

# Diplomacy World #134

## Summer 2016



[www.diplomacyworld.net](http://www.diplomacyworld.net)

# Notes from the Editor

**[[Cover photo – Brian Lee considers the situation at DixieCon 30.]]**

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Summer 2016 issue. It has been nearly 100 degrees here in Dallas for about 10 days straight, so I am taking advantage of the cooler indoor temperature to work on this page. Hip hip hooray for air conditioning! I try not to run it when I don't need it, but we NEED it this 4th of July weekend!

Sometimes the fixed publishing schedule for Diplomacy World is just a touch unfortunate. This time around the latest World DipCon has just finished up only a few days ago. So that means I can announce the new world champ is none other than the lovely and talented Chris Brand...sadly it also means there hasn't been enough time since the event to collect any reports from people who attended. Hopefully there will be plenty of those for next issue. In the meantime, here are the final results:

1 <a href="#">Chris BRAND</a>	17 <a href="#">Edi BIRSAN</a>	31 <a href="#">Paul PIGNOTTI</a>	46 <a href="#">Chris BOURASSA</a>
2 <a href="#">Doug MOORE</a>	18 <a href="#">Andrew BARTLEIN</a>	32 <a href="#">Eric GRINNELL</a>	47 <a href="#">Chris GLASSBURN</a>
3 <a href="#">Andrew GOFF</a>	19 <a href="#">Jason O'DONNELL</a>	33 <a href="#">Bill HACKENBRACHT</a>	48 <a href="#">Brandon FOGEL</a>
4 <a href="#">Nathan BARNES</a>	20 <a href="#">Robert ROUSSE</a>	34 <a href="#">Carlos TREVINO</a>	49 <a href="#">Bernard ANDRIOLI</a>
5 <a href="#">Peter YEARGIN</a>	21 <a href="#">Kevin O'KELLY</a>	35 <a href="#">Rick DESPER</a>	50 <a href="#">Mike HALL</a>
6 <a href="#">Adam SILVERMAN</a>	22 <a href="#">Mark ZOFFEL</a>	36 <a href="#">Jorge ZHANG</a>	51 <a href="#">Scott JOFFRE</a>
7 <a href="#">David MALETSKY</a>	23 <a href="#">Peter MCNAMARA</a>	37 <a href="#">Tim JONES</a>	52 <a href="#">Michael BINDER</a>
8 <a href="#">Nicolas SAHUGUET</a>	24 <a href="#">Jack LATTA</a>	38 <a href="#">Peter LOKKEN</a>	53 <a href="#">Brian SHELDEN</a>
9 <a href="#">David HOOD</a>	25 <a href="#">Christian MACDONALD</a>	39 <a href="#">Jay HEUMANN</a>	54 <a href="#">Bruno-André GIRAUDON</a>
10 <a href="#">John GRAMILA</a>	26 <a href="#">Adam SIGAL</a>	40 <a href="#">Chris KELLY</a>	55 <a href="#">Eric MEAD</a>
11 <a href="#">Toby HARRIS</a>	27 <a href="#">Tom KOBRIN</a>	41 <a href="#">Matt SHIELDS</a>	56 <a href="#">Mike SULLIVAN</a>
12 <a href="#">Dan LESTER</a>	28 <a href="#">John JAMIESON</a>	42 <a href="#">Mike BARTLEIN</a>	57 <a href="#">Brad HARRINGTON</a>
13 <a href="#">Christian KLINE</a>	29 <a href="#">Tim RICHARDSON</a>	43 <a href="#">Alex MASLOW</a>	58 <a href="#">Bryan PRAVEL</a>
14 <a href="#">Grant STEEL</a>	30 <a href="#">Jason MASTBAUM</a>	44 <a href="#">Randy LAWRENCE-HURT</a>	59 <a href="#">Nicholas DELATEUR</a>
15 <a href="#">Tom SCUDDER</a>		45 <a href="#">Grant SMITH</a>	

60	<a href="#">Dariusz MURAKOWSKI</a>	69	<a href="#">Matt SUNDSTROM</a>	77	<a href="#">Dan BURGESS</a>	82	<a href="#">Nick ROHN</a>
61	<a href="#">Siobhan NOLEN</a>	70	<a href="#">Don GLASS</a>	78	<a href="#">Hanbyl JOHNSON</a>	82	<a href="#">David SPANOS</a>
62	<a href="#">Mike WHITTY</a>	71	<a href="#">Amanda BAUMGARTNER</a>	79	<a href="#">Danny GRINNELL</a>	82	<a href="#">Fred TOWNSEND</a>
63	<a href="#">Edwin TURNAGE</a>	72	<a href="#">Roland COOKE</a>	80	<a href="#">Zac JARVIE</a>	82	<a href="#">Ian TROTTA</a>
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68	<a href="#">Eric SILVERMAN</a>			82	<a href="#">Don DEL GRANDE</a>		
				82	<a href="#">Tony PROKES</a>		

As you can see there was a terrific turn-out this year. Another Windy City Weasels success in Chicago. Check the letters section for some information on available videos from the event!

Obviously that wasn't the only convention of note since the last issue. David Hood has graced us with his annual report from DixieCon, which is a tournament I really hope to make it to one of these days. Who knows, maybe next year?

There are a few pieces of bad news to mix in with the good. One is the passing of Pitt Crandlemire, former World DipCon champion and a mainstay of the hobby in the 1990's. Jim Burgess offers his personal perspective and some notes on Pitt's tournament play after becoming WDC Champ in 1996.

I'm also sorry to report (selfishly) that our Art Director, Nemanja Simic, is seeing so much growth in his professional career that he no longer has the time to contribute to Diplomacy World on a regular basis. With that in mind he has resigned his post, although if he finds himself with an extra hour or two here or there he may still send in some drawings. Nemanja's unique style has really helped define the visual identity of this zine for a number of years now. He can never be replaced, but he'll be missed and we will have to do our best to move on. I still plan on using some of his smaller drawings to fill odd spaces.

However, that means we need a NEW Art Director. If you are interested, or know of someone who is, PLEASE get in touch with me. They don't need to be familiar with Diplomacy; I can easily give them enough examples and direction to walk them through the kind of illustrations we need. It is, after all, a professional position and can be used on an artist's resume (as Nemanja did; he also did the cover for my first memoir). Experience and references never hurt!

Of course you can find plenty of other material in this issue. But allow me two housekeeping notes. First: I have cleaned up the links on [www.diplomacyworld.net](http://www.diplomacyworld.net) and eliminated all of the dead links I could find. If you have a Diplomacy-related page you would like me to ADD to the links section, please send me an email.

Second, I am happy to report that – for those of you who have missed it – I think next issue we'll have the return of the Diplomacy World Demo Game. This time around it will be a game of standard Diplomacy instead of a variant like Youngstown. Good players, quality commentary... and maybe more entertaining press?

***I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 1st, 2016.***

Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me at [diplomacyworld@yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@yahoo.com)! See you in the fall, and happy stabbing!



# Diplomacy World Staff:

Managing Lead Editor:	Douglas Kent, Email: diplomacyworld of yahoo.com
Co-Editor:	Jim Burgess, Email: jfburgess of gmail.com
Strategy & Tactics Editor:	Joshua Danker-Dake, Email: jadddiplomacy of gmail.com
Variant Editor:	Jack McHugh, Email: jwmchughjr of gmail.com
Interview Editor:	Jim Burgess, Email: jfburgess of gmail.com
Club and Tournament Editor:	Will J. Abbott, Email: wabbott9 of gmail.com
Demo Game Editor:	Rick Desper, Email: rick_desper of yahoo.com
Technology Editor:	Thaddeus Black, Email: thaddeus.h.black of gmail.com
Original Artwork	<b>Vacant!!!</b>

***Contributors in 2016: Thaddeus Black, Jim Burgess, Kevin Burt, Dale Cooper, Joshua Danker-Dake, The GM, David Hood, Zachary Jarvie, Jim O'Kelley, Larry Peery. Add your name to the 2016 list by submitting something for the next issue!***

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.

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# Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



**Larry Peery** - THOUGHTS ON COMPARING FIRST-TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS TO WDC

Note that I am writing this a month before WDC 2016 takes place and I'm assuming that the number of foreign attendees will be fairly small. I'm also assuming that the primary reason for that is money and - with the rising cost of airfares and the value of the dollar - I can understand that.

Still, I have a few thoughts to share.

WDC and other DipCons charm and appeal is often associated with Diplomacy hobby cultural and historical diversity, a chance to meet new players from "across the pond", the opportunity to visit new places, boundless shopping opportunities and, of course, the allure of that World Championship title. Ours may be a small world, as Disney so infamously and profitably said, but it is still a World Championship Title.

With all of these qualities, Destination WDC sparks continuous interest among serious worldwide Dippers by creating an emotional connection, which leads to first-time and repeat visits, at least as often as time and money allows.

By comparing the travel patterns of first-time and repeat visitors to WDC, we may be able to discover how these two groups differ in the way they prioritize different aspects of the WDC experience. Which is most important: the international hobby's diversity, the chance to meet new players, the opportunity to see new places, shopping opportunities, or the allure of a world title?

For a majority of repeat WDC attendees the enhancement of knowledge about hobby culture, history and meeting new players is seen as the primary motivator to keep them coming back. As for first-time WDC participants who knows? Perhaps we can learn more after Chicago.

In the meantime, what's your excuse for going or not going to this year's WDC?



**Larry Peery** - A LETTER FOR DIPPERS WHO ARE DEAF AND MUTE, BUT DEFINITELY NOT DUMB!

By now, unless you're still in some sleeze bar in Chicago's East Side, you've probably seen or heard

about Chris Martin's fantastic series of videos he made at WDC 2016 in Chicago. 24+ are online with more to come and you can start your viewing at 24 videos up now in my series on WDC@WeaselMootX - check it out, not just previews. Mostly posting After-action reports tonight!

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbwng27e10e1cQn\\_4B8nL2HDUgwgCsFY0](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbwng27e10e1cQn_4B8nL2HDUgwgCsFY0)

Believe me, they're not visual Peeriblah. It's good stuff!

I have a suggestion for you. If you've watched them once already I suggest you go back and watch them again with the sound on your computer MUTED. That's right, without the spoken words, just the video. The reason I suggest this is directly linked to a project I've been working on for a month or so and Chris has provided me with a brilliant series of illustrations to go with it. My project is a introduction to the topic of "body English" for Diplomacy players --- how to use your eyes more and your ears and mouth less in a FTF Diplomacy game to better understand what your table mates might be up to. I want you to watch the going-ons and try and anticipate what will happen in the game based on what you see ---NOT what you hear. We all have that ability to some degree but refining your body English interpretive skill just might provide you with a winning edge in a top board game. Anyway, give it a try.

Then in the next issue of DW watch for my article and be prepared to re-watch The Martin Videos one more time. I'm sure you'll see them in a new light.

***[[Please don't threaten the readers like that.]]***



# Balkan Wars VI: A Review

By Jack Mchugh

Balkan Wars VI is a variant that is based on the short wars between the smaller states of Europe's Balkan peninsula and one Great Power, Turkey. Several of these smaller states had only recently freed themselves from the Ottoman Empire, e.g. the Turkish state, and as such did not always agree on their borders. These wars continued right up until virtually the First World War broke in August 1914.

There have been several versions of this game. The one I am writing about was published in Doug Kent's Eternal Sunshine zine #113 and Doug currently has openings for a black press (meaning press can be published by anyone from anywhere so you really don't know who its from no matter where the press is addressed from) game if you would like to play it.

The game has gone through several iterations. This one was done by Brad Wilson and published in his zine Vertigo back in the 1980s. It features a cleaner and clearer map showing crossing points as well as passable canals to allow fleets to go between the Black Sea and the Aegean and the Gulf of Corfu and Cycliades (the southern Aegean Sea) and to give the Rumanian home center of Galati access via the Danube to the Black Sea.

Besides the map features mentioned above, the map is relatively small with only 19 home centers and 9 neutrals. This telescopes play as players have less time and room to maneuver. The other interesting features are in the rules. First, you can build in ANY unoccupied center you own, including those centers starting out as neutral, not just the centers you start the game with. Second, there is no separation of seasons between winter and spring turns. You must do your moves before you see where everyone builds. This also speeds up the game as it rewards the bold and the ruthless over the cautious and timid players.

I like the way the powers all start right up against each other in this game—the dilemma of Ven-Tri is all over the map in this game. Albania starts with units next to Greece and Serbian centers, Greece starts with units next to Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania, Serbia starts virtually surrounded by the other powers, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania and Greece all have units next to Serbian centers, etc. etc.. This makes diplomacy more important and makes alliances of convenience more difficult to pull off.



I actually prefer to play Serbia, Bulgaria or Albania as they start right in the thick of things and you either do very well or you will be facing elimination in short order. Greece and Turkey are the closest things this variant has to naval powers but the navies aren't as important in this variant as there are several crossing arrows to allow armies to access most of the map without the need of fleets. The fleets are most useful for getting to some of the neutrals such as Cyprus or Malta or Crete—the only way to take these centers is with a fleet.

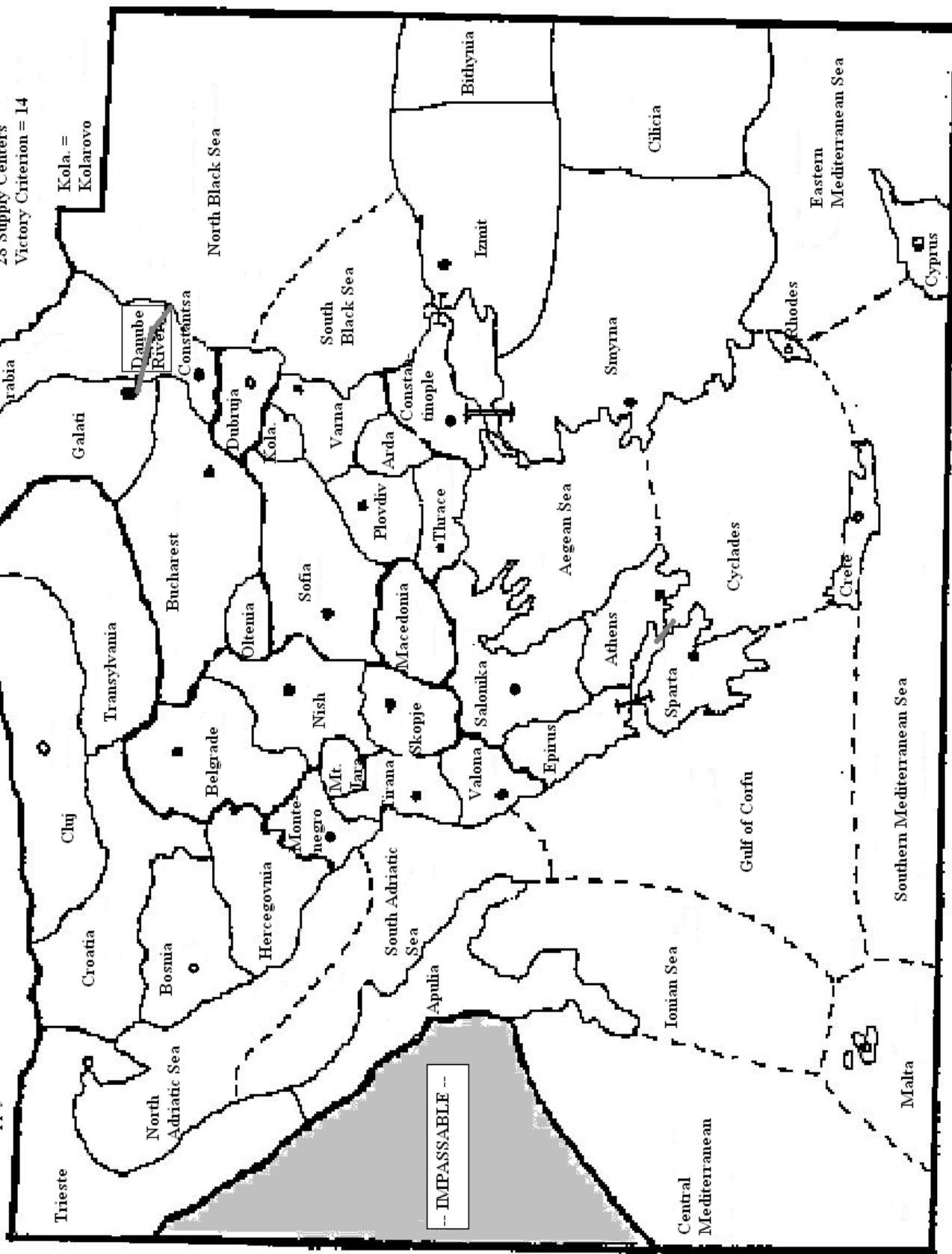
You will not need fleets to win this game as 21 of the 28 supply centers are accessible by armies on the main part of the Balkans on the map from Trieste to Constantinople. You don't need to use fleets to break stalemate lines either as there aren't any on this map. Another plus that favors this game as far as I am concerned.

The game is fast paced and due to the ability to build in any centers; as long as you're alive you're never out of this variant. I highly recommend trying it. It is unlikely to end up being a draw due to stalemate lines and can easily be played in less time than a regular Diplomacy game.

**Balkan Wars VI - Original design by Charles Reinsel (1974), III & IV by Fred C. Davis, Jr. (86/87), V and VI by Brad Wilson (89/91)**

- Home Supply Center
- Neutral Supply Center

— = Direct Passage  
 Daube River and Corinth Canal are passable to fleets.  
 28 Supply Centers  
 Victory Criterion = 14



# Reflections on the Passing of Former World DipCon Champion Pitt Crandlemire

By Jim Burgess

Even though Pitt lived in Boston (where I work) and I live in Providence, and we've known each other for well more than 20 years, we really only got together often during the period where he really was leading the Boston local hobby with regular games at The Westin, Copley Place in the late 1990's. The history of this period, when he ran games in the open lobby is essentially non-existent. The only exception is the two round Diplomatic Incident that was held at the beginning of October in 1999 to celebrate Nick Parish from the UK being in town. Nick is one of my favorite ManorCon friends, and I think he still goes to that even though he hasn't played Diplomacy there in ten years. Nick is a really fun guy and like all of these small Diplomatic Incidents in the 1990s held in and around Boston, they were some of the best fun ever. Arguably, as the Boston/New England hobby has ebbed and flowed through the last 25+ years (with me being the only constant), the period when Pitt led it was the most fun and most active. At times we were playing weekly games in The Westin's lobby. Of course, then The Westin redesigned the lobby to make better use of the space around 2001 or so and part of that "better use" was no room for Diplomacy. After that Pitt dropped away, and I would chat on line with him and his wife Radonna occasionally, and that got more intense toward the end, but let me come back to that later.

Since the only public evidence of the local hobby in Boston during that period was the 1999 Diplomatic Incident, let's recap that a bit. We had two games on October 1<sup>st</sup> with a meal in between and with people's schedules, most people only played in one of the games, though almost everyone went to dinner. And as we know, going out and sharing a meal and brew is one of the best parts of the hobby. Jeremy Ring and Adam Silverman were the only ones who played in both games, Pitt played in the second one, while I played in the first one. That first game with Nick Parish in Austria, Dave Partridge in Germany, and me playing my favorite country Italy was a real classic. We had a Central Powers alliance for a long time, but finally Dave and Nick stabbed me and they stopped with them sharing the draw. But that's not what we're here about. One of the things that Pitt used to complain about elsewhere, but we really broke down in the Boston games, was the tendency for everyone to go attack the World Champion. That's not to say we never did, our games always were hard-fought back and forth stab fests, but people didn't just go in to take Pitt out. In fact, arguably, John Quarto vonTivadar was a better player than any of us (and this was a group with Pitt, Dave Partridge, and a young

Adam Silverman), while Pitt managed to lodge that World DipCon victory, John Quarto finished second in 1998 to a guy named Chris Martin... you might have heard of him? And the top five in that DixieCon World DipCon was rounded out by Mark Fassio, Edi Birsan, and Manus Hand, arguably five of the very best FTF players of the last thirty years or so. Yes, I digress, but that's what you do in reflections.

Anyway, I watched the beginning of this game before I headed back to Providence and remember it very well. Pitt was in Germany and John Quarto was in Italy. Warren (Goz) Goesle also was visiting from Chicago and he was Turkey while our favorite really fun guy but not so excellent a player, Jack Sinnott, was in Austria. John Quarto started off with a bang playing Jack and Goz off against each other and fairly soon got most of both of their centers working with the also excellent John Fitzgerald in Russia. Meanwhile, Pitt sliced apart France (Jeremy Ring) and England (Adam Silverman) and though I didn't stay until the end, they eventually called it as a three way between the two John's and Pitt. People often say that Pitt left the wider FTF hobby for the "go attack the World Champions" thing. I never really saw that. He was great playing with us, sometime he won (more often) and sometimes he lost, but we were playing with other really good players. I think a big part of it was losing the "free" and great space of The Westin lobby, and Pitt didn't really know where else for us to play. It remains a problem in the Boston Diplomacy hobby to this day. Pitt of course also was a Private Investigator and could get very busy with work, as could we all.

He was a "big guy" in all ways and attracted the nickname "The Big Dipper" that he used on-line, but not really with us in FTF. It is, of course, true that after winning the World DipCon in 1996 in what essentially was his first FTF play at Origins in Columbus, just beating out the estimable Leif Bergman, after a lot of play on-line, that he played in the next two World DipCons and got trounced. He finished 70<sup>th</sup> in Sweden the next year, the last placing American (even below Larry Peery) where a relatively small group of Americans were present (Tom Kobrin, Edi Birsan, and Manus Hand), but those Swedes can be tough and it is tough playing for the first time as "the only American on your board". His last World DipCon was the aforementioned DixieCon one in 1998 where the top Boston finished was John Quarto vonTivadar, as I also mentioned above. He did finish 50<sup>th</sup> there, just behind Per Westling and a few places ahead of a young Heath Gardner. Part of that of course was just the grinding style of DixieCon and he



only played in the first two rounds. In that first round, he did just fine as Germany, working with Jamie McQuinn in France to take out England, but then they just stopped with a five way draw (I wasn't there so I don't know more... DW letter to the editor follow-ups on any of this are welcome). For the second game, he played as England to Rick Desper's France. You can see what Rick wrote to me at the time in my szine, *The Abyssinian Prince* #204

(<http://diplom.org/Postal/Zines/TAP/abyss204.html>).

Rick first worked with Germany, who was Robert Andler, to run a Sea Lion on Pitt. Rick eventually shared the draw with Vince Mous playing Russia and Goz (Warren Goesle again!) as Italy. Rick reports to me now that he definitely remembers using Pitt's reputation to sway Robert Andler to join the attack (and then of course turned on Germany as well... you Diplomacy player, you, Rick...).



**Triumphant Pitt Crandlemire with his WDC Trophy**

So, while it was true this was Pitt's last "big time" FTF tournament play, I think like anything else he was one of the people for which things moved on for tournaments. I myself have gone in waves, currently being in a bit of a down period, but chomping at the bit to find some more time to go back to more tournaments. I still think the categorization that the 1997 and 1998 WDC players "pushed Pitt out" in some way is wrong. So, what really was going on? Pitt was having severe illness problems, that would continue for the rest of his life (chronic since that has been more than 15 years). The best place to see the illness problems play out, and the effect on his game, was in the Judge Demo Game "Ghods too" that I was the GM for that was going on through that same

period. The line-up for Ghods too was stellar if I do say so myself (yeah, I know, I was the one who assembled it...) and since this was a Showcase game it probably is the best place to go if you want to see how Pitt played, both on the top of his game, and then hampered by illness, as he periodically dealt with complications from his long term diabetes, you can see the whole history and all the press at:

<http://diplom.org/DipPouch/Showcase/ghodstoo/>.

Since the game had Edi Birsan in it, you know it also had a lot of phone calls, which unfortunately were NOT recorded (though some of them are recapped in press to me), but you can follow almost all of the back and forth between the players. The line up was intended to bring together World Champions (like Pitt) together with great players from a number of settings and the game was varied, fascinating, and ultimately dominated in achieving the endgame by one of the best philosopher diplomats our game has ever known (also retired now as far as I know), Jamie Dreier, even though he only ended up with 6 centers. Jamie was England and John Barkdull was France. They eventually teamed to stop the great player in all realms Hohn Cho as Turkey from soloing at 17 in a three way draw. But that seemingly simple result masks an incredible amount of back and forth. The Showcase games still are there as a great resource for new players, and most people don't know about them. Who else was in this game, other than Pitt as Germany? I'm so glad you asked! Edi Birsan was Austria, Mark Fassio was Russia, and Canadian Cal White was Italy. What did Pitt do there, even as he really wasn't feeling well? After being stabbed by Jamie and John, he could have thrown the solo to Hohn Cho (Hohn of course even said that he thought Pitt was going to do that), but instead Pitt helped maneuver in his elimination to the stalemated three way.

I understand this very well, since I also have pretty much completely worked while being ill, but Pitt also was still trying to keep up the Private Investigator work. One of my favorite stories of Pitt appears here in the Press from Fall 1906. I recommend you go find and read the whole thing at:

<http://diplom.org/Showcase/ghodstoo/press/1906f.html>.

But it was another case of him being pulled out of this game just at the wrong time to get stabbed and knocked down. Pitt was following an East Boston car thief looking for documentable evidence that would get the Boston police actually to pursue him. So Pitt ended up following this guy to a small town in NH, but someone else called the police on him as being a "suspicious character", which after some back and forth led the local police deputy to arrest Pitt on an outstanding NH warrant for a speeding violation that Pitt had neglected to pay. They then don't believe that Pitt is a PI and he ends up in jail for a couple of days, until Pitt's boss eventually

gets the NH state authorities to get these Podunk police guys to let him go. And eventually even the old speeding violation is dismissed! But you really have to read the story in Pitt's words (which makes me make you go look at the Showcase...).

A few more words about the specifics of this game, the opening was dominated by Edi Birsan trying to control the whole board from Austria and create a grand alliance, that probably never was there except in Edi's mind, but he got to see how much he could control this lot of REALLY good players. Pitt actually emerged from that, allied to John in France, in great position in the midgame. In the 1905-06 part of the game he clearly was leading... with the threat of the Edi Birsan/Hohn Cho A/T coming behind. Cal White in Italy, in particular, wasn't sure Pitt was serious enough about stopping Edi. But in that period of the game also were the seeds of the endgame. Jamie in England was very near out, and as always in these games, perhaps the best outcome for him was beginning to turn John in France against Pitt in Germany. But as the press record shows, Pitt was forced to be pretty silent through that period. I'm not sure (can't easily find in all the press if he ever said, you all can go look if you want...) if Pitt really did the Fall 1905 orders that he actually wanted to do. This is also where (since Pitt wasn't stopping Edi) Hohn Cho decided he had to stab Edi as he went for the solo. The game went on quite more time, but unfortunately, from this point on, Pitt wasn't as engaged. I think reading through Pitt's press in this game (especially early on) is the best way to get a sense of his style.

After that, both in the E-Mail and FTF realms, Pitt's interaction with the hobby declined sharply, but in that period he did some other great things for the hobby that many may not remember. In that 1999 period, Hasbro bought Avalon Hill and was went through this whole

period, that in all respects failed miserably, to develop a real AI capability for Diplomacy. Pitt was one of the participants in the early stages. He reported on it to us in my szine *The Abyssinian Prince* #221 in July of 1999:

<http://diplom.org/Postal/Zines/TAP/abyss221.html>

Diplomacy-Archive also saved it at:

[http://www.diplomacy-archive.com/resources/postal/hasbro\\_software.htm](http://www.diplomacy-archive.com/resources/postal/hasbro_software.htm).

Unfortunately, the optimism that Pitt expresses from the focus group he participated in and the direction (which I think had promise) did not pan out in where things went. Pretty soon after that, Pitt really did disappear. For the 2000 Diplomatic Incident in Boston, he told me that he might come, but ultimately didn't. And I don't think I saw him in person again after that, which of course you now regret.

I had off and on electronic contact with Pitt and his wife Radonna through the next fifteen years or so, and hadn't realized until near the end of that period that all of the financial implications of Pitt's illness (both inhibiting working and expenses) were really wearing on them. In April of 2015 it became serious enough that Radonna set up a gofundme page and many of us donated money to that cause as Pitt's health continued to deteriorate. They raised over \$20,000 from this, which really was quite amazing, thanks to all of you who contributed! But then this year things went downhill for Pitt pretty fast, and once he went into hospice he did not stay there long. But I always think of the good times and memories I had with Pitt, both electronically and especially in-person. He was one of the great personalities in our hobby and we all will miss him greatly.

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## Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplom.org/Face/cons/index.php>

ManorCon XXXIV - Friday July 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 - Sunday July 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 - Stamford Court, University of Leicester, United Kingdom - Website: <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

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# Young Diplomats

By Joshua Danker-Dake

So I all of a sudden thought, "I wonder if my oldest daughter is ready to be introduced to Diplomacy." And then I thought, "I wonder if I could get an article out of this—the kids are funny enough that I probably can as long as they don't get bored right away."

Sophia, who's six years old and can read and write, was up for it immediately. My son Paul, who's four and illiterate, demanded to participate as well. So the three of us went and got the game out of the closet.

Here's what happened.

\* \* \* \* \*



Me: Are you sure you're ready to learn to play a grownup game? It's pretty tricky.

Paul: I am ready because I am four.

*I unpack the board and get out the pencils, paper, and pieces. The kids are very interested in the components.*

Paul: Are these Legos? Are these the pieces to build it?

Sophia: This is cool. Is this a map?

Me: Yes. What is it a map of?

Sophia: The world?

Me: It's Europe. What countries do you know in Europe?

Sophia: Sweden.

Paul: That's way, way far from Tulsa.

Me: Tulsa is not on this map. Okay, what piece is this?

Paul: A star.

Me: And what piece is this?

Sophia: It's a sea thing that would have a rope that you would throw on and then your ship would pull it so then if there was a treasure box you could get it onto your ship.

Me: It's actually an anchor. You throw it in the water and it keeps your ship from moving. These are the two kinds of pieces in this game. Can you guess what they represent?

Sophia: Pirates?

Me: What if I told you this was a game of taking over?

Sophia: Taking over the water and... the sky?

Me: The water and the land. The stars are the armies and the anchors are the fleets.

*I list the seven playable countries and put the starting pieces on the board. The kids are still very interested in the map.*

Paul: What's this?

Me: Sweden.

Paul: Why is nobody there?

Me: You have to go there.

*I explain about how controlling supply centers enables you to build extra units.*

Paul: I want to be the anchors.

Me: You don't get to pick the anchors. You pick one color.

Paul: Why does the board come apart like that?

Me: So it'll fit in the box.

*Sophia wants to be turquoise and Paul wants to be blue, so I end up clearing the board except for Germany, France, and England. I explain the basics of the movement rules. Sophia gets it; Paul really doesn't. I tell Sophia she can just look at the spaces she wants to*

*move from and to and to just write the first three letters of each. She understands. Paul's just ready to start playing.*

Me: Okay, the first thing you want to do is go get some supply centers, these dots. So where do you want to move to?

Paul: I want to move to this water.

Me: Why this water?

Paul: It's more deeper.

Me: Why do you want to go in the deep water?

Paul: Because I am the ship.

*I write my orders. Paul tells me where he wants his pieces to go, and I write the orders for him. Sophia gets hers down with a bit of help and some clarification about what supply centers are already hers.*

#### SPRING 1901

England: EDI-NWG, LON-NTH, LVP-YOR

France: BRE-MAO, MAR-SPA, PAR-BUR

Germany: KIE-HOL, BER-KIE, MUN-RUH

*I give them suggestions about Fall moves that might be good. Sophia has the option to go either BUR-MUN or BUR-BEL; I tell her to write down which one she wants to do and not show me.*

Paul: What's that place?

Me: That's Switzerland. You can't go there.

Paul: Huh?

Me: You can't go there, that's Switzerland.

Paul: *Huh?*

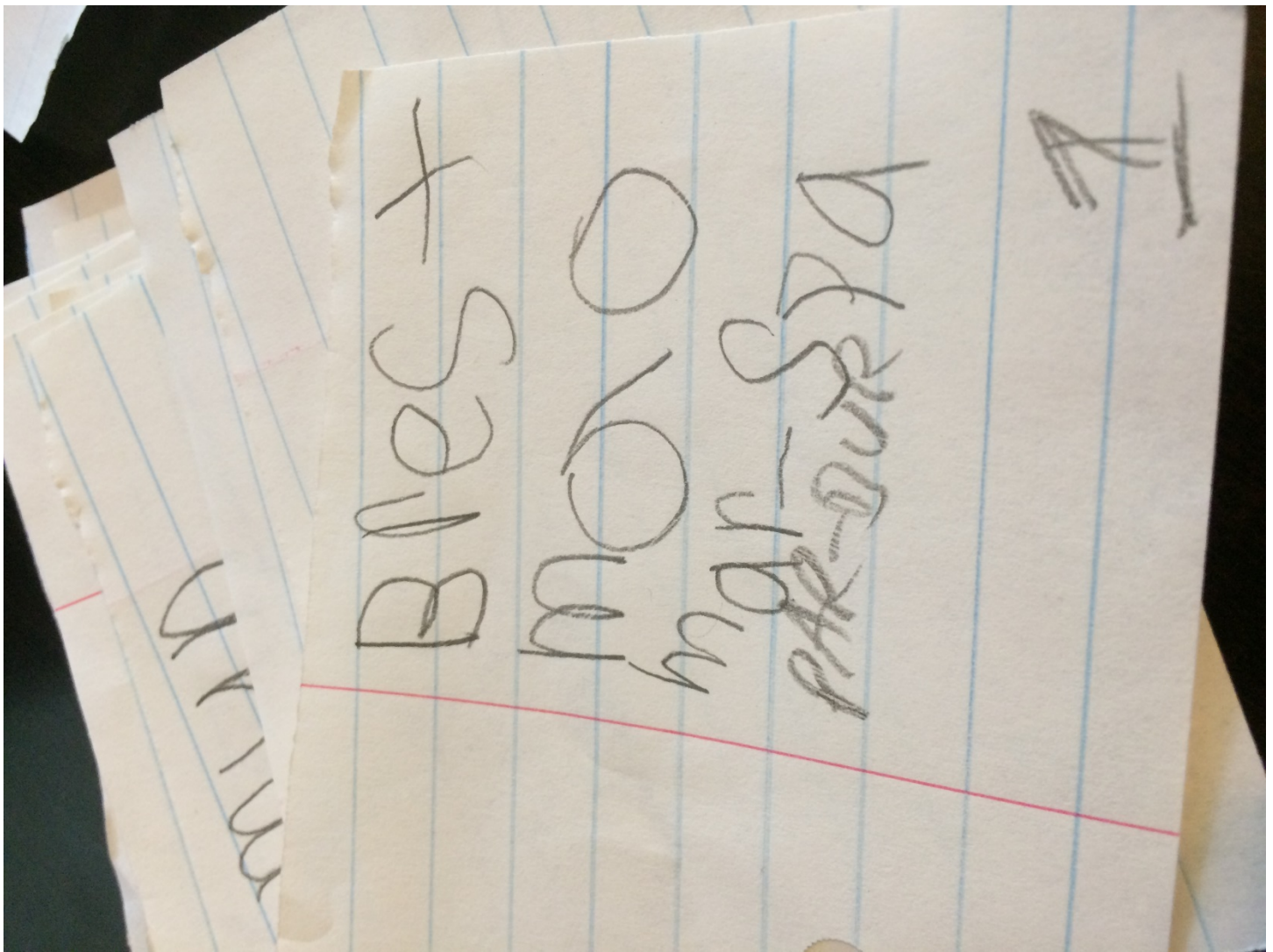
Me: *You can't go there. That's Switzerland.*

Paul: Oh, *Switzerland!*

*I write my orders. Paul tells me where he wants his units to go, and I write his orders. Sophia writes hers.*

Sophia: Do I move them right away?

Me: No, you wait until we've all written them down. We're almost ready.



#### FALL 1901

England: YOR-NWY, NTH C YOR-NWY, NWG-BAR

France: BUR-MUN, MAO-POR, SPA H

Germany: KIE-MUN, RUH-BEL, HOL S RUH-BEL

Me: When we both try to move into the same spot, can you guess what happens?

Sophia: A war?

Me: And what do you think happens to these guys?

Sophia: They die. We don't have them anymore.

Me: Good guess, but no, you keep them. They bounce. They stay in their spots. And now we see who has gotten what supply centers and can build.

Paul: Can we actually build it?

*Paul picks a new fleet. Sophia takes a fleet and an army; I take two armies. I explain about legal placement in home centers.*

Me: Paul, you can't put it there. You have to put it here, in your home center.

Paul: But then the boat can secretly come there.

Me: Sure. All right, Sophia, for Spring 1902, you have to write five orders.

Sophia: Bleh.

Me: Do you understand what you're doing at all?

Sophia: ...Yeah. Kind of?

Me: Do you understand how you got more guys?

Sophia: Yes.

Me: Now, the object is to conquer the other players. When you play with seven people, you can make deals with them. You can do bad things that are— er— things that are bad in real life that are okay in the game like



lying and not keeping your promises. But right now we're just learning about the conquering part.

*We talk about where they can move their units and how support works. Paul is still fixated on the map.*

Paul: So the boats have to go in the water space and the bad guys have to attack some other world. Where is that?

Me: Russia.

Paul: And where is that?

Me: Also Russia. Russia is a big place. Now listen: you can attack me, or you can attack England, or you can do both.

Sophia: I have to write ten things!

Me: It's a lot. It's a grownup game.

Paul: Daddy, can you actually play this all by yourself?

Me: Not all by yourself.

Sophia: You have to have at least two players.

*I write my orders and Paul tells me what he wants to do.*

Paul: I want to go here.

Me: You can't go to Spain from the North Sea, Paul.

Paul: I want to go there.

Me: You cannot go to Austria from the North Sea, Paul.

Sophia: Ha ha ha!

Me: Do you want to fight me or Sophia?

Paul: Sophia.

Me: Sophia, then you need to fight him back.

*Since they have specific objectives, I volunteer suggestions for orders, which they accept.*

Paul: Let's see who wins and let's see who loses! If I'm going to win, and you win, and maybe Sophia wins!

Me: You like fighting and conquering?

Paul: Yeah.

Me: Why?

Paul: Because it's my favorite part.

#### SPRING 1902

England: NOR-SWE, LON-ENG, NTH S LON-ENG, BAR-STP

France: POR-MAO, SPA-GAS, BRE-ENG, PAR-PIC, BUR-RUH

Germany: MUN-BUR, BEL S MUN-BUR, HOL S BEL, KIE-DEN, BER-MUN

Me: Okay, now Sophia's in my territory, and I'm in her territory.

Paul: And where am I in?

Me: You are doing just fine. Let me write my orders first and then I'll help you.

Paul: Why do you get to write your orders first?!

Me: It's actually better not to write them first.

Paul: Why? Why is it better?

Sophia: Because then you can see, and then you can think, "Where should I go?"

*I whisper some tactical suggestions to Sophia.*

Me: You could secretly go here to attack Paul.

Paul: What can I secretly do?

*I give Sophia some viable options for defending her home centers and then help Paul with his orders.*

#### FALL 1902

England: STP H, SWE H, ENG-MAO, NTH-HOL

France: MAO-IRI, GAS-PAR, RUH-BEL, PIC S RUH-BEL, BRE-ENG

Germany: DEN-KIE, MUN-KIE, HOL S BEL, BUR-MAR, BEL S HOL

Me: Let's see... resolving this is going to be complicated.

Paul: It won't be complicated to me.

Me: No? Maybe you want to adjudicate these orders then.

Paul: Uh...

*Paul takes the orders and starts writing on them.*

Me: Stop, I was joking.

*I take more than ten seconds to adjudicate the orders.*

Paul: This is boring, but it's not complicated.

Me: Do you want to stop, or do you want to keep going?

Paul: I want to keep going.

Me: Sophia?

Sophia: Keep going!

Me: Paul, you and Sophia can be on a team and fight against me.

Sophia and Paul: Yes! Yes! Yes!

*Enthusiasm has tripled. Sophia immediately assumes command.*

Sophia: Paul, if we team up, and you were right here, and I moved, and you came here, and you're all the way there, and we're teaming up, then you could go here, and that ship could sail back to us—

Paul: We could go here together and attack Daddy! That could be happening.

Sophia: —and these two could go here and attack them, and then these two could go there, and then these two could go here, and we already have this, but Daddy could go here...

Paul: And we can attack him!

*I write my orders, then have Sophia tell me what she wants to do. I translate her desires into sensible orders.*

#### SPRING 1903

England: NTH-HEL, STP-BAR, LVP- NAO, MAO-WES, SWE-DEN,  
France: BEL-RUH, PIC-BEL, PAR H, ENG S PIC-BEL, IRI S ENG  
Germany: KIE-HEL, HOL S KIE-HEL, DEN-SWE, MUN-RUH, MAR-GAS, BUR-PIC

*I point out supply centers where I might attack and ask them to think about what they might do to protect their supply centers.*

Sophia: Can you take that space over after we do?

Me: Yeah, that's how you win, you take it over.

Paul: That's weird. Okay, Sophia, a few of my boats will guard your city.

*It's been forty-five minutes, much longer than I'd expected them to last. It's gotten pretty late, and they've become a little tired and fussy.*

Me: Are you tired? Should this be the last turn, and then we'll see who has the most?

Sophia: No! I don't want it to be the last turn!

Me: All right, tell me what you want to do.

Sophia: Okay, so first, what we're going to do to protect ourselves is we're going to do one here and one here, and this boat is going to protect here.

Paul: This is hard, but I know how to do it.

*I make some specific suggestions about where to attack and support.*

Sophia: That ship should help this ship to attack here.

Paul: Good thinking. That should be right.

Sophia: Can we attack this whole line?

Paul: I don't think so. Maybe this line will take us to Turkey.

Sophia: I think there's lots of turkeys there.

Paul: Yeah. And this different black line will take us to Spain.

#### FALL 1903

England: BAR-NWG, SWE-DEN, WES-SPA, NAO-MAO, NTH S SWE-DEN, LON S NTH  
France: IRI-ENG, ENG-BRE, PIC-BUR, BEL S PIC-BUR, PAR-GAS  
Germany: MUN-RUH, DEN-SWE, HOL-NTH, HEL S HOL-NTH, BUR-PAR, GAS S BUR PAR

*At this point, we have to take a break for a rather lengthy Skype call. When I finally come back, I find that they've piled all the pieces together in the center of the board.*

Me: So... I guess we're done then.

Sophia: No! We want to start over!

Me: Start over? Why?

Sophia: So we can think of a new strategy!

*She's smiling, and I'm smiling. But it's bedtime.*

Me: We can, baby. Tomorrow.

# Dixiecon 30 (2016) Report

by David Hood

It was in 1986 that we first decided, as a group, that our Carolina Amateur Diplomats, or CADs, would host a Dip tournament in Chapel Hill. Given that I had some limited experience with debate tournaments in college, I figured I could lead the effort and put on some semblance of a Diplomacy event for the local crowd as well as a few travelers. So, in 1987 we held the first Dixiecon over Memorial Day Weekend at the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. It was a three round event over two days, and involved mostly Carolinians along with a few Virginians.

As the years rolled by, the event added features which have become standard through our 30th Dixiecon we just held in May 2016. Eastern NC-style barbeque on Saturday afternoon. Draw-based scoring system. Side tournaments for the non-Dip gaming that has always been a Dixie feature. Unlimited time for each game except the Sunday round. Thursday night gaming for early arrivals, which this year consisted of a rousing Battlestar Galactica game including Dave Maletsky, Peter Yeargin, Bruce Allen, Andy Bartalone, Mark Franceschini and David Hood. As you would expect from backstabbing Dip players, of course the Cylons won...

Since Dixiecon 1 in 1987, we have had 414 different attendees, from twelve different countries and over half the states in the US. We have hosted World Dipcon 3 times (1990, 1998 and 2014) and Dipcon 4 times (1990, 1994, 1998, 2002). As I announced at this year's event, we have 11 players who have played in at least 15 Dip tournaments at Dixiecon (and a number of people who have attended far more Dixiecons but have not always played in the Dip event). The three Dippers who have participated in the Diplomacy event the most times are Dan Mathias (21), Tom Kobrin (20) and Steve Koehler.

Dixiecon winners are added to the list of what we call the Order of the Knife. At this year's event, all Knifers in attendance received, in the opening ceremony, a medal with the player's name engraved, just as a fun way to start the 30th annual event. After a little history of Dixiecon, similar to the above, the tournament began in earnest with five boards in Round 1.

Four of the five boards ended in three-way draws, with some of the usual suspects included (Sigal, Kobrin, Richardson) as well as newer entrants at Dixiecon such as Andrew Goff, Danny Grinnell and Randy Lawrence-Hurt. I think my personal favorite, though, was the draw in Game 1B because it included one of the most experienced sharks in the tank (Jim Yerkey), one of the youngest sharks in the tank (Emily Pollock) and a shark returning to the tank after many years lost in the open waters (Jeff Dwornicki.)

In Game 1E, though, the consistently dangerous Chris Martin decided to start off his Dixiecon with an Italian win, featuring a 4-center stab of Russia in 1909 that would also net him the Golden Blade award for the weekend. Little did any of us know that this win would only be the first of four wins for the weekend!

At Dixiecon, folk who play games other than Diplomacy are playing in their own tournament, called the Iron Man of Gaming. This was GMed this year by Michael Lowrey, who scored all the game based on a system developed by Dan Mathias, awarding points based on the length and complexity of the game and the number of players bested by the winner. During the Friday night round, Iron Man games played included Isle of Skye, Coup, Ticket to Ride, Avalon, Patchwork, Pirates Cove, Nations, Catan and Puerto Rico.

Saturday morning saw Round Two of the Dip tournament, which also doubles as the Team Tournament. Out of the four boards, we had two winners - Emily Pollock as Austria in 2A and Peter Yeargin as Austria in 2D. Yes, this was a good round to be Austria, as Keith West got into the three-way draw as Austria in Game 2C. Keith, by the way, made his return to Dixiecon after many years - but was an original CAD from way back in 1984 when we started to play Diplomacy! Keith also brought his two sons to play this year, just one of many examples of young players brought to the Con by dads or friends at this year's Dixiecon (which also happened at this year's WDC in Chicago, so good news for the hobby.)

In Iron Man action that Saturday morning, we had about as many non-Dip gamers playing during the round as the Dip players. Titles included Settlers of Catan, Firefly, Here I Stand, Outpost, and Concordia.

After the always-yummy barbeque late Saturday afternoon, we had two very special events during the evening hours. First, we had a variant event for the first time in many years - this time a design by local Dipper Alex Ronke called 1812 Overture. This is a six-player variant where three of the players control fixed sets of powers, with those combos being England/Canada, Federalists/Republicans (the US, basically) and France/Rhine Confederation, and then the other three players have a random combo of one power in Europe and one power in the New World. Claude Worrell played the Brit/Canadians, Rick Desper played the French/Germans, Keith West the Danes/Mexicans, Randy Lawrence-Hurt the Federalists/Republicans, Todd Craig the Austrians/Shawnees and David Hood as the Russians/Cherokees. Lots of hijinks commenced -

suffice it to say that we would need to playtest this thing a few more times to figure out the best strategies. I will say this, though: in how many other games can I write "My Russian fleets conquered part of northern Canada in conjunction with their Cherokee allies on land."

The other fun was our Truly All Time Greats board, in which the top-ranked Dixiecon winners in attendance battled it out to see who is, truly, the All Time Great. With a board filled with Peter Yeargin, Adam Sigal, Tom Kobrin, Brian Ecton, Mark Franceschini, Chris Martin, and Jim Yerkey, you just know things were going to happen! And they did. In the end, Yerkey's 11-center Austria edged the 10-center France of Franceschini and 10-center Germany of Sigal for the victory.

In addition, the Iron Man event continued that evening as well, with games of Combat Commander, Churchill, Acquire, Suburbia, Ticchu, Settlers, Ultimate Werewolf, Roll for the Galaxy, Nations and Isle of Skye. And, of course, with this crowd there is always Poker being played - I'm sure the chips were just chips, no actual money at stake...

Sunday morning saw four boards of Dip as folk jockeyed for final position in the Dixiecon standings. There were more 3-way draw results, but the most important result was the French win in 3D that would catapult Tom Kobrin to yet another Dixiecon championship! Wins in the Sunday timed round are rare indeed. The Iron Man tourney also finished during the afternoon with games of Outpost, Nations, St Petersburg, Concordia and Firefly.

After the awards ceremony, some of the attendees left while others went to dinner and then back to the site for late-night gaming until early Monday morning. I'd like to thank Mike Lowrey for his work scoring both tournaments, all the folks who helped with airport runs, Andrew Goff and David Norman for making coming all this way to make the event a truly international one, and everyone else for coming to make this a Dixiecon 30 that I certainly enjoyed immensely!

#### Diplomacy Tournament Results:

1. Tom Kobrin 540
2. Chris Martin 524
3. Emily Pollock 520
4. Peter Yeargin 512
5. Randy Lawrence-Hurt 352
6. Adam Sigal 348
7. Andrew Goff 332
8. Jeff Dwornicki 328
9. Tim Richardson 268
10. Jeff Ladd 244
11. David Miller 202
11. Dave Maletsky 202

13. Jason Mastbaum 193
13. Danny Grinnell 192
15. David Norman 189
16. Greg Myers 183
17. Keith West 178
18. Hudson Defoe 176
19. Christian West 174
20. Andy Bartalone 170
20. Ken Peel 170
22. Ken Mathias 162
23. Brian Lee 118
24. Brian Sheldon 112
25. Marc Hurwitz 84
26. Claude Worrell 71
27. Alex Ronke 62
28. Dan Pollock 53
29. Brian Ecton 37
30. Eric Grinnell 30
31. Colin West 25
32. Todd Craig 20
- IN Jim Yerkey 178
- IN Tony Bilzi 46
- IN Ike Porter 20
- IN Justin Thompson 0

#### Best Countries:

Austria Peter Yeargin and Emily Pollock Wins  
England Emily Pollock and Randy Lawrence-Hurt 3w-11  
France Tom Kobrin Win  
Germany Randy Lawrence-Hurt 3w-12  
Italy Chris Martin Win  
Russia Andrew Goff and Adam Sigal 3w-11  
Turkey Greg Myers and Chris Martin 3w-12

#### Team Tournament:

Team Kiwi – Goff, Yeargin, Lawrence-Hurt

Golden Blade – Chris Martin  
I Got Hammered – Todd Craig  
The Brick – Brian Ecton (4 elims in a 3-round tournament)  
Death With Dignity – Marc Hurwitz, David Norman, Dan Pollard, Claude Worrell, Ike Porter, Danny Grinnell, Christian West, Colin West  
Players Choice – Colin West

#### Iron Man Tournament:

1. Kevin Brown 45.5
2. Dan Mathias 23
3. Nicky Koehler / Steve Koehler 18

51 players overall, 36 played in the Diplomacy tournament and 26 played in the Iron Man.

# A Brief Conversation with Conrad F. von Metzke

By Thaddeus Black

Conrad F. von Metzke founded the postal Diplomacy hobby along with John Boardman during the early 1960s. We recently, briefly conversed with Mr. von Metzke. During our conversation, Mr. von Metzke recalled significant incidents in the history of the Game, incidents which have not, as far as we know, been fully reported heretofore in *Diplomacy World*. With Mr. von Metzke's permission, we give you here the relevant part of the conversation.

*Diplomacy World*: On April 22, 1972, Conrad F. von Metzke wrote, "Ver Ploeg has flung the pie in the face of the Jamulian. This thing goeth on...."

Boy, does it ever. That was Costaguana, vol. V, no. 18. Evidently, Walt Buchanan kept a copy of that issue, which he later sent to Larry Peery, of whom it fell into the hands of Douglas Kent, who electronically scanned it. [Ed.: As it turns out, Kent's copy is not Buchanan's. It is not addressed, so we don't know whose.] After 44 years, the faded issue remains just barely readable to history. How did Diplomacy game masters of your generation manage it?

*Conrad F. von Metzke*: My assumption is that you got a copy printed on a spirit duplicator, or "ditto machine," which is what I mostly used until modern copy machines arrived and became affordable. Ditto can only be preserved for any length by keeping it out of direct light; lock 'em in a vault in a sealed box, they'll last a long time. But no publisher that I know, save just possibly John Boardman, ever expected longevity for the amateur sheets that we cranked out willy-nilly. I in particular never maintained an "archive," and in fact at this time I have absolutely nothing I ever published prior to Nov. 2010 (at which time I took over a small e-zine involving games other than Dip, and of which I've kept electronic copies because it's so easy and there's no filing required).

*DW*: [We have some unanswered questions regarding the history of Games Research's epochal 1971 Diplomacy rulebook. Can you inform us? According to Rod Walker in *Erehwon* no. 52 and *Diplomacy World* no. 28], the persons who materially aided Allan B. Calhamer in his 1971 rulebook revision as far as we know [include these]: [John A.] McCallum; [Rod] Walker; [John] Boardman; [Don] Miller; [Stephen] Manion.

At least two names are conspicuously missing from our 1971 list: John Beshara's and yours. Since I was born in 1967, all that was before my time.... Mr. Beshara is yours to speak of only if you wish, but for the benefit of the history, we hope that you might (a) shed some light on your own role in the matter of the 1971 rulebook

revision, if any, and (b) fill in the names of any relevant persons we have overlooked.

*CFvM*: First, I can tell you categorically that I was in no way involved with that rulebook revision in '71, save only that I and many others had spent the previous few years discussing, recommending, writing about, pushing for, etc., various modifications. But when it came to the actual writing process, I took no part. Nor I am quite certain did John Beshara, inasmuch as the putative 'head' of the work party was Rod Walker [past editor of *Diplomacy World*], who by that year would have nothing to do with Beshara. Similarly, I doubt very much that Boardman was consulted, though he may have slipped his two cents' worth in privately (via e.g. John Moot [Games Research's principal], who stayed apart from and above the argumentation of the day that has since come to be called the "Great Feud"). (Or perhaps Boardman's input came from his various writings in his own 'zines, without actually requiring direct contact, as the two John B's were "allies" in the Feud.)

One name worth including would be John Koning - notice how many Johns are in the batch here?— who really was very much involved in discussion and recommendation through his own 'zines. It was he who had the principal "unofficial" revision named for him in advance of the formal rulebook reprint; the "Koning Rule" dealt with a problem with convoys and became all but universally accepted by the hobby until Calhamer wrote it into his new rules. (Which reminds me; you don't mention Allan Calhamer at all. He was very much involved at all stages and in all ways, if for no other reason than that he would have had final say on anything formally issued by the manufacturer.)

Koning died in c.1973, and had been failing for a time before that—I took over one of his 'zines and ran out the games—so he would not have been on any 'committee' doing final drafts, but his earlier work would have been very much critical.

*DW*: We have heretofore been relying mostly on various letters and articles by Mr. McCallum, Mr. Walker and John R. Moot, dated 1968 through 1981. Taken together, these tell only a partial tale.

*CFvM*: Really rather too bad you can't contact any of those people, but McCallum has got to be deceased by now [Ed.: in 2011, as Doug Beyerlein reported in *Diplomacy World*, no. 128]—he'd be over 100—and I suspect John Moot would be as well, though that's less certain.... If you are in touch with Walt Buchanan [founder of *Diplomacy World*], or Larry Peery [past editor



of *Diplomacy World*], they may have updates on this. The three of us had dinner late last year....

I [have been] swamped with work on a theatrical production with which I'm involved....

(Ed.: For bibliographical interest, Mr. von Metzke informs us that his parents had always used the name "von Metzke" as a unit, alphabetized under the letter "v."

This runs perhaps contrary to the conventional German usage, but the von Metzke family live in the United States. Mr. von Metzke honors his family convention, so also therefore do we.

(Regarding Ver Ploeg and "the Jamulian," mentioned at the top of the interview, an historical trivia question for younger readers: do you know who they are?)

## Secrets to a Successful DipCon Event: A Conversation with Lady Elizabeth Anson

By Larry Peery

### INTRODUCTION

I first met Lady Elizabeth Anson in London during the summer 1988 on my trip to WDC I in Brum. I was introduced to her by one of the Queen Mother's ladies-in-waiting whom I had met on a visit to St. Paul's Cathedral ("Don't ask, it's a long story,") Lady Elizabeth and I kept in touch over the years, exchanging stories about our various events, hers were mostly high-end parties for royalty, glitterati, big-name celebrities and the super-rich who could afford to pay for such festivities; and mine were mostly low-end DipCons for Dippers. I was surprised to get an invitation by Paperless Post from her not so long ago when she was in near-by Rancho Santa Fe planning a party being hosted by the Prince and Princess Michael of Kent on behalf of the World Monuments Fund to thank American donors who raised more than 10M pounds toward the upcoming costs of restoring the 78 loos in Buckingham Palace. But more on that below.

### THE ANSON FAMILY STORY

To understand Lady Elizabeth Anson you need to understand where she came from. To understand that you need to understand the story of George Anson. You will need to visit the Wiki sites for Shugborough Manor (now part of the National Trust) in Staffordshire, filled with Chinoise rooms and furnishings that Anson brought back from his visit to Macau and Canton. In 1752 he acquired Moor Park Mansion, also in Hertfordshire, perhaps with part of the 91,000 pounds prize money he received for the capture of just one Spanish galleon during his four-year circumvention of the globe in the 1740s. Anson died at Moor Park and is buried in the local church yard in Colwich parish. Moor Park today is privately owned with two golf courses, other sporting facilities and multiple special event venues.

Today Colwich has some 4,500 people an abbey, a church and a school but no pubs, general store or village

green. Low Haywood, the next village down the road, has two pubs, a general store with a B&B, a village green, but no church or school.

The phrase "to the manor born" could have been invented to describe George Anson's origins. What is somewhat unusual is that he also was "on the manor died," unlike many of the British nobility, old and new, of his times.

### GEORGE ANSON

George Anson, First Lord of the Admiralty, Admiral of the Fleet, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron (Lord) Anson did the Royal Navy proud. Ditto his family. And both have reciprocated by carrying on his memory. His country showered him with fame, fortune and prestige --- denying him only that highest of accolades, burial in St. Paul's Cathedral. (Beatty, Cornwallis, Chinese Gordon, Jellicoe, Lawrence, Nelson, Pound, Roberts, Slim, Wellesley, Wilson, Wood are all buried or remembered in St. Paul's.). Anson was commonly called "The Father of the British Navy," but that wasn't enough to get him memorialized in the nation's Cathedral. Lady Elizabeth Anson is a sixth-generation descendent of George Anson, but more on her shortly.





Memorial to Anson in St. Michael's and All Angels Church in Colwich

Instead of St. Paul's, George Anson was laid to rest in his country parish church which still exists about a mile from his home. Inside the church are many tombs, wall tablets and other memorials connected with the landed gentry in the parish, including the Wolseley Baronets and the Ansons of Shugborough Hall, earls of Lichfield, many of whom are buried in the church. A tablet commemorates Field Marshal Garnet Wolseley, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Wolseley, KP, GCB, OM, GCMG, VD, (1833–1913), buried in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The Anson family vault is located underneath the organ loft, formerly the private gallery of the owners of Shugborough Hall. It is accessed through an upright door that is normally concealed behind the paneling of the choir stalls, and neither visible nor accessible to the public. The vault itself is a small, almost square room. Inside there are three niches for coffins opposite the access door, and twelve openings for coffins in each side wall. 15 bodies are currently interred here, including the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lichfield, Admiral Lord Anson, and his wife.

After reading dozens of stories about Lady Anson and her parties I noticed several things: 1) The media tended to base their reports on the Party Planner's press releases and gossip from the waiters and bartenders; 2) Hosts and guests alike generally praised her work and events, but lacked the enthusiasm of sincerity --- perhaps because they had all been through it so many times before; 3) Lady Anson rarely talked about her clients unless they wanted her to, but she wasn't adverse to a little "bad" publicity once in a while, as when the Qatari sheik fired her or one of her clients balked at paying a bill that he felt was too high and she ended up in court --- perhaps she subscribes to the dictum "It doesn't matter what they're saying about you as long as they're talking about you." )

Still, for a perfectionist; which she is; any criticism hurts, as when one unhappy but otherwise unidentified customer said: "Worst wedding organiser ever. she lay in bed while her staff organised my wedding very badly and doubled the cost of everything. Awful woman and dreadful staff. She is obviously now touting for business

as the queen doesn't want her to organise her 90th birthday celebrations.

There are at least 25 versions of Lady Anson's latest press release/interview online in various news and gossip sites from London to New York and on to China. You can find them yourself with a Google or Yahoo search.

## THE CONVERSATION

I had a chance to sit down for a one-on-one chat with Lady Elizabeth during her visit. Here's a slightly edited and heavily redacted version that uses the following format: **Topical Heading**, LP (comment by Larry Peery), and LA (comment by Lady Anson).

### What are we going to call this?

LA: Why not "Lady Elizabeth's 8 Party Tips: All You Bores, Sit Over There, and More Advice." Oh, forget that idea. I've already used it.

LP: How about "The Golden Rules of Hosting a Killer DipCon by the Hobby's DipCon Doyene?"

### More on the Palace Loos:

LP: I've heard The Mirror caused quite an uproar in the UK when it revealed that the Queen's personal private loo remodel would include a tub of Carrara marble and gold-plated fixtures? Is that true or not?

LA: Of course not. We're using Purbeck Marble from Dorset for the tub, fixtures donated by IKEA, and a Neorest high-tech toilet imported from Japan that would cost \$10,000 but was donated to the Queen by the Japanese imperial family. One unique feature of the toilet is a built-in paper shredder for confidential documents. It has a capacity of handling 50 rolls of M&S Gold Feature tissue per hour.

LA: Speaking of loos and toilet paper, only the Queen's and Duke of Edinburgh's toilets will have the M&S Gold feature tissue. Other royal and guest toilets will have Essential Waitrose and staff toilets will have Asda Smart Price.

LP: So I guess the secret to a successful DipCon is to have a well-stocked refer filled with snacks and drinks and an equally well-stocked toilet!

### ***Whether or not she's entertaining royalty, Queen Elizabeth's party planner adheres to nine strict rules.***

LA: **The invitation sets the tone.** If you have a cheap-looking invitation, she says, "you imagine there's going to be acidic wine and miserable food." Simple and elegant are preferable to invitation one-upmanship: "Someone wanted me to do 'save the dates' with

Swarovski crystals costing no less than 2,500 pounds a card, and that's just vulgarity," she said of the cards that would cost nearly \$3,600 each. For Americans, she admits to occasionally using Paperless Post.

LP: I usually use Meet-Up, Facebook, Craig's List, DW and TDP. Years ago I used to post announcements in game stores or on school campuses, but that was a lot of work.

LA: **Good parties don't have to be extravagant.** "A party with good table wine and good pasta or good sausages and mash can be just as much of a success as one with Krug, caviar, oysters and lobster," Lady Elizabeth says. "It's not about expensive ingredients. It's about people."

LP: That's true. That's why I always check the "Use by" date on anything I'm serving and avoid pizza delivery

services. I'd rather go get it myself and watch them take it out of the oven.

LA: Keep the menu simple.

LP: Right. And the same thing applies to the agenda and program. I remember one DipCon I hosted in the 1980s that had a two page list of events. The only ones anybody remembers today are: When Matt McVeigh damaged a car in the brick toss; The wine bottle corks pick 'em up event; and when Edi Birsan stole the title from Hohn Cho.

LA: **Good lighting is essential.** After the guests, the single most important element of a party is proper illumination. "Lighting makes or breaks it," she says. "You can use it to make people look nice and to divide a big room up."



LA: **Getting everyone seated.** If you're trying to get guests to take their seats, tell them it's a soufflé. "I've never had anyone come back to me later and complain that it wasn't," Lady Elizabeth says.

LP: Seating is very important. First, make sure you have enough of it so everybody can sit down when they want to. Second, make sure the seating provided is appropriate to the size of the guests. More on that below.

LA: **Bend the truth to get what you want.** Never lie about what the party offers but a little exaggeration never hurt anyone.

LP: I agree. Promise everything and guarantee nothing!

LA: **Seat all the bores together.** "They don't realize they're the bores, and they're happy," she says. "It's my biggest tip."

LP: I try to do that with Old Farts who tend to take forever to tell a story, write their orders, or debate the pros and cons of a Rule that was changed 25 years ago.

However, I do like a good table mix with Old Farts, Sharks, Newbies and Champion Wannabies. Makes it more interesting.

LA: **A round dining table is best** When Lady Elizabeth Anson entertains at home, she's always glad she has a round dining room table so she can dispense with protocol — no worries about determining who is the most important guest and thus seated in the middle. "It makes life easier," Lady Elizabeth says. "If there's a duke there, he can sit somewhere opposite me if I think there's somebody more amusing that I want to sit next to."

LP: Agreed, but I go further. I'm old-fashioned. Even in my days years ago working in a five-star hotel I refused to put 10 chairs at a round table intended for 8. I also insist on a table cloth. Plenty of side tables to hold empty bottles and glasses are a must. And those need to be cleared at least twice a day. Trash cans should be emptied nightly. Empty pizza boxes should be removed as soon as they're cold..

LA: **Pick up the phone.** It's the fastest way to get organized, and there are fewer misunderstandings. "It's old fashioned but it's instantaneous," she says. "I don't want endless emails and bits and bobs."

LP: That's good for your party planning and organizing at home but at an event you need to make sure people either check or shut-off their cell phones. For a \$100 you can get a device that will jam every cell phone in a good-sized room.

LA: **End a party when there are at least 20 people on the dance floor.** "If you let it peter out, it's death," she says. "I made one mistake in the whole of my career, which was being persuaded to restart the band. It was a flop." Announce (or have the band say) that it's the second to last dance, and then stop the bar from serving. "People leave fast when they can't get a drink," Lady Elizabeth says.

LP: Same at a DipCon or WDC event. Games over. Results announced. Prizes and awards given. Directions to the post-mortem bar provided. As some people always arrive late and others depart early to connect with planes and such --- grin and bear it.

***With the formal conversation ended Lady Anson asked for a Nicorette gum to go with her Scotch whisky, "No ice and three fingers to start, please. Buchanan's if you have any or Ballantyne's will do." I poured myself a Tab as she kicked off her S&M pumps.***

LA: Let the questions begin!

LP: Do you have any other addictions besides eggs, Nicorette, expensive scotch and tasteful inexpensive jewelry?

LA: Hmmm. Henna hair dye. I learned that from watching old Lucille Ball movies. Fortunately one of my regular Saudi customers sends me a kilo every year at Christmas. Thank God, the price of that stuff in Yemen is pegged to the price of gold. Oh, and weekly lottery ticket-buying.

***The mention of lotto tickets leads to a revelation that she has organized events for Tom Cruise and other celebrities seeking discretion. She recounts with glee the time that she shared her addiction to lotteries and on his next visit he stopped at her "lucky shop" and bought her 100 tickets. "Alas, no winners," she sniffled, "But I still do a lucky dip if it's a huge amount of money."***

LP: I don't gamble. Never have.

LP: How do you handle events for the royals?

LA: Private family celebrations, like all of my events, are not discussed outside the family. Still, even confidentiality agreements have loopholes; and occasionally in an unguarded moment I might let something slip as long as no one gets hurt by it.

LA: Of the overweight king of Tonga, whom she was looking after, along with all the other foreign heads of state, at the 2011 royal wedding, she said, "He thought he'd break the furniture in Buckingham Palace." The chairs there are "very low," she said, "very wonderful Louis Quatorze. It looks as if you sat on it, it would break. But it doesn't."

LP: I had something like that happen in Paris at the first European DipCon when I sat down in one of those infamous Louis Quatorze chairs and it collapsed. Nobody laughed, but they did look shocked. In a moment of trans-Atlantic solidarity Bruno-Andre Giraudon, a Frenchman my size but also a rugby player, same over and sat down in the chair next to mine and I watched as it slowly fell apart. We've been best buddies ever since. I still have one of the legs of that chair that I added to my Diplomacy treasures box.

***During a discussion about the lost art of conversation because of cellphones***

LA: I hate them, but I can't live without one when I'm moving around. At home I always use a landline.

LP: I refuse to use one period. I had one for a year and used it twice. I like my Princess push button with a 100 foot extension cord. I've had it at least 30 years. Works fine and you don't lose connectivity.

LP: How do you make sure you have enough good staff.

LA: The good ones come back because I pay well and they get a meal of the same food the guests are having when the party's over, without the wine of course. A formal banquet will require about 80 wait staff for 170 guests or so, plus another 100 in the kitchen, coat room, powder room and in house security. When you add in the parking attendants, paparazzi nannies, etc. it can run to over 250. That's not including entertainers, etc.

LP: What's your secret after 50+ years?

LA: Be a meticulous host! No detail is too small to be over-looked. One of my secretaries sole job is to keep track of all my lists and updating them constantly. "It's that ghastly boring phrase 'the devil's in the details.'" she said. "The devil is in the detail, and the detail doesn't need to cost very much."

LP: I try to not use more than a single pad of small Post-its and a single file folder of notes.

LP: Other advice?



LA: Any guest at any event, and I suppose it applies to Dippers (Is that what you call them?) as well, loves creating myths. It makes them feel self-important. Give them one truly memorable moment that they will remember and retell in the years to come. Even if they won't go home with a new title or medal, they can still think they might have. You can make that happen.

***She can do strict protocol — working out what year various marquesses or earls were created to determine seniority (and thus seating arrangements) — but she is not afraid to break it, along with convention. And so she arranges party spaces with the timid in mind.***

LP: It's true. Sometimes you have to do things differently just to get the players out of their "same old, same old" rut. Spaces are important. There's something to be said for a large room where everybody is in one place and can keep track of what everybody else is doing. But there's also something to be said for having break-out rooms with every table or board in a different room. Come to think of it, it was that way in Goteborg when we won the World Team Event.

#### ***Last thoughts?***

LA: Snacks are good. Caviar doesn't have to be beluga. M&S has an in house brand that costs 1/10<sup>th</sup> as much as I've never had a complaint. However, don't use real silver caviar spreaders. Guests, even nobility, will steal them for keepsakes.

LP: Pizza is better and people don't steal the empty boxes, but do go easy on the anchovies.

LA: For nobility at 75, dyed red hair, emeralds the size of robin's eggs and \$25 shoes from Marks and Spencer I haven't done too bad.

LP: For an Old Fat nearing 70, not much white hair, a Rolex that doesn't work anymore, holey sweat pants, a collection of 400+ t-shirts and \$50 Nike flip flops from Boot World I haven't done too bad either.

#### ***Thinking of retiring?***

LA: She paused to contemplate what she would do if she retired, but then quickly got back to work. Eight years ago, she fleetingly considered retiring after her daughter's wedding to Brocas Burrows in Dubai. "My brother told me it couldn't possibly get better but I decided it could. For me, the next party is always the best." Her brother was Patrick Lichfield, the fashion and portrait photographer, who surely knew a thing or two about a good party. Nonetheless, she's still determined to improve. And not just by chucking money at things. "I'm a Scot," she says. "We don't generally embrace flamboyance."

LA: I don't have the family manor any more but I still have George's emeralds; and I'm still working to pay my taxes.

LP: I squandered the family inheritance and I'm retired and milking the system for all I can to get back all the taxes I paid over the years.

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## **Ask the GM**

**By The GM**

Dear GM:

I have anger management issues—do you think I can learn self control by playing Diplomacy?

Sincerely,  
Pissed off Diplomacy Player

*Dear Pissed:*

*I doubt it but will give a chance to release your inner rage by abusing neutrals, stabbing allies and attacking enemies—you know good clean fun.*

*Your Pal,  
the GM*

Dear GM,

What makes for a great Diplomacy player? Is it people skills or tactic or some combination of the two?

Future Diplomacy Genius

*Dear Future:*

*Its both...and willingness to have no friends when playing Diplomacy. Just look at the board and keep that in mind when talking to the other players—where is it now and where do you want it to go? Like our editor does when he's taking a pee....he told me that so I have to share his brilliant insight with all of you.*

*Your Pal,  
The GM*