropping a car and taking only one all the way to Bangor, but we couldn't work out a way that we all felt comfortable with and didn't add too much time to our trip. As events would play out, it was quite fortuitous that Steve and I both had our cars in Orono. I'd been to Bangor many times before, though never to Orono and the University of Maine; however, there were no problems with the directions once I got there. I had talked to the campus housing director at Orono the week before trying to resolve the various issues regarding reservations (yes, that was also a problem and most of us registered after "the deadline"), and had a campus map, it was that last step of finding where we actually were supposed to be that was the only piece that was at all problematic. No Bangoreans (as we all came to call them) came to meet us there. Every other DipCon I had been to had some organizer around to help, but this wasn't that serious. We were all in suites; Don and I were in a suite that also had Steve Cooley and Edi Birsan. All our suites were adjacent and we quickly hooked up with each other.

As above, the games were supposed to start at 5PM, so I think it was Buz Eddy, Steve, Don, Edi and I who headed over to the main student union where the games were around 4:30 or so. This is where things began to get really strange. There were a host of people milling around as one usually finds at the beginning of a tournament, beautiful facilities (you can see them on David Webster's web site, www.dipcon41.com, which presently is up and through Google caching should be available for many years to come), lots of boards set up in at least three rooms, and David with his computer and his registrar (she was a paid employee, I believe, I'm not sure by whom). I think I was the first one to pay the

registration fee as I greeted David and had the discussion about the game awards. Edi and I started introducing ourselves around and were rather surprised to be finding that many of the people gathered had never played Diplomacy before. Edi and I are nothing if not ambassadors for the game, so as we waited for some more direction, I had brought copies of Edi's teaching guide for the game (they were trying to struggle through the rulebook, which is NOT the way to learn or teach the game!), which I passed out. As I mentioned there were three rooms and people were spread out across the rooms, so as I moved around, the group that I was teaching suddenly had disappeared. One of the new people I had met who HAD played the game before was a retired Greek Orthodox priest named Michael Schneider, who I will call Father Mike from now on. Father Mike was with this group. I went down the hall, and finally found them in a lounge. Again, I talked to them some about the game, tried to convince them how much fun they would have, it was a really diverse group, some students, some much older people, some women, some men, but these 10-12 people seemed to be eager to learn to play and be in the tournament. After Father Mike and I talked some more about the game and the rules, I went back down the hall to find Edi and tell him what was going on. When I came back, Father Mike was leading them again out of the building. I asked Father Mike where they were going. He said, "to another building" and walked away. Since I didn't know what was up, I didn't want to follow them, so I went back to the main event. A little while later, Father Mike came back by himself, but then the games were starting. I never saw any of these people again. Father Mike and I did compare notes a few weeks later about this. He agreed that this was also damned peculiar. He said that David Webster asked him to teach them the game (Father Mike was new to all of this tournament-wise and personality-wise) and then kept telling him to move to find someplace "quieter" (which sounds to me like away from me and Edi). David seemed to Father Mike more interested in establishing a U. of Maine Diplomacy club for later, not to have these people play in the tournament, and he got all their names and contact info. and gave it to David. Father Mike was worried that David was trying to get rid of him, but since we were quite delayed getting started he was back in plenty of time, as I noted. This was the beginning though of the surrealness of the whole thing. Father Mike was quite a character; he was wearing a giant cross, and had an expansive personality not unlike Andy Bartalone. I liked him a lot, even though he got put in the middle of this whole thing as it developed, neither being a Bangorean (one of the small group of David's friends and relatives) nor a traveler. Mike also was supposed to write his own article for this issue, but as of this writing, has not. I hope I get to play with him again.

OK, now we finally get to some actual PLAY! David finally got us together for two boards, just two boards, in the first round. To get 14 players, David had to play.

None of us thought anything of this since all of us Tournament Directors have played to play out an even set of boards. It also was unusual that there were no written tournament rules, none at all. If you look at the Bangor web page, there is a set of rules:

Rules & Scoring: The Scoring system will be Plus Ten. Each player receives 1 point for each supply center held at the end of the game. The player with the most supply centers receives a 10 point bonus. If there is a tie between two or more players for the most supply centers no bonus is awarded. In the event that one player has achieved a solo victory, 18 supply centers, he receives 55 points and all other players in the game receive 0 points. Tournament placement is determined by adding all of the board results. All rounds count. Results are not posted during the tournament.

Essentially, this is all David told us, except where and when the remaining rounds would be. Someone asked a question about the Sunday team round, David said that would NOT count for the individual tournament, only by team, but he didn't say how teams would work. With two boards, some of us wondered aloud how teams would work anyway when we got to Sunday.

I drew Germany for the first round, with David's son Peyton in France as the only Bangorean in the game (note that in this first game, it really did appear to be completely random to me, except that Edi Birsan was Austria, starting a tendency for someone who seemed to need to be beaten down always was placed in Austria). Don Williams was in Italy, Steve Cooley was in Russia, Brian Shelden was in Turkey, and Chris Campbell was in England, travelers all. I was immediately distracted by Don and I being in the Germany/Italy positions. This didn't fool many people, but we instantly went into the Italian Oktoberfest that I've written about in the Pouch and that Don and I are famous for. It would have been better to play against type, but I had perhaps my first and only uncontrollable gigglefest of the tournament with Don out on the balcony realizing that we could do it. But playing Austria doesn't faze Edi Birsan and Brian and Don quickly felt the knives as Edi methodically and deliberately dominated the board as only he can do. Although we had no set time limit, except that we had to be out of the building by 1AM I think, in 1906, we called a draw with Edi at 11 centers and the lead, 21 points by the system in play. Although the system said results would not be posted, David also was not ready with game sheets, so Buz Eddy provided them. But I kept records separately and had a full game report that I kept. I intended to do the same thing for the other games, but as the situation deteriorated, I abandoned this, though the scoring system was so trivially simple that it was easy to keep track of points in your head. The other important thing about this first game is that Peyton made

an order writing error (now let's be clear, he had played in tournament play at Boston Massacre and perhaps was the most experienced of the Bangorians, so he really should have figured this out by now, but hadn't) and was called on it. David did come over and rule on it, even though it was his son involved. In the grand scheme of things, this was not a big issue (even though it hurt my position), but it was part of a pattern that was developing where David clearly thought he had to protect the Bangorians from us turbophreak DipConites. It's hard to be a Tournament Director, and this was David's first big experience, despite his previous claims in winning the bid. That's why you have a good set of written rules to help you appear not to be flying by the seat of your pants. Other than a few big picture organization issues (like having all the games set up, having three giant rooms to play in where we easily could have handled 150 players, and some of the special events that were to come) there were a lot of basics that just weren't thought out.



Like food. We managed to reconvene on Friday morning in a reasonably organized way. But food was a general issue at the convention; it should be noted that David surely lost huge amounts of money on the tournament. At some points he did provide some food out of his own pocket to get around the fact that nothing was open on campus. One of the mornings I got up before everyone else, might have been that Friday, I drove all the way to Old Town, the next town over to find a place where I could get some breakfast pastries and brought some back for Don and Edi. None of this was easy; the food venue at Memorial Union (which you can see on the web page) had this annoying habit of closing down early, since it was summer. I never managed to get any food from it at all. Unlike all the Brit conventions I've been to at universities where I stayed in the dorm, there wasn't even bad dorm food to eat. Now, Friday's day game had another special feature that I long to see someday, no sign of it yet though. David's sense of balance in organizing everything was way off, as he

clearly spent lots of money and time on this. He had procured the campus TV studio, and seven players, ALL travelers, were sent over to the studio to play their Round 2 Friday morning game. I talked to the TV director afterward when I went to find him after our game was over (and theirs was already over as well). He seemed like a really good guy, who knew his business, but he also had some problems with David's organizational skills and was not especially happy at that moment. Carl Ellis topped this board in the extreme heat of the intense TV lights, as Edi was a target and was eliminated. Carl got into this game in the first place, I am sure, by topping his board in Round 1. Carl and Chris Campbell drove over from Vermont at the last minute, and didn't seem to be expected or known by David, though he must have met both of them at Boston Massacres. Meanwhile, on Board 2, Chris and I were in Russia/Turkey. We had four Bangoreans, including the Tournament Director in France, and had David's good friend Dennis Hutchins in Germany, Jake Massey in England and Calvin Patterson (a really mature 12 year old!) in Italy. Father Mike was in Austria. The Bangoreans started out with a full all-out alliance, supposedly agreed upon at the very beginning as Dennis eventually admitted to me, through 1902. This included ceding Belgium and Holland to France. Germany opened all-out on Chris in Russia. Father Mike quickly joined Calvin and Chris and I faced the whole board. I sharpened up all my best tactical skills and deflected attack after attack after attack. But David Webster just continued to grow. Finally, after Germany was nearly out, Jake was on the rocks with all his units in Scandinavia/St.Pete, I stopped the whole board after a set of moves were adjudicated and said, "Look, we can all keep going this way, but David Webster is just going to get an 18 center win, that means we all get zero and since David is TD and his score doesn't count, this is as if we didn't play the game at all." But David said, "Wait a minute, my score does too count." I was stunned. But time was a wasting, so I tried to negotiate on, but no one else was willing to oppose David at all. Father Mike and Calvin kept coming at me and I kept fending them off, but David walked into 18 centers in one of the easiest wins I've ever seen, and I've seen a lot of them. I was incredulous. Edi and I (Edi having been eliminated from the TV studio game) asked David again and he insisted it was his tournament and his score counted. He told us, well, Mel Call plays in her own tournaments and her score counts. I would note for the record that in the Boston Massacre that David had just attended, Mel listed herself as finishing 15th, one place ahead of David Webster at 16th. Mel, of course, would never have tried to win her own tournament and if she had finished first would not have taken home the winning trophy, but it is only fair to note that with the limited experience that David had, I don't think he thought it was as unreasonable as we all did. Also, we all started to wonder about the board draws, David getting France, surrounded by all his friends, with us on the other side of the board. Plus a game-starting automatic alliance that

ensured his solo.

Edi and I called the remaining travelers, who had gone out for dinner; we had to wait until they returned (late) in order to start the evening round. We dramatically told them to sit down and then informed them that David got the solo and was playing in the tournament. I wasn't there, but Don Williams and Steve Cooley and Brian Shelden and Chris Martin got themselves worked up and came back in a very bad mood. Steve in particular was beside himself. He and I walked up and down the corridor and talked as Steve said he wanted to get in his car and drive home. I told him we needed him to get two boards, Dennis Hutchins had gone home and Rick Desper had arrived, but we still had just 14. Steve had had it, after being baked under the TV lights and had a family at home that would be happier if he left. He didn't care about the room (which he had already paid for through the weekend). So he left, and Rick Desper agreed to play on both boards so that we could go on. Round 3 might still have been random, though debates are possible. David Webster was on a board with all travelers. I was in Russia on the other board with Don Williams in Turkey. We again attempted to ally and were much more successful, I topped the board with 11 centers. Meanwhile, Chris Martin was engaged. And he worked with people on the other board to eliminate David Webster and claim his own 18 center victory.



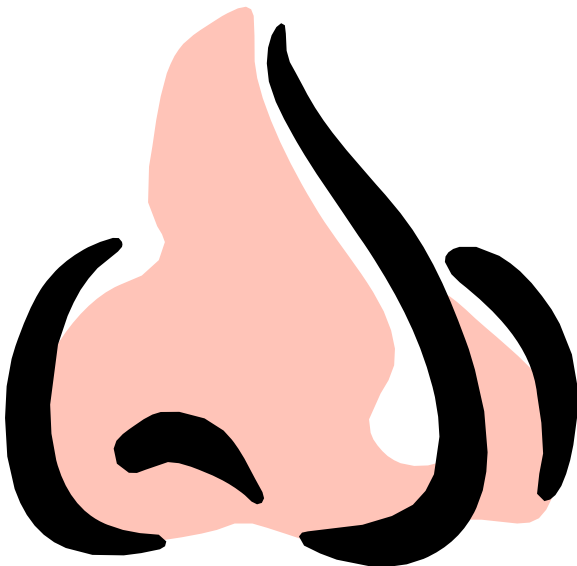
So we went into the fourth and final round with Chris ahead by five points (though results were not published, I knew precisely where Chris was in the standings, and presume Chris knew as well). Now, in another really interesting idea, if not completely well thought out, we were off to Fort Knox State Park (no, not THAT Fort Knox) across the Penobscot River from Bucksport (which is where David Webster actually lives). For Maine, this isn't far, but it is about 30-40 miles from Orono. We split people up among cars and drove down on Saturday to find the game. We were set up outside the bathrooms and one of the ranger booths. The fort itself is a neat tourist site (which I've visited a couple of times), but we really didn't have time to actually go up there (we were down to the side of the main fort). It was a brilliant sunny day, which actually was somewhat painful (I finally moved the boards into the shade of the

building after about 1902).

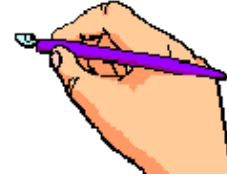
And here was the final straw. I topped the board the night before, and found myself in Austria, with six of the other travelers, but Chris Martin and Brian Shelden (along with Father Mike) were on one of the other two boards. For the first time, we finally had three boards. David Webster brought his whole family, plus an ex-game store owner named Tom Constantine, who David appointed to be Tournament Director for the day (this didn't really make anyone feel better when we saw the full draws). Tom was also playing, to make 21 players, he played on a board with the rest of David Webster's family. While David had his laptop up at UMaine, no one saw the laptop at Fort Knox and what Tom did as TD was not clear. Where did our board draw come from? (I had some mathematical assistance from Math PhD Rick Desper to Economics PhD Jim-Bob here). If we postulate that Chris is going to be a player on one board and do not do anything about country selection (he was, of course.... Austria), and take out Tom and those other six local Bangoreans, we had four Bangoreans left (including David) plus Father Mike. The odds that all four Bangoreans were on that one board is $\frac{6}{13} * \frac{5}{12} * \frac{4}{11} * \frac{3}{10}$. That's a little over 2% at .020979. Now, one needs to be careful with probabilities since ANY arrangement of players will itself be very rare. But David and all three of his friends were on that board, and so was Chris. Plus Chris was Austria, the designated country for "leaders", except for David Webster, who never played Austria. Our seven player traveler board played what I would call a regular game until we watched more of what was happening on the board with the four Bangoreans, Father Mike, and Chris and Brian. Chris and Brian were both taken out completely, while Father Mike topped the board with 14 and David Webster had 12. That was 7 points more than David needed to win the tournament. On our board, we had had enough. We set up a Smyrna to St.Petersburg convoy using ALL seven players on the board and then called it with a board topping for Don Williams. So we ended laughing hysterically. It really was fun in that way that only such silly orders can be, and it gave us some internal dignity back. But Chris and Brian were as angry as I've ever seen them.



We went back to Bangor after this. Even though David Webster had scheduled an event with a martial arts fighter named Garth Krane there in Bangor, we did not go. Instead, Edi Birsan, Buz Eddy, Don Williams and I went to find a seafood restaurant in downtown Bangor. This was actually somewhat difficult (possibly partly because I wasn't so good at getting and executing the various directions that we got – part of a continuing theme of being lost???), but we finally found a perfectly wonderful restaurant and had a great meal. Buz in particular said it was the most fun he had had all weekend. Then we went back to UMaine and hooked up with the other travelers. Carl Ellis, Buz Eddy, and Chris Campbell decided to stay. But the rest of us had had it, we were gone. Continuing my trip through northern New England airports, I drove Edi Birsan to a room at the hotel at the Bangor airport, Edi chose to stay in a hotel all by himself at the airport rather than return. Don and I went back to my Maine camp in Limington and I couldn't leave Rick Desper, Brian Shelden, and Chris Martin stranded, so I invited them back to my house. I think Rick will probably have written about that in his article elsewhere and his perspective will be better and more entertaining than mine. My wife has now forgiven me, but having five Diplomacy players descend on the house on Sunday led her and our friend Marianne to head back home to Rhode Island a little earlier than they had originally intended. Charlotte made a wonderful chili before she left and some cornbread that we ate for dinner in the midst of playing two games of Puerto Rico. Then, on Monday, I drove Rick Desper to the Portland airport (yes, hit another airport!!!) to catch his flight (Chris and Brian had a really early flight and a rental car, so they got up while I was still asleep and left) and we also spent a little while in the Old Port of downtown Portland. Don stayed around another day and then I drove him back to the Manchester airport. And that was it, completing miles and miles of driving people around and the most surreal weekend in the hobby that I've ever had.



Except for the aftermath... On July 30, 2008, after a history-making conference call with forty or so hobby members on it, the Bangor DipCon was stripped of the DipCon status by the NADF and DipCon was assigned to Tempest, upcoming on the Columbus Day weekend. I hope that David Webster will be telling his story next to mine and you can see what you think. As of this writing, he says he still is going to do so.



But David Webster for sure failed the sniff test of the appearance of impropriety in running this tournament. He sold the DipCon society meeting a bill of goods in claiming he had a large Diplomacy playing community up in Bangor to bring DipCon to. Clearly that was not the case. He spent lots of real money trying to do this, there were many large trophies, food costs, TV production costs, etc. that were NOT recouped from the tiny turnout. The hobby has no business sending DipCon to these developmental locations, I am proposing a new way of doing this to the DipCon Society; we need to have someone practice before they host DipCon. Some people have the good sense not to try to birth a DipCon from nothing, but others do not. They need to be protected from themselves. Like most such situations, I think David Webster deceived people, but it started when he came to Boston Massacre the previous year and listened to us complain about the difficulty in finding good locations for Diplomacy conventions. He thought he could help and "do it right". I'm convinced that at the beginning he had all of the best intentions in doing so. Yet, like us all, real life intervened and he needed to REALLY do the hard work of what he claimed to the Vancouver DipCon he had already done, build up a tournament from scratch. Plus I'm sure that his friends were telling him that they were "afraid to play with us" straight up and that was some of the reason for the "strange board draws". This also is a lesson not to be missed, do we want a Grand Prix that is played with a VERY small number of traveling players where locals are afraid to come out and join us? That would be wrong too. David also wanted to do something good, but it turned out all wrong. And that's sad. Read this sad story, but keep coming to tournaments, try to help TDs run better tournaments, and try to bring this hobby to more people. That's what I'm committed to. Come to my tournament in Providence, RI, TempleCon in February. I'm going to write more about that in the next issue of *DW*.

Jim Burgess is the co-editor of Diplomacy World, and one of my hobby toadies.

Fighting SUNS

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[This game begins with a lengthy discussion of the "science" involved, then the rules. At the end are some design comments, such as I can make about 25 years after I designed the game.]

This game depicts warfare in a not-too-distant future. Humanity has colonized several stellar systems. Internal disorders have led to the destruction of all useful worlds in the Solar System, and to the partial de-civilization of the colony worlds. Where sufficient natural resources are obtainable within a system, not yet exhausted by intensive use, faster-than-light (FTL) travel has been re-established on a practical basis. (The knowledge was never lost, but the technology for FTL ships was temporarily beyond the production capabilities of any system.) In other systems, where resources are not available, industrial installations still exist but no government remains with the coherence necessary to resist interstellar invasion. In several relatively recently colonized systems industry is still limited but resources are ample. The governments of the older systems, lacking sufficient resources at home to operate all the available industry, and foreseeing the exhaustion of the remaining resources in the near future, plan to gain control of other systems which possess raw materials in abundance. Each player controls one of these expanding nation-systems.

FTL travel can be accomplished only by massive objects, traveling from a planet in one system to a planet in another. The only way to enter or come out of FTL drive is with the aid of a planetary mass. A huge mass such as a star severely interferes with the drive. As a result, fleets typically consist of large spaceships (10+ miles in diameter) which never descend to a world's surface. Only the outer planets of a system may be reached by FTL travel, owing to the sun's interference closer in.

These ships travel within a system using an anti-gravity device which also requires large (planet-size) masses to react against. Thus ships may only travel between planets, not directly deep in interplanetary space.

In combat, ships project fields (related to the gravity/anti-gravity propulsion units), an entire fleet projecting a single integrated field. The size of a fleet is naturally determined by the number of ships which can orbit a world while projecting a field, without forcing some ships so far away that they are unable to use the normal space drive. Fleets on nearby worlds may reinforce the field projection of a fleet. Ships are seldom destroyed; instead they are forced to go into drive to retreat to a nearby planet. If other fleets occupy all planets within range, the fleet is forced into interplanetary space, where it

becomes a drifting target for heavy missiles and is destroyed. Of course, the technology permitting such huge ships to move without a tie to planets exists, but it is so expensive that the necessary units are not in production, nor would it be efficient in the long run to put such propulsive units on the great ships.

The only defense against space fleets is the very large and expensive planetary defense installation, including orbital and planet-based components. Because propulsion units need not be included, these are cheaper than space fleets. Planets are otherwise defenseless against space fleets and therefore routinely surrender to them without resistance. The human race, having seen the Solar System destroyed, has adopted a form of limited warfare similar to that known in Europe c. 1650-1750. Fleets are capable of "burning off" planets; while no fleet is likely to do such a thing, planets nevertheless surrender when faced with an orbiting enemy.

Teleportation between worlds and systems is known, but only raw materials can be teleported without harm. Humans die; electronic components (disassembled spaceships, for example) are irreparably damaged.

The Rules.

The rules of Diplomacy apply except as follows.

1. Definitions.

A) Stellar system: a group of planets surrounding a star, separated from other systems on the hex sheet by a heavy black line. Planets are identified by the first letter of the system name and the number beside the planet (A5, B2, etc.). There are eleven stellar systems in the game.

B) Fleet: the space fleet, which acts as a normal army in *Diplomacy* except as stated below.

C) In-system: the area one or two hexes from the sun of a stellar system. In-system planets are separated from out-system worlds by black lines, and are identified by one-figure numbers.

D) Out-system: the area more than two hexes distant from the sun of a stellar system; out-system worlds are separated from the inner system by black lines, and are identified by two-figure numbers.

E) Hyperjump: movement between one stellar system and another "connected" to it (within range), permitted only between outsystem planets of different systems.

F) Industrial planet: a planet worth one industrial unit per year.

G) Raw materials planet: a planet worth one raw materials unit per year.

H) Industrial-raw materials planet: a planet worth one industrial unit and one raw materials unit per year.

I) Barren planet: a planet worth no industrial or raw materials units, but used for movement of fleets.

J) Sun: the star-sun of each system -- impassable and worth nothing in game terms.

2. Economics.

The economic base of this variant is the combination of industry units (I) and raw materials units (R). Each pair of I+R a player owns at the end of a game year entitles him to one and a half supply points. There are no supply centers as such. Extra I without corresponding R are worthless and may not be accumulated (saved). Extra R without corresponding I are worthless but may be accumulated to be used in a later year when more I are available. Supply points themselves may not be accumulated. Each fleet costs one supply point per year to maintain, and each planetary defense requires one half supply point per year.

3. Gifts.

A player may give or loan raw materials, but not industry, to another player. No agreement made in connection with the transfer is binding, that is, transfers are at the player's risk. The order is written as, e.g., "transfer 2R to Becrux".

4. Depletion of Resources.

In Spring 5005, the in-system raw materials worlds of each home system (i.e. A5, B5, C5, D5, E5) become barren worlds. In Spring 5009 the industrial-raw materials worlds of systems F, G, and H (i.e., F1, G1, H1) become industry-only planets.

5. Building.

Fleets and planetary defenses (D) may be built on any owned industrial planet subject to usual restrictions (e.g. only one F per planet, only one D per planet, though an F and D may be on the same planet).

6. Beginning.

The game begins with a Fall 5000 building session. Each of the five players, Arcturus, Becrux, Capella, Deneb, and Eltanin, begins with four I worlds and three R worlds. The extra I world is worthless, so total supply

points are three times one and a half, or four and a half. These may be used to place units on any planets in the home system, except that D may not be placed on out-system planets. This is the only opportunity to build units on non-industrial planets. For example, Arcturus might start with F All, F A15, F A12, and D A5.

7. Neutral governments.

F1, G1, and H1 are each occupied by a fleet in Civil Disorder at the start of the game. As usual with Civil Disorder units, these fleets may be supported in place but are eliminated if dislodged. They represent the forces of relatively "young" colonies.



8. Movement.

Fleets may hyperjump from one system to another using FTL drive, or move between planets within a system using the normal space drive.

A) Within a stellar system, a fleet may move one or two hexes from planet to planet. It may not end its move in any non-planet hex. The possible moves are indicated by double lines connecting planets. Note that movement directly through a sun is not possible (thus there is no connection between G3 and G4, for example).

B) Faster than light travel (hyperjumping) is possible only between out-system planets of different systems. A hyperjump may be **supported only** by a fleet able to move to the destination planet by **normal** means. Consequently, if a fleet is hyperjumping to a system where no friendly fleets are present when the move begins, it is impossible for the fleet to gain any support, no matter how many friendly fleets are able to hyperjump to the same planet.

Moreover, if fleets attempt to trade places through hyperjumps they **do not** stand off each other as they would in standard Diplomacy.

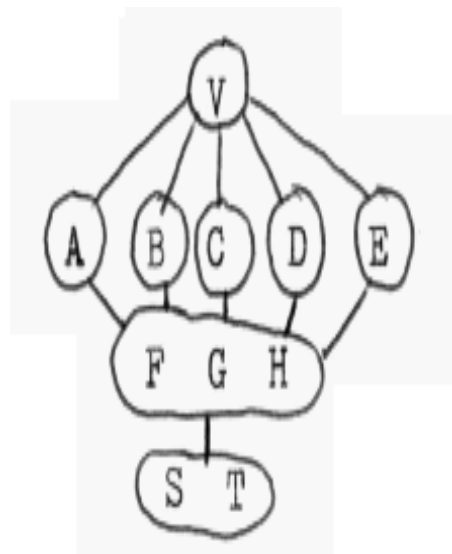
A ship may not hyperjump from one system to any other, but only to those systems "connected" to it (within range). The table and diagram below indicate connectivity. For example, a fleet on an out-system planet of Sirius may hyperjump to any out-system planet of Fomaihaut, Gacrux, Hamal, or Tau Ceti.

In any case, only one fleet may occupy a planet at a time, though a defense installation belonging to the same player may also occupy the planet.

Connectivity

System	Connects With
A,B,C,D,E	V,F,G,H
F	G,H,S,T, A through E
G	S,T,F,H, A through E
H	S,T,F,G, A through E
S	T,F,G,H
T	S,F,G,H
V	A through E

Diagram:



(A, B, C, D, E
not
interconnected)

(F, G, H
interconnected)

(S, T
interconnected)

9. Defense Installations.

A planetary defense installation (D) costs one-half supply point per year. Only one may occupy a planet, but a fleet of the same player may also occupy the planet. A "D" may only affect defense of the planet it is on, and of any fleet on that planet. The D has a strength in defense equal to one fleet. It cannot give support to a fleet on another planet, though it may receive support. A fleet on a planet with a D has a strength of two (equal to one fleet supported by another), even when moving to the planet or attempting to move away but failing. An unsupported attack is sufficient to cut the support of a fleet occupying a planet along with a D. Remember that the additional strength given to a fleet by a D applies only on the planet where the D is located, and does not extend to any support order, or attack from the planet, undertaken by the fleet. See examples.

10. Winning.

A player wins when he owns planets with a total value of at least sixteen industrial and fifteen raw materials units.

EXAMPLES

1. Player Alpha orders: F A15-G14, F G3 S A15-G14, FG4-G1. Player Beta orders: D G1, F G1-G14. Alpha's last order was security against the possibility that Beta might order F G1 to support a hyperjump by another fleet to G14. It would have cut the support given by F G1 even though a D is there. Alpha could have used F G3 and F G4 to attack G1, one supporting the other, but then A15-A14 and G1-G14 would have stood each other off, and the attack would have failed--the fleet bouncing back to G1 still combines with the D for a strength of two.

2. Alpha orders: F A11-H12, F A12-H12, D H1 (H), F H11 (H). This is a fairly standard defense of a system. A11 and A12 stand off each other, making it impossible for any enemy to occupy H12 unless supported from within the system. They also bounce back, securing much of the home system for the same reason.

Alternative Versions

1. **Less than five players.** The extra home system(s) are either off limits altogether, or are accessible but unoccupied. (When only two play, each should have two home systems.)

2. **Six players.** The sixth player occupies the Sirius and Tau Ceti systems. He begins with six supply points of units. He may place fleets on any planets in the two systems, but may place D on industrial planets only.

3. **The Cetan Empire.** A sixth player begins with Tau Ceti, Fomalhaut, Gacrux, Hamal, and ten and a half supply points of units. He may build fleets on any planets in these systems, but D may be built only on industrial planets.

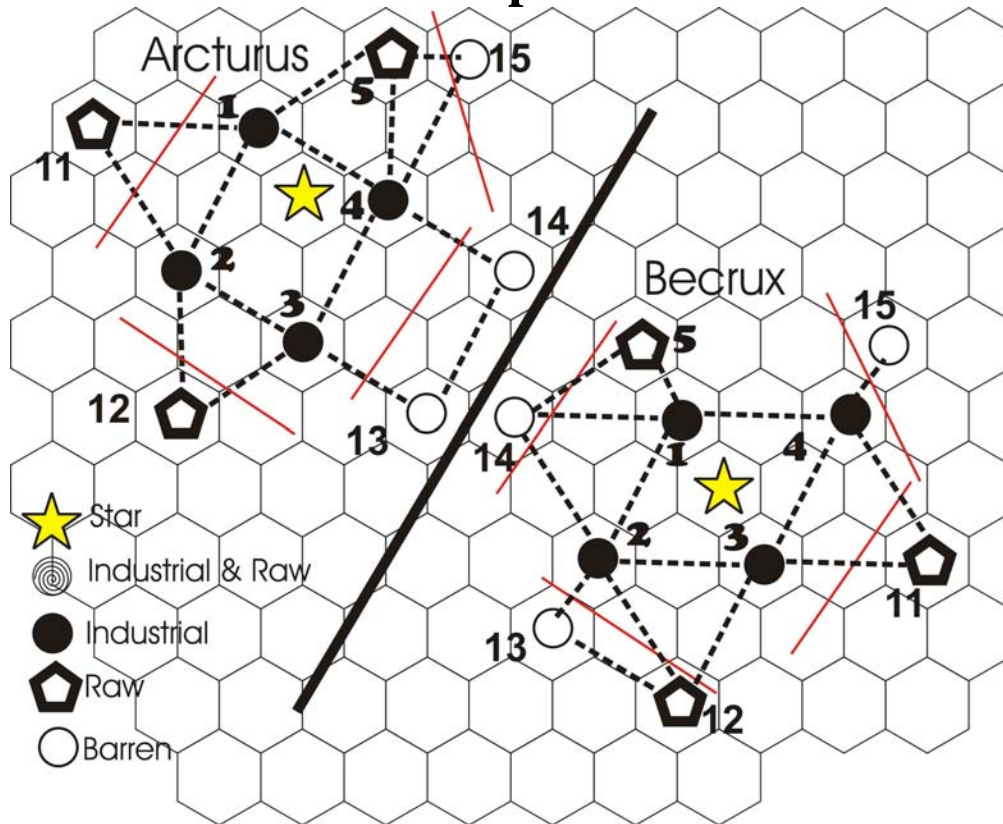
Notes: This game was part of a "Science Fiction and Fantasy Variant Book" that I submitted to Avalon Hill sometime in the early 80s. In the end they sent it back, and while some of the games in that group have apparently seen the light of day elsewhere—I have no recollection, but they're listed in the Variant Bank—this one evidently has not. There were three science fiction "space war" games in that group. *Fighting Suns* was a "near-future" game, *Star Kings* was one depicting a large area of a galaxy, and *Between Galaxies* had quite a few galaxies on the map for a way-futuristic game!

I confess I remember nothing specific about the development of the game!

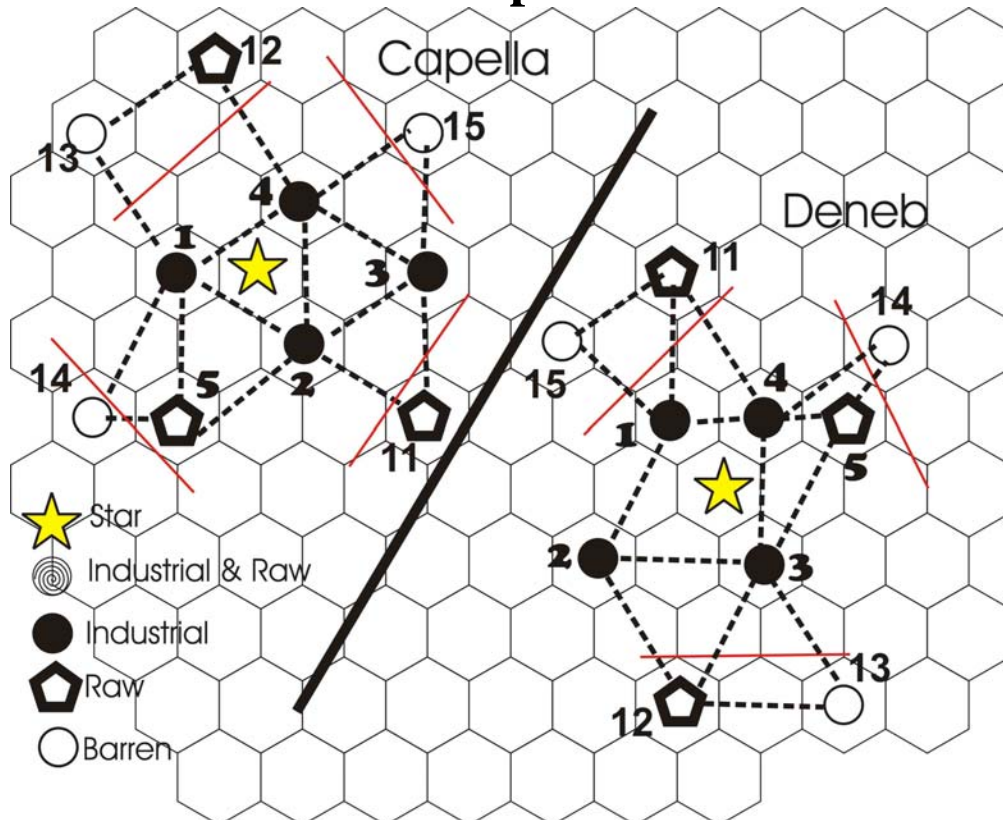
Lew Pulsipher has designed countless variants, many of which have graced the pages of Diplomacy World! Players who want the digital map images can send me an email at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com and I'd be happy to oblige.

Maps for Fighting SUNS

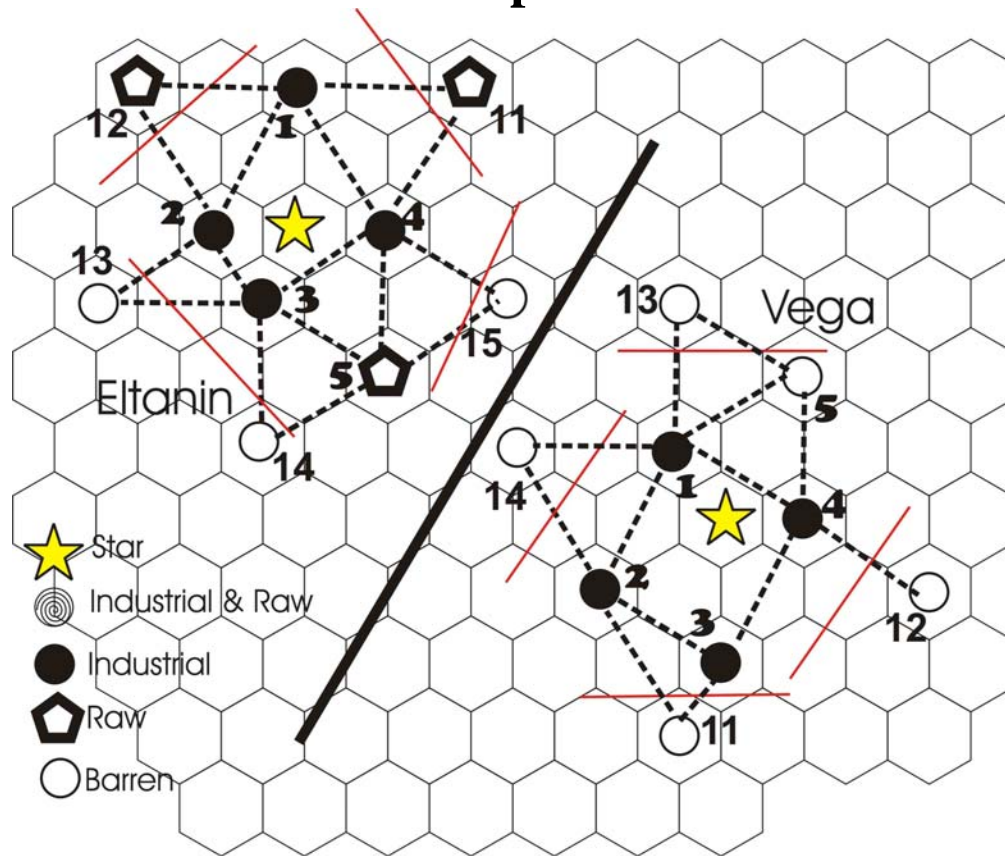
Map A



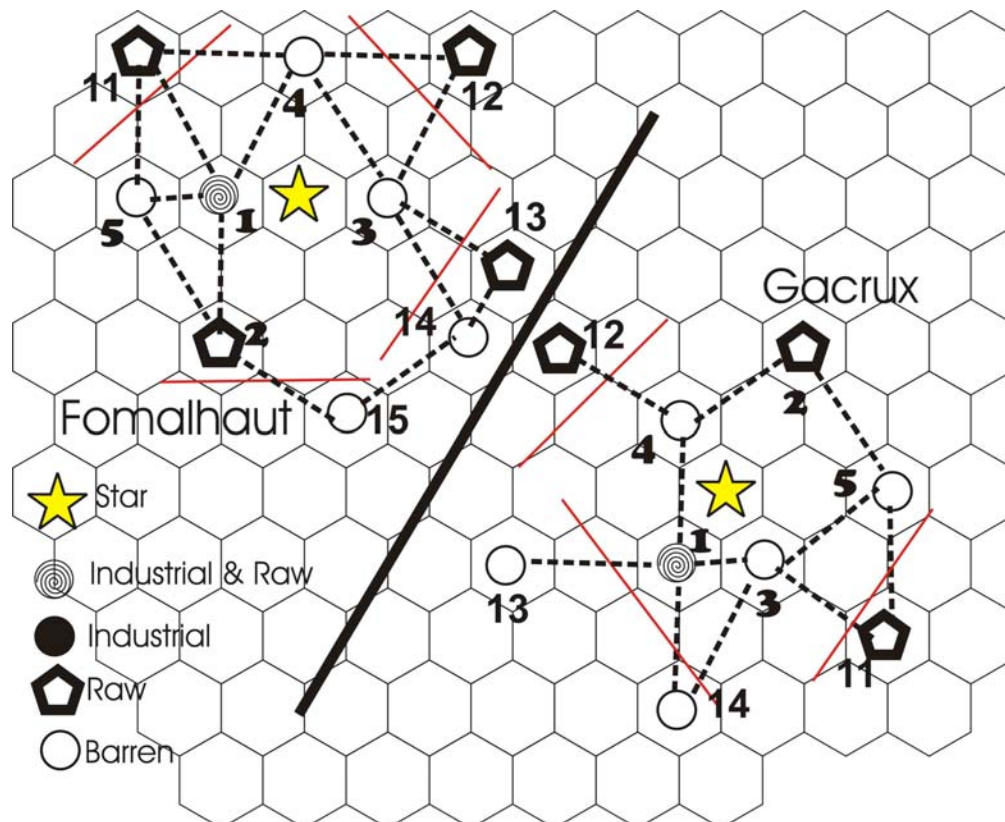
Map B



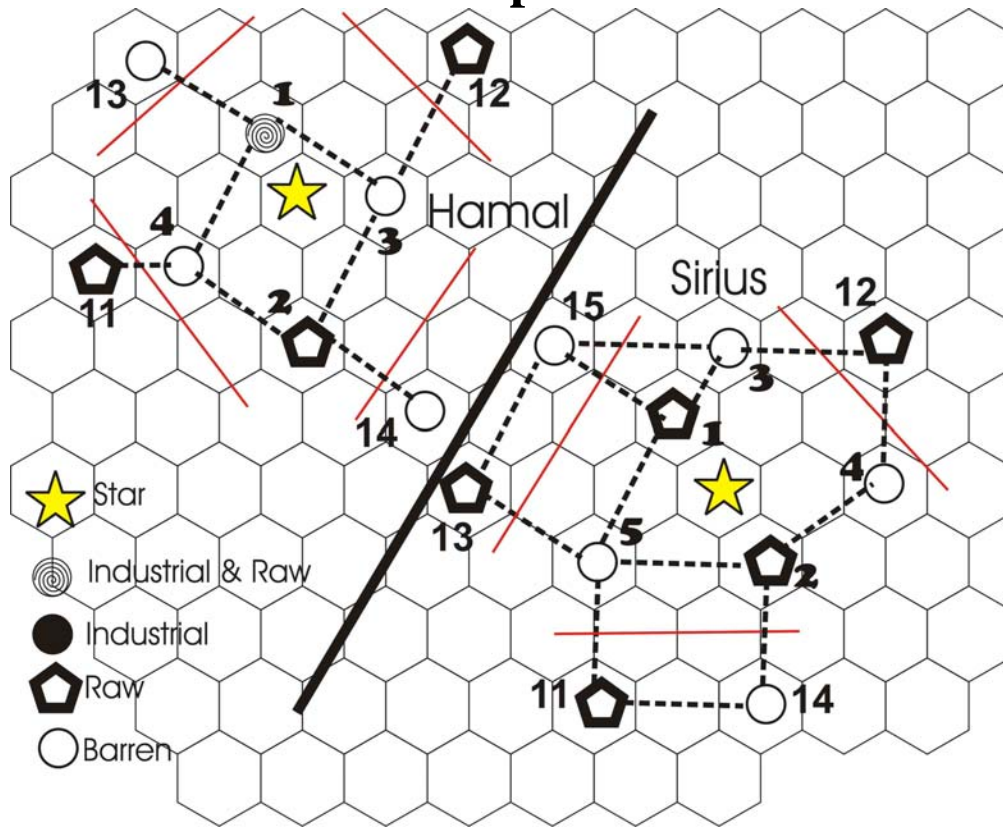
Map C



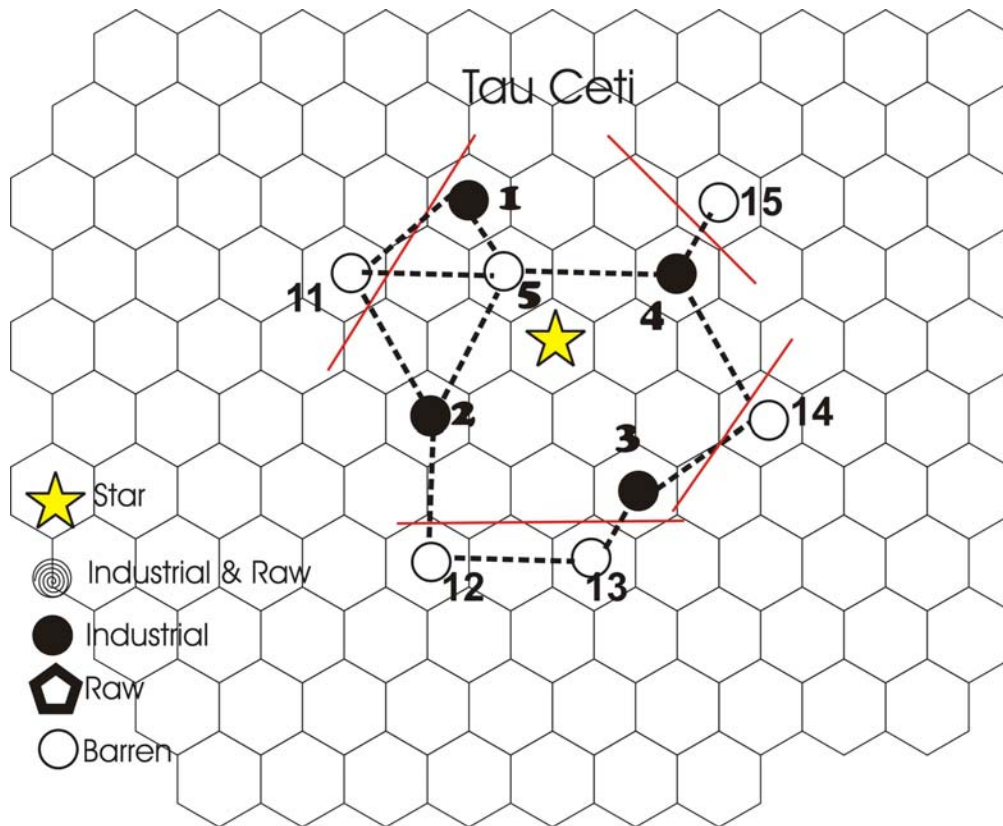
Map D



Map E



Map F



World DipCon 2008 European Tour

By Andrew Goff

I. Lock the Door Before You Leave

By and large, I am a fairly calm, cool and collected kind of guy; relaxed and easy going and not stressing too much about things. So as I walked calmly around on the ceiling of my apartment my flatmate was quite right to comment "You're a bit excited by all this aren't you?"

This whole adventure was made possible in January when I won the Australian Championships; the prize (very generously donated by Sean Colman) was a trip to Vienna for the World Championships. Fortunately, I had about 6 weeks of leave saved up so I extended my visit for the whole month. Europe here I come!

The initial reaction to winning was "wow: I am the Australian Champion." Strangely enough, it was talking to my mum that really changed that into "wow: I just scored a free trip to Europe for playing Diplomacy." So I must admit at this point in my preparation it is Europe I am most excited about. If you want to skip the travel diaries and go to the Diplomacy I won't hold it against you!



I only forgot one camera accessory, and forgot to lock the front door. I packed my suitcase four times. I should have packed flip flops (What kind of Australian am I???) but as it was 11 degrees and beyond miserable in the middle of an Australian Winter I think I can be excused for my oversight.

II. Come Fly with Me

It is a 21 hour flight, not including transit times, from Melbourne to London. On QANTAS, that is life threatening. 21 hours rapidly became 23 hours after a work experience student completely stuffed seat allocation and we sat on the ground at Singapore for 45 minutes... missing our Afghan fly over window (now **that** is scary – circling over the Pakistan/Afghan border in a plane with a poor maintenance record) and thus completely missing any chance of Landing at Heathrow without further circle work. QANTAS: Shocking.

Drama aside, I did watch three movies, including Casablanca. This came back to annoy a lot of people later during the trip. Frankly I don't give a damn. The food was bad but edible, preparing me nicely for England. Best of all, I managed to sleep for 10 hours, so when I landed at the delightfully simple Heathrow, and faced the friendly and courteous staff at the well resourced British border security point I was bright and chipper. This of course led to me being asked to go through "that door over there". After a luggage search where they managed to break TWO things (a blow up Aussie hand Sean had given me and a zip on my favourite jacket) I was free to enter the country (and this is a real quote) "but on this visa you are only welcome so long as you do not engage in any business or terrorist activity".

III. Mind the Gap

I got an Oyster. I put it in my wallet. Either you know what this means, or you think I am insane. Shortly after I am on the slow boat to the centre of London watching some very "Coronation Street" scenery going past and then, before quite realising it the Underground lives up to its reputation, going underground. Crazy, huh? "Mind The Gap" for the win! Cool.

I am staying at a "cheap" backpackers just near Piccadilly Circus. Strangely enough I get off the tube there... and reality hits home. I don't think we're in transit anymore Toto.



The first thing that struck me about London is the astonishing vibrancy and diversity of the City. I think the popular perception of London (in Australia at least) is a very British one – a financial capital with men in suits wearing bowler hats and carrying umbrellas. I was under no such misconception going in to this, expecting a

strong and vibrant cultural city with lots of cool people doing whatever it is that the cool kids do these days. But I was just miles and miles short of reality. Even the first 5 minutes made it clear that London is exponentially “more” than the stories. More on that later.

I find my “cheap” backpackers. It has all the traits of any other cheap backpackers in the world, except it is not cheap. I am sharing a room with a German girl and three Italian boys. Many interesting and hilarious stories could be shared, but won’t be.

IV. Monopoly

So from Piccadilly, I walk along Regent Street for a bit, turn left to Leicester Square then arrive at Trafalgar Square. In less than 10 minutes. Further and extended WOW factor. I would have walked further, but it started raining and since there was a convenient National Gallery I thought I would start my first morning at a fair clip.

Most of my time in London was essentially the same plan with different parts of the Monopoly board (astounding). The tourist highlights were certainly Westminster Abbey (despite the millions of people) and the Tate Modern Gallery.



The Abbey is so steeped in history, both big picture history the type that Australia simply does not have and detailing... with some of the memorial stones dedicated to people who died over a thousand years ago. Australia, in particular the “outback” has a very ancient feeling, but this was a completely different kind of old; an impressive, human, capital H kind of History. There are parts of Roman walls in London that have been standing since Christ walked the Earth. Think about that.

The Tate Modern against this background of history is dynamic and just houses a magnificent collection of art. At the risk of coming over all arty farty (my mum was an art teacher), I was very moved by a Matisse (“The Snail”)

which somehow captured the essence of “Snailness” in a very Platonic form kind of way (for me anyhow). It was just one highlight of many.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the British Museum. Badly laid out, but with some very impressive items. I must admit the impact of walking into the first room and being face to face with the Rosetta stone was quite something! Remember to bring your mummy. (Sorry)

I would point out at this point that I am keeping the travel diaries succinct... if you do want to see pictures or read/discuss more of the tourist bits my facebook profile has lots more details. Ok thousands of photos.

V. The Low Point of the Trip

We are not quite done with London yet, but at this point I think it is only fair to introduce Paris. I took a midweek three-day visit to Paris, which was not originally on the itinerary for one simple reason: three days in Paris is, of course, a joke. Three weeks in Paris is a joke, let alone three days. But the opportunity was there so I went for it.

So the definite low point of the trip was the Eurostar. It goes under the channel, the lowest I’ve ever been. I was hoping to see fish and whales and sharks like an aquarium, but you can’t stay seven years old forever and a little bit of my inner child died somewhere between England and France.

Paris and London are very different cities. If you were abducted by Giant Intelligent Ant Monsters and then returned to earth on a street corner in London, you would struggle to know what continent you were on, let alone what city. If you were dumped in Paris, there is only one place you could be.

Paris is stunningly beautiful... the people walk beautifully, the buildings look beautiful, the city is beautiful, even the dogs poo with a certain Parisian gracefulness. So where do all these French Diplomacy players come from? Ha Ha!

VI. A Lesson for Loud Americans Travelling In Foreign Countries

Now, my United States readers will excuse me for bringing this up I hope, but are you aware that you are very loud? Two of my favourite moments in Paris were the result of VERY LOUD AMERICANS. Now, I know not all of you are VERY LOUD AMERICANS but gee the few of you who are sure make your presence felt.

Having sat down at one of the many beautiful cafes and politely struggled through with my (very poor) French and been very politely served by a beautiful French waitress, a VERY LOUD AMERICAN couple arrived... and without a word of French said VERY LOUDLY

"DOES ANYONE IN THIS DAMN PLACE SPEAK AMERICAN" and were promptly ignored. So they VERY LOUDLY repeated this a few times at anyone –patrons, passing travellers, pigeons, chairs. Eventually (after about 20 seconds) the waitress sat them down and they VERY LOUDLY told her it was about time. At which point I rolled my eyes at the situation... the waitress saw and we became best of friends. So thank you to VERY LOUD AMERICANS!



The other similar incident involved a VERY LOUD AMERICAN approaching me: "HEY YOU, DO YOU SPEAK AMERICAN?" Firstly, it was delightful to be mistaken for a beautiful Parisian. Overwhelmingly however, I was cringing at this guy... so I used a standard response of the French: "A little" (Translated: "Of course you twit"). I really understood how annoying it must be to have VERY LOUD AMERICANS treating you like you're an idiot because they can't speak the language.

My American friends: You lot are great. The world needs you as the beacon of freedom you strive to be. Please don't undermine all your good deeds by shouting at the French.

VII. We'll Always Have Paris

Rollerblades in front of the Louvre, Gymnast/Street Dancers practicing in a park by the Eiffel Tower, the bells of Notre Dame ringing out over the Seine, take away Crepe from the Champs Elysees and the view of Paris from the top of Centre Pompidou. Sidewalk cafes serving croissants and smooth bars on the left bank catering to artists and alcoholics alike, meandering markets down backstreets from the Rue de Sebastopol with eager hawkers and "genuine" merchandise, a late night city of lights which is surely just as the cliché would have it: the most romantic city on Earth.

Three days was never enough. Jusqu'à la fois prochaine...

VII. The Heavily Edited Story Of Andrew's Adventures In The London Nightlife

So after seeking legal advice, the official story is: I didn't go out in London at all.

In fact, between you and me and the internet, there was carnage. Soho and the West End is just astonishing. Walking around on a Tuesday night it feels like New Year's Eve there are so many people out having a good time. Everything so close together makes it just an unbelievable city to go out in. The bars, the venues, the all night cafes, the people, the people, the people... all contribute to a true city that truly doesn't sleep. Far, far more than you believe possible. How awesome.

Highlights for me certainly included the visit to Ministry of Sound, which as a DJ was pretty much a required stop. While not as huge physically as its reputation is, the quality of the DJs and the sound system was just awesome. After about 8 hours of dancing, it was time to head home, wherein I got to see a genuine footy fight. With about seven Arsenal fans getting excited and then politely stepping off the bus to have a good ol' British Barney. If I hadn't been just a lot scared I would have taken a photo.

I also gatecrashed one of my best friend's birthdays, she was unaware I was even in the country so that was quite a surprise! The Big Chill House proving London does random acts of music as well as it does the doof doof. Then there was the catching up with some very dear school friends at a very dear restaurant. And the boutique Trash Palace for Club PopJustice (free plug: www.popjustice.com – these guys pop my world). And Fabric. And OMO@Astoria. And. And And And.

VIII. Surrealism, Heathrow Airport, And The First Excuse For Not Winning World DipCon

So, as my trip to London was coming to its natural finish after a truly wonderful few weeks, I go to the wrong terminal at Heathrow. Thankfully I am 20 minutes early so can make the transit to Terminal 5... just. I check in, settle down to wait and decide against the five pound coffees. I get "the phone call".

Standing overlooking the terminal duty free in terminal five, my boss calls me and advises me that I am redundant. My heart skips a beat.... if it is immediate I am cancelling my return flight and staying in London. It's not. I am on a nine month timer. But almost half my colleagues have been made redundant effective immediately.

I walk around Heathrow airport looking like I am dazed and confused, largely because I am dazed and confused. Security takes an interest. I sit down and have

an eight pound vodka. And another.

I am going to state for the record that this interrupted my preparation for the World Championships a bit. I never did achieve that Zen-like focus I require to play at my best. I found my mind wandering to "What on EARTH am I going to do about this???" a few times in the middle of games. I also chose not to inflict this news on Diplomacy people... it's not a promising way to meet people – you can come over a little negative!



For those who may care, I am still not sure what I am going to do next. Perhaps go back to DJing, perhaps open a bar, perhaps fall into another highly paid but ultimately soulless job. I am certainly open to suggestions! Ideally it would involve travelling the world working remotely.....

IX. Vienna

The week leading up to World DipCon was planned to be largely just recovery from firstly the non-stop partying and an attempt to compose myself after the news at Heathrow. I failed on both counts. Vienna is a surprisingly happening city! I stayed in a truly superb hostel (Free plug: <http://www.happyhostel.at/>) which was cheap and more like a serviced apartment than a backpackers... and so friendly; really brilliant, and made my Vienna experience five star. From the hostel I made some friends and sure enough backpackers the world around know where to go drinking. Ugh.



Even having not done any touristy things, I walked around the city a bit and Vienna is a great city for walking... and eating (Yum. After England it was like heaven)!!! All of which did not really help me focus on how to play Diplomacy. So the due time comes around and it is off to Westbahnhof to try and spot a Diplomacy Bus. After standing right next to the group for about 10 minutes contact was made and we are on our way.

X. The Diplomacy Officially Starts Here

On the bus to Lockenhaus Castle... which really was "all that", I am sitting chatting to David Norman, and around me there are conversations in five different languages. My Brian sizzles away.

We get to the venue and the astonishing lack of any difficulty communicating with everyone is just brilliant. Everyone is getting along and while there are the much talked about cultural difference there is precious little (visible) animosity or avoidance. I almost expected the room to be divided into camps, but in fact everyone is getting along wonderfully. My brain flips over to sizzle the other side. Officially fried.

They serve gruel in lark's vomit for dinner. I very foolishly hook in. By the next morning I am rushing to the bathroom every 15 minutes. Just in time for Round One.



The short story is I draw Russia, Germany NMRs in Spring 1901, I grow fairly quickly at first before the inevitable EF alliance claims first and second spot at my and Italy's expense. It is not the start I had hoped for. If I could have spent more time negotiating maybe the EF alliance could have been broken, but I don't think anyone else was negotiating for it as they saw me as the threat (again... if I had had more time...). The game would have been very enjoyable except for the "outside game" issues. Tor, an eventual top boarder, is very impressive as England and plays the system and his game to perfection.

Round two starts without any time to pause for thought, and this time I have drawn Italy – my favourite. This is a tough and highly aggressive board, and Yann Clouet is prominent in my field of vision playing Turkey. My lack of zen-ness shows here as I decide to play the very Australian strategy of “hit the big guy” then clean up the rest. Wrong wrong wrong. This is neither my natural game nor the right strategic thing to do on the board. While I do manage to cripple Yann, he of course is more than good enough to wreck my position right back.

I finish with one whole centre and feel very humbled. I have learnt a lot... the Austrian stab against me would have been suicidal in Australia, as the other side of the board would have run to 32 centres between them... but of course this is not how 1908 time draws work! Furthermore I am reminded just how lazy the “path to victory” in Australia has been – kill the big players and you win the board. The easy path is not actually good Diplomacy, and World DipCon really reinforced that.

XI. Homesickness, Thunderstorms, and Trivia

I must admit I was pretty down after all that. I don't like Trivia nights so instead spent an evening thinking about home, feeling shitty about my performance, and wondering how I can face going back to Australia after such a heightened sense of living experienced from travelling to strange and wonderful places. My mood is helped by a dramatic thunderstorm rolling over Austria and drenching the poor village of Lockenhaus. While still some way away from Dracula country, you can see how the legends would have started from nights like this.



What I actually really wanted was to have a few of the Australians there to share war stories with. Or just to curl up in bed with my cats keeping my toes warm. Or something other than gruel to eat. Time to sleep it off.

Day two dawns and the world is much brighter. The inappropriately named Team France is losing the Team tournament by miles, so the pressure is off there. I draw France... surely I can't stuff this up!

XII. Goffy's First England/France/Germany in the 21st Century

I have a passionate dislike for three-way England France

Germany alliances. I was very strongly in favour of an England France alliance in this game, and then suddenly Italy looked very weak as a player, Germany wanted to be part of an EFG and it just kinda happened.

Of course, my EFG misgivings were absolutely well founded. Italy was a much much better player than I gave him credit for. My campaign appears to stall before Germany's and sure enough I am in a dogfight over not many centres. Then the inevitable England stab comes... against me.

I have many many failings as a Diplomacy player, but one of them is not that I fold easily. After losing Belgium, I am now positioned to hold out the EG for the entire rest of the game. I make a key build and throw down army Paris. England could now get Brest and then duke it out over MAO... but the fight is just too tough in a 1908 game, and I negotiate hard and flip him to work with me against Germany. Revenge is devastating and Germany is ripped to tiny little shreds. I stick by England to the end and decline to nick a centre from him in the last turn... in the end this allows him to make the top board. Chris Brand was a delight to work with and is a nice guy to boot! Of course he goes on to be completely pantsed in the final... but such is life.

To everyone who played on this board, this was great fun. EFG alliances are usually just rubbish games but the very high quality of players and willingness of everyone to take risks and negotiate no matter what made this a really fun and interesting game. Thank you!

XIII. (Not The) Final Board Heroics

Toby Harris. Someone forgot to mention Toby Harris to me. In all my discussions about who to watch out for and who was who in the Euro Dip hobby, Toby Harris did not come up once. I have thought long and hard about this, as I played against a lot of very good players, but for mine the best of us all was this unheralded (for me) pom. Playing Italy (again?) and aided and abetted by Millis the Mad (and very friendly) Turk, this was easily the most enjoyable fiasco of a game I have played in years.

In short, I stabbed the living profanity out of Toby in Austria in Spring 1901. Guttled him in Fall, out pointed him in negotiations in Spring 1902. And by Spring 1903 he was left with army Bohemia. But just like the road runner he just wouldn't go down. Slipping into Munich, then back to Vienna the next year... along with some woeful play by Russia (assisted by the mad Turk) he sneaks back into Budapest in 1905 to return to 2 centres. By 1907 he is back to 3 centres and heading for 14.

The game is summed up so well in his play in this game that I need to step back and just say how he did it. My game was good, but riddled with some careless mistakes. His game was brilliant.

There are a number of absolutely critical components to good Diplomacy: never stopping your negotiations with anyone no matter what; never giving up; always fighting for every centre (whether it is your first, your third, or your eighteenth); picturing where you want to be and then making it happen through strategy and negotiation not just brutal tactics; and above all imposing your personality on the board. Toby Harris owned this game of Diplomacy completely. Despite his poor result, his game epitomised the principles of the game, and had the game continued he really would have continued to grow. Outstanding.

XIV. Who won the tournament?

So, for all this, who actually won? Well, first of all it is worth noting a big name in Cyrille Sevin was the only solo of the tournament... achieving this feat as Austria with an excellent stab against Edi Birsan. Chris Brand and Tor Magne Tonnessen both made the final board of the players I played against, deservedly so from the play I saw.

But the winner, in a quite dominant final board performance, was Julian Ziesing. Playing as Germany he crunched out a solid lead and was never headed, and in fact from my observations it never looked in doubt. I didn't get the chance to play against him, so others will have to fill in the main story (Sucked in if you read this far hoping for in depth analysis of the winner).



I must also thank very highly the organising team. Clara and Sebastian were both helpfully every time I needed anything, and the whole organising and tournament directing team were well drilled. Except they launched the final ceremony almost a full hour before the schedule said they would. Oh well. An awesome venue, complete with authentic gruel, and I particularly liked the upright

boards... worked very well indeed!

After the tournament I handed half a dozen people their arses on a platter at various board games. To the likely astonishment of Australian readers I even played Settlers! After that a random group of international no-good-nics hit Vienna's infamous Bermuda triangle and partied on to the wee small hours. Great Fun!



XV. Back to Tourist Stuff

Vienna is a wonderful and friendly city, and it is hard to pick one highlight though perhaps the rambling Hofburg is most interesting for "tourist" things, the city is packed with some awesome museums, including the weird and entertaining Kunsthalle Wein and the much more renowned Kunsthistorisches. With a palace on every corner, street markets, shopping strips, and the Danube all around it can fairly be said that just walking around the city is a delight.

Any discussion of Vienna must include mention of the Stephansplatz. Centred on a lovely baroque church which, for all intent and purpose, has a ridiculous and brilliant Art Deco roof tiling design, the mass of people and places to eat and shop is what you expect of Europe. I went to Vienna expecting an historical tour de force... I got that, and a vibrant modern city which I think would be a great place to live as well. If you ever get the chance, Vienna should be on your "must visit" list... at the end of three weeks I still wanted to see more and more of the city!

XVI. Day Tripping

From Vienna, I took on a number of Day Trips - Overnights. It is so central to central Europe that it is stunningly easy to run off to other places. For an Aussie where a train trip from Melbourne to Sydney is 10 hours, the idea of jumping on a train and being in Budapest 2 hours later was just mind blowing.

Bratislava was unexciting, except for the constant "Hostel" references from fellow travellers. Having said that, the boat journey from Vienna down the Danube

was just so beautiful it made the trip worthwhile. Prague was quite stunning... and one full day there was not really enough. Budapest was most "strange" for me. A city divided so clearly between Eastern European ex-communist poverty and a significant nouveau riche was odd. St Stephen's Basilica was stunning, while the strange walk through main road shopping strips that smelt of a cross between pre-mix concrete and cheap shoes was stunning in a very different and not at all comfortable way.

Salzburg was...um... very beautiful. I hesitate because it was also totally touristy. It almost felt like the soul was being sapped from it by vapid tourists buying anything with Mozart on it. Innsbruck was far more impressive. From here I climbed an alp. I am terrified of heights, so even the "little" alp I scaled was a major psychological feat, if not a physically challenging one. From the top, you could see all the way to Italy down a long valley, and in the other direction a large mountain in Germany – and frankly it was the most stunning, jaw dropping thing I've ever seen watching clouds rise up from the Inn valley over a thousand metres to float up over the mountain you are standing on.



I also had the best Indian meal I've ever had (Sahib Restaurant) in Innsbruck (of all places) and saw a moose! (There are NO Kangaroos in Austria!!!) All in all Innsbruck was the unexpected highlight of the trip (and not just because I stood on top of a mountain).

XVII. 30 Hours In An Unsafe Plane

Vienna to London to Hong Kong to Melbourne was always going to be a fun way to finish my adventures. 28 hours in the air became thirty as turbulence over the Himalayas woke everyone up at [I have no idea what time it actually was]. Instead of simply going up to get out of it, we turned south for an hour of bumps because there was a Fin Air plane above us. You could actually see it out the window! This would have been very cool except for the vomiting elderly people, screaming babies, and lack of sleep.

By the time I got home to Australia, I was ready for sleep. I go through customs, and sit down to wait for my

bag. Forty five minutes later, myself and five others were waiting when they stopped the carousel. All from Vienna. QANTAS had lost my luggage. In fact, they'd put it back on the same plane it started on and sent it back to Vienna. This plane had then decided to blow an engine mid-air and landed in Hamburg, making the news. 5 days later, my suitcase arrives, smashed to bits and with most of the contents well and truly bruised. I hate QANTAS, and highly recommend anyone travelling to Australia pick any other travelling option that they can.

Patently waiting at the airport were some family and stray friends. While I didn't want to end my adventure, I was very, very glad to see smiling faces when I got to the end of that trip.

XVIII. What The Future Holds From Here

I must admit, I have a taste for it all.

Europe was superb, more than my wildest hopes. I certainly have the travelling bug again and may well consider living over there. An eye-opening and highly enjoyable experience which has made me think about myself and the world in a new light.

The other thing I have a taste for is International Tournament Diplomacy. We need to get an airline to sponsor us! The quality of play was great and very enjoyable. The diversity of people was excellent, and above all the feeling of being part of a large tournament is just brilliant. I will almost certainly be at next year's World DipCon, and will certainly go to the one in 2010 in The Hague. I am hooked!

I met a lot of good people and if I can ever offer hospitality to an Australian bound Diplomacy player I know I wouldn't hesitate! I've obviously only shared the barest details (5,000 words is probably long enough) but many of the memories from the trip will last forever, and the little details and quirks of the Diplomacy players will give me anecdotes to share for many World Dip Cons to come!

Finally, a word of advice for those of you who are solely internet players: Get out there... get to the tournaments! I know it is a very different medium and it is hard work to make the transition, but the payoff for actively participating in the Face-To-Face hobby is worth it even if you get beaten every time you show up. Whether it is a 3 board local tournament or a hundred-strong World Dip Con, make it a point of getting along to the conventions and I promise that the payoff is there in more than just the glory of perhaps one day beating up on Toby Harris!

We should all be insanely jealous of Andrew and his trip. Not so jealous that we hate him or anything...but ALMOST that jealous.

Moot: *n* a deliberative assembly primarily for the administration of justice.

Weasel: *vb* to escape from or evade a situation or obligation. *n* 1: small carnivorous mammal that is able to prey on animals larger than itself. *n* 2: cunning Diplomacy player indigenous to the Chicago area.

Weasel Moot II Diplomacy Tournament

November 14-16, 2008

Day's Inn Chicago

644 W. Diversey Pkwy.

Chicago, Illinois 60614



International intrigue in your own backyard! Play Diplomacy the way it was meant to be played in a world-class tournament setting! Former World Champion Chris Martin (below, left) of Maryland won last year's Weasel Moot. This year, it could be you!



When: November 14-16, 2008.

Where: Day's Inn Chicago, 644 W. Diversey Pkwy., Chicago, IL 60614.

What: A three-round Diplomacy tournament. Best two rounds count for score. It only takes one round to be eligible for awards.

How much: The entry fee is \$40. Preregistration fee is \$35. (\$20 for students and kids; \$18 if they preregister.) You may preregister through November 11 by PayPaling to redpawn3@yahoo.com.

Schedule:

Friday, November 14

Round 1

Registration: 5:45 to 6:15 p.m.

Board Call: 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 15

Round 2

Registration: 9:00 to 9:30 a.m.

Board Call: 9:45 a.m.

Round 3

Registration: 5:15 to 5:45 p.m.

Board Call: 6 p.m.

The tournament will end at a predetermined time between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m.

Sunday, November 16

A brief awards ceremony will be held beginning at 10 a.m. at a location to be determined.

Questions? Contact us at weaselmoot@gmail.com or visit our Yahoo group at games.groups.yahoo.com/group/ChicagoDip/ or our website at umbreho.dyndns.org/wcw or our Meetup group at diplomacy.meetup.com/30/.

Sponsored by the Windy City Weasels.



DipCon 41: A Shotgun Marriage

By David Webster

DipCon 41, held at the University of Maine July 24th – 27th, 2008, was a shotgun marriage where neither the bride nor the groom showed-up. To really fully understand the situation would require a long back story, which would be asking more of the reader than would be reasonable. This article is already long enough. I have four objectives with the intertwined information herein. 1) I want to describe the basics of how the tournament was run, some key points in game play, and what occurred after the tournament with the NADF. 2) I need to provide some historical information about some past DipCons and NADF tournaments to illustrate that alleged problems at Bangor DipCon 41 were not unprecedented, and therefore should not have been viewed as harshly as they were. 3) I need to examine the DipCon Charter and demonstrate that the action taken by the NADF, revoking its DipCon endorsement, was in violation of the DipCon Charter, and was not accepted as authoritative by the legitimate governing group for this DipCon. 4) I want to help the NADF players understand why the attendance was abysmal. 5) In the process of these aims, I need to refer to emails, online posts, and prior writings by several people. I believe that the reader will learn that *this is not a case of a merry band of NADF travelers expecting to find a large group of cheerful local players but were instead cheated by the tournament director*. It wasn't the story of a beleaguered Gary Cooper-esque tournament director who fended off a horde of outlaws, *High Noon* style. It was about two surly mini-mobs that butted heads, and the best hometown player won, which meant that the best NADF guy lost, even with having a solo thrown to him. Winding back the clock, I'll start at the awarding of the bid in Vancouver in 2007.

During the question and answer session at the Dipcon Society Meeting in Vancouver, it was fully disclosed that a portion of the Bangor players were opposed to hosting the Dipcon, and that they favored remaining invisible to the NADF world. To be brief, I'll only mention one reason: throwing solos or otherwise throwing games is considered cheating in Bangor, black and white. In the NADF realm this is permissible "meta-gamming." Now if you think I'm retroactively creating an issue, read *Diplomacy World #98* (earlier than Vancouver) where I complained about thrown games. This difference in cultures makes me belatedly concede that *the NADF and Bangor are incompatible*.

At Dipcon 40 in Vancouver (also known as World Dipcon 17), the Dipcon Society Meeting voted 12-7 to hold Dipcon 41 in Bangor on July 24th -27th, 2008. There never was solidarity behind Bangor. The level of support was probably greater than an unknown group deserved; yet, once the vote was taken there never was unity, or

even anything approaching unity. The general NADF populace mistakenly believes otherwise due to not being privy to the behind the scenes activity. I'm only going to mention two of the most reasonable conversations, one with Tom Kobrin and later with Mark Zoffel. Tom told me that my presentation was too aggressive and that I had made a bunch of enemies, especially along the eastern corridor. I agreed with him. Mark relayed how at a late night session at a bar, a school of thought had arisen and that NADF players would arrive at the University of Maine to find that no one knew who I was and that it was all a prank, a hustler out hustling the NADF master meta-gamers. Mark had given me a ride from the Airport in Seattle to Vancouver, and he was the person that knew me the best from the NADF. I realized that he was trying to read my reaction, and that he had probably been sent by the group. I like Mark, and didn't take it personally – from him. Before leaving Vancouver, I had doubts that the NADF would ever allow Dipcon 40 to be held in Bangor. The only thing that really was in Bangor's favor was the Dipcon Charter and winning the open public vote.

Vancouver Dipcon 40 was a good NADF tournament, deserving the praise that it has received. The only relevant issues concerning the Bangor Dipcon were that in two different games, I was directly asked to throw a solo¹, and I saw the ends of two highly dubious solos. The other issue was that the top American players agreed before the tournament to specifically prevent Frenchman Yann Clouet from winning a world championship in North America. After skipping round one, Clouet soloed with Germany in round two, which reignited the conversation. Clouet drew Austria on the top board, and was eliminated from the top board game. Stop crying over thrown solos you say?

Dave Maletsky, NADF president, was literally crying after Doug Moore soloed against him in Vancouver. Maletsky proclaimed that he would never play a tournament again after bitterly weeping that Doug Moore was aided by Emmanuel Du Pontavice and Brian Murdoch. If the NADF president breaks down and cries over a thrown solo, isn't that an indication that there really is something wrong with the practice?

After arriving back in Maine, I gave an exhaustive report of every observation, every game, every conversation, etc. When *Diplomacy World* came out, I circulated the reports. First, Bangor was stunned that the NADF voted to have Dipcon 41 here. Second, some were appalled at the thrown solo issue and wouldn't play. Third, others

¹ Tom Kobrin and Phil Burk asked me to throw a solo to Tom. Graham Woodring was closing in on a solo, when he asked me, an ally, to throw him the solo. In both cases, I refused.

were intimidated at the prospect of playing the best players in the world. Edi Birsan had said that a group of NADF players would come into town, in a "gunslinger" fashion and working in concert takeout Bangor's top players, which would result in a NADF player winning. Predictably, no one in Bangor wanted to be identified as an experienced player.

I expected some bumps in the road, but it was very early. I made sure that we had accommodations for 175 players. I personally owned 20+ Diplomacy boards, loaning most of them out through the years, and began buying more on EBAY hoping to have enough wooden block sets for 100 plus players. I bought about 15 sets on EBAY between Vancouver and the start date of Bangor's DipCon. Edi and Buz Eddy were the first NADF players to arrive for the opening round, July 24th, 2008. A minimum of 8 or 10 boards, purchased on EBAY, were still in the mailers, and Edi opened some of them. I only point this out because some people have drawn the impression that I never expected more than the 22 attendees because I purposely kept NADF players from coming and there are no Diplomacy players in Maine other than me. There are beautiful accommodations, available to alumni of the University of Maine, totally free of charge. The accommodations complete with fireplace, corporate board room, etc. are for functions up to 100 people. Free, but they are without sleeping accommodations. The rooms for out-of-town players required use of an entirely different network at the University. It should be obvious for anyone who saw the facilities that my original plans were for a large gathering and not 22.

November 3, 2007, I attended Carnage in Vermont and spoke with a number of players there. I drew the conclusion that Carl Ellis and maybe three others would be likely to attend Bangor Dipcon41. Most of the more active Massachusetts players are fond of a very nice tournament in Long Island, NY – HuskyCon. For the four preceding years HuskyCon was held the third weekend in August, but in 2008 it would follow Bangor Dipcon 41 by five days. HuskyCon was the sole competition to Bangor for Dipcon 41. Bangor chose July 24th – 27th largely to space it away from HuskyCon and the Boston Massacre held the third weekend in June. The host family for HuskyCon was above fretting that Bangor had received the bid for Dipcon 41 with HuskyCon being the only competition; however, their patrons made it clear that they would be supporting HuskyCon and not Dipcon 41. This wasn't a mass conspiracy against Bangor. Jim Burgess' tournament in Providence had only drawn 7, including Jim and NADF officer Buz Eddy from Seattle. People preferred to play Diplomacy with the Woodrings in a tournament that they were familiar with, rather than coming to Bangor, nothing wrong with that.

In January 30, 2008, I received a call at my office from the University of Maine. They wanted to know who Edi Birsan was and what role he had in the tournament.

They informed me that he was asking if the University was aware of whom I was and if there really was a tournament scheduled, and a line of questions that were pointing to the fact that he thought I was a con man. I had already informed the University that the bid process was competitive, highly political and that there were certain to be malcontents. I e-mailed Edi a terse letter upon hanging up the phone, including this passage, *"I don't enjoy conversing with you because you are amazingly offensive, and I'm sick of you implying various things. I've given-up trying to persuade you that we are worthy. The vote was taken, and we won. Are you able to deal with that?"* Edi responded, "Actually you do have it so wrong. I have been the one trying to **fend off the hoard**. I have been the one advocating that we have to do everything possible to make things work. I have been the one trying to help you and to avoid others from going off on the deep end to **invoke the Charter and get it directed to someone else**." You can think what you want but there was a movement six months before Dipcon 41 to remove NADF designation.

In November 2007, I was at a NADF event. People knew the time, place, costs, etc. They just didn't want to play in Bangor out of their own freewill. Now in January 2008, there was a horde and consideration of stripping Bangor of Dipcon 41. We can point fingers in many directions, including at me, but the truth is that the NADF was never united behind their vote, and key elements were campaigning against Bangor within hours of the vote.

In terms of Bangor, Edi's letter and call to the University, the arrangements had been made before going to Vancouver. Photos had been presented of the actual rooms, a year in advance. The tournament was held in the exact rooms, on the same dates as advertised. What was missing were dozens of NADF players and dozens of Bangor players. When Edi's letter became public knowledge, Bangor felt that the NADF had given it the finger, and responded in kind by not showing up.

June 21-22, 2008 I attended the Boston Massacre and answered questions privately, and in a Q & A session between rounds. After speaking with a number of people, it seemed likely to me that approximately five people at the Massacre were likely to play at Bangor Dipcon41.

July 1, Buz Eddy wrote to me, "There seems to be a wholesale cancellation of travel to Bangor going on. I will be there (non refundable air fare). Rick Desper will be there. Even Edi Birsan is on the edge of passing. The DipCon charter currently tags the NADF to re designate the host event if the elected committee is unwilling or unable to host. If there is not the NADF Grand Prix minimum of 5 boards over the course of the event I suppose a re designation would be indicated."

July 1, Steve Cooley in an email titled "Maine Dipcon

Disaster” wrote, “Is the Con going to take place? It seems most of the hobby is doubtful.”

I had never made a public or private statement that the tournament wasn't going to happen. The tournament was on from the vote in Vancouver and never had been off. Yet, somehow people were communicating that it might not happen. Were they sincere, or were they talking down attendance?

July 2, Steve Cooley again wrote, “Btw, not to pile on, but you are aware that a lot of people are staying away because they perceive a lack of organization?”

I responded, “Well, I'm not particularly bright or good looking either. It's often the same anonymous guys complaining who haven't worn matching clothes since they out-grew Garanimals. We're going to do our best and avoid being dragged into the mud, which is where some would like to take this. I'm still smiling; it will be fun.”

July 22, 2008 Jim Burgess wrote an e-mail, “Edi, this is going to be one of the ‘smallest’ DipCon meetings in recent years, I think. I think that makes it a perfect time to propose a total change of charter.”² Edi responded, “No problem with the procedure of the traditional two meeting process, which is fair after all to prevent one meeting jamming through significant immediate changes.” In other words, Bangor wasn't too bogus for Edi to get his charter changes introduced. The modifications were obviously a negative reaction to Bangor. How did he expect to get a 2/3 vote on that in Bangor? By July 22, the outlook was shaping up as about 10 guys not from Bangor. The amendment would only pass if all the NADF guys voted for it, and 5 or fewer people from Bangor voted. I guess they really did expect to find an empty conference room and that it had been a prank.

I'm not going to belabor this anymore but this should be enough to dissuade people from believing that people were shocked by the low attendance when they arrived in Bangor. They fully expected it.

Fun Facts About Past Dipcon Attendance

Did you know that counting the five Dipcons, numbers 36 – 40, prior to Bangor Dipcon 41, only 21 players attended the majority of DipCons?³

Did you know that only 23 more had attended more than one of the last five Dipcons?

² Jim Burgess suggested on the 7/30/08 conference call that Bangor had not met expectations. Eight days earlier he predicted the opposite.

³ Most attendance data and most other data concerning NADF attendance is from the EDA website.

Those numbers are for all of the United States and Canada populations. The players who played in two of the five Dipcons were significantly influenced by the region of the country that hosted the Dipcon. While it wouldn't be accurate to call them purely “regional” players, it is a convenient label. *The traveling hobby is a small band.*

Did you know that Bangor Dipcon 41 wasn't the smallest DipCon?

Dip at Sea Dipcon 38	15 attendees
Bangor Dipcon 41	22
San Antonio Dipcon 21	23
Seattle Dipcon 30	31
Kansas City Dipcon 25	31
Charlottesville Dipcon 39	35
Columbus, OH Dipcon 32	37

Where is the line drawn to withhold NADF recognition?

According to Buz Eddy, NADF official, writing on July 1st, before the tournament, “The DipCon charter currently tags the NADF to re designate the host event if the elected committee is unwilling or unable to host. If there is not the NADF Grand Prix minimum of 5 boards over the course of the event I suppose a re designation would be indicated.” (emphasis added.)

Did you know that Bangor Dipcon 41 wasn't the lowest local turnout of recent years Dipcons?

This is tricky to verify due to a lack of published addresses for attendees. Dip at Sea lists the Gulf of Mexico as local. I am unaware of anyone living in the port town, but I am unsure of where two players resided; therefore, 0 to 2 would be a better answer. Edi Birsan complained in *Diplomacy World* #94 that his Bay area group traveling to DipCon 37 in Portland, “we managed to take to Portland 6 players, which is more than all of Oregon was able to provide.” This doesn't provide a clear number but it was less than six. A paltry 12 Bangor area residents played in Dipcon 41. I suspect if we looked at the number of locals from Kansas City Dipcon 25, Columbus, OH Dipcon 32, or San Antonio Dipcon 21 we would find that 12 wouldn't look that bad.

Did you know that the number of NADF players from outside of New England for Bangor Dipcon 41 were six? Buz Eddy, Edi Birsan, Don Williams, Chris Martin, Brian Shelden and Rick Desper.

NADF players from within New England were four. Carl Ellis, Chris Campbell, Steve Cooley and Jim Burgess.

Did you know that players from Bangor outnumbered players from the other forty-nine states and Canada? There were 12 locals, including Mike Schneider who had recently moved to Bangor.

Did you know that the local turnout for Dipcon 40 in Vancouver was less than 20?

The EDA database lists 20 Canadians. James Istvanffy is from Calgary. How many others are Canadian but not from Vancouver I can't be sure. Did all of Canada, outside of Vancouver, only produce one player? Vancouver was considered a huge success. Bangor had 12. Is 12 and maybe 19 so different that one is a huge success and the other warrants removal of NADF sanction?

Fun Facts about NADF turnouts from Vancouver Dipcon 40 to Bangor Dipcon 41

First, critic Jim Burgess' tournament, Templecon – 7 total players. Jim played in the second round (last round.) He apparently had little problem outwitting "Dead Man." Obviously, they had six for the second round. Buz Eddy attended. Perhaps there were five New England players and Buz Eddy from Seattle. Next, critic Edi Birsan's tournament KublaCon – 16 total players in Burlingame, CA. He also had 25 total players for Conquest in San Francisco. Buz Eddy's DragonFlight (technically just before Vancouver Dipcon and hasn't repeated yet) in Seattle – 14 total players. Origins, Columbus, OH, next home for World Dipcon – 25 total players. Carnage in Vermont had 18 total players, including 3 locals from Maine. Boston Massacre had 29 total players, including 2 locals from Maine. BADAss Whipping – Oakland, CA had 26 total players and then repeated within the period with 22. Prezcon – Charlottesville had 21 players. National Block Party – West Albany, Indiana had 16 total players. CODcon – Chicago – had 19 total players. Dixie – Chapel Hill - had 28 total players. SpringCon – Washington, DC – 18 total players. And now for the big NADF tournament turnouts in the period: WAC 5 – Seattle – 30 total players. HuskyCon – Long Island, NY – 35 total players, very few from NY, certainly less than 12 New York state residents. Tempest – Falls Church, VA – 41 total players. GenCon – Indianapolis – 41 total players.

Some of the tournaments are not officially recognized as NADF "Grand Prix" tournaments because they had less than 5 boards of played over the course of the tournament. Bangor Dipcon41 met this requirement. Of the total 17 tournaments, eight were larger than Bangor Dipcon 41, eight were smaller, and one was tied. The rounded average of the tournaments matched Bangor's 22.⁴ Thirteen of the tournaments were smaller or no more than seven people higher in attendance. Check the EDA website, I included all of the reported tournaments;

⁴ This does include DragonFlight, which is included because it's NADF officer Buz Eddy's tournament, though it missed the time frame by one week. World Boardgaming Council could be included under that same reasoning. It's held in Lancaster, PA and had 25 total players the week before Vancouver Dipcon. Regardless, Bangor's turnout is right in the middle of the pack.

I didn't pick and choose.

The Actual Tournament July 24th – July 27th, 2008

A summer date was selected because Maine is appealing in the summer, and housing was available at the University. Originally, it didn't dawn on me that only ten people would stay on campus. The University charged about \$40 per person per night. Most local hotel rooms were \$100 plus. The downside is that not one college student played in the tournament. We also reduced our high school turnout. I made a mistake by having two rounds before Friday evening. To place well, a player couldn't work on Thursday or Friday. We had people who planned to play only Saturday's round at Fort Knox State Park and the team round on Sunday.⁵

The first round began Thursday evening. ***Four different people participated in one aspect or another as tournament director, for one or more session.*** In Vancouver, the bid included David Webster, Dennis Hutchins and Dean Beers. Tom Constantine was added because he had served as a game master numerous times in the past, but never had played in one of the Bangor events. Outside of Dennis and me, he had never met any of the Bangor players. I always intended to play in the tournament; others were to handle the game related tournament director duties. Life doesn't turn out like that. Dennis was on call for his employment; he has employees but if you own a small business you know. Dean has a little girl and instructs at a college, and had a new summer class. Tom works as an athletic trainer, and schedules to fit his client's convenience. I had to perform more duties than planned. Since this is a point of contention, I'll elaborate in detail.

Communicating with the group – making

announcements: the other directors did not know the names of the NADF players with the exception of Dennis knowing Carl Ellis. Dennis knew the majority of the Bangor players, but not all. Dean knew less than half of the Maine players, and Tom Constantine knew Dennis vaguely from being a game master for a pickup game in the 1990's and Tom knew me. There was an atmosphere of tension at the tournament too. The other directors, like many people, did not want to speak in public; therefore, I made all the announcements.

Rulings: I can only remember three specific rulings. Players were advised at the opening session that rules would not be specifically, strictly enforced in situations where a player's intentions were clear, though the orders may be technically incorrect. One ruling, made by Tom Constantine, was similar to a situation that arose in the top board final at Vancouver in 2007, when a player did

⁵ By Saturday the word was out that a fun time was decidedly not being had by all, and people decided not to play. A broken leg Friday at football practice took two brothers, a father, and a friend out of the tournament.

not put his orders in the box. This was noticed after orders had been substantially read. Chris Martin challenged whether the orders should be read and he suggested that the player may have two sets of orders. One of the tournament directors allowed the orders to be read, which clearly was the wish of all the other players, except Chris Martin. I was watching the game, and used this as an example in discussions in a newsgroup and elsewhere later. (I wasn't second guessing the call.) At Bangor Dipcon 41 a player did not put his orders into the box and there was some question about where original orders maybe. Tom ruled against allowing the player's orders. I didn't see the situation, but I know that all of the players were okay with the decision. The player was my son, Peyton.

I made two calls related to orders. The first involved my son Peyton again. The structure of the orders was intended to be:

A moves to C; B supports A to C

The problem was that he omitted an S for supports, definitely a problem. This occurred in the first round minutes after I had given the criteria that informed players that I would allow such an order. I was called to the table; I didn't see the board. I could see that people with one exception were inclined to let it go. One player seemed inclined to let it go, but wanted me to rule because it involved my son and presented an opportunity to paint the tournament as biased. Also, he was technically correct. My son looked embarrassed. My first inclination was to say too bad Peyton because he was my son; however, I immediately realized that he was probably allied with someone and the ruling would impact other players, positively and negatively. One of the players said, what do you think his intention was? Instantly, I read off what was the obvious intention of a sloppy order writer, not one player complained.

In the other case, a player had a structure that was essentially two adjacent units attacking an unsupported unit of another player. However, the fundamental difference was that one of his units eligible to supply support could be cut by another defending unit. I had to rule against the order. The person who wrote the order wasn't upset because he had to look at the board several times to determine what he had been thinking! Jim Burgess and Chris Campbell were present for both of my rulings. Later, it would be alleged that I ruled inconsistently *in my favor*. Bull. Chris Campbell was the defender in the second case and avoided losing Warsaw as Russia in the Fall of 1901, and he wanted me to rule against upholding the order! Jim Burgess was his ally in Turkey. I was playing in the second game, discovered the problem in the order, and *ruled against my ally*. The decision didn't impact the outcome of the game.⁶

⁶ Steve Cooley later, in a conference call 7/30/08, had portrayed the positions as being exactly the same (the sound quality was miserable

Seeding the Rounds: Generally speaking a simplistic Windows program that I wrote in a low end programming language called Liberty Basic was used. On a fast computer and with the largest known Diplomacy tournaments requiring very little data crunching, the program executes everything instantaneously. In Vancouver, a few people suggested that I use Manus Hand's DTM software;

On 8/19/2007, I wrote to Manus this email:

"Hello Manus,

At WDC 17, several people suggested that I obtain a copy of DTM. Please send me a copy at websterdtpl@gmail.com. Also, Dipcon 41 will be held in Bangor, Maine. I would be happy to help you with accommodations. Thank you, David Webster"

September 9, 2008, (after Bangor Dipcon 41) Manus responded,

"My horrible apologies for taking so long to get to this! I have been ignoring this email address for a very long time (bad Manus!). I now have 3500+ mails to go through. You can download the DTM at

[http://www.diplom.org/armada/dtm/DTM\[3.12.19\].zip](http://www.diplom.org/armada/dtm/DTM[3.12.19].zip)

My profuse apologies. Manus"

Immediately after Vancouver I pursued a copy of the NADF approved seeding software. I never received it. In the aftermath of Bangor Dipcon 41 and being labeled a cheat, I mentioned that I had attempted to use the NADF's software, even though I had my own. Soon thereafter, I received the email from Manus. For the record, you must get the link from Manus by asking him through email, this is explicitly stated as a requirement. I'm not blaming Manus. It is ironic that one justification for stripping Bangor was slow response times to Edi Birsan's requests. Please note the NADF software linked site was 3500+ mails behind. Likewise, you may or may not recall that the NADF home website was not updated from September 2007 until May 30, 2008.

The computer software that seeded the boards was supposed to be used by Dennis Hutchins. Someone needs to input the players for the tournament, and then select those who are actually playing in a round. In most cases, the software prevents family members from playing on the same board. No family member played on

on the call.) So bad, that I am not positive what precisely Steve had said. I contested any representation about the orders being equivalent situations. Steve was present at the first ruling, and over a hundred yards away in the television studio being filmed when the second decision was made. He flatly does not have a basis to be talking about this issue. I was not allowed time to make this point in the conference call.

any board with me. The software prevents a player from having the same country twice in a tournament and attempts distribute a player's assigned countries across east, central and west regions. The software attempts to allocate countries by three zones: France and England; Italy, Austria and Germany; and Russia and Turkey. No players played a nation more than once at Bangor Dipcon 41. The software normally prevents any duplication of players sharing boards. This feature had to be eliminated at Bangor Dipcon 41 because of their being four rounds and a very small turnout. The software does not have provisions for locals, NADF players or any other designation for players. The software does not assign boards according to pre-tournament ranking or in-progress ranking.

As Jim Burgess has noted elsewhere, my notebook computer with a printer was in one of the three side rooms for the rounds at the University of Maine. At the round at Fort Knox State Park the computer was used by Dennis Hutchins in the Visitor Center before all players had arrived. The players who were attending were known (a parade had delayed some players but they had been in touch by cell phone.) In a conspiracy theory worthy of mini-grassy knoll status, the legend arose that there was no computer at the Fort. My wife, who played on a board, and Dennis each were upset about the allegations and wrote emails to the NADF.

Dennis' email said, "I picked the conclusion time for round one and round three. I also ran the software to place players on boards for round three and round four. The notebook computer was at Fort Knox; I used it there."

Tiffany's email explained how the satchel, with the notebook in it, was moved between the Visitor's Center, under tables and to vehicles to protect it from being stolen in a public place. People didn't see it sitting out on a table because it was in a satchel in a vehicle after being used before the round. Obviously, I knew it was there because I carried it to the visitor's center. I hope the myth about the computer software can be laid to rest.

Dennis owns a computer technician business, with a couple employees; he was called out of the Bangor region and did not return to Bangor in time for round one. I ran the software for round one.

For round two we had a television studio reserved from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. The plan was for Dennis, Dean Beers and I to film one board of players in the studio, which was about one hundred yards away from the other rooms. The University technician in operational control would only agree to those hours for the tournament.⁷ At

the opening session, I announced that filming would occur during round two and that players for the board would not be randomly selected but chosen according to notoriety. No one objected, and every player offered to play on the board accepted. They were allowed to refuse. The players selected were chosen by prior NADF visibility and Carl Ellis, who was leading after round one. Here are the people on the board: Edi Birsan, Chris Martin, Buz Eddy, Brian Sheldon, Steve Cooley, Don Williams and Carl Ellis. Rick Desper would have been on that board but he hadn't arrived at the tournament yet. The film project was part of the bid. The remaining players played on the other board at the usual location.

Dennis used the computer to assign boards three and four. The only alteration was that in round four (at Fort Knox) Don Williams requested not to play if not needed, or if he was needed not to have to play with Chris Martin because he was tired of Chris' playing style/ personality. I told Don that with him there were exactly 21 players. Dennis observed the conversation, and we decided to change Don's board assignment from the board with Chris Martin, quickly switching him with Mike Schneider and avoiding players playing duplicate countries.

Times for Rounds to End: Every round had a pre-determined latest ending time possible. The building generally closed at 1:00 am. However, there were some security issues after 11:00pm. Dennis Hutchins chose the round end times for round one and three. This was done by writing "round end" or "continue" on a series of pieces of paper, which were placed in envelopes labeled with times thirty minutes apart counting backward from when the building closed. Both boards for round one ended by vote. One board in round three ended by solo, while the other board was called using the envelope system. Round two's time was dictated by the studio time, which Dennis, Dean and I all knew in advance. The studio board was actually allowed to run to the end of a year, which was the rule, and finished between 4:00 and 4:30pm. The University studio technician gave us a small leeway. The other board ended in a solo victory before 4:00pm. The fourth round was held at Fort Knox State Park. Tom Constantine chose a round-end. All boards ended by vote before that time.

Where players saw me making announcements they assumed a great number of things that were not true. After the tournament, in a couple instances, I was asked whether I was **THE** tournament director. Never being granted the courtesy of time to answer the question, people jumped at me with I was being evasive. You now have the information. Could you answer the question in *literally a few seconds*, without being called evasive, by people from different sides in this debate?

⁷ The University had offered more time at the time of the bid but had understood that U.S. Representative Michaud would be involved. Though the congressman's office had agreed in 2007, I did not

consummate the request when it became apparent that attendance would be low and contentious.

The scoring system for the tournament was very basic and is known as "Plus Ten." A player receives one point for each supply center held at the end of the game. The player who has the most supply centers receives a bonus of ten points, hence supply centers "plus ten." In the event that there is a tie for the most supply centers no ten point bonus is awarded. The purpose is to encourage players to play to win. The maximum score in a non-solo victory is 27 (17 centers plus 10.) In the event of a solo, the winning player receives 55 points, which is double a non-solo maximum score plus 1. Players on the losing end of a solo receive 0 points. The scoring system is designed to encourage players to gamble for solos. In conjunction with this, the Central Powers System is commonly utilized in local games. This system produces a higher than typical number of solos (see *separate article in the next Diplomacy World*.)

The round one games were won by Carl Ellis and Edi Birsan. In Carl's game, Carl (England) forged a game long alliance with Buz Eddy (France.) Chris Martin (Turkey) came close to repeating his memorable tirade at the Boston Massacre where he actually called a player in my game with him an "ass-clown." I'm not sure what that is exactly, Chris has a scholarly background in modern dance, perhaps it is from that. At one point, later in the tournament, I heard with my own ears, Chris claim that my son played Austria and sided with me. Austria was played by Calvin Patterson. He's a nice teenager, who is decidedly not my son. My son, Peyton Webster, did not play on any board with me, nor has he in any tournament anywhere (but at home oh boy, I can't find an ally at home!) I have never met Calvin outside of this Diplomacy tournament. Calvin's father, presumably Mr. Patterson, is totally unknown to me. Calvin does not reside with any of the players in the tournament. Calvin, I believe, was given a ride home with Drew Deredin once, Dennis Hutchins once, and Michael Schneider on another occasion. All of whom, with me, not surprisingly advised him to be careful with Chris Martin. Original, I know. I attacked Calvin's Austria, with my Italy, on the first turn and by late in the game had reduced him to tears, and *then continued attacking him*. Meanwhile Chris Martin was attacking him from Turkey. Chris asked me if I intended to continue to attack Austria; I said that I did. Chris said that I was heartless but he admired that and that we should *ally together against the kid*. What bastards! I lied to Calvin. Calvin lied to me. Chris lied to Calvin. Calvin lied to Chris. I lied to Chris. Chris lied to me. This occurred virtually every turn from the first move until Chris and I finally took the kid out. Calvin didn't grasp the concept that a dislodged unit can retreat in dangerous ways, and it cost him repeatedly.

After being brutalized, Calvin actually returned for every round of the tournament and the house game, bringing his friend Drew! Talk about a trooper. Both were given directors' award trophies and t-shirts at the end of the DipCon, and begged to get into a monthly rotation of Diplomacy players in the area.

The second round featured the studio game, which was won by Carl Ellis with 12 centers. There were five other players for round two. Dennis and I played to fill-out the board, leaving Dean to handle the filming, while within his capabilities with a ton of equipment to work with. Dean is an instructor at a local Media College, and ironically had years before been a cameraman for northern Maine's premier newscast, which had since that time, donated that former set to the University. The attendance was dismal; therefore, the film project became even more important.

For round two, I drew France. Everyone loves France. England (Jacob Massey) would be fairly easy to ally with. Italy (Calvin Patterson) was an unfortunate repeat. He obviously would want some revenge. Austria (Mike Schneider) had been slammed with Germany the night before. (Turkey) Jim Burgess was all smiles. Chris Campbell (Russia) had a good first round game. Dennis had Germany. I watched Turkey and Russia adjust their pieces on the board as we were getting ready to play. It wasn't a tough read; they were going to do what a large percentage of Russians and Turks do – ally and head west. What they didn't know was that Austria, Italy and Germany were going to do what frequently happens in local play, ally in the Central Powers System and crush Russia and Turkey. Please see the article on the Central Powers System in the next issue of *Diplomacy World*.

The CPS is a product of thinking about how Austria and Italy could have a more level chance and at the same time making Russia and Turkey iffy propositions. In local play, people don't celebrate when they pull Turkey and they think they have a chance to solo with Italy. It's a different balance of powers. More than that, instead of players supply centers being bunched in rectangles, they are stretched to the eastern edge of the board in a line. It is an open system with sharp lines of play. It isn't as easy to see who is winning and who is losing. Experience playing the system is what counts, like in systems of play in chess.

The signature moves are:

Germany: Kiel – Den, Berlin – Prussia, Munich – Silesia
Austria agrees to bump in Galicia with Russia.
Austria: Vienna – Galicia, Trieste – Albania,
BUDAPEST – SUP. VIENNA - GALICIA

When the Spring 1901 moves were read, Jim Burgess openly, verbally claimed that the game was fixed in my favor. For me, this ended the civility of the tournament. I attempted to rationally explain that this was a common opening in local play, that I had created it years ago, it had a name, and that the fact that he was unaware of it hardly gave him room to call five players at the board cheats. In my opinion, Jim had only come to Bangor to chronicle a disaster. When you look at the Spring 1901

opening to the CPS, Germany certainly moves away from France. In terms of relations with France, England and Italy proceed quite normally. Germany can cover Munich with the unit that moved to Silesia. Germany has given up Holland but with a build in Kiel can still have a say in Holland. You can't read England, Austria, Italy as throwing a game for France on the basis of Spring 1901 moves, unless you were predisposed to making the accusation.

In negotiations before the Fall 1901 move, needless to say a bunch of people were highly offended. Mike Schneider (Austria) became determined to get Jim Burgess, and proceeded to play a poor game by not co-coordinating with Germany. Italy, after being bludgeoned by me the night before, was hesitant to commit full-out as is necessary. England proceeded along well. Dennis (Germany) was really upset with being called a cheat. When Dennis turned in his orders, they were written wrong. I described this situation earlier. I think he did it on purpose because he felt bad that Chris Campbell in Russia might think, like Jim Burgess, that the game was rigged. He knew that Russia and Turkey have no chance in the CPS.⁸ Maybe, Dennis made the mistake because he was rattled. I don't know. I had to make a call, and this one was so obvious that, not even Dennis thought it should be allowed. He didn't even ask for it to be permitted.

I'll skip the blow-by-blow; I ended up with a 20 counter solo with France. Two important notes though. Jim Burgess was teetering on elimination; he managed to get a Turkish fleet into the Ionian. Jim then offered to help me (France) expand. Would I mind supporting him to Tunis? I was well on my way to a solo. Austria (Mike Schneider) was livid that Jim had called us cheats. I supported Turkey to Tunis. Shortly, thereafter I took Tunis from Turkey. In the process, Turkey had pretty much insured that Italy would not be able to attack France and prevent a solo. I was puzzled by that.

At this point, based on the position of the units, who would be losing supply centers, the mix of fleets and armies, and the holes in the defenses (CPS games often have linear positions running horizontally across the board), I could count 21 possible supply centers. To do so, I would have to keep "island-hopping," creating positions where the defenders would have to cover and guess.

To solo this board would require another hour, maybe

⁸ Dennis had played in Carnegie before and remembered Carl Ellis and Chris Campbell. He liked them. My son Peyton had played on a couple occasions with Carl and liked Carl. I liked Carl too. I really didn't know Chris. The point is none of the Bangor guys ever considered Carl Ellis and Chris Campbell to be "NADF guys." Buz Eddy had been nice to me in Vancouver, and I didn't view Buz as NADF guy either.

ninety minutes. I really wanted to be over at the studio participating in the filming of the other game. I had 14 units but I had supply centers behind my lines in England and Scandinavia to land-on and take that I had bypassed. I wanted to win the tournament but we only had one crack at the studio, and I had made commitments for post-production for the film. **I offered a draw, at 14, with a certain solo, maybe 20-22 supply centers, in front of me. Jim Burgess (Turkey) vetoed it.**

I finished out the solo, ending with 20. A solo is worth 55 points. With the small number of boards per round, things looked pretty good if I scored something moderate in the next couple of rounds. I wasn't naïve enough to think that the NADF guys weren't going to throw one of their own a solo.

Before round three, Friday night, the buzz was loud and clear that the NADF guys were going to take down Carl Ellis and me. We were in the top two spots. Chris Martin, Brian Sheldon, and Rick Desper were more than a half hour late coming back from dinner. We had eleven players present. Steve Cooley then left to drive home to Massachusetts while we were waiting for them. When Martin, Sheldon and Desper arrived they decided that they would prefer to play poker. We were pushing being an hour late at this point. Now if I were the cheating s.o.b who manipulated an entire tournament, flying psychotically to Vancouver a year in advance, I would have just let the round go off without them. Instead, after asking them, pretty please with sugar on top, they played. We were one person short so I asked Rick Desper to play a country on both boards.

My board had Carl Ellis in Austria; I had England; Edi Birsan had Italy; Mike Schneider played France; Don Williams pulled Turkey; Jim Burgess played Russia, and Rick Desper had Germany. Desper (Germany), Burgess (Russia) and Schneider (France) played good games and eliminated me. Edi Birsan (Italy) and Mike Schneider (France) formed an alliance that held together the entire game. Don Williams (Turkey) was pushing hard on Italy (Edi Birsan.) When I was reduced to one orphaned fleet, Edi pulled out a demon death duck marker to place on my fleet. I decided I should get a photo. After fumbling around for a few minutes with my cell phone, I snapped a grainy photo. Interestingly, as I was playing with my phone near the other board, I discover that I'm back-to-back with Chris Martin, Brian Sheldon and Rick Desper, and they are discussing throwing the solo to Chris Martin. Desper was going to walk out of France for Chris Martin, who was England. Brian Sheldon would let Martin have St. Petersburg. When they walked away from the board to discuss the matter in more detail, I snapped a photo of the board. I clarified to Desper, who wasn't at the opening session, that we don't have conceded solos because he wanted was openly trying to just concede the solo. Martin went from 13 to 18 in the last year.

Back at my board, Desper and Burgess took down my last fleet. Mike Schneider (France) had taken much of my English homeland, but he and Edi propped me up for a while because I had a convenient fleet. Within a few minutes Chris Martin walks over with his score sheet. I can't congratulate him, especially when I can see Jake Massey wondering why he's spent something like four or five hours to have the game thrown. Brian Sheldon is trying to justify it by saying that St. Pete can't be held from the south. Brian didn't see me take the photo, and he's continuing with his jive about not being able to defend. At least he's embarrassed that he threw the game. When Desper gave away his supply centers, he would have had to remove his units that had been attacking the other players as Chris Martin grabbed Desper's supply centers. Due to positioning, Desper's units were vital for Martin to be able to keep 17. Desper, Sheldon and Martin were bright enough to realize this; thus, they arranged to have number 18 given away before the disbands took place. No, Chris Martin didn't have anything like a legit solo.

Fort Know State Park was home to the final round, number four. "The Bay Festival" was occurring. In a more optimistic time, I thought we might get to play in front of people and expose some people to the great game for the first time. The feared rainstorm didn't happen. We had indoor arrangements but it would have been a disappointment. Who could win the tournament? Chris Martin, David Webster, Carl Ellis, Edi Birsan or Jim Burgess were still in the running. Edi or Jim would have to solo. In all seriousness, this is a NADF tournament, nothing prevents the same mentality that gave Martin his solo from giving one to "the master of meta-gamming" Edi Birsan. Main Street in Bucksport was backed-up with a parade, a couple of players were held in traffic for thirty minutes. They called and asked for the round to be held for them. Round four had three boards, and Tom Constantine served as the game master. The third board consisted of novices or players playing in one round, not in contention, or not wanting to take part in what is now decidedly not your average friendly Diplomacy game. Tiffany, Lucy and Peyton Webster all played on board three. Peyton unsuccessfully attacked his sister in the game, taking her out of contention for the win. Mom, Tiffany, in turn stabbed Peyton. Board three called it a day very early, casting a vote to end at the end-of-1902. Chris Martin who was on my board and I were openly feuding, time for the civilized people to go home.

We've already covered the controversy with the computer in the satchel on the grassy knoll with a T-1 line to Roswell. When I awoke in the morning, I was feeling really good. I knew that we were going to have three boards. Of the remaining countries, I could theoretically draw Germany, Austria, Russia or Turkey; however, since I did not have either Russia or Turkey yet, I almost certainly would pull Russia or Turkey

because of the regional allocation distribution in the software. For the final round, the computer assigned me Turkey, good, on a board with Chris Martin, better, with Austria, better yet, but Edi Birsan was on the opposite board with Carl Ellis, not good, but Desper and Sheldon were not both on Martin's board, good. The remainder of my board was Dean Beers (Russia), Jake Massey (Germany), Dennis Hutchins (Italy), Mike Schneider (England) and Brian Sheldon (France.)

You make the call. You are playing Italy, Turkey or Russia and the other two are willing to takeout Chris Martin in Austria. With a straight face, tell me you aren't going to blast him off the board. The last game I played before this tournament with Chris Martin on the board, Russia, France and Germany took Chris out in England. In Dipcon 40, I drew Austria twice; all three neighbors collaboratively took me out. It's Diplomacy.

My first conversation was with Chris Martin. After a couple moments of chit chat, I stated the obvious. We're leading the tournament. We're side by side. You have Austria. Like most games, Austria needs a break or it's going to fall. I think we're just going to take Austria down. Blood could have shot out of his eyes, he became insulting, and I told him what I thought about his thrown solo.

Brian Sheldon (France) wasn't happy. I like having France apparently he doesn't. Brian posted online in part, "Chris had no chance. I never built. It was the worst defense of France that I have ever seen." Chris had the same chance that I had when I drew Austria twice in Dipcon 40. Brian's comments don't give credit to Jake Massey with Germany, who Brian described as "A competent tactician, but inflexible diplomat." Truth be told, after England opened to the Channel and bounced France, England moved away from France and did not attack any French supply centers. Jake Massey, who had experience with war games, but had played Diplomacy for less than a week, completely smoked Brian. I suspect that it was revenge for Brian's thrown solo the night before. Germany opened to Munich, Ruhr and Holland. France opened to Burgundy and Picardy (bouncing in the channel.) From that point on, it was one on one and Germany guessed right on every move and eventually Brian refused to continue putting orders in. Yet, Jake is only "competent." It irked the NADF guys to no end that Bangor didn't put up anyone but novices, and the NADF guys couldn't win. Brian described Mike Schneider, Father Mike, with only these words, "generally an irrational individual." He was rational enough to finish 4th, having only one day more experience than Jake, but again an avid war gamer. Mike Schneider (England), I learned later, mistakenly thought he could win the tournament with a solo. (He didn't know Chris Martin's exact score.) If Mike soloed, Chris and I would receive 0 points, but Mike would not overtake Chris, and the finish would be Chris, Mike and then me. So maybe Brian had a minor point. Brian

claimed that I wrote all the orders for Russia. A complete lie, as if he knew. Brian couldn't keep straight who was playing Italy and Russia. Dean (Russia) chose to hold on the north of Russia because England made an alliance with him that England later broke. Dean refused to not bounce in the Black Sea in the Spring of 1901, a completely wasted move for an open RT. Brian described Dennis (Italy) as "Dean -- Mainiac who felt bad about it, but nonetheless went along with everything Dave proposed." Yeah, wrong name. Brian knew all their inner thoughts, but not their names. Dennis and Dean both were taken aback as Chris Martin and Brian Shelden attempted to bully them into letting Chris Martin survive, as if there is something wrong with taking out Austria. Both players were disgraceful, as was I at times in reaction to them, which I apologized for in relation to Brian at the Dipcon Society Meeting. Dennis was so rattled by Chris' outbursts, threats to quit the game, false accusations, that Dennis hurriedly under time pressure wrote an order to build in Tunis. As mentioned before, board number three voted to suspend their game early. Brian also wrote in his post, the earliest form of the grassy knoll conspiracy, "I asked David how the board assignments were done. He responded '[with] a program that I wrote. 'However, I didn't see any laptops at the outdoor site.' Did you see a brown satchel? Maybe not, when did you arrive at the park? Perhaps an hour after the directors did. Do you think we're going to leave out a notebook computer, unattended with hundreds of people milling about the park? I remember him asking me the question, and turning around in disgust and walking off. He may have been able to see the computer, if he had kept his cool. I heard Brian talking to Chris about "back-dooring" the tournament results at the Dipcon Society Meeting. Personally, I tried not to think of Brian and Chris back dooring.

Brian was correct when he wrote "I and the majority of the travelling hobby boycotted the awards." In this case "I", Brian, is one and Chris Martin, Rick Desper, Jim Burgess, Edi Birsan, Don Williams are five more. That is six people, half of whom cheated in the tournament that they boycotted. Three non-cheaters boycotted. Well, one wanted to boycott in advance (Edi.) Okay then, Jim Burgess and Don Williams boycotted. Um, Jim accused five players of cheating, by playing a standard opening, on the first move, Don Williams boycotted. Don also boycotted Chris Martin, and later publicly said that by playing the games the NADF players had implicitly endorsed the tournament, though it was badly flawed. For his part, Don won his board at Fort Knox, which he hadn't really wanted to play.

Brian also wrote this description, "David was six dots behind Chris Martin going into the last round that counted. With one solo each, no one else could have won the tournament. (Well, Carl Ellis could have if he soloed.)" Did Carl Ellis need to solo? I had 62 points; he had 41 points. Under the scoring system, topping a board is worth 10 points. He needed 11 more centers

than me, and for him to top his board. Again, if Edi were fortunate enough to draw Brian and Rick Desper on the same board, a thrown solo was a real possibility. Brian's post didn't mention his role, and Desper's admitted role, in Chris Martin's solo. A misleading impression was presented that the tournament director (wrong) hand picked (wrong) board assignments and arranged to isolate the only possible way (wrong) that he could lose.

In the midst of the turmoil, Rick Desper heard me arguing with Martin and Shelden about the thrown solo. Neither one would admit that there was a thrown solo. Desper interjected that the game was a thrown solo and that there was absolutely nothing wrong with it. Everyone at my board heard him and some entered into a debate with him. Ten or fifteen park visitors, temporary spectators, heard this. Throwing games didn't seem to make sense to them. After Martin was swept from Austria, Brian Shelden decided too not put in orders, which would have only been one more anyway. Mike Schneider made a play for a solo with England. He was stopped short at 14. I finished with 12 in Turkey. We voted for the draw.

We finished in time to make the tournament activity. A whale watch had been considered; unfortunately, with fuel prices rising, the tickets went from \$28 to \$53 from 2007 to 2008. As a number of high school kids were planning to attend, some quite athletic. One is a state champion wrestler, a father coached wrestling, another was a top three wrestler in the state, a couple had interests in Mixed Martial Arts. I decided to arrange for a instructional seminar at Marcus Davis' gym in Bangor. Marcus is a world ranked fighter, who has fought several times for the UFC and will be fighting again soon. He would have personally led the session but he was going to be out-of-state having scar-tissue surgery; however, another professional fighter in his gym agreed to take the session after the Fort Knox round. I wasn't expecting Buz Eddy and Edi Birsan to spar, but contrary to popular belief there are Diplomacy players in Bangor who did not play at Dipcon 41, and they would have enjoyed it. Unfortunately, the state champion wrestler broke his leg at football practice Friday, and missed both weekend rounds of Diplomacy and the dampened the enthusiasm of a handful of younger more athletic people. The Diplomacy tournament had turned ugly and the event was cancelled; Marcus' gym was paid, a potentially poor choice of people to stiff. Look for Marcus at an upcoming UFC within the next couple of months. He was willing to make the event fun, at a low price, covered in the \$55 Dipcon cost, and suitable for middle-aged duffers.

Sunday July 27th had been scheduled for a team round and the Dipcon Society Meeting. When I arrived at the University, I expected to hold a small team round and a heated meeting. Instead, all the NADF players except Buz Eddy were gone. Carl Ellis and Chris Campbell who were riding back together to Vermont were still present. We could have had 21 again and played three boards

with three people teams, one teammate per board, if everyone stayed. The mood for a team round had melted away sometime on Friday. Instead we decided to hold the Dipcon Society Meeting and then play a house game.

The house game was won by Mike Schneider, with a nine center Germany. Chris Campbell had eight with Austria, in an abbreviated game. Buz was looking to switch to an earlier flight to Seattle, and every one else want a game to end in harmony. NADF president Maletsky later listed the house game as one of four problems with the tournament, "4. The fifth round, the "team" round, which logistically doesn't even make sense given the attendance numbers, was apparently ruled to not count towards the final tournament standings." First, it was crystal clear that the fourth round, at Fort Knox, was the final round from the opening of the individual tournament. This is why the NADF guys split after that round. The Sunday round, the team round, the last round, could have been played with three people per team (one per board, three boards) if every one stayed AND wanted to play. By Friday morning, no one expressed any interest in the team round, or the group activity for that matter. Playing at Fort Knox had a tepid response. I had originally expected seven teams of seven players, hence the seven winning team trophies lined-up on a table from the very start of the tournament.⁹ As of the end of the Fort Knox round, the team round was off but the Dipcon Society Meeting was still on, as scheduled and mandated by the NADF. If the scores for the house game were counted, Mike Schneider would move to third as he would add 19 points and Carl Ellis was eliminated. Several players, present at the University, elected not to play in the house game but would have played if the round counted. All 12 Bangor players were available to play and attend the Dipcon Society Meeting because we anticipated debate, based on Shelden and Martin "back dooring." I'll leave it to the reader to figure out how counting a round, that was never scheduled for individual points, with six players leaving in boycott and not knowing that it would be counted, would be seen as anything other than adding points for Maine players after-the-fact. Every player in the house game knew it was a house game, including Buz Eddy. Every player watching the house game sat out knowing that it was only a house game. The handful of players in contact with me by telephone did not come to play in the game because it was only a house game.

Before the house game began, the group held the awards ceremony. Each player who topped a board received a small trophy. Carl Ellis won two. The top three individual finishers were presented with large cup

trophies, except Chris Martin who was back-dooring with Brian Shelden. Calvin Patterson and Drew Deredin received Directors' (plural) awards for having such great attitudes, just wanting to play with the big guys, even after seeing what ogres the adults are (me included.) Peyton Webster was the top junior finishers, during the school year we would have expected a significant number of high school and college students. Lucy Webster was the top female finisher, prompting me to cite the phrase "showing up is eighty percent of success."

At the Dipcon Society meeting on Sunday, a bid for Dipcon 42/ 2009 was presented for Origins in Columbus. In Vancouver Origins had won the bid for World Dipcon in 2009, with Edi Birsan explaining that no one else wanted the tournament. Origins reluctantly would take the tournament. Origins had sent Edi as their representative to the Bangor Dipcon to receive the designation for Dipcon 42 to be an added designation for the already approved World Dipcon. Edi did not appear in Origins behalf. He had provided me with written information for Origins. I read the presentation. The issue wasn't knowing what Origins was or not liking Origins. I related my positive impression of Origins from attending in the 1990's, but choosing not to play in the NADF tournament, after playing in the prior NADF Dipcon. The basic problem was Origins hadn't actually provided a representative in two straight Dipcons, and seemed by Edi's description, to be taking this chore upon themselves. Some, including me, prefer two tournaments, one World Dipcon and one Dipcon (North American) as it tends to geographically distribute opportunities to play, and the Diplomacy hobby seems to be regional in orientation to me. Buz Eddy's DragonFlight was provided as an alternative. Obviously, after attending Vancouver with a strong Seattle contingent, playing with a meager 22 in a Bangor Dipcon, and looking at the trend of attendance, the upper west coast and the central regions combined seemed to provide a chance for more players to play in a tournament. The vote count was DragonFlight 9 and Origins 0. DragonFlight was scheduled for the first weekend in August. Origins is still hosting WDC 2009. The NADF will take it from here, and DragonFlight may have been withdrawn in the controversy after the tournament. Don't rely on me for information concerning future NADF events.

A new diplomacy charter had been submitted by Edi Birsan in writing. Based on pre-Dipcon emails, he and Jim Burgess expected that the number of NADF players (all players are allowed to vote) to outnumber the local players. In other words, the original estimation expressed by Mark Zoffel that I was the only Bangor Diplomacy player, would allow them to vote through whatever they wanted. All 12 Bangor players were available for the meeting. Only enough to provide a majority attended. If all the NADF players attended, then there would have been 12 votes against them. This is

⁹ Incidentally, in Bangor, we do not award best country because it is believed to detract from the play to top the board mentality found in the scoring system, etc.

why the NADF boycotters avoided the Charter mandated Dipcon Society Meeting, the proper venue, because they knew they didn't have the votes. Furthermore, none of the Bangor players, who actually played in the tournament, were buying the bogus allegations, especially since some of them knew from first hand experience that the claims weren't true. A motion was made to table the new charter until the next Dipcon. The vote to table was defeated 8 to 1. The new diplomacy charter was then defeated 9 – 0, with Carl Ellis, Chris Campbell and Buz Eddy voting.

The final discussion was my prediction that the NADF would contrary to its charter retroactively withdraw recognition of the tournament. The group unanimously was opposed to any vote on a statement because they believed that such action, revoking Bangor's DipCon status, would be an attempt to rewrite history that would not have credibility. Buzz Eddy said that as NADF secretary that he would only report and recognize the results of Bangor Dipcon 41 as the only Dipcon for 2008. This had great weight with the group. He said that Bangor Dipcon 41's results would be going on the Grand Prix scoring, plaques, etc. To be fair, Buz, Carl, and Chris had issues that they were displeased with about me; however, the tournament was played and there was no need to give credibility to any movement to change the results by making a statement. None of them, with the possible exception of Buz, believed that anything would come of the boycotters, especially in light of the fact that the boycotters had skipped the chance to air their grievances before the Dipcon Society. The Dipcon Society Meeting was closed.

The Aftermath

Dave Maletsky, NADF president, emailed me on July 29th, advising me that "Suffice it to say that there is a vast groundswell of support for revoking the DipCon status from the Maine event (which I am personally empowered to do by the DipCon Charter). I am currently investigating the nature of what actually occurred. Setting aside all of the other, more trivial, concerns, I wish to call to your attention that you, as Tournament Director, have been accused by several people, who have painted a rather clear, consistent evidentiary picture mind you, of basically "fixing" the event in the fourth round. Among the irregular factors presented to me:

1. You, as Tournament Director, made yourself eligible for tournament awards
2. You apparently claimed that the boards were seeded randomly on a computer, yet no one in attendance that I have spoken with saw said computer before the fourth round call
3. The board call in the fourth round has sounded highly suspect at best, from what I have heard to date
4. The fifth round, the "team" round, which logistically doesn't even make sense given the attendance

numbers, was apparently ruled to not count towards the final tournament standings

While I am constantly hearing from virtually everyone in the hobby, tournament directors, people who attended Maine, even just random interested parties, I am curious to hear what, if anything, you have to say in your own defense. Currently, there is an emergency meeting of the DipCon Society scheduled for this Wednesday at 3pmEST on a conference call. And, as mentioned above, I myself have the power within the terms outlined in the DipCon Charter to decide the status of the Maine event."

I believe that alleged problems 2, 3 and 4 have been covered in this report. Problem number 1, as one of the acting tournament directors, the main director if one must be chosen, is true. One critic, Jim Burgess claims, that he did not learn of this until after the Spring move 1901, in round two. At no time was there ever a statement made to the contrary. Later, I'll show that this has been the case at other NADF events, Grand Prix and Dipcon included. The tournament ended July 27th. This e-mail was on July 29th. How much information had everyone in the hobby heard from people from Bangor, before the firestorm? None. On the word of six or at maximum ten travelers, a Dipcon can be revoked? So on July 29th, Dave advised me that a conference call would be held at 3pm the next day. Obviously, the need to finish an investigation that quickly was an interesting application of the concept of due process. Before 3pm the following day, I was able to get my wife and Dennis Hutchins to write e-mails to the NADF's Mark Zoffel or Nathan Barnes, who was to moderate the meeting. Neither could take part in the meeting. No other Maine player was able to participate on such short notice; Mike Schneider attempted to obtain an access code number for the conference call but was unable to. The agenda provided by Nathan Barnes for the conference call:

"1.) An overview of the weekend's events, issues players had, and general airing of irregularities at the event Preference will be given to those that attended the event in Bangor. (10 min max)

- This will set the stage for the larger discussion and bulk of the call. We will be discussing several irregularities as the event, including TD seeding and participation in rounds, manipulation of results seemingly in the interest of the TD, questionable representation of the event, and questionable TD board calls.

2.) Discussion of the pros and cons of invalidating the results of Bangor, as well as the possibility of reassigning DipCon to an alternative location. (40 min max)

- My assumption is that there are two camps, and each camp will be given 2 minutes to speak at a time, until

such time as the allotted 40 minutes are up, or we've got nothing more to say.

- General comments will also be heard if necessary, taking a turn in rotation.

3.) Voting on motions. (10 min, more if necessary)

- After the discussion period, there are three questions, at the very least that should be answered.

- a) Should the results of the Bangor event be invalidated?
- b) Should DipCon status be revoked and reassigned?
- c) If reassigned, what location?

- This will be a Roll Call vote. I will read your name, and you're a yes, no, or abstain."

The total time allocated for fact finding was 10 minutes, a complete joke. In the entire conference call I received four or five, opportunities to answer attacks; I don't have an exact count. The combined time to speak was a disjointed six minutes by my estimate. If someone timed it and said a couple minutes more, I'd believe them. The sound quality was very poor, and at one point the organizers asked that whoever was playing the pinging submarine sounds stop. I actually only could hear and comprehend 75% of the call. The pattern was two or three accusations or rhetorical questions, often by people who weren't present, followed by a brief time for me to respond. I was not given an introductory statement period. All I could do was try to answer the allegations that could be best answered in thirty seconds, often trying to unravel misinformation first. More than one person told me that they changed their minds because my answers were evasive! For example, it was alleged that I made contradictory calls on the two decisions made on orders, covered in detail earlier, and that the situations were equivalent. No they weren't. Try explaining that in fifteen seconds, with sound problems, a submarine sound pinging, and have people tell you that you are splitting hairs. As I stated in advance that it was venue shopping, and the complainers found a kangaroo court. Even Jim Burgess emailed me, "I agree with you that you should have had more time (especially given that the original reason for the rush that it would have some effect on HuskyCon is incorrect) to assemble the statements of other players, especially Michael's. "Jim was fair enough during the conference call to acknowledge the notebook computer at the University and that he refused a draw in my solo (when I had 14 centers.)

Nathan Barnes report of the conference call included, "the question was posed to the group: given what we've heard here today, does any action need to be taken. A few people had left the call at this point, so the resolution passed with a vote of 22 for and 11 against, with 5 abstentions.

The floor was again opened back up to discuss what action should be taken and how. Several ideas were floated, revised, and agreed upon.

The course of action voted was one of four options:

- 1) To denote Bangor DipCon 41 with an *, marking it as irregular
- 2) To remove the TD From the results of Bangor DipCon 41
- 3) To remove the status of DipCon from Bangor
- 4) Deciding that this would be better done face-to-face at a special meeting in Tempest.

Votes were by roll call, and were tallied as follows:

Option 1 - 10 Votes
Option 2 - 2 Votes
Option 3 - 17 Votes
Option 4 - 4 Votes
Abstention - 7 Votes¹⁰

Please recall that 11 players from Bangor were excluded from this process. I abstained on the votes. It was later explained to me from the NADF end that the Bangor players at Dipcon 41 "were not representative of the general hobby." If the 11 Bangor players could have voted, it would have been 22 – 22 – 5 abstentions to take action. In other words, the vote would have failed. The conference call crew is a fantasy entity in the Dipcon Charter. My impression, though not sufficiently confirmed, was that the majority of those abstaining, overall in all of the votes, felt that to vote would be to acknowledge the legitimacy of the proceedings. If the real concern was that a tournament director wrongfully won his own tournament, then vote to remove him (me) from the standings. If one thought Chris Martin was cheated out of his victory, the solution was easy. Two of 40 voters made that choice. Edi Birsan, Brian Shelden, Steve Cooley, Don Williams, Jim Burgess, Carl Ellis, Buz Eddy and I were the Bangor DipCon attendees on the call.¹¹ So it was manifestly obvious that the NADF

¹⁰ There were indications of motivations to reassign DipCon to HuskyCon which three days later, hence the rushed emergency meeting, or to Tempest near Washington, DC, two months later. Tempest is a good tournament run by Maletsky. Many of the conference call participants regularly attend Tempest. Some Midwestern players were upset that Origins lost the DipCon bid for 2009, held at Bangor's DipCon Society meeting. A small number had voted against Bangor in Vancouver, didn't attend Bangor DipCon, and may have been predisposed for opposition. While there is some validity for questioning motivations, many players were genuinely concerned because of the allegations. A number of people, not supporting Bangor, thought that the concept of retroactively withdrawing recognition was outside of the charter and was a questionable practice. One person appeared to be amused by playing submarine sounds. Several Vancouver participants felt that Bangor should be stripped because of low attendance – ironically none of them attended the Bangor DipCon.)

¹¹ Nathan Barnes' list of people on the conference call: "Robert Rousse, Jim Burgess, Andy Bartalone, Joe Wheeler, Ike Porter, Len

players who were in Bangor did not think that Chris Martin was denied his rightful crown. The 17 people who voted to remove NADF sanction for Bangor, an unofficial opinion poll, received a second chance to win DipCon in 2008. You can't win if you don't play. *Of the 40 pseudo-voters on the conference call, only 7, including me, were at DipCon 41. (One having left before round 3.) The decisions were based on a meeting with less than 48 hours notice, without a chance to present witnesses, no opening statement, and six non-continuous minutes to answer questions with the sound of a submarine pinging.* My position is that once the Dipcon Society Meeting closed in Bangor, Dipcon was over for the year. The Dipcon Committee which made the decision was rightfully constituted as David Webster, Dennis Hutchins and Dean Beers. By a standard presented by Nathan Barnes, the correct committee was Nathan Barnes and me until July 27th 2008, and me and Buz Eddy now. You haven't heard this before?

7/21/2007, I emailed NADF secretary Buz Eddy, "Can you e-mail me, or direct me to, current charters/rules for submitting a bid to host Dipcon or WDC? Are you aware of anyone bidding in Vancouver, and has anything been submitted in writing as of now? Do you know *who is currently on the Dipcon and WDC committees?*" (Italics added.)

Buz responded, "There is no standing committees. Both WDC and DipCon have charters that guide the selection process. The cc above is the person that is the organizer of this years WDC and DipCon."

The person cc'd was Nathan Barnes who then emailed me on 7/22/07,

"Buz, David –

Technically there is a "DipCon" committee, but *that's simply the person who hosted the previous Dipcon, and the host of the current Dipcon*, it's function is merely to make sure information is passed smoothly. David Hood and I are that committee.

The rules for submitting are pretty straight forward, you need to let me know ahead of time that you're going to bid." (Italics added.)

The Dipcon committee was David Hood, Dipcon 39, tournament director, and Nathan Barnes, Dipcon 40, tournament director. When? From the time when Dipcon

Tennant, Ed Prem, Adam Sigal, Steve Cooley, Craig Regis, Matt Shields, Brian Shelden, JT Fest, Conrad Woodring, David Hood, Greg Harry, Tim Richardson, Mike Hall, Jeff Ladd, Seth Vaughn, Doug Moore, Andy Hull, Doug Kent, Chris Mory, Edi Birsan, Adam Silverman, Andy Marshall, Jeremiah Peterson, Steve Emmert, David Webster, Eric Grinnell, Eric Mead, Dan Mathias, Don Williams, Chris Davis, Kai Hsieh, Brian Ecton, Dave Maletsky, Carl Ellis, Buz Eddy, Mark Zoffel, Nathan Barnes."

39 ended and until Dipcon 40 ended. Remember the date, 7/22/07 is before Dipcon 40 in August 2007. When would the tournament director for Dipcon 41 become part of the committee? When DipCon 40 ended, and at that time David Hood, the old member, dropped off. Remember according to Nathan there were only two members. The DipCon Society in Bangor voted for DragonFlight as the next DipCon, when that happened I became the old member on the committee and Buz Eddy, tournament director for DragonFlight, became the new member.

Every NADF manipulator purposely misstates the function of the DipCon Society. From the DipCon Charter, "1.2 Purpose: The DipCon exists for the purpose of selection a site for each successive DipCon, and for electing an Administrative Committee to manage the Society's affairs between DipCons, as provided for under Articles 2 and 3." Article 2 is about the bid process. The Administrative Committee is described in Article 3.1.

"Article 3.1 The Administrative Committee will consist of three members elected by the DipCon Society to manage the Society's affairs from the end of one DipCon until the next DipCon. "

These are the three people who have to be named in the bid. Unless you have bid on a DipCon or followed the process carefully, you wouldn't normally know about this committee.¹² In Vancouver, those named were David Webster, Dennis Hutchins and Dean Beers. We were mandated to serve until DipCon 41 ended. Once the DipCon ends; it's over.

In Bangor, Buzz Eddy and two others for DragonFlight DipCon 42 were selected. Their term runs from the end of the DipCon 41 year to the date of the DipCon Society Meeting in Seattle 2009. They have no say over DipCon 41 and Dennis, Dean and I have no say over DipCon 42.

I want to confirm this further for you. "Article 3.4 The Chairman of the Committee will act as presiding officer at the DipCon Society meeting."

¹² July 23, 2008, Buz Eddy in a group mailing encouraged Jim O'Kelley of Chicago to make a bid for DipCon 42/ 2009. (The one DragonFlight later bid for.), "Jim, I have mixed feelings on this. I don't think a lack of identified venue is reason to bail, especially if you are going for a fall date. You don't need an identified venue for a bid, only a three person committee." This is the same committee that I am speaking about only it would be from July 27th, 2008 to the end of DipCon 42. Note the list of who received the email: edibirsan@astound.net, JimOK@elks.org, tjhaver@gmail.com, dmaletsky@comcast.net, dance.scholar@gmail.com, wllmsfmly@earthlink.net, rick_desper@yahoo.com, tmssteve@msn.com, websterdtp@gmail.com. That's Edi Birsan, Jim O'Kelley (who acted on the illegitimate board), Tom Haver, Maletsky (who appointed the illegitimate board), Chris Martin = dance scholar, Don Williams, Rick Desper, Steve Cooley and me.

Before Bangor DipCon 41 began, July 23, 2008 Buz Eddy wrote to Edi Birsan, Jim Burgess and me, "My concern is that **David is DipCon chair this year** and needed to know the existing rules..." This is why Edi Birsan forwarded the Origins bid information, and proposed complete new charter to me. I was elected Chairman, with Dennis and Dean as committee members, by virtue of winning the vote in Vancouver.

Can this be overridden? Back to the Charter, concerning the committee:

Article 3.5, "If any member of the Committee is unable to continue his function, he will nominate his own successor. If he does not, the Chairman will do so. If the Committee fails to function, its powers devolve upon the North American Diplomacy Federation, who must appoint a new Committee within one month time. If the NADF inquires as to the Committee's progress, and does so twice in succession without receiving a reply, it may consider the Committee as no longer performing its function. (Such inquiries must not be less than 10 days apart, and one week must be allowed for each reply.) Copies of these inquiries should be posted on the NADF website at the time the inquiries are made."

I want to break this down. Dennis, Dean and I never stopped functioning. Therefore, we didn't need to appoint our own successor. The committee did not stop functioning. It completed its year July 27th, 2008. Did the NADF make inquiries posted on its website, no. In fact, the website was down until May 30, 2008, as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, it is blatantly obvious from NADF secretary Buz Eddy's email of July 23rd, the day before DipCon 41 started, that the Committee was still functioning. Buz had also emailed at one point that the DipCon would have to have a total of 5 boards to make NADF Grand Prix standards. The tournament met that criteria; however, this requirement technically is not in the DipCon charter.

Okay, in pure terms the Committee was Dennis, Dean and I up to July 27th 2008. In practice, Nathan Barnes maintained that it is successive Chairmen, David Hood and Nathan until the bid for DipCon 41 was awarded. It then became Nathan Barnes and David Webster. When Buz Eddy won the bid for DipCon 42, Buz and I became the Committee. That practice isn't in the DipCon Charter; however, anyway you cut it by the Charter or following precedent David Maletsky has no authority to appoint anyone without posting inquiries and not after the DipCon has ended. The only committee that David Maletsky could reappoint over is the current DragonFlight committee. Otherwise, nothing prevents the NADF president at any time from appointing a committee and undoing the results of DipCon 40 (with issues that will be discussed shortly), DipCon 28, or DipCon 38, which had fewer players than Bangor and required a cruise ship boarding pass that was \$1,500, a

significant barrier to entry. I'm not advocating reopening any of these. When the tournaments ended; they are done. If you do not want that to be the case, amend the charter at the next DipCon and have it confirmed at the following DipCon, which is the process for amending the charter. This is the process because it allows those people who actually attend to have a democratic vote.

After DipCon 41, Dave Maletsky claimed he had the sole authority (aforementioned email.) Then the Kangaroo court was arranged by the NADF, but that could only be advisory. Then Dave attempted to appoint a new committee, 7/30/2008 Dave wrote, "I have reappointed the DipCon Committee. Its new constituents are Buz Eddy (Chair), David Hood, and Jim O'Kelley." Soon Maletsky reported that Buz Eddy had "respectfully declined." Somehow, Nathan Barnes ended up back on the committee when the decision to remove NADF association for Bangor Dipcon 41.

Common Allegations and Complaints

The biggest one that hasn't been addressed yet is that as tournament director I should not have played in the tournament. First, I did not gain an advantage from being tournament director. I benefited from playing on my home field, not because I was a tournament director, but because I had met some of the local players before, plus I had played with some of the NADF players before. Diplomacy is an easier game, if you can find an ally.

A more important point is that *other NADF tournament directors have played in their tournaments for awards*. I bet most readers don't know that or believe that. Go to the EDA website and lookup the results for World Dipcon 17/ Dipcon 440 in Vancouver 2007. Three tournament directors are listed: Nathan Barnes, Mike Hall, Matt Shields. You have already read Nathan's email identifying himself as being tournament director. Nathan finished 12th. I played against a very competitive Mike in the tournament. In the first round he soloed with Russia, winning best Russia, and taking the lead in the tournament. Of the three tournament directors, Mike is the only Canadian. He was the local anchor. Mike finished 11th. Mike was outraged that I played in the Bangor tournament, go figure.

In the Boston Massacre, 2007, sole tournament director Melissa Call played and won best Russia. In 2008, she finished 15th. The results from her official report:

..1.Chris.Martin.....41.27..24.14..20.00..85.41
..2.David.Maletsky.....12.07..28.81..25.93..66.81
..3.Brian.Shelden.....20.69..31.48..10.91..63.08
..4.Andy.Bartalone.....1.72..13.56..44.44..59.73
..5.Peter.McNamara.....20.37..16.67..22.22..59.26
..6.Alex.Amann.....6.35..24.07..25.45..55.88
..7.Charles.Steinhardt....20.37..20.34..10.91..51.62
..8.Christian.Pedone.....1.59..24.07..25.93..51.59
..9.Amanda.McLean-Thomso..33.33..13.56.....46.89

.10.Seth.Vaughn.....	36.21...8.62...0.00..44.83
.11.Chris.Campbell.....	36.21...6.78.....42.99
.12.Graham.Woodring.....	1.72...8.47..30.91..41.11
.13.Randy.Lawrence-Hurt...	20.37..17.24...1.82..39.43
.14.Don.Woodring.....	1.85...1.85..35.19..38.89
.15.Melissa.Call.....	11.11..27.78.....38.89
.16.David.Webster.....	1.85..18.52..14.81..35.19
.17.Maxwell.LebLANc.....	24.14...8.62...1.85..34.61
.18.Eric.Fitzgerald.....	15.87..17.24...0.00..33.11
.19.Greg.Bylenok.....	15.52..14.81...1.85..32.18
.20.Hugh.Beckett.....	1.72..27.78.....29.50
.21.Peyton.Webster.....	0.00..13.79..14.81..28.61
.22.Carl.Ellis.....	15.87..10.34...1.85..28.07
.23.Chris.Morse.....	17.24.....9.26..26.50
.24.Gregg.Harry.....	12.07...9.26.....21.33
.25.Jeff.Luce.....	18.97.....18.97
.26.James.Choy.....	7.94...8.47...1.85..18.26
.27.Jeremy.Peterson.....	1.85.....1.85
....Chris.Martin.2.....	1.85.....1.85
....Andy.Bartelone.2.....	1.85.....1.85
.30.Bob.Holt.....	1.72...0.00.....1.72
.31.John.Todd.....	0.00...0.00...0.00

I'll stop here. I'm only using the Boston Massacre because it was the NADF tournament directly before Bangor Dipcon 41. You may have noted that Dave Maletsky, Chris Martin, Brian Shelden, Carl Ellis and Chris Martin appear in the list. Chris Martin finished first, Dave Maletsky was second, and Brian Shelden was third. Is the order of finish part of the issue? In 2007, Jim Burgess attended the Boston Massacre.

Tournament Director Making Calls in His Favor

The rulings that had to be made in Dipcon 41 were minimal. I did not benefit from any of the calls. The Bangor players would have testified that these allegations are purely a post-Dipcon ruse. I was very surprised to learn of this charge. I do understand the potentially legitimate point that a tournament director playing will create moments where the appearance of a problem is possible. This is hardly limited to Bangor Dipcon 41.

At Carnage 2007, I played in a game with Bob Holt. It was a frustrating game in several ways. To begin, Don Woodring and I were allies. Peter McNamara was expanding rapidly with no resistance being even attempted by one of his victims. Bob was down to one supply center and he wanted to end the game and get something to eat. I didn't like what was happening on the board and openly said so. At that point, my position began to steadily dwindle. My interpretation of what was happening was that another player was going to allow Peter to expand all the way to 18, unless I accepted a draw. I couldn't cave to that kind of tactic. The game proceeded for *hours*, with Peter on a steady march on my positions, grinding it out. A secret draw vote was taken, and it was Don Woodring who voted for the game to continue. Bob Holt became so ticked at me that he

changed the time rule mid-game. The clock had been set to a shorter amount of time for negotiations. I did not notice this, when I noticed I protested. Bob Holt said that everyone else wanted the shorter time and since I hadn't complained on the earlier turn the new time limit was in place because "I'm the tournament director and that's my ruling." Everyone at the board, except Don Woodring, was mad at me. I thought the whole scenario was bogus. Don was expanding his position and had actually voted to continue the game (not me), but we were the only players who knew this for several board years.

At the Boston Massacre 2008, Melissa Call and I were allies. She had Russia and I had Turkey. Chris Martin in England was eliminated by a concerted effort by Russia, France and Germany. Russia came to the party a little slowly. Eventually, Chris insulted his other attackers, and at one point unleashed the insult of calling one an "ass-clown." The stupidest people on the board always seem to those who take Chris out, or so it would seem by Chris' comments. The game continued until quite late. The player with France announced that he had to go home. He had 10 centers. Melissa in Russia had 10, and I had 6 with Turkey. The unfortunate thing was that Melissa had just left the Ukraine open, and I could walk to either Warsaw or Moscow unimpeded. I also had a guaranteed steal of a center from her in the Balkans. And the possibility of a third center if she did not retreat toward the homeland immediately with everything she had. If France and Germany attacked her she was in major trouble. In the process of trying to force a neat finish by calling a draw, when France was about to leave, and finding Carl Ellis to serve as a replacement, the clock went down to 5:40 seconds for the turn and no way for Cal to even reconcile who was playing what and get a read on the board. I suggested that the clock be reset to 15 minutes so Carl could begin play on his first turn with 15:00, the normal time per phase. Melissa ruled no.

Carl would simply play a cautious first couple of seasons. No! Because of the time in the evening there were only a couple of years remaining. He had inherited 10. Melissa had 10. I had 6. Melissa couldn't possibly maintain more than 7. Carl would have 11, and I would have 8. Carl would win just by pushing his pieces in her direction. Germany also factors into this, but that is off point. Melissa's call was purely motivated by self-preservation. She was the only player opposed to resetting the clock. I told her that it was B.S. and agreed to a draw because the game obviously was artificially changed due to the player leaving. A player leaving certainly is not Melissa's fault. This was an example of a tournament director on an issue that was too close to home. Those things happen. I didn't quit the tournament. Melissa, demonstrated above, does play for awards at the Boston Massacre. Her 10 center Russia had been closing in on top Russia, which was 13.

Hand Assigning of Boards

The events of Bangor Dipcon 41, in regards to how boards were assigned has been covered, you may have the impression that all NADF Grand Prix events use computers to assign boards. Actually *some NADF tournaments are not evenly randomly assigned by hand*. Carnage 2008 was hand selected by Bob Holt, the tournament director. Peyton Webster, Dennis Hutchins, and I were at the Diplomacy room well before the second day's morning round was assigned. Bob was in a chair, near the windows, working on the board assignments. He told us that he had placed two guys from Vermont together on the same board the night before because one was claiming to be a novice. Bob never hid from anyone that he chose board assignments and countries with individual players based on personalities, play strength and past histories as part of the appeal of the tournament. He, as I recall, looked to be using an Excel Spreadsheet for record keeping. After the round where Bob and I butted heads over the timing rule change in a game we both were playing in, I feared that I was looking at getting Austria, with Peter McNamara and one of a small group of players who I thought were certain to ally with Peter. Yes, Bob thought that an interesting match would be me in Austria, with Peter in Russia and Melissa Call with Turkey. Incidentally, the Carnage tournament, when Dave Maletsky was the tournament director, allowed brothers to play on the same board, when the situation could have been avoided by assigning different boards. They finished first and second on the board, under the Maletsky scoring system which is largely rank of finish place. The two brothers finished first and second in the tournament.¹³

In Tom Haver's report on the National Block Party in May 2008, Diplomacy World #102, he notes, "There were three less experienced players at the board, so at the suggestion of Edi and myself we put them in England, France, and Germany." That Edi would be Edi Birsan. Sound like a manipulated placement? Yes, but there were valid reasons in the interest of running an enjoyable tournament. In the Fort Knox round at Dipcon 41, Dennis Hutchins and Tom Constantine we were faced with four Websters, and a few novices over three boards in a bitter contest. Board 3 in round 4 was a solution to avoid a family member of mine being able to shape the end result by either helping me on my board or attacking my closest competitors on other boards. In other words, the intention was to limit help for me. Good intentions that have been interpreted in a harsh light.¹⁴

Dan Mathias, I believe a tournament director at next years Origins World Dipcon, does not use computer

seeding. He does use solid controlled manual procedures that are random. I'm not implying that anything is wrong. Dan has been quite neutral, cautious, and thoughtful in his communications with me. If it was this easy to throw computer seeded boards into question, what can a malcontent do with manual systems or hand-seeding like at Carnage?

Nathan Barnes –

<http://www.diplom.org/Zine/F2002R/Barnes/deMetaGaming.html>

Nathan Barnes wrote an article for the Diplomatic Pouch – The Zine – Fall 2002 Retreat titled, "Dispelling Meta-Gaming Myths." (I have added italics throughout these quotations.) He stated, "There is always talks during and after tournaments, where, upon reflection, players detect a pattern. Perhaps the same players were always in a draw together, or a certain pair of players never seems to attack one another. We can all remember examples from tournaments where this seems plausible. I would argue, however, that most of these cases are, most likely, misperceptions of the dynamics between the individuals involved." He gave an example of what some thought was meta-gamming in DragonFlight 2001, "The first 3 rounds I was in a four way draw with the SAME players." He continued, and later wrote, "Some people are very upset that others will come to the board knowing some people better than others... This is NOT something that rules can ever prevent. We are dealing with people, human nature, and personalities that have lives outside of a Diplomacy board, it is not possible to make enforceable rules that can alter and shape people's motivations." Nathan noted, "Some lauded my solo in the first round of DragonFlight this year, but I paid for it with elimination the next round." This is exactly what happen to me with rounds 2 & 3 and Chris Martin in rounds 3 & 4. Nathan, worked toward this conclusion, "Hauling out words like 'cheating' and 'care-bear' and 'cabal' create a much more divisive environment, counter-productive to building up the hobby. The unwillingness of some to see beyond their own understandings of how Diplomacy should be played, coupled with their inability to refrain from applying their personal standards to other players, does much more harm than good, while at the same time betrays a certain level of misunderstanding about the game, as the previous passages have explained in agonizing detail. Solutions such as attracting more players are good, but they do not address the 'problem', as there will always be familiarity on the board. Not only that, but it cheapens the constant work that people like Buz Eddy or Edi Birsan or Manus Hand are constantly doing to attract people to the hobby." This is the same Nathan Barnes who gave me six minutes, and excluded 11 people from Bangor from the conference call.

¹³ Graham and Conrad Woodring were the brothers. Male sky's friends from HuskyCon. Carl Ellis played on the same board.

¹⁴ The other two boards at Fort Knox were computer selected with the modification necessitated by Don Williams' request.

The Moving Target

When the post Bangor Dipcon 41 complaints began to be relayed to me by David Maletsky, I attempted to find out what justified revoking NADF recognition. 7/29/08, David Maletsky, NADF president, emailed me, "if you want to be on the conference call, to defend your event or even simply to listen, I can provide you the information when I get the specifics, which is frankly something no one else in the hobby is going to go out of their way to offer to you."

This explains why I received six minutes of time, with less than 48 hours notice, without witnesses. Maletsky continued, "no matter what happens in the meeting, unless I start hearing evidence and argument to the contrary, I will be revoking the status of DipCon from the Maine event, and appointing a new DipCon committee." Powers that Maletsky does not have under the Dipcon Charter.

Maletsky cited the four problems mentioned earlier.¹⁵ I responded to him and I believe in this report to you have demonstrated that nothing that happened in Bangor was unprecedented in NADF Grand Prix competition. Ultimately, Maletsky stated on 7/29/08, "Again, the problem is not any of the elements present individually. The *gestalt* of them collectively creates an appearance of impropriety, to put it mildly." (emphasis by Maletsky.) I'll break that down, none of the elements alleged, before a defense was allowed, is unprecedented enough to disqualify Bangor, and none of them were proved. Yet, the collection of unproven allegations which are not unprecedented creates an appearance of impropriety or worse if they could actually be proven. They weren't proven. These were allegations before any witnesses, before an attempt to establish what NADF practices have allowed.

Chris Martin at

http://www.diplom.org/~diparch/resources/ftf/top_table.htm

Chris Martin wrote an article, called "Top Table – Good or Bad?" reprinted from *Spring Offensive 71* at diplomacy-archive.com. Imagine the NADF guys coming to Bangor expecting to find that they are in the majority, which is obvious because they expected to submit a complete Charter change that was a slap in the face of Bangor. Obviously, this couldn't get the necessary 2/3

votes if more than five players from Bangor were present, as compared to 10 NADF players. Here's an excerpt from Chris' article:

"Let's take a look at a fictional scenario. The Arlington Beer and Dagger Society has decided, as a group, to win RebelCon. *14 of the club members make the trip to Raleigh, North Carolina, and they have decided that they are going to make Richard Timson the champ. So, whenever any of them are on a board with him, they will do everything they can to make him the winner - nothing above board, but when it comes time to stab, he somehow gets all their centers. On other boards, they play not to win, but to force draws - always ganging up on any leaders, preventing anyone from getting points.* There are 49 people at the con, 7 boards, and the AB&DS members are a significant percentage. At the end of the weekend, Surprise! Richard has the best score. *The AB&DS laughs all the way home, and next tournament it'll be Morris Stevens who gets to be champ. Meta-gaming, and I highly approve of it, in spirit.*" (Italics added.) That's Chris Martin, not me, who approves of this.

Is this an apt description of what came to pass with the NADF sending just a few guys, three of them combining to throw a solo – to the author, while the others take out Carl Ellis and David Webster, which specifically was stated before round three? Does this sound like Edi Birsan's gunslinger talk in Vancouver? Rick Desper admitted that they threw the solo to Chris Martin, and because Rick was playing two boards in that round, he was simultaneously eliminating me on the other board! I don't think that all of the NADF guys would do that, most specifically Carl Ellis, Chris Campbell and Buz Eddy. I think that in reality, a few came to Bangor expecting that one of them would pick-up an easy Dipcon title. They would pass a draconian Charter change to "reform" the situation. The problem was they didn't win.

This excerpt of Martin's article circulated in Bangor circles before the tournament. Who wants to play against people who approve of such meta-gaming? A dozen novices who sent them packaging with their tails between their legs, that's who.

If the conditions were objectionable, the NADF players should have refused to play until changes were made.¹⁶ Don Williams was honest enough to acknowledge this. To *allege* that they were out meta-gamed is ironic. The reader of this document should have a better perspective of what really happened with Bangor Dipcon 41. At this stage in a blood-feud, I have little choice but to present a case. Personally, I know that the person holding the shotgun trying to force the bride and groom to marry – was me. It was a mistake. I thank *Diplomacy World* for providing a forum, so that anyone who wants to hear Bangor's defense in the future can find

¹⁶ Steve Cooley didn't leave until he fell behind 62-15.

¹⁵ 1. You, as Tournament Director, made yourself eligible for tournament awards
2. You apparently claimed that the boards were seeded randomly on a computer, yet no one in attendance that I have spoken with saw said computer before the fourth round call
3. The board call in the fourth round has sounded highly suspect at best, from what I have heard to date
4. The fifth round, the "team" round, which logistically doesn't even make sense given the attendance numbers, was apparently ruled to not count towards the final tournament standings

something. For those who actually read this document, whether you agree or disagree with me, you have given me a fair hearing, and I'm impressed with your fundamental fairness.

A tournament was held July 24th – 27th, 2008 at the University of Maine. Every known Diplomacy player in North America was invited to play. Every one had a chance to play, no one was barred at the door. Every person who complained about the turnout could have been here. You think that you were lied to? Really, you were clearly, repeatedly told that there was reserved attitude in Bangor, but that I was trying to bring the two together. I even employed the comparison with Nixon going to China *in my presentation for the bid*. When the NADF guys threatened in *January* to remove the bid,

they depressed attendance. Every item in my presentation was true, and with the exception of the dismal actual attendance, I came through on every other promise. I failed. The NADF failed. Where were you? It's much easier to get on a conference call than to make the effort to attend. That's why the DipCon Charter reads, "1.3 Membership: Each Diplomacy player who has registered for and is attending a DipCon is considered a member of that year's DipCon society. Membership in any other organization may not be considered qualifying or disqualifying in this regard. No absentee votes may be cast." There were 22 DipCon society members this year. The majority found no reason to take any action to change the NADF status of Bangor DipCon 41.

Round 1	Board 1	SC	Pts	Round 1	Board 2	SC	Pts
Austria	Edi Birsan	11	21	Austria	Calvin Patterson	0	0
England	Chris Campbell	7	7	England	Carl Ellis	9	19
France	Peyton Webster	4	4	France	Buz Eddy	7	7
Germany	Jim Burgess	3	3	Germany	Mike Schneider	1	1
Italy	Don Williams	1	1	Italy	David Webster	7	7
Russia	Steve Cooley	8	8	Russia	Jake Massey	2	2
Turkey	Brian Shelden	0	0	Turkey	Chris Martin	8	8
Round 2	Board 1			Round 2	Board 2		
Austria	Buz Eddy	1	1	Austria	Mike Schneider	6	0
England	Don Williams	3	3	England	Jake Massey	0	0
France	Steve Cooley	7	7	France	David Webster	20	55
Germany	Brian Shelden	7	7	Germany	Dennis Hutchins	0	0
Italy	Chris Martin	4	4	Italy	Calvin Patterson	6	0
Russia	Carl Ellis	12	22	Russia	Chris Campbell	1	0
Turkey	Edi Birsan	0	0	Turkey	Jim Burgess	1	0
Round 3	Board 1			Round 3	Board 2		
Austria	Carl Ellis	0	0	Austria	Jake Massey	3	0
England	David Webster	0	0	England	Chris Martin	18	55
France	Mike Schneider	9	9	France	Rick Desper	0	0
Germany	Rick Desper	3	3	Germany	Calvin Patterson	0	0
Italy	Edi Birsan	3	3	Italy	Chris Campbell	5	0
Russia	Jim Burgess	11	21	Russia	Brian Shelden	8	0
Turkey	Don Williams	8	8	Turkey	Buz Eddy	0	0
Round 4	Board 1			Round 4	Board 2		
Austria	Jim Burgess	6	6	Austria	Chris Martin	0	0
England	Edi Birsan	4	4	England	Mike Schneider	14	24
France	Chris Campbell	6	6	France	Brian Shelden	0	0
Germany	Buz Eddy	0	0	Germany	Jake Massey	3	3
Italy	Carl Ellis	1	1	Italy	Dennis Hutchins	3	3
Russia	Don Williams	9	19	Russia	Dean Beers	2	2
Turkey	Rick Desper	8	8	Turkey	David Webster	12	12
Round 4	Board 3						
Austria	Lucy Webster	5	5				
England	Drew Deredin	5	5				
France	Calvin Patterson	5	5				
Germany	Tom Constantine	7	17				
Italy	Tiffany Webster	4	4				
Russia	Steve Look	5	5				
Turkey	Peyton Webster	3	3				

The Final DipCon 41 Results

Place	Name	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Total
1	Webster, David	7	55	0	12	74
2	Martin, Chris	8	4	55	0	67
3	Ellis, Carl	19	22	0	1	42
4	Schneider, Michael	1	0	9	24	34
5	Williams, Don	1	3	8	19	31
6	Burgess, Jim	3	0	21	6	30
7	Birsan, Edi	21	0	3	4	28
8	Constantine, Tom				17	17
9	Cooley, Steve	8	7			15
10	Campbell, Chris	7	0	0	6	13
11	Desper, Rick			3	8	11
12	Eddy, Buz	7	1	0	0	8
13	Webster, Peyton	4			3	7
13	Shelden, Brian	0	7	0	0	7
15	Patterson, Calvin	0	0	0	5	5
15	Massey, Jake	2	0	0	3	5
15	Deredin, Drew				5	5
15	Look, Steve				5	5
15	Webster, Lucy				5	5
20	Webster, Tiffany				4	4
21	Hutchins, Dennis		0		3	3
22	Beers, Dean				2	2

Meeting the Expectations and Promise of the Diplomacy Community

By Chris Babcock

The Diplomacy hobby is at a cusp. As the game passes its 50th anniversary, we are faced with decisions that will affect the next 50 years. Technologies are maturing that not only enable small interest groups, like the Diplomacy hobby, to interact, but also for it to be possible that those interactions could be profitable for some. User expectations are increasing at the same time. Players expect more polished user interfaces for their game servers and social networking sites, more professionalism at conventions and a more customer-centric focus overall. We not only expect more and better services; we expect that technology will enable those services to be delivered at a lower cost.

In the throes of such progress, there remains a need to preserve the legacy of the hobby - continuity with the history and with the values that have brought us to this place. If we ever hope, ourselves, to have the kinds of anecdotes we hear of early Cons and postal players then we must at once preserve our heritage and see ourselves as pioneers. The kind of dirty dealing and other in-game shenanigans that we treasure in the past can only remain part of our future if we are absolutely scrupulous about our dealings with one another in the hobby community, with integrity in our dealings with

each other away from the game board.

This is how and why we must organize ourselves and our resources to provide quality services within the hobby on a nonprofit basis. It is a strange quirk of human nature, and one that the paranoia of the Diplomacy table exacerbates, that we only trust those in whom we can identify the baser motives for their actions. This being the case, it is easier for Diplomacy hobbyists to give personal information to Yahoo than it is for them to supply an accurate registration to a judge keeper and it is often easier to pay for subscription services than it is to donate to a nonprofit organization. That being said, it might be easier to relegate organizing conventions and the hosting of game servers and social networking sites within the hobby to for-profit concerns. It would be easier, but it wouldn't be right. Most businesses are arranged for the profit of their owners. This is a natural expectation and perfectly acceptable in most situations. For certain social purposes, however - including the business of the Diplomacy hobby - this is not acceptable.

There is within the hobby certain services, such as the preservation of archives of Diplomacy game data and 'zine articles, that are highly unlikely to ever be

profitable. There are other services, such as running conventions and hosting websites, which may have profit potential. On the other hand there are those who have been providing services to the hobby community for many years, often at great personal cost. It's not unusual for 'zine publishers to spend \$100 out of pocket for each issue published. Running a properly configured "public" email judge in keeping with the Terms of Service of an Internet Service Provider costs from \$40 to \$200 a month over and above the cost of a residential Internet connection, depending upon the location of the server.

If we want reliable and quality services in the hobby, and we do, then we must be prepared to pay for those services. If we want those services to be available on the basis of the needs perceived by those who love the game and who have given their time in service to the Diplomacy hobby - as opposed to the determination of the marketplace - then we must support those services through nonprofit concerns.

First and foremost on everyone's minds right now will be the re-sited DipCon. This is a legitimate concern and a very vivid illustration of the principles involved. It is to be hoped that the participants enjoy themselves as well as doing a thorough job of restructuring that event as necessary to preserve its continuing role in the hobby. While discussions about rewriting the DipCon charter has raged, however, other work in the hobby has gone forward quietly.

Very few of us, you see, are able to gather 7 players in one place and at one time for face to face games for much of the year. The need to perpetuate the hobby, and indulge ourselves, in between Cons (and for those unable to attend) is filled by various methods of play at a distance - initially using the postal service then, as they have matured, various Internet media. Since 1963, John Boardman and subsequent Boardman Number Custodians have been tracking and archiving postal Diplomacy games. These archives have, at times, included live and electronic games as well.

Now an effort is underway to collect those 45 years of archival data and make them publicly available on one site, while at the same time developing state of the art data tools for the Diplomacy hobby. The project includes a website inspired in part by floc.net, the archives of the Boardman Number and Miller Number Custodians, and data tools to simplify the collection and transfer of game results. The tools being developed have applications for all kinds of Diplomacy players. The records will be available for players to research opponents and compare styles of play from differing playing venues. The archival tools themselves will be available for individual players and Diplomacy clubs to collect and analyze results from their own games and for AI programmers to analyze in detail the performance of the 'Bots they develop. This in turn will inform variant

designers about which bots can be best used to simulate human play for testing purposes, resulting in a richer playing experience for all players.

This project, called the Diplomacy Assigned Numbers Authority (or DANA for short), is being created to:

- Set up a permanent web site to make available both the historical postal game records and the Internet games.
- Acquire and archive the historical and on-going record of Diplomacy games played in diverse media, presenting the archived data free for non-commercial use.
- Draft standards for the storage of Diplomacy game data and develop implementations of those standards in various media.
- Automate, as fully as possible, data capture from existing and developing Diplomacy game venues.

At this time, there are 80 boxes of records in Oakland and other records scattered throughout the country. It will cost \$250 to move the records in Oakland into storage and \$100 a month for storage until they can be scanned. Other costs anticipated include \$250 in start-up costs and \$800 for a dedicated file server. The objectives above are part of the definition of the scope of activity for DANA as defined in the charter, available at <http://www.asciiking.com/diplomacy/dana/>.

With the first release of the XML schema for Diplomacy Archive Markup Language, created for DANA by the author, and the work scheduled this winter for archive utilities, it is hoped that DANA will be a model in the hobby for combining financial resources and talent in the Diplomacy hobby to achieve great things. There is a role for any person who loves this game to contribute to the success of this endeavor. In addition to \$500 in initial costs to secure the Oakland archives and establish DANA as a nonprofit corporation, there is also the need for coders who understand Python, XML, C, C++, HTML, MySQL and PHP to help with the archival utilities, to write import utilities for the various automated servers and to create other tools to manage the collection and analysis of game data.

The DANA archive project is not only a link to the past, it is a set of tools for the future and a model of the kind of cooperative effort of which the Diplomacy community is capable. Please consider the goals and ideals put forward here with an eye towards making your own contribution to the hobby.

If you don't know who Chris Babcock is by now, you haven't been paying attention...go back and read the last few Diplomacy World issues!

Beyond Blitzes and Hedgehogs: An Overview of Austrian Opening Strategy

by Frank Oosterom

Basic

Generally the Austrian position on the board divides the field of Diplomacy players into two groups: the lovers and the haters of this major power. While there has been said so much about how to survive with this fickle power since strategy has spread out on paper, I thought it was time to make an overview of all the insights brought forward so far and shed some modern light on it.

Please bear in mind when reading this that I'm talking about face-to-face games, in any kind of scoring system. Though there is an awful lot to say about which system does what with your strategies, my viewpoint is that in all systems you need to thrive. Whether this is with as many fellow players with you or not is left for other discussions.

There and back again – The hedgehogs

So what has been said about Austrian opening strategy? Well, the two most considered openings in strategy are beyond doubt the **Southern Hedgehog** and the **Balkan Gambit**. The Southern Hedgehog being the most defensive one of the two, first put forward by Richard Sharp as an aberration of his original Hedgehog, the opening moves are as follows:

F Tri – Ven
A Vie – Gal
A Bud – Ser

The main changes to the original Hedgehog is the movement of the Budapest army, which the standard Hedgehog sent eastwards to Rumania. Although this was firstly considered to be nicely reactive to any Russian interest in the Balkan, it also spurs too much Turkish interest into the Balkans. This caveat is somewhat circumvented by the prospect of a Turk with anti-Russian sympathies, though there's a lot more to gaining that advantage than simply the movement to Rumania.

At least it opens up profitable negotiations with the Sultan as it keeps the option of Greece to leave to one or the other. At the same time, though, this also puts Italy in the same equation. Richard Sharp makes it even stronger in his article about the Hedgehog (Dolchstoss No. 47, November 1976): "you've made a present of Greece to the Italians, who can keep Tunis on ice for later."

The weakness that is created in the Austrian position leads Sharp to change Bud-Rum into Bud-Ser, and this

seems like the most sound variation of this opening. At the same time you make sure there is no Russian in Galicia, no Italian in Venice and you have proclaimed Serbia to be Austrian. Still Greece is far away with this hedgehogging business. The upside of this is that you've got more control over Greece and you can still choose between Italy and Turkey for an ally with this very strategical center as a bargaining gift. On top of that you've sounded the bell for everybody with these defensive first moves: Austria will not be gobbled down like a fish.

Then there is the more forward thinking Balkan Gambit.

F Tri – Alb
A Vie – Bud
A Bud – Ser

Actually, the Viennese army has a couple of options within the Balkan Gambit, giving rise to its variations. The first one is just holding it. This forestalls the matter of either trusting Russia or Italy. If you suspect one of the two to move to Galicia or Trieste respectively, the best way is to bounce by moving the Viennese army there, hence the Galician and Trieste variation. Of course you cannot do both at the same time, so you must be very scrutinizing with this decision. In case the Italian is more hostile-looking you could also opt for the Tyrolean variation, which stops dead an Italian attack.

A Vie – Tyr
A Ven – Tyr
A Rom – Ven

Then, there is the option of trusting both neighbors at the same time with the move to Budapest. This results in a firm grasp of the Balkan area with its fat center belly, and at the same time keeps the option open for fending off a hostile Italian. That is, only in the case the Italian goes directly to Trieste, as with Budapest, Serbia and Albania you have three units to grasp your center back. If the Italian chooses the full on attack like described in the Tyrolean variation, you're in deep trouble, especially when the Russian has gone to Galicia. Now on with bright side of this opening.

As the name suggests, this opening will take no second changes for grabbing as much Balkan soil as possible. Serbia is a sure thing and Greece often remains untouched by Turkey and Italy with such strong

proclaiming moves by Austria.

On the other hand it totally leaves open Galicia and any Tyrolean prospects for Italy as we've seen. If you consider this open character, it is surprising that it is by far the most played opening for Austria. This must mean that a lot of diploming has been carried out by Austria, which is of course a good thing.

As has been pointed out before, Russia can be told off of going to Galicia with German's threat of keeping him out of Sweden. Besides, the Russian does not have the same kind of worries as Austria when a hostile unit is lurking in Galicia.

Italy is also considered to be one of Austrian early friends by obligation, since a brawl between Austria and Italy easily sparks off one of the most feared alliances on the board: the Juggernaut.

These considerations make you wonder how much of a gambit this opening really is, but at least in a positional sense it is. A lot of players who've chosen the path of this gambit back their choice up by claiming that after they've taken Serbia and Greece, they sit tight for things to happen with two built armies in Vienna and Budapest. In that sense, this can also be categorized as a Hedgehog opening.

There and back again – The blitzes

Although the Balkan Gambit has a darish feel to it as it gambles for expansion early on, there are two cutthroat openings that have far more zest to them: the **Key Lepanto** and the **Blue Water Opening**.

The Key Lepanto was an invention of Jeff Key, who gave Austria and Italy some startling options with this blitz optima forma.

<u>S01</u>	
A Vie – Gal	F Nap – ION
A Bud – Rum	A Ven – Tri
F Tri – Alb	A Rom – Ven
<u>F01</u>	
F Alb – Gre	A Tri – Ser
A Gal – Ukr/War	A Ven – Apu
A Rum S A Gal - Ukr	F ION – AEG

Being as classic trust-to-your-throat, this is a stunning example of how a strong alliance can turn up interesting positional advantages. The danger is all for the Austrian, while the Italian can decide at any time to take advantage of the situation and just grab those centers in which he is invited to. A strong will and caution for a

Juggernaut are thus at hand for Austria.

Still, this same threat of driving Russia into Turkish arms is what these daring moves can ignite. After all, Austria is making a dash for Russian soil, while letting Italy through to the south. At the same time, Italy is venturing into the Aegean Sea, which will not be cheered at by the Turk. What advantage is it then that gives us the desire to proceed in this manner?

First of all it's probably not desire but despair on both sides. Austria may fear the sandwich syndrome between three expanding powers; Italy rarely finds it intriguing waiting on the fence for any gains apart from Tunis.

Second, Italy seems to put any Austrian ideas towards Russia in the fridge, which in turn will give enough negotiation space with Russia, as well as Turkey, who will fit the bill of comforting ally for the time being. While all this is going on, Russia can be deprived off Rumania and with a bit of German help off Sweden as well in the first year. That together with one of the most forced alliances on the board working to its full potential is quite a feat.

Naturally, these kind of tactics, strategics and diplomacy is not for the faint of heart, but the truth is this opening can bring out bright prospects for Austria.

Finally, the Blue Water Opening is definitely one of the daring kind, if not a very powerful set of moves, suggested by Manus Hand.

<u>S01</u>	
A Vie – Tri	A Ven – Hold
A Bud – Ser	A Rom – Apu
F Tri – ADR	F Nap – ION
<u>F01</u>	
A Tri – Hold	A Ven – Hold
A Ser – Gre	A Apu S A Ven
F ADR – ION	F ION – Tun

Any opening with the fleet going to the Adriatic is called a Blue Water Opening in Sharp's vocabulary. There is also a variation of this opening, which goes by the name of **Von Metzke Blitz**. This variation opens like:

A Vie – Tyr
A Bud – Tri
F Tri – ADR

While the original opening is a forced AI-alliance disguised as an Italian Attack, the Von Metzke Blitz is an

Italian Attack without any disguise. Let's take a look at both of them.

First, the Blue Water Opening aims to take the Ionian Sea by putting a threat on Venice. This way, The Apulian army cannot be convoyed to take Tunis, or Italy will lose Venice. The only way for Italy to get Tunis is by sailing into it with his fleet, and that is the moment Austria moves into the Ionian, while bouncing in Greece with Turkey. Still the disguise of an Italian attack are upon us. Next, Italy builds his second fleet in Nap and forces the Austrian fleet to retreat.

And here comes the beauty of this opening. Instead of the expected retreat to Tyrrhenean Sea, Austria retreats to either Aegean Sea or Eastern Mediterranean. Why is this beautiful? Because Austria can wait until the Turk has moved his newly built fleet in Smyrna to either sea areas to choose for himself where to go with his fleet. No guessing required.

Then the Von Metzke Blitz. This variation has been looked upon as rather idiotic or absurd and suicidal. The truth is: all this is very much the case, or at least it can be all of that. At the same time it profits from any full commitment in that it puts all available units to their maximum use. Here is how I imagine it would work:

<u>S01</u>	
A Vie – Tyr	A Ven – Hold
A Bud – Tri	A Rom – Apu
F Tri – ADR	F Nap – ION

Both Italy and Austria have two options, where at both sides there is a strong preference for one of these options.

First of all, Italy either supports Venice with Apulia and takes Tunis with his fleet or the fleet cuts Adriatic forcing the Austrian to take Venice with his fleet.

The first of these two options is the most favored and for good reason. It gives Italy the chance of gaining a center, while the second only gives a chance of keeping the three he already has.

Which brings us to Austria's side: while the capture of Venice is certain when going with the fleet, it also gives a slight disadvantage positional-wise, for Venice is not a splendid place to be in for an Austrian fleet. This is countered with the Italian position, which is utter chaos. The Ionian is open, and either the fleet in the Adriatic must be disbanded or he has lost tempo with a fleet in Tunis with no builds to boot for.

Another option for the Austrian is to bounce in Trieste, while taking Serbia with the Trieste army. This is better in the sense that it strengthens your back to Turkey. On

the other hand, it is doubtful that Italy will venture for Trieste so the first option seems the best.

Make no mistake, this Italian attack plays into the cards of Turkey, who will find Greece ripe for the taking and the Ionian is bound to fall also. On the diploming part it is thus important to ally with Turkey on the terms that he gets Greece and Tunis, while you take Serbia, Venice and Rome. Whoever needs it most gets Naples, but that's of lesser importance.

In the north you need the Russian to get involved further north in exchange for security in the south. Again the threat of an enemy unit in Galicia is far less dangerous than the other way around, which you must use to usher him north.

The rest is a coordinated attack on Italy. Make sure you keep an army in Serbia and use your war mongering to tell both Turkey and Russia the other one will be next. This will not be a bed time story to keep them sleepy, because that is the next step after Italy's demise. You close down the area around Tunis and keep France as much as involved in the west as possible.

What now my love?

So far, we've seen two openings for the more cautious way of getting through the first years with this center power and two openings for a more forward way getting a head start. Is it what the serious player has to choose from, judging on the information from his neighbors? Let's summarize the options we've discussed so far:

The **Southern Hedgehog** – both Italy and Russia cannot be trusted, Turkey is on a somewhat non-aggressive pact mode

The **Balkan Gambit** – take no prisoners and go for the quick two centers and hope for the best; an attack from Italy can be thwarted, Russia is more difficult, position on the Turk is best here

The **Key Lepanto** – Italy's deceitful attitude is put to full use against Russia and Turkey; might encourage a Juggernaut, but can the two in the corner counter this when the knife is at their throats?

The **Blue Water Opening** – Either Italy is forced into an AI-combined Lepanto chain, or he faces a full on attack from Austria in an AT-alliance; needs extreme trust in Russian interests in the north and agreement for peace in the south

On the whole, we see Austria ally with two of his three neighbors (well a little bit of Russia in the Blue Water Opening, but that's just a touch). Can Austria form a decent alliance with his third neighbor Russia?

It appears difficult due to the fact that they both look at the other man's belly throughout the game, but

remember: this is a game of trust, not deceit per se, which counts double for any workable alliance.

The bright side of the AR-alliance is that after the riddance of Turkey, they both have a strong corner position as well as immediate access to the heart of Europe with their well-placed home centers. This makes reinforcing front lines a lot easier.

The riddance itself can pose some tactical maneuvering worthy of chess analytics, for the most Austria can offer in that vein is an attack on the bottleneck Bulgaria. The rest of the battle lies in the hands of the Russian player. A non-suspecting Italian might be enticed to add his Lepanto-like convoy power to the mayhem, after which he is driven back into the seas that he came from.



Tripling Treasures

Considering all this thoughts on where to tread and where not to as Austria, my strongest trump would be an AT alliance and apacement with the Russian player. There are a couple of advantages to this strategy: 1. Russia can keep the West occupied from the north; 2. With promises of Greece and Tunis and therefore the control over the Mediterranean you set up a powerful AT-alliance in which it is easy to defend against a Turkish stab and 3. it is easy to stab the Turkish like a retreating caterpillar.

To see the point of advantage no. 2: with just an army in Serbia and a fleet pointing at the Ionian Sea, it's more than safe to venture into Italy. Once it Italy's been brought down, Austria can march on Munich and Berlin with the help of Russia, who has been chopping down Scandinavia if not for now. All this time, it is easy to stab both Russia and Turkey if the timing desires it.

One more advantage: no one in his right mind would expect such a course of events: as Austria most of the time is begging for Italian help. France on his turn finds it a welcoming sight to see Italy bogged down, only to see

that his Iberian gains are in peril. At the time France is communicating these fears, a well thought-through DMZ should be arranged over the Iberian corner. Both Turkey and Austria do not need it, although you can persuade an unsuspecting Turk further on to stretch himself, but in the event you really want to keep Turkey on the good track: keep Iberia clear and usher him northwards.

Through all the confusion the subsequent wars will provide you are constantly in your web like a great tarantula, profiting from all the advantages Austria has a central power on the board. That is why I like to christen this strategy as the **Blue Water Tarantula**, since it starts off from a Blue Water Opening.

The beauty of this strategy (mind you it's not just another opening, but a long-term strategy) is that from the outstart you're bursting onto the stage of the European theater while keeping all your options open. The danger is the risk of an RT building up, but both Russia and Turkey can be convinced in my opinion, because you tell them both what they like to hear. Russia: peace in the south, the Turk going west, possibilities in the north, later to be supported by Austrian expansion in the centre. Turkey: Russia abiding from the north, Austria going west, Greece and Tunis for himself and control over the Mediterranean.

And that is what persuasion is all about: "Getting people to do what you want, is merely a question of telling them what they like to hear" as one of the flavor text says on a Magic the Gathering card (a center for the person who guesses the card right!).

Conclusion

Of course, I'm telling you this in the knowledge that you like to try something new, dashing and that you're not the type who waits for blessings or bludgeons to come your way. If you're the waiting kind, try the Southern Hedgehog or try the Balkan Gambit, as heaps of Austria have done before you. But if you've read as far as this, chances are you either hold an open mind about things or you're sick to death of waiting and diminishing or not getting more than 5 centres out of a trench game.

This article then was meant to give you the ins and outs of Austrian opening strategy and how it should extend to the middle game in my opinion. It is to you noble men and women to tread the path I layed out before you; may your journeys give inspiring adventures and most of all keep everyone from the axiom that Austria is a chicken on a board filled with foxes.

It has been suggested that Frank may be willing to write similar articles for Diplomacy World on the other six powers. I can only hope that happens!

Chapel Hill, BBQ, DixieCon, and All That Good Stuff

By David Hood

Another year, another Dixiecon. This time it was Dixiecon 22, but for a change I was not there for the Thursday night gaming. My son was in a show that night in Hickory, so I did not make it to Chapel Hill until after 2am (with Steve Koehler in tow.) The report I got about midnight as I left Charlotte with Steve said that Dave Maletsky, Rich O'Brien, Bruce Allen, Bruce's friend George, and at times a very sober Graham Woodring played Imperial and "some numbers/math game like Samurai."

That's it for the Thursday night gaming report.

Friday morning saw the first of many meals at Con favorite Time Out, which is next door to the tournament site, and features good chicken and biscuits along with various vegetables available for purchase "24 hours a day, 365 days a year." It's like a Waffle House, with lima beans and collard greens.

Various gamers began to drift in as the afternoon approached. I saw Brass being played, for the first of many times over the weekend, as well as Power Grid, Railroad Tycoon, Storm Over Holland, and that screwy little AH game from yesterday Twixt. We have had Candyland played at Dixiecon before, but this was a Dixiecon first with the Twixt...

We usually have afternoon basketball, but this year we had little interest. So Kevin O'Kelly, one of the five Chicagoland "Weasels" who invaded Chapel Hill this year, joined me for a shooting clinic. After I declared both of us winners of the Dixiecon BBall Tournament, we went inside where the gaming had already spread to most of the room.

Friday night began with the usual Hood prattle and announcements, as well as the wonderful sight of awards given from past years. This time it was the 2005 Prezcon awards for I Got Hammered and for Best Russia, both won by Roy Rink who only had to come by plane 3 years later to a different state to claim his prizes! I also awarded a Best Germany to Ed Turnage from an even earlier year, this time a Dixiecon plaque, from like 2004 or something.

Then I pulled out the granddaddy of them all - the 1999 Best Russia that was never picked up by that year's winner. So Tom Kobrin claimed it on general principle.

It was time then to dive in to.... not the Diplomacy tournament, apparently, but the Iron Man tournament for non-Dip gaming. This was the first year we had more people playing those games than the Dip! There were three Dip games, important mainly because Turkey got destroyed early in all three of them, earning the three

players in question a joint Brick award on Sunday.

Iron Man gaming Friday night included Container, Puerto Rico, 1861 (we had more than the usual crowd of 18XX gamers this year), Princes of the Renaissance, Princes of Florence, Here I Stand, and the ever-present Twixt.

Saturday morning the Dip round was one round bigger, due to late arrivals on Friday night and to some REALLY old Dip retreads brought out of retirement for the round. I am very proud to say I got Jim Yerkey, certainly one of the best I ever saw play the game, to come out of serious retirement to play in Game 2D. Yep, the one that proceeded to last about 12.5 hours and end with the stalemate of Andy Bartalone's win attempt. From what I can tell, this was a very good game, including some other really good players (three past Dixiecon champs in all). Jim would later receive the Player's Choice award for the weekend, which I freely admit including ballot-stuffing from people who did not get to play with Jim but thought it was really cool that he was playing, and that he was playing on the board in question.



Round Two, Board Three: Bartalone Rolling as England. Can anyone stop him?

Iron Man gaming on Saturday included two more boards of Brass, 18West (told you that guys were active this time), 1960, Railroad Tycoon, 1846, Puerto Rico, Campaign Trail, and my own introduction to the game Goa. If you have not watched Bruce Reiff and Ken Guteruth play Campaign Trail, you have not lived. I think they were just taking turns at the same time or something. Bruce was playing faster than he talks, which is obviously pretty fast.

The BBQ started at its usual time of 5pm, this year with a different vendor and with fried chicken instead of the usual BBQ chicken to go with the Eastern NC style pork

BBQ. It was very popular. One quick note for locals reading this - the things people say about the hush puppies never cease to amaze me. One guy assumed they were fried potatoes, and was complaining about them being undercooked...



Brian Ecton napping in the middle of the second round. His England was put to sleep shortly thereafter.

Saturday night gaming was so extensive, since there is no Dip that night, that we literally outgrew the space we were in. Take a look at the list I compiled on games played that night - Axis and Allies (twice), Attika, Rome vs. Rome (Justin Thompson had shown up by then with this Columbia game), St Petersburg, Manifest Destiny, Through the Ages (twice), Transamerica, Finster Fleur, Power Grid, Container, Puerto Rico (twice), Imperial, Twixt, Titan, Outpost, Airship, and some insane Eric Grinnell game called Cash N Guns where he and some other folks were pointing foam handguns at each other.

Sunday morning saw no hobby politics, just the usual slimy, inexorable, inevitable trail of Dave Maletsky polluting young minds with his dangerous ideas. In other words, the usual. The normal game of Sechs Nimmt before Round Three did not get played this year because a rousing game of Bang started up instead. Yes, the rumors are true. Bruce Reiff forgot which guy he was playing, and killed the Sheriff to make the Outlaws win. He was, of course, not an Outlaw but the Renegade so he LOST.

Three rounds of Dip. Thomas Haver captured his second big three-way draw to edge Buffalo Bartalone for the Dixiecon title. Both Andy and Thomas had close-but-no-cigar attempts at a win. This was in contrast to Dixiecon 21 last year, which featured three outright wins, two by Doug Moore alone...

Yes, there was non-Dip Sunday as well, again with more players than the 21 playing Dip. A few new titles got play on Sunday - San Juan, Race for the Galaxy, Age of Steam, 1830 (Reading variant), The Bulge, 5th Fleet,

Twilight Struggle, Settlers of Catan - to go along with repeat products like Power Grid, Imperial, Railroad Tycoon, Transamerica, Manifest Destiny and Puerto Rico.



"The Mathias" has been unleashed!

The awards ceremony was followed by two different dinner groups (which was not entirely intentional but probably sensible since we had a combined 30+ people staying for Sunday night dinner this time) after which it was back to the basement study lounge for even more gaming, including more Manifest Destiny, Here I Stand, and gobs of other stuff I did not try to keep up with.



Bruce Reiff accepts an award from Dan Mathias

This was a big Dixiecon, largely because of the influx of non-dip gamers. It was a blast, at least for me. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves, and will consider a return trip for 2009. Also, don't forget our fall roving housecon Hickcon, now in its 17th year itself. This year it will be in Boone, NC - email David Hood for details. No date set yet, but will likely be in October.

David Hood is a big, powerful guy and one of the ruling CADs, so don't get on his bad side buddy!

Science Fiction Diplomacy Variants by Design

By Tom Swider

Overview

Game design is intriguing for many gamers. Creating something new or interesting can be its own reward for some. For others, it may be identifying a source of dissatisfaction and attempting to make improvements. The ego also plays a role. These goals may even be similar to why people are interested in designing buildings, furniture, software, or other products. Those contemplating their own game designs can benefit from some form of process to get underway.

Great successes are also based upon a strong motivation or idea, and the will instilled upon the designer. Minimalist composer Steve Reich, early in his career, became fascinated with exploring new structures to music. Pieces like "Violin Phase" and "Eight Lines" sought out a musical process, as did his contemporaries (Philip Glass, John Cage). Once he developed a new musical vocabulary, and possibly with some feelings that what he wrote was interesting but not necessarily joyful, he broke out of his mold when he wrote "Music for 18 Musicians" and "Drumming". Reich started these pieces with an initial process, and then abandoned the process to let artistic judgment guide rule. The same can be said for David Lynch in film, Francis Bacon and Jackson Pollock in art, and Karim Rashid in furniture design. Designers should remember that process helps realize a vision.

Aspiring game designers will need to keep the needs of gamers in mind as well as their own motivations. Game design within the past 15 years has expanded. There are many more games on the market, and with that many new ideas. The Diplomacy hobby boasts many amateur and professional designs. The growth in gaming may have even made variant design more acceptable; many players during the 70's and 80's were skeptical to try new variants. On the other hand, the trend in "Eurogames" has moved gaming closer to problem solving exercises rather than games of conflict and negotiations. Gamers are also more pressed for time, and so games with shorter play times or that adapt well to electronic play are often preferred to designs such as Diplomacy, which have significant playing times and doesn't work as well with fewer than the maximum number of players.

In game design discussions, gamers differentiate between American designs that are heavily themed (at the cost of mechanical complexity) versus European designs that have streamlined designs and mechanics (at the cost of tacked-on themes). Focusing on this issue's Science Fiction theme, the assumption is that theme is more important, otherwise the design could be of any genre. The challenge is that the Diplomacy

system was made for slower evolving combats on a grand scale. This is a problem that can be addressed with a variety of approaches.

Diplomacy pieces move along one space at a time, though convoys once established provide more fluidity. The map and supply centers establish spheres of influence and stalemate lines, both of which have an impact on player behavior. Simple and limited mechanics emphasize the design goal of negotiations over history or military considerations. A space opera or alternate history Science Fiction theme could succeed as a more literal application of the Diplomacy system, as traditional map variants. Those who envision large space armadas conquering galaxies have probably played one or more computer empire building games (such as "Sid Meier's Civilization" or "Spaceward Ho!"), and could very well discard the Diplomacy system as a viable system. The Diplomacy system might work for this type of story if other design consideration such as pace or complexity are complimentary.

Science Fiction is quite varied, so this may not work for most SF themes. Books I've read tend to emphasize characters over empires, and revealing unknowns. My personal favorite Science Fiction game design is "Dune", which derives its system from "Cosmic Encounter." It includes a series of simple mechanics that become moderate in complexity when combined, and are dependent upon one another (money or special ability are converted into various forms of power that can be applied successfully in some conditions and not in others). Special powers or advantages allow players to break the standard rules. For example, CE's "Silencer" alien power allows a player to stop one player from speaking for the rest of an attack turn, and in Dune the Guild faction receives all spice spent by players when shipping their legions to Arrakis. CE succeeds as a minimalist design because special powers and gadgets and their interactions in amusing combinations become the focus. Dune succeeds as a fully featured design and uses the special powers and gadgets to strongly theme each faction as depicted in the Dune universe. Game balance requires a careful eye on how advantages combine so that killer combinations don't give an overwhelming advantage.

Wargaming has undergone a revival, through the mechanic of card-driven design. Games like "We The People", "Paths of Glory", "Twilight Struggle" and "Sword of Rome" include decks of cards that provide assets such as operational movement, reinforcements, special opportunities, or to trigger events. Decks may be common and shared by players, or made specific to a given faction. Mechanics and design chrome can be reduced, or transferred onto the cards so that the game

is easier to teach and play. Sub-decks that represent different phases of the game can help provide a story arc to provide a sense of simulating history or a story line. Game balance can be adjusted by adding or removing cards.

Design Process

As mentioned earlier, a process can help guide the design to a successful product. Establishing design goals and requirements is an important first step, as opposed to a “winging it” approach of breaking out the poster board or drawing program. A SF Diplomacy variant design could benefit from strong theme consideration; beyond the space opera/empire theme, these designs could benefit from adapting modern game mechanics and ideas. A very large design on the scale of Colonia might work well for pbem play, as would mechanics that limit intelligence or communications. Designs that attempt to simulate character-based stories could scale better for varying number of players and may only vaguely resemble Diplomacy when completed. Until the design is fully under way, reference to a design process can help identify obvious problems that can be corrected early. Once a game goes from a logical design into a physical design, it becomes increasingly difficult to make large-scale changes such as a movement or combat system.

Once goals and requirements are established, designers go into a solution mode and create the board, units, cards, and other mechanics in a fashion to meet the requirements. Diplomacy uses area movement; is this approach more appropriate for “Planet of the Apes” or “Foundation”, or would a box/warp line system make more sense? If the theme emphasizes quick lightning attacks, shouldn't the pieces move faster or out of sight of other players?

Feedback from players is critical because the feedback can validate whether design goals are being met, and if the game is any fun. Some of this can be done on your own by setting up a scenario and thinking about the actions and questions of a typical gamer. This can be helpful for weighing numerical balances, but not as helpful for complex mechanical interactions. This is where play-testing and blind-testing help. Designers will want to seek volunteers to try out the game in various incarnations, and note problems through direct observation of play and through player feedback. Internet tools such as a discussion board or wiki can help cultivate a playtest community, and provide a way of developing the rulebook and other game aids (such as charts, counters, or player mats). At some point, a blind-test is necessary to make sure that the game can stand on its own without the designer being around to explain how it works. There is also an advantage of getting a sufficiently high number of play sessions without design changes in order to gauge play balance. Making change management a process consideration (possibly through some formalized discussion) can prevent runaway idea

generation arising from a small number of iterations from adding too much complexity. Some problems may be better remedied through simplification rather than by adding additional rules, units or spaces.

Design Process Example

A thought experiment on how a game design illustrates some of these concepts. A generic theme would work here so that attention to storyline details doesn't detract from the discussion.

How about zombies? Yes, it's horror and not Science Fiction, though I think there is some overlap. They're popular for the movie-going audience, and slow moving hordes overwhelming a small but empowered human contingent could work with a Diplomacy style system. The working title will be “28 Dots”, a parody of the hit movie “28 Days Later.” As the standard Diplomacy map has 34 dots, that would give 28 dots to the zombies and 6 more for the humans, making for seven players. If each human player begins the game with a single super unit of some sort and has to use their wits to survive the zombie onslaught, the number of players could vary. Probably wouldn't make for a good two or three-player variant, but as pbem gamers have enjoyed “Anarchy” variants (each player starts with one or two random centers and can build in any center), this approach has some surface merit. Because the Zombie theme isn't intended to be serious science fiction and has a pop-culture element, gamers might find it amusing. It also could present interesting game press.

For today's gamer, a variant like this might be helpful as a way of introducing the game and recruiting future diplomats and stabbers. A shorter play time of 2-3 hours would be ideal to capture Eurogamers. If the goal of “28 Dots” is recruitment, keeping the map very similar to the standard game would leave the door open for some discussion and questions about how the standard game works, whereas a more radical map change might make the transition to Diplomacy less obvious. Whatever map changes are made should facilitate the goal of a shorter play time. That could include the addition of land bridges, tunnels, or airline flights. This also allows removal of naval units and convoy rules from the design, so that beginners can focus on basics.

How about the requirements for units and rules? Consider that the Zombies would be plodding and numerous, and adapts well to the trench warfare style of Diplomacy mechanics. They must eat brains!! However, there needs to be a way for the overwhelming numbers to be outwitted or outmaneuvered by the human players, otherwise the humans would never win. An adjustment to victory conditions would also be in order; this might work well with the smaller playing time. Human positions will need some game advantages so they can profit or win by indirect force, technology, and collaboration. Powers that combine well or a victory condition that requires some cooperation might help enhance the

collaboration aspect of the design, and teach players the value of working together.

Did I just say that we want to teach Diplomacy players to work together?? Where would be the opportunity for stabbing and treachery? A game that is ultimately two forces (with one being commanded by multiple players) would not give a proper introduction to Diplomacy. The Zombie genre often includes characters that started out as heroes, but succumb to the dark side, be it through Zombie bite or becoming one of the pod people from "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." This variant needs some twists and surprises to keep the players alert and on the edge.



So far, there seem to be some reasonable possibilities. The army/trench system parallels zombie behavior, and the limit unit types can make game easier to teach. The veteran player can play the zombie player so that the new players aren't overwhelmed by a large number of units or decisions. For the humans, starting small and building up gives novices a chance to learn though the design should include some measures to make sure they cannot lose the game very early. The design will need to avoid becoming an epic battle because the Zombie genre is more about heroics, though there should be some sort of day of reckoning or final showdown. The larger number of zombie units could present balancing and time issues that will need to be addressed. The game should also include some of the basic Diplomacy mechanics rather than drift too far from the basic mechanics so that the design succeeds in helping recruit new players, and transfer their knowledge from 28 Dots to Diplomacy.

Establishing the development environment for a variant that parallels Anarchy would not have extreme considerations. There are plenty of standard map graphic files on the Internet that can have some rudimentary changes added if desired. For an introductory level variant, the size of the rule changes should not be large, though other elements such as cards or counters might be needed. To explain the rules for prospective Diplomacy players, some sort of play aid explaining their options would be beneficial. The Anarchy style of game would mean playtest flexibility, though the test should try to include a variety of ranges to see if very small or very large numbers of players present issues. If there test community is large, some designer license should be insisted upon so that the

result is more realization of a vision instead of design by committee.

To address the zombie balance, their mobility could be limited. If we also wanted to force the humans to win quickly or else succumb, some acceleration factor might work. For example, the Zombies get to order one unit on turn 1, two on turn two, and so forth. Despite their plodding speed, Zombies sometimes have an element of surprise working for them. Maybe each zombie unit or space has some chit that is revealed, and that some of them allow the Zombies a privilege or set the human player back? If this mechanic is based upon zombie units, consider the physical aspects of the design. Cardboard counters have the advantage of having a down or hidden side. This might allow the Zombie force a random set-up, and when a zombie unit moves or is dislodged, its hidden side is revealed and a privilege or event is activated. The random set-up also adds replay variety and may introduce balance concerns if the random distribution works out skewed. The hidden chit system would also work well to simulate a human becoming infected by the zombies. For example, the human drawing this chit now becomes zombie-like and their victory conditions change. This allows a teachable moment regarding the devastation of betrayal and backstabbing.

To reflect the hero or technology aspects of the human force or single unit, maybe their wooden block is replaced with a colored die. After orders are read, the dice are rolled to determine their combat strength (value is half of value rolled). The range of results present moments of great strength and weakness, and provide a suspense element.

Human heroes and armies present an interesting conflict. Can a design start out on a heroic scale (a single piece), then scale upward to an army level and still be believable, interesting or fun? How can the humans win against overwhelming odds? Maybe the theme presents a solution, such as a new victory condition: human victory is based upon finding a cure for the zombie virus. Maybe there are elements that make up the cure: plants from southern Italy, a non-player Russian scientist, and a medical lab in London. The human or team that can get the plants and scientist to London in time wins. Congratulations! You saved the human race! But can you design a Diplomacy variant that won't turn your friends into zombies? There's only one way to find out.

Tom Swider, always a variant fan, designed the classic Final Conflict. He has appeared in Diplomacy World many times, and if you promise him beer he might write something again!

The Green Jacket Game: A Concept for a Diplomacy Masters' Championship

By Doug Brown

The past few months have seen a loud discussion as to the role of the "DipCon" meeting. That discussion, and the attendant discussion of the purposes of DipCon, gave rise to some thoughts for a means of playing Diplomacy in a meaningful contest that would draw quality players, while not turning off the less-experienced players who make up the numbers needed to grow the hobby. I am not specifically suggesting a Masters' format for the DipCon convention. I am suggesting that a tournament of this nature, adjusted for practicality and deferring to the advice and opinions of the sages of the hobby, could be a step towards achieving the sometimes conflicting goals of competitive interest, drawing a good crowd, and increasing the camaraderie and commitment of the majority of the hobbyists who are not competitive superstars.

Regardless of the posted intent of a Diplomacy convention, it doesn't have too much point unless there is a Diplomacy game going on. It is the manner in which the game is conducted that will determine whether the event serves to build the hobby or to draw a small group of ultra-competitors even more tightly together.

The proposal for a Master's Championship is based on experience in helping to build other professional meetings, on a very little experience with FTF Diplomacy and, recently, quite a bit of experience with the play-by-e-mail (PBEM) side of the hobby. Of course, my opinions are necessarily a product of that experience, with some refinement thanks to the interactions, primarily via e-mail, with other Dipsters of all manner of experience, but they are not the final word on this subject; the article will be successful if it stimulates a discussion of whether such a format is viable and desirable.

The experience of this type of activity to date leads to several observations that shape the idea behind a Master's Championship:

- Any one-shot face-to-face [FTF] Diplomacy contest amid rapid move deadlines causes most good [but not great] players to deteriorate to a point-scoring hyper-competitiveness that may well help to do well in such an event. However, this same attitude turns off those who simply attended to see what the face-to-face Diplomacy game is all about.
- I read and hear that in FTF tournaments, experienced players tend to collaborate to blast unknown players off the map as soon as possible to reduce the risk of the unknown and to assure a small draw (and higher scores) in the very likely event that there is no solo. When this happens time after time, the enthusiasm for the FTF hobby dries up. Yet it is unreasonable to expect serious players to care-bear new players to their own detriment.
- Despite the obvious hyper-competitiveness of the top 3-10% of the FTF Dipsters to whom I have been exposed, those members I have met from the top 1-2% are in fact much more oriented to relationships, both in the game and aside from it.
- FTF, PBEM with press and PBEM gunboat no-press have such different dynamics as to make them essentially different games. However, each has a component that is missing from the other formats. FTF most closely follows Calhmer's rules, but they were for a social game: relationships already exist. The 15-minute time limits, or 2-3 minutes per power, of an FTF contest, certainly don't allow for any deep discussion. PBEM with press allows for building the relationships and conducting something that looks a lot more like actual diplomacy; but it also allows for days and weeks to do this, and this is not realistic for a tournament. No-press PBEM is nothing more than a tactical exercise – but it is just like a FTF tournament in that once you have been eliminated there is no point sticking around to watch the game when you can't see into the diplomatic activities that are the true heart of the game.
- A format with growing popularity in the PBEM world is the commented game, where one can kibitz as the play develops. This format assumes that the demonstrator players are not so crass as to log on to the discussion as someone else in order to get some hints or to see what the other players are thinking. (If that concept makes you guffaw, then you are one of those hyper-competitive players we were talking about). However, that format depends on the players to make comments, because the color commentators are quite often far off the mark; unfortunately, even the most voluble diplomats tends to get wrapped up in the communications of the game itself and forgets to post thoughts to the observers.
- Professional sports of all types are able to attract large crowds of people, most of whom have some idea of how to play the game but no illusions that they can compete at that level. Nonetheless each of them thinks they take something away from the event because they see it unfolding in front of them.

Diplomacy doesn't do this: the moves are an almost trivial by-product of the actual game, which is in the negotiations. So, to make a contest appealing to all but a few, we have to expose the negotiations somehow.

Assuming that the purpose of DipCon actually is to attract attendance, but recognizing that Dipsters are a competitive bunch who want to win something and stab somebody (not necessarily in that order), the Masters' Championship idea attempts to fuse the best elements of Diplomacy in order to create an event that you don't have to win (in fact, don't even have to qualify for) to enjoy, but provides a very high level of recognition for those who do win.

The proposal provides for "the hobby" to identify a small number of top, top players who will attend the event. The point of this exercise will be to provide a competitive situation that makes it worth being awarded the title, while providing for sufficient interaction to make it interesting for everyone else.

- Roles:

- Masters. The top players, who are the only ones who will win overall awards, serve as team coaches. They are not allowed to play the boards themselves (and they won't have time anyway). The tournament needs at least 7 credible Masters, but ideally it would be on the order of 10-15 or even more. The masters would then be assigned into pools of 5-7 so that they could compete amongst themselves, permitting the galleries to be split to follow the interactions of a group of masters. In order to give the Masters time to manage their teams across the various boards, without making the turns impossibly long, Masters should not play more than 7 boards. The Masters must wear distinguishing clothing and they may not interact with each other during the games.
- Shadows: One commentator is assigned to each Master as a shadow to provide non-playing participants with reports on what the Masters are actually thinking (as opposed to speculation on what the commentator would do if they were playing) in the focus games. The commentator needs to have substantial proficiency also, as the Master will not have time to explain everything in depth himself. In the early rounds there will be too many games to track individually, so the TD randomly selects 2-3 games for focus.
- Color Commentators. If there are enough experienced players on hand, then additional commentators may be assigned to serve as kibitzers during the actual negotiation periods.

- Players. In the early round/s, as many players as possible are randomly assigned to boards and positions. The positions are then systematically assigned to the Masters, such that a Master cannot have 2 players on the same board, and the Masters (preferably) have a fair distribution of countries. Ideally (if discernable) player skills would also be fairly distributed. The players must have colored shirts or something to permit the Master to readily identify his/her team members when wandering the floor. Eliminated players are assigned to one of the galleries (preferably a gallery that is not following the player's game or Master) for the rest of that round. In later rounds, there are fewer players; the Master cannot have more than 1 player on each board, and these players are selected randomly by the TD from those who were in the master's original team and were not eliminated in their game. Players are eligible for Best Country awards.

- Gallery: Anyone who was not selected as a player in the current round, and anyone who is eliminated during the current round and wants to observe. During play of a tournament round the non-players are confined to a separate area of the tournament where they cannot interact with the active gamers. The gallery forms the voter constituency for one of the top prizes of the tournament: Master Diplomat.
- Marshals: control the gallery to ensure that players do not filter in, non-players do not filter out, annual votes are tallied, and the visiting Masters are kept more or less on schedule.

- The Tournament: the tournament consists of only one game per day in order to provide appropriate time for interaction.

In the first round, as close as possible to every registered attendee is randomly assigned to a board and position; then the attendees are systematically but randomly assigned to the Masters' teams in as fair a manner as the TD can devise. In each subsequent round, players from the Masters' team are randomly assigned to the Master's remaining boards, except for players who were eliminated in earlier rounds.

- The Masters guide their team members in their negotiations and orders, placing their emphasis as they see fit. However, the Masters may not negotiate for a player, and they may not write or submit orders. They may not bring any writing instrument or materials into the game area, nor may they write in that area; the Shadow may write observations on the Masters' behalf, thereby improving the game notes, but the Shadow may not provide orders to a player to submit.

- At the end of each round, scores are compiled as per the tournament rules as if the players had been individuals. Those scores are then cumulated for each Master's team. Based on those scores, the number of Masters is reduced in the following rounds, and the number of boards per Master should also be reduced, causing the elimination of Masters until the last round consists of one board and one player representing each of the seven remaining Masters. If there are only 7 Masters, then each round simply adds to the scores for each Master's team.

▪ Awards:

- The Master with the highest vote total from the galleries is declared to be the Master Diplomat.
- The Master with the highest tournament team score is declared to be the Master Strategist.
- The gallery votes are normalized to match the range of scores from the boards, and the two scores are added [or the rankings are added]. The Master with the highest combination of gallery and board scores is declared to be the Grand Master of Diplomacy. There is to be no tie-breaker; if two Masters have the same combined score, then the title will be shared.
- The Player with the highest point score for each power, as determined by the host tournament scoring rules, may receive a Best Country award.
- The host tournament may present such other awards as it desires without overshadowing the significance of the Grand Master, Master Diplomat and Master Strategist awards.

• Interactions:

- The point of this Tournament is to provide a very challenging opportunity for highly-skilled players to win a major tournament in the role of "chief of general staff" rather than "battle captain," while providing an entertaining and instructive environment for the remainder of the tournament attendees.
- As the tournament progresses, the gallery gains increasing opportunities to learn about the Masters' approach to the game. With the one round per day limit, each turn can be long enough to provide for this interaction. Specifically,

- Movement turns (spring and fall) are not less than 5 minutes per board the Masters are playing, which may therefore run at least 35 minutes per season, or longer if the TD so decides, but not more than one hour. [Note that the Master is not supposed to be conducting the negotiations or writing orders, but providing guidance to the team members]. This also provides for board players to spend a bit more time developing relationships among themselves.

- Summer turn, 15 minutes.

- Winter turns (retreats and adjustments) are scheduled for 40 minutes, allowing for each Master to spend 5 minutes with the gallery; however, the adjustment adjudications shall not occur until each Master has taken their turn in their gallery for the winter, and the TD must manage this process with the help of the Marshals and Shadows.

- With the extended timeframes, there are no meal breaks during the games.

- At 2 hours per year, and a practical limitation of about 8-10 hours per day, this makes it unlikely that any game will get past 1905. However, it is also pretty unlikely that any of these Masters would permit any other one to get the high scores that go with a solo. Usually by 1905 the game has separated into 2-3 large powers, 2-3 rump powers, and at least one elimination, which should provide sufficient point spread over 7 boards to rank the Masters' teams at that point.

- During the adjustments phase of each game year, the Masters must provide a 5-minute discussion on their strategy and, more important, their negotiation processes for the selected games. The gallery should be divided into pools so that only 7 masters brief any gallery group.
- During the middle of the year (summer and into the fall negotiations), the Shadows provide a 5-minute discussion to the gallery on what their Master is now doing or thinking as a result of the spring negotiations and moves.
- During the move seasons, if there are Color Commentators, then they can lead discussions of what the gallery is seeing and hearing, or address specific tactical issues that the game maybe presenting.
- Each Spring the gallery votes on the best Master (in terms of their interaction with the gallery) as of that point. At the end of the game the total votes

are tallied for each Master. The tallied are not announced but the TD provides each Master with their ranking. At the end of the tournament the Master with the highest gallery vote total is declared the Master Diplomat.

This format may need a lot of adjustment, but I think this sort of direction might be most interesting in recognizing

the superior gaming skills of top-notch players (in organizing and leading a random team to success) while providing the rest of the conference attendees a structured means of learning something from the top-notch players.

Doug Brown is a man of many ideas!

Tales from the Tournament Trail: Birth of a Nickname

By Jim O'Kelley

**Husky Con VI, Woodring Home
Setauket, New York
August 1 to 3, 2008**

The Woodrings own a beautiful home on a cliff overlooking Long Island Sound. Each summer for the past six years, they've opened their home on the cliff overlooking Long Island Sound to friends and strangers from the Diplomacy hobby.

The event, called Husky Con after the Woodrings' family pets, tops many players' lists of can't-miss cons. This year, some 50 people attended, 40 of whom either stayed in the home or camped on the grounds or squatted in the "guest shed." They came partly for the Diplomacy, but mostly to partake in the Woodrings' legendary hospitality and enjoy what is easily the hobby's most festive con.



The Woodring Home

Most of the games ended fairly early on Friday night this year, thanks in equal parts to Dave Maletsky's Carnage scoring system and a general desire to blow off steam in the wake of the previous week's DipCon fiasco. My game lasted 3 hours and 5 minutes. I topped the board as Germany, along with Lori Wheeler, my English ally and distant cousin.

Sometime past midnight, I wandered outside, drink in

hand. Although I missed the wrestling match between Graham Woodring and Brian Ecton, the bacchanal was in full swing. The two tables on the patio were filled with people drinking, smoking and chatting. Conrad Woodring, Graham's older brother, was sitting close by, deep in conversation with Ecton, who had soundly beaten Graham in the wrestling match, I'm told.



View From the Backyard

I was about to engage them when I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, someone staggering behind me through the darkness. I turned and could barely make out a dark figure stumbling toward the back of the yard, hunched over and hacking, as if he were about to boot.

"Conrad," I started, intending to inform him that someone was about to puke in his yard. But before I could utter another word, the dark figure reached the back of the yard, hacked once more, and then disappeared with a yelp right over the cliff.

I was the lone eyewitness.

"Holy shit!" I said. "Conrad, someone fell off the cliff."

"Yah, right," laughed Ecton. Conrad returned to his conversation.

"I'm serious," I said. Now I had Conrad's attention.

"Someone just fell off that cliff."

Ecton and Conrad sprang up, and the three of us raced to the ledge.



Here's Where Cliff Went Over the Cliff

"There's a fence about 15 feet down," Conrad said. "That probably caught him."

The drop to the rocky beach below is about 50 feet. The side of the cliff is covered with grass and shrubs, and the slope, while precipitous, is not sheer. As we reached the ledge, we could hear rustling in the grass below.

"Is someone out there?" asked Conrad.

The dark figure moaned in response. The fence indeed had stopped his fall.

"Who are you?" asked Conrad.

"It's Colin," the dark figure moaned. Colin is Colin Davis, a friend of Adam Sigal's. He lives in New Jersey and, I would later learn, designs video games for cell phones.



Conrad (left) and Graham (right) present Colin "Cliff" Davis with an award commemorating his fall.

"Are you okay?" asked Conrad.

"It hurts," groaned Colin. The rustling grew closer, and a moment later, Colin pulled himself up over the ledge. He was disheveled, embarrassed and sore, but largely unhurt, so the four of us returned to the party.

And now we call him Cliff.

Star Trek and Diplomacy

By Steven McKinnon

In many ways, I am the ultimate Trekkie. I have watched **Star Trek** in one format or another for just shy of 40 years. I own t-shirts with **Voyager** characters on them. My Christmas decorations box has a **Borg Cube**, a **Janeway** and a **Seven of Nine** in it. I have figurines, magazines, DVD collections, computer games and books from the series. I have ripped the audio from **Original Series** episodes and listen to them at work... and my youngest daughter is called **Kathryn** after Janeway. Always looking for ways to 'meld' my favourites together, consideration comes to mind of how the Nations in Diplomacy model their not-real-life counterparts in the **Star Trek** Universe.

There are a couple of considerations when we look at how I've decided to portray the Nations in this piece. The first is the television shows, of course. Secondly, I draw from another game. Amarillo Design Bureau's **Star Fleet Battles** was a great favourite of ours during the heavy-gaming days of High School, in the early 80s, and

I draw additional inspiration and parallels from that great series of games.

First, we look at **Russia**. I've often found Russia a difficult Nation to play. Spread across the map, it faces two of the most entrenched opposition in England and Turkey, and two of the most explosive, in Austria and Germany. Because of that I've always found the Russian situation to be hard to focus, and resources drawn too far afield. There's also that rarest of considerations, the 1917 Revolution, wherein Russia historically was split into factions. And so Russia makes me think of the **Star Trek: Voyager** race, the **Kazon**.

The Kazon were unfocused, nearly-incompetent foes. With a huge population and massive warships, they were never able to defeat Janeway's small exploratory ship. Show canon indicates at least 8 factions of Kazon, which were usually more interested in putting one over on each other than in settling their differences and

putting enemies to the sword. And much in the way I've found Russia, they were in far too deeply when Seska used them in her intrigues against the *Voyager* and Janeway.

In terms of **Star Fleet Battles**, they resemble the Kzinti, a feline race, whose game pieces were White, like Russia's. And, again, for me, there's a personal bias. The Kzinti utilise drones as their primary weapons. Proper use of these can overwhelm an enemy's defense with a massive timed attack with waves of projectile missiles, rather than the direct phaser or disruptor beams of other races. But as with Russia, I was never able to use the drones to maximum potential. And in the case of Russia, the breadth of access to the Diplomacy board, and opportunity to craftily utilise all potential allies was lost on me. The final similarity remains that both these factions represent a potential I was unable to master, and for that I partially resent them.

We travel South to **Turkey**, and there I find a resemblance to the **Star Trek: Deep Space 9** race, the **Dominion**. Growing up in Western Europe, Turkey represented the farthest reach of the Continent. It was both European and Eastern. In Diplomacy Turkey has a well-earned reputation for being a hard nut to crack. Early game it has guaranteed growth, a hard-shell defense and can make or break Austria and Russia depending on the solidity of early works.

The Dominion's main battle force, in the series, was the Jem'Hadar, genetically bred warriors from a strangely structured society, and are essentially slaves to their masters by virtue of their inbred dependence on a chemical. The relationship of the Founders to their slave-warriors, and the intermediary Vorta commanders was all a bit confusing to me, when I didn't have the time to properly keep up with the series. Turkey's mysterious dual Christian-Moslem society is reminiscent.

Further identity with mystery and complexity arises from the yellow-coloured **Star Fleet Battles** race, the Lyrans. Their ships were catamarans, and used the complex ESG, or Expanding Shield Generator. It both stopped incoming fire, and if brought near enemies, its contact could harm them. Like the Lyrans, Turkey is easy to use on its obvious strengths, and difficult to overcome its weaknesses in the longer game.

Moving around a little, we come to **Italy**. Ahhhhh, Italy. Is there anyone who really, really looks forward to playing Italy? Oh, we may rationalise the selection, thinking how defensible we are, hard to reach by sea and through the bottleneck of the top of the boot. But when one thinks of powerful nations, one doesn't really, really consider Italy, does one? However, for the potential Ally, Italy can be the extra on the balance. A backdoor into Austria, fleets to enfilade France or Turkey, a Northward stab into Germany.

In that respect there's a potential to Italy that's a help to many, if the Nation isn't a power player itself. And I find myself comparing them to the **Ferengi**, a race introduced in **Star Trek: The Next Generation**, which carried through all the series in some capacity. The Ferengi are a Nation of traders, their empire and technology built around and by their command of commerce, and in a way we can compare them to Venice and the great economic power she held in the Mediterranean throughout much of the Middle Ages and Renaissance Eras. In the Star Trek Universe there are few who haven't dealt with, or found themselves forced to deal with the Ferengi at some point. And in Diplomacy, one can go long periods without anything meaningful to say to some Nations, but Italy has potential from the star for all comers.

In the Star Fleet Battles universe there's a simple parallel between the Italians and the Hydrans. The Hydrans ships are underpowered, they rely more on forces of smaller, faster fighters, and as such they can be a pest and a nuisance until one finds oneself overwhelmed, much as can be seen with the economic vise of the Ferengi, or the sudden appearance of Italian Forces at one's back.

Roll on around the map further, and find yourself in **France**, a powerful nation with its back to one board side, assumed guaranteed builds from Iberia and the Low Countries and a face full of the intimidating major powers of England and Germany.

I have the hardest time thinking of someone to parallel the French. The remaining major Races and Powers are obviously well-spoken for. I can not assign them to **The Borg**, as they, like all others, simply are not all-powerful and conquering. So, again, I draw upon my youth and envisage the French as those close but so-far-away people across the Channel. Very much like us, but with strange ways of speaking and doing things. In this manner I can rationalise a comparison to the **Vidians** from **Voyager**. The Vidians were a humanoid race, like most others, but a deadly genetic disease, the Phage, caused their bodies to deteriorate, and so they took to the otherwise abhorrent practice of organ harvest, and developed a technology around the harvesting and implantation of such.

Sure, it's a bit of a stretch to compare this to the 'exotic' French practices of eating weird foods, with these rich, lavish sauces and their long, funny bread... but when I was a young lad the French were always portrayed as the enemy we worked with when we had to. We loved the people, but hated the Government. We competed harshly in sport, and cooperated on Concorde. When needed, *Voyager* worked with the Vidians.

There's less easy comparison in the **Star Fleet Battles** Universe, too. But the exotic comparison remains in a link with the Andromedans. They were easily the most

exotic technology in the game. They didn't use shields, but absorbed enemy energy and radiated it off into space. They didn't have direct fire weapons so much as a perversion of transporters, called a Tractor Repulsor, which literally shook an enemy ship to bits.

We've only three Nations left, and three obvious **Star Trek** comparisons. The red, red blocks of **Austria**, and their central location, where intrigue is a must for survival and exploitation lends a comparison to the **Romulans**. In the initial appearances from the 1960s the Romulans were depicted as a warlike extension of the genetic line that created the logical Vulcans. Their Birds of Prey warships were technologically inferior, but boasted the awesome power of the Plasma Torpedo.

By the time of **The Next Generation** the Romulans were being shown as the masters of intrigue, forever plotting and planning from their Empire. They borrowed technology from the Klingons in TOS; they became involved in the Dominion Wars in DS9. They sit surrounded by four other powers in Diplomacy, but with a compact power structure, access to the Balkan Centres and with explosive growth and invasion potential.

Their counterparts in **SFB** are likewise red in colour, sport the massive power of the Plasma torpedo, and are a major player and threat in the game, a fan favourite in both the dramatic and gaming arenas.

The bad boys of the Trek Universe, the bad boys of Diplomacy. It's a natural fit for **Germany** to be compared to the **Klingons**. Warlike, powerful, threatening, ubiquitous in the plans of every Nation, both the Klingons and Germany must be dealt with on both the gaming and dramatic planes. In Diplomacy, Germany is a Nation best played offensively. Sitting diplomatically mid-map is asking for whoever makes the greatest strides to come rolling into their sphere. In the series the Klingons are always portrayed as the aggressors. Lending aid to the Romulans, killing Kirk's son in the movies, blindly attacking V'Ger, and expounding on their warlike nature in the TNG and DS9 series with in depth analysis of their near-Bushido sensibilities.

In **Star Fleet Battles** the Klingon units are black, of course. And their warlike nature is encapsulated in the unique ability of their ships: every weapon on the vessel can fire to the rear. The belligerence of the Race is often found in the tactic of running straight at an enemy and firing all weapons, and once past him, firing all again in a second salvo.

This isn't to say Germany can afford to be simply a warrior, and not a Diplomat. There must be some skill in a game where six opponents can easily take offense and crush you. So there's a little known book which can be referred to. John Ford's 1984 novel The Final Reflection

portrays many Klingons as masters of strategy and tactics, so-called Thought Admirals. It's a great departure from the shouting, stomping Klingons as they've lately been portrayed, and their pursuit of the *Khomerex Zha* (the ultimate game) is a lovely parallel to the Diplomacy we all love.

What are we left with but the wonderful, the shining, the admirable **Federation**, a **Star Trek** phenomenon so well-beloved it can only be compared to **England**. Blue pieces in Diplomacy, the European nation equated with balance of power, their mighty fleet controlling the seas, they render an easy similarity to "StarFleet".



I always wanted to be England when I first learned the game. I was from England, I first played as England, and as such, I had far more experience playing that Nation than any other. I equate the elegance of the Federation ship designs with the Royal Navy. The continental nations are all "the enemy," the antagonists in Captain Kirk's adventure, and foes to be defeated by the combination of Vulcan Ambassadors, Human Warriors and their own treachery.

There may be less potential for the races across the board. Turkey isn't an immediate help or hindrance. Italy is adjacent to but not a major player in the initial intrigues with France and Germany. But sooner or later, the enduring England player meets and deals with every one. Their episodes will come...

So, too, in **Star Fleet Battles** the units are blue with the black ship silhouette. The photon main weaponry the gaming equivalent of the guns of Royal Navy dreadnoughts and battleships. It's the easiest comparison for a Star Trek loving gamer to make, and the easy favourite of a sci fi geek and expatriot.

Steven McKinnon provided quite a bit of wonderful material for my old zine Maniac's Paradise. And, guess what? He's a Trekkie!

Tales from the Archives:

1964C – The Hobby’s First Scandal

By Douglas Kent

It was in 1963 that the postal Diplomacy hobby was born. While it actually started at different places independently, at different times, it is generally accepted that John Boardman ran the first true postal Diplomacy game in his zine Graustark (a zine which amazingly is still being published today). The players were generally from the world of science fiction fandom, or had become college friends. After completing 1963A, Boardman announced he was willing to run another game (to be known as 1964A). The response was very supportive; so much so that he started another publication – Fredonia – to run a second new game. (In the early days of the hobby, it was traditional to run only one game per zine. If you wanted to run a second game, you simply created a second zine for it, and so on).

In fact, response was so heavy, that soon there was enough spillover to fill a third game. Boardman asked Dick Schultz, living in Detroit, if he'd be interested in running the game so that John himself could be one of the players. Dick agreed, and through that game Brobdingnag was born on May 9, 1964. Within those pages, the battle for Europe in 1964C was fought. The nations (assigned at random), players, and locations were as follows:

England: John Boardman; Brooklyn, New York
France: James Goldman; East Paterson, New Jersey
Germany: Derek Nelson; Scarborough, Ontario, Canada
Italy: Len Bailes; Charlotte, North Carolina
Austria: Ron Daniels; Youngstown, Ohio
Russia: John Koning; Youngstown, Ohio
Turkey: Eric Blake; Jamaica, New York

In an attempt to encourage historical press, Dick provided information in the first two issues about the circa-1900 rulers of the seven great powers, and many minor ones. Sadly, immediately following the Spring 1901 results John Koning resigned as leader of Russia, due to other pressures. Paul Harley, another Ohio player, took the position over without a turn being missed.

It is interesting to read through the results of any early Diplomacy game. Many players were not 100% secure with the rules, so Dick made it a point to explain some of the more complicated results: why a support failed, what centers are permissible for builds, why a center captured in Spring but vacated in Fall is not owned by the capturing player, etc. To those who have played Diplomacy a number of times, these may seem obvious, but Diplomacy was still a new concept to the gaming community at this point. For years afterward, debates over the interpretation of one rule or another would fill

the pages of many a zine.

The game started out in somewhat unusual fashion by modern standards. Italy and Austria battled, swapping Venice for Vienna. Turkey and Russia crossed swords, with Turkey actually marching through Bulgaria and into Rumania in the Fall. France took Belgium and Iberia, grabbing three builds. England bounced Germany out of Holland, and convoyed to Norway. Russia moved into Prussia, and then Berlin, which caused Germany to bounce him out of Sweden. Consequently, Germany wound up with no builds.

France and England seemed to show their peaceful intentions with each other in the Winter, with France building only armies and England building F Edi.

By 1902 the press started coming on a heavier basis, including special full one-and-two-page releases written by John Boardman (England). These "Reuters Reports" releases were actually printed by Boardman himself, and then sent to Dick Schultz for distribution along with Brobdingnag. Boardman seemed to derive a lot of pleasure from these releases, writing them with obvious gusto. Good press-writing was a driving force in the postal hobby for many years, and these days is a lost art. To many Diplomacy players, "press" now simply refers to whether or not you know the identity of, and can negotiate with, the other players. But back then, if the game itself was the football gridiron, the press would be the commentary, the blogs, and the conversation between the fans in the stands. In Winter 1902, for example:

*"ST. PETERSBURG (17 November 1903)
Prime Minister Stolypin today announced that a number of Tsarists, guerillas, and initguers against the Anglo-Russian peace terms had been placed under arrest. The arrested persons included:*

- *General Prince Kokodryov, for treason, offenses against nature, and impairing the morals of a minor. The Prince's 11-year-old son had been taken from him and made a ward of the state.*
- *Adolph Terre and Tristan de Vinairre, for profiteering with a military brothel on the German front, and for various other offenses which cannot be with propriety made public. (It is commonly rumored that the real reason for the arrest of these two fugitives from French*

justice is that they charged more for German than for Russian girls.)

- *Egon Miller, for treason and for robbing the bodies of soldiers along the front lines.*
- *Capt. Fyodor Fyodorov and Capt. Katash, for dereliction of duty. These two officers were allegedly arrested in the Terre-de-Vinaigre brothel at a time when they should have been commanding troops in the line.*

In addition, warrants were issued for the arrests of Prince Momy Vibesou and a monk named Grigori Rasputin. Prince Vibesou had been a Rumanian officer in the Russian army, and it is believed that the real reason for his arrest is an intrigue between him and the wife of General Munin. Rasputin had been a favourite of the former Tsarina."

Despite a stagnant Germany, a friendly England, and three 1901 builds, France managed to gain nothing in 1902. Russia found himself between an England/Turkey pincer, and despite taking Kiel from Germany had no builds, as Turkey took both Sev and Mos by force. Italy gained ground on his Austrian neighbor, and England took Sweden for Boardman's one build. As the rules were still new to many, including GM Schultz, in Fall 1902 we saw the adjudication result in the French dislodging their own unit in Bur by a supported attack from Paris. Fortunately the error was realized and corrected with the Winter orders.

Unlike modern hobby traditions dictate, in these early days a replacement player was generally only brought in when (as in 1901) a player notified the GM of his desire to resign the game for personal reasons. The postal hobby had grown out of the face-to-face hobby, where it was understood and accepted that if somebody had to "go home" before a game was over, their nation would be placed in Civil Disorder. As the postal hobby grew and matured, it became a common practice to call for a "standby player" after one or more NMR's, depending on the house rules of the individual GM, with the idea being that no nation be left in civil disorder when it could be avoided. When available, a standby player could be assigned even if the power in question had only one unit left. Much of this varied between one zine and the next, as it does today depending on where you play (different websites, judges, and GM's have their own traditions). But back in 1964, the face-to-face traditions were still in place, and Civil Disorder was simply an accepted and expected part of any game.

Because of this, 1964C very quickly degenerated into a battle between England, France, Italy, and Turkey; Russia and Austria disappeared in Spring 1903, never to return. Germany quickly dropped out of sight as well, returning only when he was down to a single unit. A

number of GM errors also added confusion: a Turkish fleet turning into an army and then back into a fleet, a disappearing and reappearing Italian army, and other typographical problems. These, too, were more common back in the early days, especially as no maps were provided with adjudications and everything had to be typed and stenciled, dittoed, or offset. The Anglo-Turkish forces continued their roll, as evidenced in this press release:

"LONDON (1 August 1903): Foreign Minister Lord Lansdowne was asked today in the House of Lords whether the capture of St. Petersburg with Turkish aid meant that H. M. Government was now allied with Turkey. The Foreign Minister referred the question to the Earl of Selborne, First Lord of the Admiralty, who pointed out that a detachment of marines had been ordered to Novgorod to patrol the frontier between the British and Turkish zones of occupation."

By 1907 a full year of real time had passed. Dick Schultz, in a more open era than today, was comfortable discussing the game as it happened, which gives the reader some insight into the struggles of the game. As Dick saw it, Italy was rapidly on the way out. "It is no great surprise, of course, to see Italy collapse this way. For many years it has stopped the Turkish steamroller by itself with no real help from any other corner, despite a superior strategic position and tactical superiority by the Turks." Turkey and England continued to grow, with France holding on. At the end of 1907 Italy was down to two centers, with France and England at 10 each and Turkey in the lead at 12. England and Turkey were in full Wicked Witch mode, squeezing France and the neutered Italy between them (the French having taken, and then later lost, London). All that really remained was to see how it played out, and whether Boardman or Blake would reach the magic 18th center first. The English successes were chronicled in more of Boardman's press:

"LONDON (6 January 1908) Parliament resumed sessions after the New Year's holiday to hear a special message from the King. His Majesty's speech, which was read to the assembled Houses by H. M. Prime Minister the Duke of Ormskirk, expressed confidence that the war would be brought to a speedy and victorious conclusion. "The collapse of Italian arms before our gallant Turkish allies," the King announced, "together with the new forces which we have raised here at home, assuredly strike fear into the hearts of the anarchists who today rule in France."

"But most to be commended are the people of Great Britain. Although seven years of way have brought privation and suffering upon the

British people, although a French fleet is still in occupation of Wales, they have roused themselves to further efforts against the enemy. It is our great pleasure to announce that the Sixth Fleet has just been commissioned in the port of Liverpool, manned by volunteers who flocked to the colours in last autumn's recruitment drive. And the First Army, which was disbanded a year ago in Moscow after temporary reversals, has just been re-commissioned in Edinburgh. With these new forces in the field, French stragglers will assuredly be driven out of these islands before the end of this new year."

But the game stalled out at this point. Dick Schultz, who had seen his bi-weekly suffer first one week delays and then longer ones, never published an issue after Brobdingnag #24. John McCallum, living in Alberta, Canada, offered to take the game and zine on himself, but didn't get any response from Dick. At John Boardman's urging, however, McCallum took the game over anyway, as the first Canadian publisher. The game continued along the previous path: an England/Turkey alliance pushing the other armies and fleets off the map. Press releases died down considerably in this last stage of the game. McCallum instead livened up the zine with discussions on the rulebook and his varied houserules, such as those which first dealt with the idea that it might not be appropriate to adjudicate moves prior to the deadline, in case a player decided to send in a revision at the last minute. Topics like this, which might seem obvious now, were still new and unclear back then. Usually you needed something to HAPPEN before people came up with ways to handle the situation. Houserules, therefore, were more reactionary than preventative.

By issue 36, France was nearly gone and Fall 1912 had been reached. England was gaining ground, and looked to be the eventual winner. In the nearly two calendar years it had taken to get to this point, the hobby was now firmly entrenched and growing. Where at gamestart Brobdingnag had been the third Diplomacy publication ever, there were at this point more than a dozen, with Wild 'N Wooly having reached issue #50 and Graustark approaching #100 rapidly. The wheels had been set in motion for a hobby which, more than 40 years later, is still going strong...although in rather different media.

Finally, after Fall 1913, in Brobdingnag #39, 1964C came to an end. John Boardman's England grew to 18 centers, with Eric Blake's Turkey at 15 centers and James Goldman's France surviving with a single center (Munich). The following issue included a detailed end-game statement from John Boardman, describing the ins and outs of the game, as well as a full move-by-move recap. Boardman admits a game-long England/Turkey alliance, until the final two years when France sacrificed centers to England in order to stop Turkey from winning.

In fact, Boardman closes out his commentary with the following summary statement: "Conversely, Eric Blake does not seem to be as good a player as his gains in 1964C would indicate, as he had the advantage, early in the game, of facing two extremely weak opponents in Ron Daniels and Paul Harley."

So thus ended 1964C, one of the first postal Diplomacy games to begin (and the ninth to be played to completion). Under the stewardship of John McCallum, Brobdingnag would continue through the end of 1968 (issue #90), before being passed on to a new editor. It wasn't until issue #155 at the end of 1973, under Bob Ward, that the zine finally saw its last days. 1964C was, in many ways, a typical early game: rule confusion, NMRs, dropped players, transfer from one GM to another, GM errors, lively press, and a textbook 18-center solo win.

Now, those of you who have been paying attention are saying "Wait a minute, you called this article **1964C – The Hobby's First Scandal**. Where the hell is the scandal? So the GM mistakenly turned a unit into a fleet, and then back to an army when the error was pointed out. Was *that* the big scandal?"

No, kind readers, it was not. The scandal was not revealed until a year later, in July 1967. That was when, in Graustark #130, John Boardman revealed (as reported by John McCallum in Brobdingnag #68) "that he has used the name 'Eric Blake' as a pseudonym and as a mailing address through which to receive literature of a quasi-fascist nature. He has also, over that signature, published articles and letters supporting that political position."

While the use of a pen name in fandom or literary circles was a well-established and accepted practice, it had not been commonplace in Diplomacy; Winsome Losesome was years away (I **know** you have **no idea** what I am talking about; see Jim Burgess' sidebar for some explanation and other fun examples). But real name or pen name was not the issue...the issue was that John Boardman had, in fact, played two positions in the game: England (as John Boardman) and Turkey (as Eric Blake). And, as you might expect, those were the only two powers of consequence remaining when the game was over, James Goldman's one-center France notwithstanding.

Due to admitted "laziness" McCallum waited an issue before publishing this revelation within the pages of his zine (although, in part, it seems he also wanted to assemble all the facts before making accusations). In the meantime, outrage boiled over elsewhere in the hobby. In particular Charles Reinsel of Big Brother and Jim Dygert of Armageddonia were incensed by Boardman's deception, as they were at the apparent silence from John McCallum on the subject. At this stage in the hobby, player rating systems were a popular

source of debate and revision, and this added the element of whether to delete 1964C from the record books entirely.

Boardman, rather than simply admitting wrongdoing, took the unusual stance that his actions had never been forbidden by the rules of the game. In Graustark #137 he wrote "...as I have previously stated, the Graustark rules for postal Diplomacy are in sense to be regarded as obligatory for other gamemasters...At the time Dick Schultz organized 1964C – taking surplus players from the 1964B enrollment – he had no stipulation on this point, one way or the other. The accusation that in entering 1964C under a pseudonym, I broke a rule, refers to a rule which did not exist."

McCallum himself found this point of view quite disingenuous. As he explained, nobody was claiming that the mere use of a pseudonym was a problem. It was the act of entering the game under both his own name for one position and under a pseudonym for another. Also, Graustark #17 laid out Boardman's houserules, specifically stating that while deception of other players was permitted, deception of the gamemaster would not be tolerated. And Schultz's premier issue of Brobdingnag made clear that 1964C would be played under the "generally accepted rules of Postal Diplomacy (nee Graustark #17)."

McCallum also found fault with Boardman's depiction of the game as being "organized" by Dick Schultz. Boardman had, in fact, supplied Schultz with the list of players, including Eric Blake. As McCallum wrote in his public response to Boardman, "In Graustark #24, you again mentioned the two new games forming [[1964B and 1964C, 1964A already having started]], and asked players to send in their \$2 fee for either of them to yourself. And, in fact, the games were not arranged with

the first 7 names to be received going into the Fredonia game and later entries, together with your own, going to Schultz. You already had seven entries when I sent mine and yet I ended up in Fredonia, not Brobdingnag, so that the decision as to which players would play in which game was made by you."

Duplicate Position Cheating By Chris Babcock

Duplicate position cheating is an ugly stain on the electronic hobby. Email and play by web Diplomacy servers will never be any more secure than the Internet protocols that they run on. Fortunately for players, actual hacking is almost non-existent. Existing play by web servers generally don't have the security infrastructure to control multiple position cheats automatically. Although administrators can usually identify cheats by looking through server logs, this is a cumbersome process.

In the email hobby, more recent versions of the nJudge offer some help for judgekeepers, mostly in the form of event notifiers. In addition to accessing server logs and archives of raw messages, judgekeepers also get notified of activities that are most likely to be linked with abuse like registration activity and email from unregistered addresses.

Overall, cheating on email judges is very rare except in certain kinds of games. There are attempts at multiple position cheating in about one of fifty no press games and one in five novice games. Experienced players have other ways of abusing one another, but multiple position cheating is almost non-existent in judge games that are not specifically targeted at new users.

The most notorious multiple position cheater in the history of the email judges is Scott Marshman, who once played 5 powers in a standard game. It is very rare occurrence (about once a year on a server that usually runs 50 concurrent games) for a turn to be adjudicated before a multiple is discovered, thanks to the judgekeepers that make sure registrations contain meaningful information and the game masters who review the registrations at the beginning of each game and whenever there are replacement players.

Prior to passing final judgment, John McCallum contacted all the other players, and Dick Schultz himself, to ascertain for certain whether any of the players, or the GM himself, had known about the deception, and to see what they felt should be done about the situation. In theory, if Schultz had known, then Boardman would have been innocent of breaking the rules, as deception of the **players** was legal. While Dick Schultz offered no opinion on the resolution, he did confirm that he had known nothing of the deception. Neither did the players. One unnamed player went so far as to state that James Goldman should be declared the winner. The problem there, as McCallum explained, is that Goldman **did not** win. Either Boardman won, or if his methods were rules illegal, nobody did.

Despite finding the entire experience (and the raging emotions and opinions from some in the hobby) utterly nerve-wracking, McCallum did what he felt he had to. He methodically gathered the evidence, obtained statements from the parties involved, and made the inevitable and in his words "unfortunate (for the hobby)" decision to wipe 1964C from the Brobdingnag records and ratings. The entire matter was generally forgotten about as time marched on, as the hobby found new things to argue about (or go to war over, in some instances). But if you think the practice of playing more than one position in a Diplomacy game (or at least attempting to) has

disappeared, just ask Chris Babcock about how many times he encounters this problem in Judge games (see Chris' sidebar). As for me, I still fail to see the appeal of cheating like that. What possible satisfaction can someone derive from winning a game of Diplomacy where they start the game with a significant advantage?

Or, more to the point, what if they lose **anyway**? If you're so insecure about your ability to win that you need to cheat, how would you feel about yourself if you still couldn't win a game even with this advantage? Ouch...

Better to just admit you are a terrible player, the way I do, and expect to lose every game. That way, when you somehow stumble into a win, you can be pleasantly surprised.

Famous Nom de Plumes in the Diplomacy Hobby ***By Jim-Bob Burgess***

Since the earliest days of the hobby, people always have realized that "on any given day, anyone can be beaten" or "reputation is a bitch". As a result, there always has been considerable incentive to hide one's true identity behind a nom de plume, a pseudonym. In real life, efforts such as these by Mark Twain or Lewis Carroll are fun diversions, of no real consequence. But in the Diplomacy hobby, some of them have become quite controversial stories. I am going to enumerate some of the more famous of these examples, but write in to our letter column with some of your favorites.

The Transgendered:

Since women are relatively rare in the hobby, two of the most famous nom de plumes are of men pretending to be women. Jerry Lucas was a postal employee, many of the postal hobby's notables (Conrad von Metzke or Gary Coughlan) were also employed by the carrier of our diplomatic missives. Jerry (and his pal Tim Winger) was playing Dip among his local group of postal employees, but wanted to start a szine and trade with everyone in order to see more szines (that was what we did in those days). Anyway, they first came up with the szine title *Winsome Losesome* and then the name Judy Winsome to be the publisher. Tim tells the most of the story in my TAP #268 (<http://devel.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/abyss268.html>) and like most of these stories, it ended when a hobby member actually PHYSICALLY showed up to end the charade (that of course was crusading attorney Brenton ver Ploeg). But "Judy" really didn't play very much, if at all. I recall playing a number of games with Jerry Lucas at that time with no knowledge of the connections to Winsome Losesome at all (he of course used a different address, that of postal secretary Leslie Obata, as a mail drop).

The other famous "women" here though most definitely DID play, a lot, and very successfully. Harry Andruschak was a pretty mediocre Diplomacy player, a bit timid, not very effective when he got the idea that if he played as a woman he might do better. As he lived with a woman named Reichert, he postulated a daughter named Sara Reichert, all set with a postal drop, off he went. Well, he was phenomenally successful. In 1998, "Sara" won the John Koning Award for Player Performance as the best player in the entire hobby. For a variety of reasons, Harry made a GREAT woman Diplomacy player. Interestingly enough, Brenton ver Ploeg tells HIS story of unmasking "Judy" in TAP #234 (<http://devel.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/abyss234.html>) where I tell the story of flying to California, hooking up with Don Williams, and driving to "Sara's" house to find.... yes, Harry Andruschak, who admitted that he'd been fooling us all for six long years!

The Phoenixes:

There always have been players who for whatever reason became persona non grata around the hobby. If they wanted to "get back in" one of the ways to do that was to get a nom de plume. One of the most infamous of these was Buddy Tretick, aka Bernie Oaklyn. "Bernie" was one of the very first people I met (postally that is) as I widened my hobby interests from my local high school group and some postal games we ran while we were all away at college in the late 1970s. I loved Bernie's szine, *Le Front de Liberation du Diplomacy*, and all the players in it like Eric Ozog, Terry Tallman, and Bob Olsen. Even "James Alan" (actually James Alan Tretick) and his other brothers were fun to play with. John Boardman and Rod Walker famously were not so amused.

The Columnists and Editors:

These were true nom de plumes, taken on not so much to play, but to write amusing columns in szines. In the UK, there were famous writers that obviously were pseudonyms like Lucifer in *Dolchstoß* and Smectonymuus or Marat in the palindromic *Rats live on no evil staR* (<http://www.diplomacy-archive.com/resources/postal/rats.htm>). Not being a Brit, but reading many of these, I'm sure some people know who those anonymous writers really were and they can write in too if they want to. Also they headed up various press writing series. In the States we had some of each of these as well, like Flat Evil or Steve Cattier.

The Early Years:

In addition to this story, which Doug tells in detail, but also is mentioned in Diplomacy A-Z (<http://www.badpets.net/Diplomacy/AtoZ/A.html>) and by John Piggott and a few other places that one actually can find on the Internet, Bruce Pelz played as "Admiral Grauhugel" in 1963B and the wild inventive press of that period featured nom de plumes of one sort or another in practically every game.

The Recent (E-Mail) Years:

Back in the early 1990's, there was a group of players called the Merlin players, based on the bulletin board group they came from who were playing in the early judge games. They persistently (very persistently) tried to cheat by taking on multiple positions in games. As a result, the judgekeepers of the time (first David Kovar and Dave Kleiman, then others, and presently Chris Babcock seems to be the keeper of this flame) developed ways of trying to track and stop players trying to play more than one position at once. They seem to be reasonably successful at doing this, but it still is something that people try every day. Some of the nascent web communities on Facebook and php seem to be plagued a bit by this problem at the moment. It must be worked out and every new system, starting with the original postal hobby, has had these problems. Let the buyer beware.....

The Dark Ages Variant

By Benjamin Hester

The Dark Ages variant was released in late 2007 as part of my relentless quest to become the most prolific variant designer around. (I only have three others completed, so I'm sure I have a ways to go before I can claim that title.) Since that time, the variant has undergone two playtests (in ACD and DC) and two revisions, and we are now on the eve of a third game (in ACD).

Dark Ages is a simple map translation variant – meaning none of the core rules of Diplomacy have changed at all, only the map and the roles that the players assume. Which, in the case of Dark Ages, are the Gaels, Scots, Bretons, Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Norse, and Swedes, roughly as they were in the year of our Lord, 825. Some concessions to gameplay at the expense of historical accuracy have been made, but these have been limited to the greatest extent possible. The layout of the North Sea region lends itself readily to the intent of the variant – to emphasize naval action and fill the map with opportunities for convoys. This is the age of Viking and Germanic invasions by sea, and the variant is designed to capture that spirit.

The next section of this article will provide the first-time player of Dark Ages (which encompasses 99.9+% of the human race) with a brief overview of the variant and its opening strategies.

The Gaels

The Gaelic position is most similar to Britain in Standard. The Gaels begin fairly secure in their island home that we know today as Ireland. While they enjoy considerable defensive advantages, their early opportunities for expansion are somewhat less than their immediate neighbours. Strathclyde, Cornwall, and Brittany are their most likely targets for growth in the first year.

The Gaels priorities for negotiations are fairly straightforward – form a strong bond with either the Scots or Bretons early, keeping options with the Anglo-Saxons open. Avoid the formation of a Scot/Breton alliance at all costs – the Anglo-Saxons are unlikely to be able to save the Gaels in that situation, especially if they are distracted by the Danes.

The Scots

The Scottish position is most similar to Germany in Standard. The Scots begin the game poised for rapid expansion, but will have to make concessions to their neighbors in order to secure their vulnerabilities on three fronts. Early occupation of key sea zones (namely, the North Sea) may carry a short-term cost in SCs, but will pay off as a deterrent to invasion from Scandinavia, and

provide opportunities to gain diplomatic capital by offering support to Norse or Danish forces.

Alliances with the Gaels, Bretons, or Anglo-Saxons are all strong options in the early game, though the Scot player in particular must keep a nervous eye turned east as events unfold in Scandinavia. Events in the British Isles and Scandinavia tend to resolve themselves independent of one another in the first 2-3 years, but after that, attacks across the North Sea become more common. The Scots would do well to be the first one to occupy the strategically invaluable North Sea accordingly.

The Bretons

The Breton position is most similar to Austria in Standard. The Bretons have a tight group of home SCs that are all interconnected, and their position lies in a veritable minefield of SCs. Just beyond that perimeter however, lie Gaels, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons – all three potential strong allies or formidable enemies.

The Bretons must tread carefully – peace on one, preferably two, fronts is a must. To that end, SCs such as Deira and Strathclyde must be weighed carefully – are they more valuable in Breton hands, or traded away for friendship with a neighbor? An opening stab to Hwicce that threatens Hamptonsire can damage Anglo-Saxon growth tremendously – but are you **sure** that the Gaels will stay by your side? Of all positions in Dark Ages, the Bretons offer the most reward for well-timed stabs.

The Anglo-Saxons

The Anglo-Saxon position is most similar to France in Standard. Peaceful neutral expansion is readily available, and first year growth of 2 SCs can be attained without violating neutrality – but not without opening up vulnerabilities in your home SCs.

Breton invasion of Hwicce and Middle Anglia are significant threats in the first and second years – if their attacks are coordinated with the Gaels or Danes these threats have the potential for early Anglo-Saxon elimination. Gaelic convoys into Brittany or Cornwall can potentially rob the Anglo-Saxons of continental gains, or coordinate with Breton attacks on Hamptonsire. Although potentially dangerous, Breton/Scot alliances are usually directed more at the Gaels than the Anglo-Saxons, and should be encouraged. Breton/Gaelic alliances should be disrupted at all costs. Finally, despite the threat they pose, the Bretons can also be extremely valuable as an ally against either the Gaels or the Scots – or both.

The Danes

The Danish position does not have much similarity to any position in Standard – perhaps Italy, but even that is something of a stretch. The Danes are unquestionably a naval power with considerable prospects in both directions on the European coast, as well as at the expense of their neighbors in Scandinavia.

The Danes form one point of the “Scandinavian Triangle” of the Norse, Swedes, and Danes. Typically, two of these will ally against the third, and barring significant involvement from the west, that third power will be eliminated early. It is very much in the Scots and Anglo-Saxons interests to prevent this from happening however, and it is not at all uncommon for a Scot or Anglo-Saxon fleet in the North Sea to prop up Danish or Norse defenses to that end.

The Norse

The Norse position also bears little similarity to any position in Standard – Turkey is the closest match, but that is mostly due to their relationship with the Swedes. The Norse have a simple choice of alliance with the Danes or Swedes, while remaining vigilant against Scottish fleets heading east. This choice also entails whether the Norse will be primarily a naval power (as is the case in most alliances with the Swedes) or if they will fight on land for dominance of Scandinavia (which is the direction most alliances with the Danes lead to.)

The Norse are the second point of the Scandinavian Triangle. Of the three, they are the most vulnerable to attack from the west, typically by Scots that got off to a good start. To that end, they usually have the most interest in a rapid resolution of events in the Scandinavian Triangle, which allows them to take the initiative against the powers of the British Isles.

And finally, the Swedes

The Swedes are the third point of the Scandinavian Triangle. Their position bears many similarities to Russia in Standard, most notably in bi-coastal Lappland. They have ample early opportunities for expansion, though most of them will be contested by the Danes or Norse. Tension runs particularly high in Varmland and Skane, and a wise Swede will guard these territories jealously due to their tactical value.

The Swedish rear guard is very secure from attack, however, an alliance of Norse and Danes can launch a devastating pincer attack that can quickly reduce the Swedes. The Swedes stand to gain the most from western involvement in Scandinavian affairs in the long term, despite the inability of those powers to directly aid Swedish defenses against an attack by the Norse and Danes. The Swedes must focus more than any other power on the control of territory with tactical value rather than simply gaining SCs.

I hope this quick overview of opening strategies for the Dark Ages has piqued your interest in the variant, and whetted your appetite to pillage and plunder in the cold northern waters. Any prospective GMs or interested players that would like more information or files for running the variant should contact me directly at nairenvorbeck AT yahoo DOT com. Please respect privacy and limit the distribution and use of this address to Diplomacy related topics only. Thanks! Your humble variant designer – B.

Benjamin Hester is a member of the Academy of Creative Destruction (ACD), home of the highest caliber PBEM Diplomacy anywhere on the net.

Dark Ages Variant Rules, Version 2.1

Homepage: <http://www.geocities.com/nairenvorbeck/files>

The Dark Ages Variant is a historical transplant of Hasbro/Avalon Hill's Diplomacy game to the North Sea region in 825 AD. The Dark Ages variant conforms to the standard rules of Hasbro/Avalon Hill's Diplomacy in most every way, with the few exceptions listed below.

Turns move from Spring to Fall just like standard Diplomacy, and the first turn is Spring 825 AD.

Players take control of one of the seven major nations in the North Sea area, the Gaels, Scots, Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Norse, or Swedes.

Somerset, Ribe, and Saxony are bi-coastal territories, similar to Spain or Bulgaria in Standard Diplomacy.

The island of Roskilde is similar to Constantinople in Standard Diplomacy. Armies and Fleets may move directly from Jelling, to Roskilde, to Skane, and vice

versa. A fleet in Roskilde may NOT convoy.

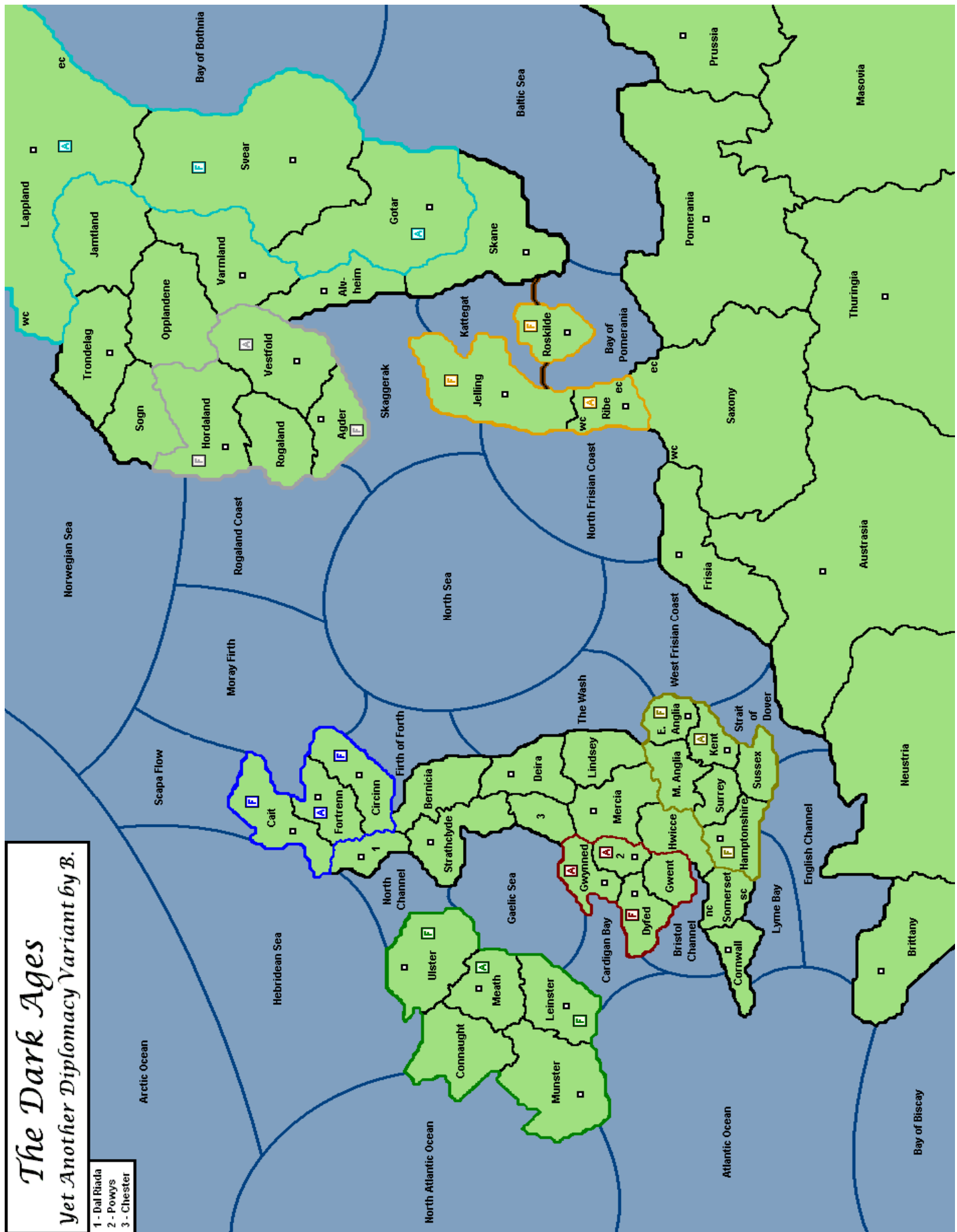
Solo victory is declared when one nation has control of 19 SCs (simple majority). Have fun and happy raiding!

Starting Positions:

Gaels: F Ulster, A Meath, F Leinster
Scots: F Cait, A Fortrenn, F Circinn
Bretons: F Anglia, A Kent, F Hamptonshire
Anglo-Saxons: A Gwynned, F Dyfed, A Powys
Danes: F Jelling, F Roskilde, A Ribe.
Nore: F Agder, A Vestfold, F Agder
Swedes: A Lappland, F Svear, A Gotar

The Dark Ages *Yet Another Diplomacy Variant by B.*

- 1 - Dal Riada
- 2 - Powys
- 3 - Chester



Diplomacy World Demo Game

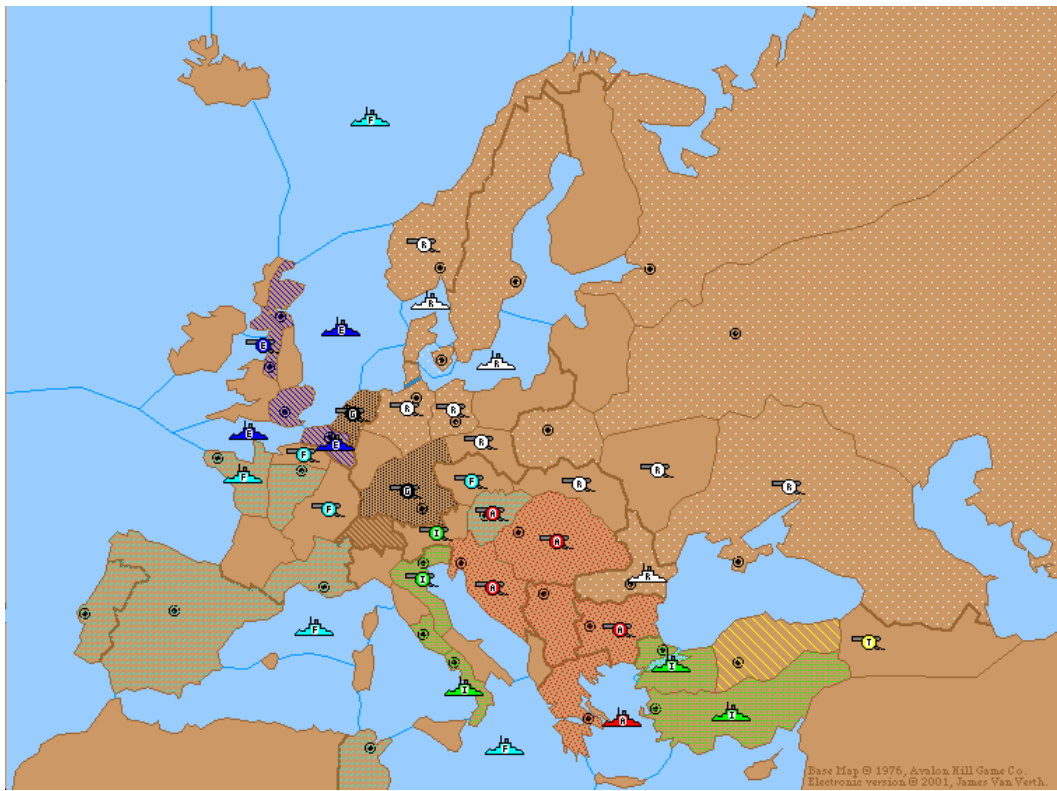
Regular Diplomacy – “After the Rapture”

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)



Spring 1905 Results:

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Trieste – Vienna, A Bulgaria - Constantinople (*Bounce*),
F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea, A Serbia – Trieste, A Trieste - Vienna

England: F Belgium Supports F London - North Sea, A Edinburgh – Liverpool,
F English Channel - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), F London - North Sea

France: F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Burgundy Supports A Munich,
F Marseilles - Gulf of Lyon, F North Atlantic Ocean - Norwegian Sea, A Picardy Hold,
F Tunis - Ionian Sea, A Vienna - Bohemia

Germany: A Holland Supports F Belgium, A Munich Hold

Italy: A Bohemia – Tyrolia, F Constantinople - Black Sea (*Bounce*),
F Naples Supports F Tunis - Ionian Sea, F Smyrna - Constantinople (*Bounce*),
A Venice Supports A Bohemia - Tyrolia

Russia: F Baltic Sea Supports A Kiel, A Berlin Supports A Warsaw – Silesia, F Denmark – Skagerrak,
A Kiel Supports A Munich, A Moscow – Ukraine, A Norway Hold, F Rumania - Black Sea (*Bounce*),

A Sevastopol - Armenia (*Fails*), A Ukraine – Galicia, A Warsaw - Silesia

Turkey: A Armenia - Sevastopol (*Fails*)

Spring 1905 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

GM Rick Desper - I'm at the edge of my seat, wondering how this is going to turn out. OK, maybe not the edge...but I am curious. Jake is a party pooper for not letting Dan into MAO, I must say.

Austria: Adam stays the course with anti-IF, pro-Russian moves. Ion-Aeg seems weak, unless Adam has made a deal with Andy.

This seems to be a good time to take pause and ask, quoting David Byrne, "And you may ask yourself... Well... How did I get here?" Adam made an early choice to convince or work with Russia to go 2-2 and had a very safe northern border for a long time. In my opinion, he didn't take enough advantage of it, so now he has five units, and a lot of questions. Though there has been some waffling with Russia, Russia still is benefitting greatly from the continuing quiet on the Austro-Russian border. As Eric notes, Adam remains committed to an anti-IF course. I'm not sure I get the decision to keep Ionian and rather than be dislodged and choose a likely place to retreat, moves to Aegean. Given the extremely likely Italian fleet orders, I would have held. I might then have retreated to Aegean, but would have had choices. I think Ion-Aeg is simply weak period. A deal with Andy? Andy is just as likely to keep moving to Sev and let Doug take his last center (that would be my prediction) as anything else. Eric can elaborate if he wants, since Armenia and Aegean are three spaces apart they can't collaborate this year. So I presume Eric means that if Andy moves back to Ank and stays alive that something might happen next year. Frankly, I don't see what it would be.

Aeg S Arm-Smy, Bul-Con takes Smy unless Jake orders the unlikely Ion-Aeg. Bul S Aeg-Con, Arm-Ank takes Con unless Doug lets Mark take Bla by ordering Smy S Con. If Andy and Adam have decided to work together, Ion-Aeg makes some sense, otherwise, it really doesn't. Adam may have thought he'd see Mar-GoL, Tun-TyS, Nap-TyS, so he figured Ion-Aeg would leave Ion open, but it still seems weak.

Agreed. And I think Andy is going to keep bouncing into Sev until I see some evidence otherwise.

Lastly, while Russia and Austria aren't antagonistic, it would seem that Adam should have known that Mark was bouncing Doug in the Black Sea. I suppose the move to Con was OK, but with giving up Ion, moving to Greece might have been better. Then he could at least have established a bounce

over Albania if he wanted to. We could see F Ion-Alb, F Tun-Ion next and that doesn't look good.

England: Dan defends against France, and tries to counter-attack. Neither of Russia's allies respond to the Russian Solo threat.

And "How did I get here?" Dan has played it cute for the most part and is toadying to Mark in a very imbalanced way. This has been the story from the beginning. Dan appears to have conducted most of his negotiations last minute, frequently to his detriment. These orders are tactically sound. I'm going to say more about other people, it seems I have little to say about Dan here. Is he planning to have four centers until the end, does he have any interest in trying to stop Mark? These, unfortunately, do not even appear to be interesting or relevant questions. And now he must contend with a French F Norwegian Sea, where only his F North Sea borders on it. I suppose that there is the Russian to aid him.

I suspect the move to Nwg was a move against Russia, rather than England.

I think that's right. Jake should be trying to get Dan to turn around and assist in stopping Mark from sweeping the board. There is at least some positive probability of this happening and Jake is 100% correct in moving to Nwg as the way of incentivizing Dan as highly as possible.

France: Is Jake supporting Germany to hold the line against Russia, or supporting Germany to get the time to move into position to attack Germany himself? Jake continues his alliance with Italy.

Responding to Eric first, can't it be both? I think it is both.

I don't think it can be both, really. In any Stop-the-Leader alliance you need to determine who is willing to help stop the leader, and quickly eliminate those who aren't, and determine who is necessary to stop the leader, and make sure they are in the alliance. I don't think Mike is willing or necessary, so I suspect that Doug and Jake are looking to keep Mark from taking his Centers while they gain position to do so.

That is correct, I'm sure. Mike is not doing well what powers in this position need to do, make themselves indispensable.

"How did I get here?" Jake has been innovative and daring throughout. In the beginning, it was hard to see what he was up to, but he clearly has shown how that was his advantage. Tactically, right now, it is a bit difficult to see what these moves were supposed to do. He chose to move to Norwegian Sea rather than Clyde. But it follows his pattern of derring-do. Now, the calculation question is: IF has only 12 units, plus two German and one Turkish toady. The numbers say, with consistent support from Mark and Adam, that this is not enough. What does Jake do about it? Dan's not listening.

If Mark doesn't build this year, which is probable, Nwg-Bar next year poses a problem for him. Possibly a big enough problem to bring Dan into the StL.

Agreed, that is the biggest decision on the board right now.

Germany: Mike might just receive six supports for Mun HOLD this Fall.

Eric's suggestion would be fun, but beware, when that is possible it also is possible to get blown out.

Were I to guess, I'd say we'll see Bur-Ruh, Pic-Bur, Tyl & Boh S Mun, so that unless Mark convinces Adam to cut support (unlikely), A Mun holds whether Mark attacks, or not.

I would say that is highly likely. If Mike were trying to make himself indispensable though, how would he go about doing that? He would likely try to hand over Munich in a spring turn while moving toward another center. This is not the time to do that, so this turn survival is the best thing to do.

"How did I get here?" Sorry to sound like a broken record, but Mike's big mistake was in not coordinating more with Adam, Austria, in a classic Anschluss. This game evolved in a way where a perfect Anschluss could have been formed. As a result AG have been divided and conquered. Picking up a theme from my comment on France, ERA has 19 centers on the board, one past the magic number. That gives Russia the freedom to start trying to pick at Austria and crunch him with Italy. Expect German prospects to keep deteriorating, there seems zero chance to get back in the game. If not Austria, Mike had to see where things were going and get with someone, he never seemed to connect with his own power or in concert with others. This always is a deathknell. It's overused, but SO, SO true. Look around the table, and if you can't see the patsy, YOU'RE the patsy.

Italy: Does the IF abandonment of Vienna signal a response to Russia, and a peace offering to Austria?

Perhaps.

"How did I get here?" I liked Doug's play from the beginning. Then there were the jousts with France, now the tight "of necessity" IF. Doug also can count. As Eric says, they NEED Austria on their side. I suppose it is possible that this is in the cards, but then we would have seen F Tunis hold or more likely back to Wes. Med., as France could use one more fleet on the other front. No, I think the intent now is to figure out how to break the deadlock. Getting both F Ion and F Tun into the action means Austria eventually crumbles, unless Adam switches NOW.

Agreed, Ion-Gre, Ion-Alb, and Ion-Adr are all bad news for Adam.

Adam should be able to see such forceful handwriting on the wall.

Russia: Mark goes for position, and generally succeeds, but there is no obvious path to growth visible here.

"How did I get here?" Mark has been running the game he wants to run pretty much from the get-go. I cannot help asking what outcome he seeks, since he is amenable to goals other than win-only.

None of his allies are strong enough to make a two-way likely. Sev-Mos, Ukr-Sev, Rum-Sev, Vie S Bud-Gal, disband Gal, B F Sev, would let AR finally make a play for the Turkish Centers, but Adam can't afford to do that, I don't think.

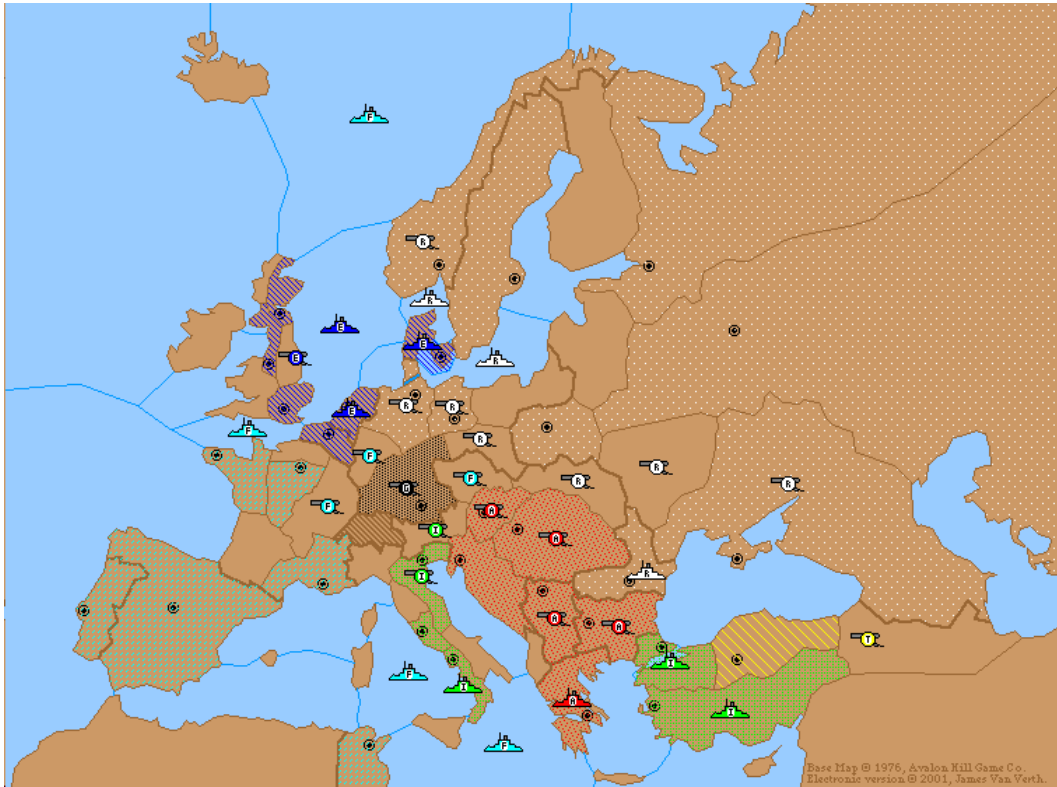
I agree with that too. This game always has a way of making itself interesting just when it seems that it isn't, so we look forward to seeing some surprises in the Fall.

His winning chances depend a lot on the next couple of seasons. Can he find a way to get one or both of Germany's last centers? Does he turn on Austria now or later? What happens in the north with the rogue French fleet in Norwegian Sea? Lots of fun questions to try to answer. These moves suggest that perhaps he tries to keep Austria in the fold and attempts to use the numerical advantage of ERA vs. IF plus GT to try to sweep the board. Expect the attempt, which cedes the tempo to Adam, much depends on what Adam decides to do as the board moves forward. As stated, I admit being a bit bored with Dan's likely responses. Is Dan going to do ANYTHING independently at this point? Mark seems to say no.

Turkey: Andy continues to attack Mark with his last breath. Will either Doug or Andy try for Ank this Fall? Stay tuned.

I be shocked (sic) if Andy sways from his steadfast path. Attack Sev until he dies! And that's useful enough that IF probably will maneuver to protect Con and take Greece. "How did I get here?" Andy never seemed to really be in the game. Did he ever

have an ally? There were chances and opportunities turned down for the Juggernaut. But Austria never helped. And Italy only is working in concert in a pure toady arrangement. Expect Andy to survive, but survive by choosing the danger.



Fall 1905 Results:

Austria: F Aegean Sea – Greece, A Budapest - Rumania (*Bounce*),
A Bulgaria Supports A Budapest – Rumania, A Trieste – Serbia, A Vienna Hold

England: F Belgium – Holland, F English Channel - North Sea, A Liverpool – Yorkshire,
F North Sea - Denmark

France: A Bohemia - Munich (*Fails*), F Brest - English Channel, A Burgundy – Ruhr,
F Gulf of Lyon - Tyrrhenian Sea, F Ionian Sea Supports F Gulf of Lyon - Tyrrhenian Sea (*Cut*),
F Norwegian Sea Supports F English Channel - North Sea, A Picardy - Burgundy

Germany: A Holland Hold (*Disbanded*), A Munich Hold

Italy: F Constantinople - Black Sea (*Bounce*), F Naples - Ionian Sea (*Fails*),
F Smyrna - Constantinople (*Fails*), A Tyrolia Supports A Munich, A Venice Supports A Tyrolia

Russia: F Baltic Sea Supports A Kiel, A Berlin Supports A Munich, A Galicia - Rumania (*Bounce*),
A Kiel Supports F Belgium – Holland, A Norway Hold, F Rumania - Black Sea (*Bounce*),
A Sevastopol - Armenia (*Fails*), A Silesia Supports A Munich, F Skagerrak - North Sea (*Fails*),
A Ukraine Supports A Galicia - Rumania

Turkey: A Armenia - Smyrna (*Fails*)

Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.
England: Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London.

France:	Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain, Tunis.
Germany:	Munich.
Italy:	Constantinople, Naples, Rome, Smyrna, Venice.
Russia:	Berlin, Kiel, Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.
Turkey:	Ankara.

Adjustments:

Austria:	Supp 6 Unit 5 Build 1
England:	Supp 6 Unit 4 Build 2
France:	Supp 6 Unit 7 Remove 1
Germany:	Supp 1 Unit 1 Build 0
Italy:	Supp 5 Unit 5 Build 0
Russia:	Supp 9 Unit 10 Remove 1
Turkey:	Supp 1 Unit 1 Build 0

Fall 1905 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

Austria: Adam attacks Russia, confirming my supposition that Vie-Boh was an offer from IF to get him to switch sides. Bul-Gre, Con-Bul/EC, Aeg-Con might have been more effective, but there isn't enough trust between Doug and Adam for that to happen, yet. Since he is attacking Russia, now, we will see B A Tri.

This is THE most significant move of the past two or so game years. I think Adam should have been "playing to this" sooner than he did, as we noted here the course of the game to this point has been pretty obvious for awhile.

Yup, Adam has squandered what was a strong position by spending too long beating on the Turkish turtle's shell.

I think these moves showed though, that there is a bit of ambivalence and some lack of trust evident in Adam's moves. Eric clearly agrees. This is part of the game that a lot of people don't get, the steps to make a move when one is doing it incrementally. Sometimes the really grand stab presents itself, but it is far more common to be something like this. My view of the world says that you need to keep options open (tactical and strategic) as one is in these kinds of situations. You want to take advantage of the uncertainties and cognitive dissonances, and let others be motivated to reduce them. They can offer useful gains to do so.

**nod* I certainly don't blame Adam for not trusting Doug completely. I've made that mistake and rapidly found Doug sitting in my Home Centers.*

England: I've had turns like this, where a series of unsupported moves all succeed, resulting in multiple builds. It doesn't happen often, though. Was Dan lucky, or did negotiations go his way? I would guess we'll see B F Edi, B F Lon, though B A Lon is not impossible.

I believe Dan set this up and knew precisely what he was doing and what the outcome was likely to be. Dan has a tendency to do last minute negotiations and that can be quite effective when you can be quite sure what other people are going to do. And you know they have no more time to go back to other players and raise the level of the game further. Time for a mea culpa from this quarter. I really thought Dan was planning to stick with Mark longer than this. Mark seemed to think so too.

I agree that Dan was probably pretty confident that these moves would work. It does suggest that there was a real failure in Mark's diplomacy and read of the board this turn, though.

France: IF seems to be working at cross-purposes, here. Does this suggest a breakdown of the alliance, or just a failure to communicate this turn? If FIE cooperate next Spring, they can take Munich. I would guess Jake will disband one of his Med Fleets, if IF are still allied.

I'm not sure how to interpret this. Let's wait and see what the adjustments say and then I'll comment on this one. GOL does get into TYH. Yes, this is very significant, but we also need to remember that we saw Dan's defection this turn also. That could have the effect of destabilizing the IF arrangement.

**nod* The more I look at these moves, the more I see a shift from IF vs. ARE to FATE vs. I & R.*

I don't think we've ever exactly seen IF working in lockstep. Continuing my increasing regard for Jake's play. Jake could be being a bit of the mastermind here. I would expect MORE on this. Perhaps Munich goes, but perhaps it does not. I do not expect to see a Mediterranean disband. Jake's longer term interests are in stabbing Doug, eventually.

Agreed.

Germany: This strikes me as waiting for the headsman's axe to fall. You need to work harder and write more in these positions, to give the strong Powers a reason to keep you around. Mike hasn't been doing that.

Agreed, he does have another opportunity this season. There is no reason for Germany NOT to save Munich, given the shifting alliances going on about him. If Munich falls, it will at least partly be Germany's fault for not doing some aggressive negotiation.

**nod* I do expect Munich to fall, though. It looks like Mike has given up.*

Italy: Was Doug unavailable this turn? These moves seem passive and uncoordinated.

These are not good moves. I would state again that from the "demo game" perspective, Rick should be letting people have time when they need it.

Of course, it is also up to the players to say "bad week for me, can we extend the deadline?" Even on the Judges where a player can extend the next deadline by sending one line to the Judge I've seen games go late and then process with hasty moves because a player doesn't bother to make that small effort.

It is hard for players of this caliber not to manipulate that freedom, but "marker" moves like this (see the lack of coordination with France too), just lower the level of the game. France may decide to stab just because Doug is busy and not responding. That is "real life" in the Dip world, and ALL players need to guard against it, but we do not like to see it in a demo game.

Russia: There isn't much of an effort from Mark here that I can see. Kie S Bel-Hol is the only order that that is likely to succeed/change the board. Now he quite likely faces a board-wide Stop-the-Leader alliance, and if so, he has no good disband available.

Mark seems rushed too. I'm sure he has a deep, dark plan though. ☺

**chuckle* Yes, knowing Mark, I wouldn't rule out an intentional decision to even the board up and cast off the Leader's mantle.*

If he had to disband, I would choose to disband south and try to get the possibly crumbling IF to split, with Austria jumping in on one side or the other. That's a very good hope and indicative of the good play of these excellent players, not just locking up what seemed to look rather boring two seasons ago or so. Time for a bit of meta-commentary. I see

what Eric and I are doing as trying to take on an entertaining punditry role, trying to illuminate what we see as we look at these moves. We, like you as readers, are not privy to what the negotiations actually are. But it is important skill as a Diplomacy player to look at moves and to infer negotiations among others. I hope (and I think we hope) that these discussions help you assess how to assess Diplomacy positions better.

**nod* It is critical to look at each turn's results, and see what moves don't match what the negotiations you have been privy to led you to expect. That will often give you insight into the other negotiations going on around the board. The coordination between EF this turn and the LACK of coordination between IF suggest that an alliance shift has occurred. Will that carry forward in 1906, or will Doug be more available, and be able to mend fences with Jake? If you were another Power on this board, how would conflict between IF help you, and how might it hurt you? That thought process should shape Mark's, Dan's, and Adam's negotiations with Jake and Doug, in particular.*

Like all pundits, we are sometimes (even frequently) wrong, and we will dash on ahead and keep commenting, only when it seems relevant commenting extensively on our previous errors of prediction. You, as gentle readers, may see more point in assessing that so you can see both how deeper analysis can help but also mislead, as the level of the game changes.

**nod* The game is not only more complicated than you (or we) imagine, it is often more complicated than we can imagine. Each player has his own view of the way the game is supposed to be played, of the position on the board, of the strengths and weaknesses of his opponents, of his relationship with each of his opponents, and of their relationships with each other. Add in the influence of personal mood when a player is submitting his orders, and prediction becomes an inexact science, at best. Still, your odds of success are better if you consider what your opponents are likely to do, than if you don't.*

Turkey: If Mark had let Con-Bla succeed, Andy would be building, and Doug disbanding.

I will note that I was also wrong here (following on the above note). I thought Andy would keep playing out A Arm-Sev. It is worth noting that Mark may have TOLD Andy that he would permit Con-Bla to succeed, to get Andy to move to Smyrna. And then he may have lied.... or he might have insinuated it to induce Andy's shift. On such choices and negotiations, the outcomes of games lie.

Hmmm, I don't see that Mark gains by lying to Andy here. Getting Andy to order Arm-Smy and Build as Doug

disbands would help Mark much more than the bounce-fest does, I think.

You're right, Eric, I don't see it either, but sometimes Mark's style is to intentionally confuse and I am trying to think my way through that. But I think I was

wrong here, he should really have done that and then followed up into Armenia himself as he attempted to do if Smyrna went (as it would have if all those moves went because Con got into Black Sea).

Winter 1905 Results:

Austria: Build A Trieste

England: Build F London, Build F Edinburgh

France: Remove F Norwegian Sea

Russia: Remove A Berlin

Winter 1905 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

Austria's build of A Trieste is as expected, though Adam could split his forces between I & R now.

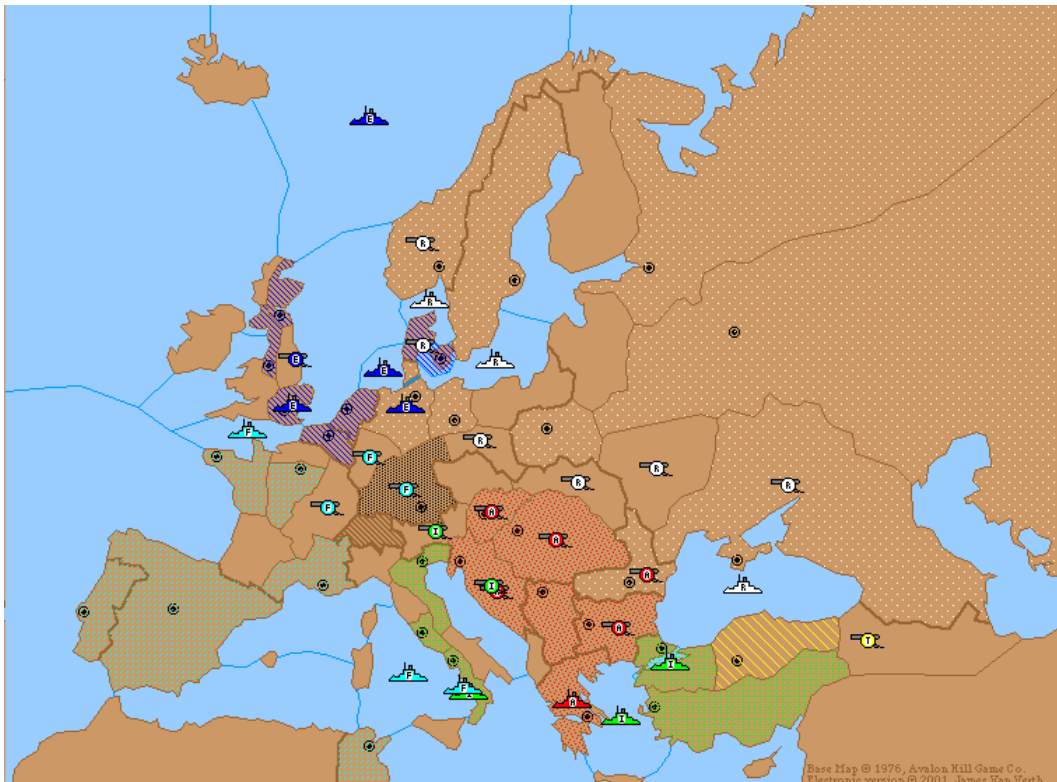
England's builds are also as expected. Mark's going to have real difficulty holding Scandinavia, unless he somehow manages a build this year.

France's removal results in nicely ceding the Scandinavian campaign to England. I expect we'll see Jake focus on the Med next year.

With Russia's removal, Mark's got a line of Armies against Austria, but he's going to have to talk his way back into this.

Well, Germany now has his space to defend, time to negotiate to stay in the game, most players don't understand just how important these one center powers can become. And it can be loads of fun to play, with lots of tense negotiation. France did indeed disband the F Nwg Sea, so EF are set to cooperate if they want to. Russia did surprise me slightly by removing A Berlin, but he must then feel he can make some progress in the south, if he does not, that was a poor choice.

Mike may be able to save himself, but I would guess that Munich will be French in '06.



Spring 1906 Results:

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Serbia – Rumania, A Bulgaria Supports A Serbia – Rumania, F Greece - Aegean Sea (*Fails*), A Serbia – Rumania, A Trieste Hold (*Dislodged* can retreat to Serbia, Albania, or OTB), A Vienna - Galicia (*Fails*)

England: ~~F Denmark – Sweden~~ (*Disbanded*), F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea, F Holland – Kiel, F London - North Sea (*Bounce*), F North Sea - Helgoland Bight, A Yorkshire - London (*Fails*)

France: A Bohemia – Munich, A Burgundy Supports A Bohemia – Munich, F English Channel Supports F London - English Channel (*Fails*), F Ionian Sea – Naples, A Ruhr Supports A Bohemia – Munich, F Tyrrhenian Sea Supports F Ionian Sea - Naples

Germany: ~~A Munich – Berlin~~ (*Disbanded*)

Italy: F Constantinople Supports F Smyrna - Aegean Sea, ~~F Naples Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea – Ionian Sea~~ (*Dislodged*, can retreat to Rome, Apulia, or OTB), F Smyrna - Aegean Sea, A Tyrolia Supports A Venice – Trieste, A Venice - Trieste

Russia: F Baltic Sea Supports A Kiel – Denmark, A Galicia Hold, A Kiel – Denmark, A Norway – Sweden (*Bounce*), F Rumania - Black Sea, A Sevastopol Hold, A Silesia - Berlin (*Bounce*), F Skagerrak - North Sea (*Bounce*), A Ukraine Supports A Galicia

Turkey: A Armenia - Sevastopol (*Fails*)

Spring 1906 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

GM Rick Desper: OK, Dan was on a 3-day bender and woke up somewhere in East Anglia, but Jake is the one submitting misorders. France is attacking Italy who is attacking Austria who is attacking Russia. Two retreats, two forces destroyed without retreats, and I'm guessing that is the last we see of Germany. Retreats needed from Italy and Austria.

Now if I was Mike I'd be working hard to get Mun-Ber, by offering to use my newly build A Mun to do whatever Jake wanted. I suspect Rick is right, though.

Rick really shouldn't be right. This is a perfect situation where it DOES make sense to annihilate the German army and in some sense let the French army "play through" (to use a deserved golf metaphor) and then let him rebuild it to support in the rear. I want to be positive, so let's just say "it makes sense to talk about it".

Austria: I'm guessing that Adam knew Jake was attacking Doug, so he's trying to keep Doug's forces split with Gre-Aeg. If he retreats to Serbia, he'll be able to hold Rum, if Doug doesn't cut support.

I think surely this is joint maneuvering between France and Austria, that really isn't even a question. The more important thing here is Adam's balancing of his two front war. He's doing OK, but the outcomes are not clear yet. He failed to get Russia to remove south last year, probably will do so again

and may still stagnate.

England: Dan gets hurt by a suspicious French disorder. The bounce of Lon-Nth weakens Dan's position considerably. Will Jake now take Bel to limit Dan's builds? Still, Nrg-Bar would put Mark in something of a pickle.

I wouldn't believe it was a disorder, though it might well have been. Dan has a tough choice, I would probably shoot forward into the Barents Sea, while laying down a "if you do that again, that's it, I'll not trust you again" line to Jake. It always is tough, since if you focus on the disorder in negotiations, you may poison the chances for going forward, but you can't just ignore it. Balance is hard in this game.

France: I'm not sure how Eng S Lon-Eng could be an actual disorder. I would have opted for Eng S Lon-Nor with a note to the GM saying I was being deliberately ambiguous, or perhaps Nrg, and claim my left index finger accidentally shifted one key to the left. Jake should be building three (Nap, Rom, and Mun), so taking Bel is perhaps somewhat risky, but it would give France a tremendously strong position.

Jake needs to go for it, whether or not it was a disorder, and take Belgium. I would also do the deal with Germany if he wants it to go through to Berlin (but again, with the disorder, would Dan

support Jake in that? I'm not sure.). Jake is either playing a brilliantly designed balance of power game or he's really lucky. He's convinced me as this has developed that it definitely is the former. You have to make the move now while people can't attack you.

Germany: As mentioned above, Mike should be talking to Jake, but I doubt that he is, or that it will work, if he does.

I agree that the French "misorder" makes it more unlikely, but DO NOT GIVE UP, EVER!!!

Italy: Doug should have seen the French attack coming, I think, and the fall-back from Turkey could cost him.

The question is, will he lose a unit, stay even, or get a build this time? Lots of uncertainty for Italy, I would probably risk the retreat to Apulia and see what I could make. The uncertainty is skewed, most likely Italy drops this turn. Time for Doug to pull a rabbit out of the hat. Diplomatically that means making up with Adam.

Russia: Mark is a few Units short of what he needs to hold Scandinavia, so his well-being in the north seems to depend on Jake stabbing Dan. Sev Hold seems like an olive branch to Andy. The question is, will Andy take it?

Mark needs to make a deal with Turkey this time, we've said that before. It might be the surprise that the board needs this turn.

Turkey: The battle for the southern corner gets more interesting. Will Doug or Mark try for Ank? Will we see

Con-Smy, Arm-Smy, Bla-Con all bounce? Hard to say.

On the less inventive side, Andy is back to the futile bounces against Sevastopol.

I'm thinking Andy knew, or sensed, that Doug was going after Adam, and he expected Smy-Aeg, so he felt he couldn't risk Arm-Ank/Smy, Sev-Arm both succeeding. So, I see Arm-Sev as either a place-holder to while away the Spring turn, or a deliberate cut of Sev S Rum to give Adam a better chance of taking Rum.

I certainly agree that is possible. We'll see what Andy decides to do this time.

But as Eric says, we would be surprised to see it next time. Andy still should try to work a deal rather than try a random bounce. His best deal is probably with Russia again, but he's had that problem numerous times and he and Mark have declined to make a deal, so they probably will do the same again. It is important to note that bucking such trends and actually making a deal when NO ONE expects it, can be quite powerful. Maybe one of these turns.....

For the retreats, Serbia seems obvious, but since the retreat to Rome just forces Nap S TyS-Rom we might see Nap-Apu.

Serbia is the move needed to defend Rum, even better if Austria also makes up with Doug to ensure he keeps Rumania. I also agree that Doug is likely to try to retreat to Apulia and create some options.

Summer 1906 Results:

Austria: Retreats A Trieste – Serbia.

Italy: Retreats F Naples – Rome.

Summer 1906 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

Austria: As expected.

Jake see the danger, and ask Adam to order Gre-Ion this Fall?

Italy: Doug may be thinking that forcing Nap S TyS-Rom will allow Aeg-Ion and then Ion-Tun to succeed. Will

I agree.

Fall 1906 Results:

Austria: A Budapest Supports A Rumania, A Bulgaria Supports A Rumania, F Greece Supports A Bulgaria, A Rumania Supports A Bulgaria (*Cut*), A Serbia Supports A Rumania, A Vienna - Galicia (*Fails*)

England: F Helgoland Bight Supports F London - North Sea, F Kiel Hold, F London - North Sea, F Norwegian Sea - Barents Sea, A Yorkshire Hold

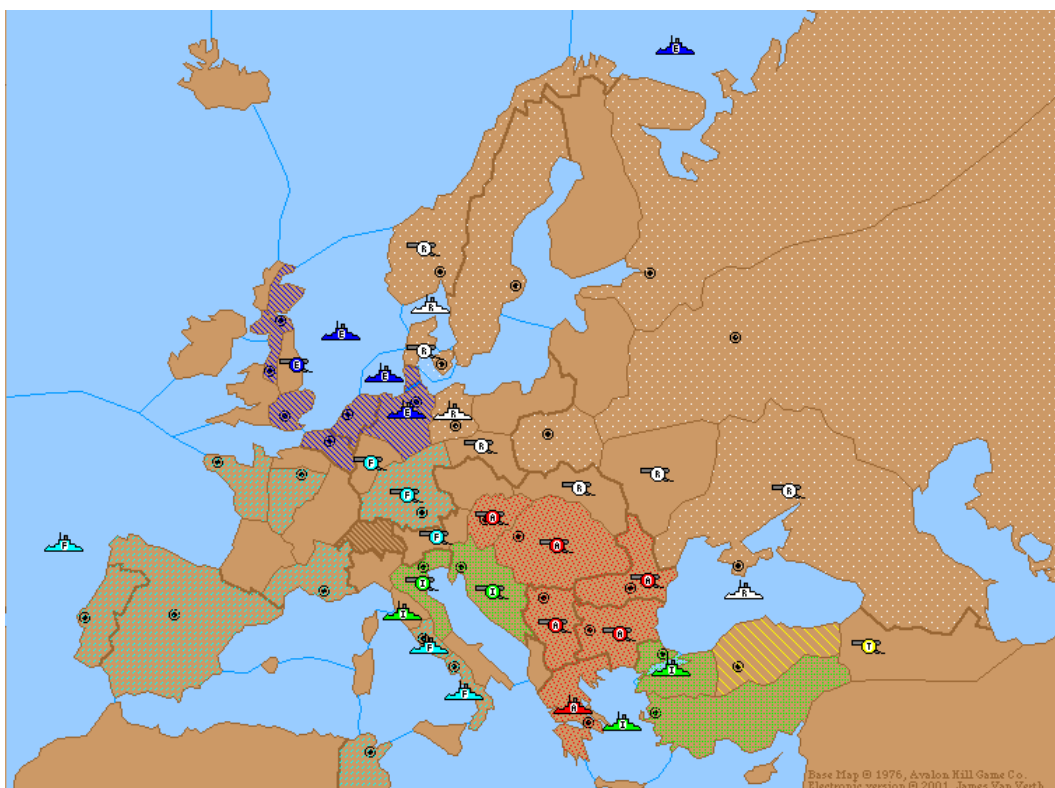
France: A Burgundy – Munich, F English Channel - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Munich – Tyrolia,
F Naples Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea – Rome, A Ruhr Supports F Kiel, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Rome

Germany: No units.

Italy: F Aegean Sea (no move received), F Constantinople Supports A Bulgaria,
~~F Rome – Naples~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Tuscany or OTB), A Trieste Hold, A Tyrolia - Venice

Russia: F Baltic Sea – Berlin, F Black Sea - Ankara (*Bounce*), A Denmark Supports F Kiel,
A Galicia - Rumania (*Fails*), A Norway Hold, A Sevastopol Supports A Galicia – Rumania,
A Silesia Supports F Baltic Sea – Berlin, F Skagerrak Supports A Denmark,
A Ukraine Supports A Sevastopol

Turkey: A Armenia - Ankara (*Bounce*)



Ownership:

Austria:	Budapest, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, Serbia, Vienna.
England:	Belgium, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Liverpool, London.
France:	Brest, Marseilles, Munich, Naples, Paris, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Tunis.
Italy:	Constantinople, Smyrna, Trieste, Venice.
Russia:	Berlin, Denmark, Moscow, Norway, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.
Turkey:	Ankara.

Adjustments:

Austria:	Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
England:	Supp 6 Unit 5 Build 1
France:	Supp 9 Unit 6 Build 3
Germany:	Supp 0 Unit 0 Build 0
Italy:	Supp 4 Unit 5 Remove 1
Russia:	Supp 8 Unit 9 Remove 1
Turkey:	Supp 1 Unit 1 Build 0

Fall 1906 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

GM Rick Desper: When I saw Jake's orders, I worried/hoped that Mark would bounce Munich and Mikey would be resurrected. Alas, it was not to be. Thanks for playing, Mike! Italy submitted an order of F Smy - Ion which, given my policy of not pointing out errors, was left as an illegal order.

Austria: I was hoping to see something where Adam made some progress on taking advantage of the shifting alliance structures. It is quite possible, even likely, that he was working hard on this, but these moves illustrate that he didn't make much progress. He did pick up Rumania in the Spring and kept it. Russia chose not to use Black Sea to assist the attack on Rumania (which I think we all expected) so there really was little risk to Adam, except that he wasn't able to take Trieste back. So Adam is even overall and back in a position he has been in this game often, a bit stuck and hard to fathom how he gets some traction. Let's review what should be his goals. Russia is simply not going to pull back, there is another option this winter for Mark to remove south again, Adam could try to push that in return for attacking Doug a bit more forcefully. But the potential gains from that aren't good. Adam's best longer term hopes are to work WITH Doug again, and get Doug defending himself against Jake.

Adam's play remains too passive. Static defense in the middle of the board is a sure recipe for elimination. On the bright side, he may survive until Jake has enough force in the Med to take him out.

England: Dan did not support Jake into Berlin (which we had talked about before), instead Jake went south with that unit. Russia may now have to remove Baltic Sea or Silesia, and so Dan could perhaps get Jake to help him get Berlin next year with the new unit in Munich. Despite the "misorder" last turn, Jake and Dan are still seeming to work together and Jake pulls English Channel back to Mid and headed south. Norwegian went to Barents as we expected. Dan still has his A Yorkshire ready to convoy to the mainland in the Spring (now that he is in North Sea) and a build in hand, I would build another army even though he will have to convoy the armies in sequence. The long term outlook is good, if he sticks with Jake and Jake doesn't use the three builds to attack him quite yet, he may want to try to get a promise of support to Berlin and convincing Jake to withhold one of the builds. Russia cannot survive the pressure from all sides and will continue to bleed, so Jake may go along to get along.

Dan's prospects look good. Given his relationship with

Mark, and Mark's efforts to hold in the south, Dan could easily see a disband in Scandinavia. Given that, I would not be surprised to see MAO-Iri, Bre-Eng, Par-Pic from Jake next Spring.

France: Jake moves more emphatically toward putting Doug on the rocks. He is aided by Doug's misorder which will give him time to get F Mid-Atlantic to Western Med and protect Tunis easily. He has three builds, and since he did pull back from English Channel presumably will stick with Dan for now (of course F Mid-Irish is possible, especially with the Italian misorder). Jake is quickly moving into a commanding position, he may want to try to keep Adam and Doug from working together, though even that is a pretty weak threat. Does England stab him? I suppose that is possible, but it doesn't look like it will be successful.

I think the question is, does Jake use these three builds to attack England before Dan doubles in size by taking Russia's northern holdings? In his shoes, I'd offer Mark support to Kiel and hit Dan hard next year.

Italy: Doug misordered, but he also was very lucky (perhaps with some negotiation) that Andy bounced Mark's attempt to take Ankara. There really wasn't a reason to do so, but if Arm-Smy and Bla-Ank had both worked because Turkey and Russia did work together, Doug would essentially be dead. Can we ask why Con Supported the Austrian A Bul (was that just a "friendly signal"?) that wasn't necessary? Does anyone really want to stop Jake? We asked this before about Mark, who is now stopped. Remember how the balance of power of this game is supposed to work. You're supposed to keep going after the leader. Doug should be organizing that.

Tyl-Ven, Tri Hold, Con S Bul, is a pretty clear plea for peace with Austria. Doug is in deep trouble if someone doesn't organize a "Stop Jake" campaign before S'07. My concern is that Doug is too distracted to do it himself.

Russia: Mark needs an ally, he put the fleet in Berlin, but needs to disband one and has no great choices. I think he probably SHOULD try to work a deal with Adam and remove F Black Sea, but I don't expect him to do that. But look, if he removes, say, Silesia, he could lose three centers in the north next year, even keeping Silesia and everything else north he could lose at least two. Russia and France are usually good long term allies, if they ally at this point, it is probably the stab of England that is next, remember with the Italian misorder, Jake can afford to lose a turn of tempo and not move F Mid-Wes.

Agreed. Mark should be working hard to establish a

Leaders Alliance with Jake. Given their ability, it has frightening potential, and it may be needed to prevent Dan from dominating the West.

Turkey: Andy stays in the game, but still doesn't make progress. Still would be better to make a deal with Mark, now would be the time, again.

I think Andy needs to make a deal with Adam or Doug.

I respectfully disagree. Certainly making a deal with just one of Adam or Doug without them allying

together isn't going to put Andy in a position to matter in the game. At the same time, I grant that is far more likely than working out a deal with Mark. Mark needs the help though.

I was imprecise in my language. A deal between Andy and Mark would benefit them both, but my sense from knowing them both, and the play of the game so far, is that Andy has no way of making it happen, so a deal with Doug, or preferably Adam, is his best chance to have a role the the game.

Autumn 1906 Results:

Italy: F Rome retreats to Tuscany.

Austria: No activity

England: Build F Edinburgh

France: Build F Marseilles, Build A Paris, Build A Brest

Italy: Remove F Constantinople

Russia: Remove A Ukraine

Turkey: No activity.

Winter 1906 Results:

Autumn and Winter 1906 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

England: Dan trusts Jake, decides he needs one more FLEET to focus efforts to defeat Mark in the north with no help from Jake. This could limit Dan's later expansion, possibly an error unless it was demanded by Jake to generate.....

I don't think it was a mistake. Edi-Nrg, Ruh S Yor-Kie, Kie-Bal puts all six English Units adjacent to five different Russian Centers, defended by only five Russian Units, and sets up two forced attacks, and the threat of Kie-Bal-Lvn in the Fall. I would expect Dan to build Armies next year.

France: these pro-England builds by France. Looks like the EF goes forward strong and coordinated.

That would be my guess, though MAO-Eng, Bre-Pic, Par-Bur, Ruh-Hol still has potential.

Italy: Possibly presages the alliance with Adam that he needs.

Doug could easily lose Smy, Con, Ven, and Tri, and be gone next year, though.

Russia: About as expected. Not a great choice, but he needs to stop Dan above all, I think.

I think the only way Mark stops Dan is by convincing Jake to stab him. Mark would have been better off taking Doug's approach, and disbanding Gal to sue for peace with Adam, or Ska to sue for peace with Dan, in my opinion.

Eric is surely right here, though there might be some hope of getting Dan to stab Jake in a "stop the leader" alliance, but not with this removal. Let's talk about this in "options", does Mark increase his options with this removal? I thought he would remove Ukraine last year, but as I try to analyze why now, I am left with a vague feeling that that was what Mark would do. So I was right, but what did it gain me in analyzing this position. Nothing. I admit this and as I look at what Eric wrote, that seems so much more sensible. Mark now has no real options in his position, and that is not good. Mark and Doug could be big losers this year, perhaps leaving Adam (!) as the strongest power in the East.

Yes, R A Ukr is a, "What Unit can I pull and still have some hope of defending myself?" removal. The problem with this sort of thinking is that it tends to be self-defeating, since it encourages the other Powers to view you as a source of Centers, rather than as a potential ally. Even if Mark has concluded that he HAS to defend against Dan, keeping Ukr to order Ukr-Mos, and the Mos-StP would have been better.

Knives and Daggers

The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Robert Lesco – Regarding your Boardman/Miller numbers article, I did in fact write a report on how Germany fared after building three in 1901, which I published in an ancient issue of NFV2. It couldn't have a very good article as it was over-looked by the Hobby Awards bunch.

[[Hobby Awards? Well, if you wrote it in 2003 or later, it might still be under consideration! Besides, somebody needs to nominate it, and it's always hard to remember what good articles I've read in the prior year. In the old days of postal zines it was easier...I'd just check my files!]]

I recall a "bounce/don't bounce in Sweden" discussion at CanCon way back. At the time this was not done in polite company (like the ENG bounce these days) and Frank Easton suggested that in light of how very successful Russia had become at CanCons and elsewhere it might be time to re-visit that point of etiquette.



Alfred Nicol – I love Diplomacy World. I think it is wonderful that you spend so much time on such a professional product.

My own interests are not often shared. My preference would be more strategy articles, as I find the con reports not so interesting. Perhaps some more themed articles; say, taking a country as a focus for an issue: all things Russian, or may be one issue focusing on the witches Turkey and England; or articles around a triangle west or east, or unconventional openings, etc. You should be very proud of the excellent work you do.

[[It is always hard to balance articles for such a wide audience such as DW has...and, of course, the biggest problem will always remain simply getting people to WRITE any articles at all! At least this issue you will find a few very thoughtful S&T pieces. Now with Mark Zoffel as our S&T editor I hope we get more of them.]]

By the way, I have read about you trying to locate and organize Diplomacy players in Texas. If you know of any Diplomacy players in the Kent region of the UK, or run across any, I'd like it if they got in touch with me.

[[Anyone in that area can email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com and I will forward it along to Alfred.]]

Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplom.org/Face/cons/index.php>

Milan Med Championship – Saturday October 18th, 2008 to Sunday October 19th, 2008 – Milan, Italy - <http://diplomacy.cleosolutions.com>

MileHi Con 40 – Friday October 24th to Sunday October 26th, 2008 – Denver Colorado- <http://www.milehicon.org/>

New Zealand Diplomacy Championships – Saturday October 25th, 2008 to Sunday October 26th, 2008 – Auckland, New Zealand – <http://daanz.org.au>

Italian EGP Step – Saturday November 8th, 2008 to Sunday November 9th, 2008 – Fossombrone, Italy – <http://diplomacy.cleosolutions.com>

Weasel Moot 2 – Friday November 14th, 2008 – Sunday November 16th, 2008 – Chicago, Illinois – <http://umbrehod.dyndns.org/wcw/index.htm>

HessenCon 2008 – Friday November 21st, 2008 – Sunday November 23rd, 2008 – Waldkappel-Gehau, Germany – <http://www.diplomacy-bund.de>

French NDC – Saturday December 13th, 2008 – Sunday December 14th, 2008 – Paris, Hotel la Louisiane, France – <http://www.championnat-de-france.org>

TempleCon 2009 – Friday February 6th, 2009 – Sunday February 8th, 2009 – Biltmore Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island – <http://www.templecon.org/09>

Pontevedria #86

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Pontevedria historically was produced by the Diplomacy hobby's Boardman Number Custodian, or their designee, and listed the currently available 'zines and game openings within the hobby. Over time, it expanded beyond traditional games of Diplomacy, and its many variants, to include similar multi-player games offered within Dip 'zines and the postal hobby. *Pont* was last published and mailed in the late 1990's as the hobby moved more and more into the electronic realm. This resurrects the purpose of *Pont* as a column within *DW* and provide a one-stop place to find GMs, 'zines (in whatever form) and game openings that are part of the non-professional, human monitored/moderated gaming hobby.

This isn't the place to find solely computer moderated games, commercial enterprises, on-line gaming or interactive/real-time gaming. This is the place for folks to find openings in traditional face-to-face or beer-and-pretzels multi-player board games overseen by a human game master and which encourage player to player contact and interaction (even though some games are "Gunboat" style).

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Starting next issue, there will be a "GM's Wanted" section in Pont. If there is a game you would like to play and it needs a GM, send in the request. Those requests will be listed starting in the next issue and, if possible, matched with a GM. If you are a GM that might be willing to respond to a particular request, sign up for an early notification or look in the next issue for requests.

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Disclaimer: Information listed is the most current available at time of publication and is verified quarterly with the listed publisher, game master or responsible party. No listing should be accepted as assured or guaranteed; but, rather, should be confirmed with the indicated contact person prior to exchanging funds or making any arrangements/commitments/agreements.

Updated and additional information is solicited and very welcome, presuming that it fits within the guidelines of the column's purpose, and all appropriate submissions will be included. In general, a GM/publisher has to agree with inclusion in this column before they are listed.

The publisher and compiler have no financial stake in any of the listings and make no promises or guarantees regarding the entry's accuracy nor of future publication schedules, game mastering or any efforts by the listed individuals.

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Zine Listings

Boris the Spider

Publisher/Country - Paul R. Bolduc/USA

Contact Information - 203 Devon Ct, Ft Walton Beach FL 32457-3110, prbolduc@aol.com;

http://members.cox.net/boris_spider/BorisHome.html

Frequency of Publication - monthly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication – Mar 85 / Sep 08

Subscription Costs - \$12.75/yr (12 issues) for hardcopy; \$1/yr for e-version (waived if overseas player)

Game Openings - Diplomacy, Wizard's Quest, Circus Maximus, Colonial Diplomacy, History of the World

Other Games Currently Underway - Machiavelli, Kingmaker, Kremlin, Britannia, Dune, Silverton,

Merchant of Venus, Blackbeard

Potential Future Offerings - 18xx, Age of Renaissance, Gunslinger, Magic Realm, Puerto Rico

By the WAY (on hiatus)

Publisher/Country - W Andrew York/USA
Contact Information - POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117 or wandrew88@gmail.com
Frequency of Publication - included in each **The Abyssinian Prince**
Date of Last Publication - February 20, 2008 (Issue #16)
Subscription Costs - Free
Game Openings - Metropolis, Tombouctou, Grey Ranks, Facts in Five
Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**

Cheesecake

Publisher/Country - Andy Lischett/USA
Contact Information - 2402 Ridgeland Ave; Berwyn IL 60402
Frequency of Publication - Every Six Weeks
Date of Last Publication - August 27, 2008 (Issue #282)
Subscription Costs - Free
Game Openings - Diplomacy

Damn the Consequences

Publisher/Country - Brendan Whyte/Thailand
Contact Information - obiwonfive@hotmail.com
Frequency of Publication - c. 6-weekly
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Began 1987/Latest issue #145, September 2008
Subscription Costs - 35Baht to Asia, 45 to Europe/Australasia, 50 to the Americas/Africa
(US\$1=30baht)
Game Openings - Railway Rivals, Origins of WWI, Tactical Sumo, Diplomacy, Britannia, Maharaja, Sopwith, Snakes & Ladders, Machiavelli, Mornington Cres NOMIC, World Record, Dream Mile
Other Games Currently Underway - Railway Rivals, Bus Boss, Diplomacy, Wooden Ship and Iron Men, Sopwith, Banbury Merton St, By Popular Demand, Where in the World is Kendo Nagasaki, Robo Rally, Maneater

Eternal Sunshine

Publisher/Country - Douglas Kent/USA
Contact Information - 11111 Woodmeadow Pkwy #2327, Dallas, TX 75228
dougray30@yahoo.com, <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>
Frequency of Publication - Monthly
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Feb 2007/Oct 2008
Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - Free, available in pdf and html or appearing in **The Abyssinian Prince**
Game Openings - Diplomacy, Woolworth II-D
Other Games Currently Underway - Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney, By Popular Demand, By Popular Opinion
Potential Future Offerings - Youngstown, Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney, Cannibalism
Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**
Notes/Comments - Andy York loves cats, especially mine, and he hopes to visit them very soon. He has asked me to sell them to him many times, but I refuse. But I am glad they love each other so much. (sic)

Minstrel

Publisher/Country - Rob Thomasson/UK
Contact Information - rob.thomasson@virgin.net; rob.thomasson.com
Frequency of Publication - Monthly
Subscription Costs - none for electronic version
Game Openings - 1829, 1830, 1835, 1856, 1870, 18EU, Railway Rivals, Outpost
Other Games Currently Underway - St. Petersburg

Northern Flame Volume 2

Publisher/Country - Robert Lesco/Canada

Contact Information - 49 Parkside Drive; Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6Y 2H1
rlesco@yahoo.com

Frequency of Publication - I try for every two months but in practice it's quarterly at best.

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Originally December 1987;

I took over in September of 1994 and I am assembling the newest issue just now.

Subscription Costs - \$1.00 per issue

Game Openings - Regular and gunboat (press and non-Press)

Potential Future Offerings - I always hope to be able to run a variant other than gunboat

off-the-shelf (currently on hiatus)

Publisher/Country - Tom Howell/U.S. of A.

Contact Information - 365 Storm King Road, Port Angeles, WA 98363;

Error! Reference source not found.; www.olympus.net/personal/thowell/o-t-s

Frequency of Publication - traditionally six weekly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - 18 Oct 1992/ 31 Mar 2007

Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - postal: US\$1 per issue/free play on web site

Game Openings - none at present

Other Games Currently Underway – Diplomacy, Woolworth Diplomacy II-A, Fog of War

Diplomacy, Breaking Away!, By Popular Demand, Downfall

S.O.B.

Publisher/Country - Chris Hassler/USA

Contact Information - 2000 S. Armour Ct.; La Habra, CA 90631;

hompages.roadrunner.com/sobhome; chassler@roadrunner.com

Frequency of Publication - Every 6 weeks

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - April 1993/September 2008

Subscription Costs - Paper: \$2.00/issue (inside U.S.), \$3.00/issue (outside U.S.); Web: Free

Game Openings - Machiavelli, Gunboat Machiavelli, Gunslinger, Merchant of Venus, History of the World, Industrial Waste, Outpost, Power Grid

Other Games Currently Underway - Kremlin, Silverton, Seafarers of Catan, New World, Dune, Puerto Rico, Age of Renaissance, Republic of Rome

Potential Future Offerings - I'm open to suggestion...

Notes/Comments - The zine is mostly about the games, but it also hosts a regular column about science.

Variable Pig

Publisher/Country - Jim Reader/USA and Richard Smith/UK

Contact Information - jim_reader@hotmail.com

Frequency of Publication: Target is 6 issues per year but actual frequency varies

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication: 1987/August 2008

Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive: No costs although donations of stamps or money to cover postage costs encouraged. Only requirement to receive the zine is to be playing in a game (or sending mail and maintaining contact)

Game Openings: It's A Raid, Snowball Fighting, Railway Rivals, Bus Boss, Teadance, RoboRally and 6 Nimmt. Lyric Quiz and By Popular Demand game can be joined at any time.

Other Games Currently Underway: Awful Green Things From Outer Space, Lyric Quiz, By Popular Demand, Railway Rivals (7 games), Bus Boss, Der Fuhrer, Breaking Away, Cafe International, Hare and Tortoise, Fair means or Foul, Teadance, Where on the Tokyo Metro is Kendo Nagasaki, Work Rest and Play, Fearsome Floors, Golden Strider, Sternenhimmel, RoboRally, Maneater, Pitagoras, Shanghai Trader and Puerto Rico

Potential Future Offerings: Always more Bus Boss and Railway Rivals, Rail Baron

Subzines: VP comprises "Polar Pig" and "The Universe is a Pink Blancmange Called Simon"