

Diplomacy World #139



A Goodbye to Jim Burgess

Fall 2017 Issue

www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, for Fall 2017. It has been a difficult issue to complete, as it is the first one since I returned as Lead Editor where I did not have Jim Burgess at my side to encourage me, support me, and improve on whatever I managed to assemble on my own.

One of the things Jim was very concerned about was maintaining some sort of balance within each issue. Even though there is plenty of material here dedicated to remembering Jim and praising his life (rather than simply mourning his passing), I hope you'll agree that those positions are balanced out by some very high quality pieces on other topics. It is true that each issue is really at the mercy of the submissions that come in, but as it begins to take shape I try hard to see what might be lacking, and then to ~~harass~~ encourage people to help fill those voids.

One article I am very happy to bring you will be the last one from Jim Burgess himself. At the time of his death he had been working on an interview with the wonderful Siobhan Nolen which he had been rather proud of. While I am certain he would have expanded on sections and improved it overall if he was still with us, it is my pleasure to present it to the readers of Diplomacy World as a reminder of the wonderful work Jim took such pride in.

While you won't find it in **THIS** issue, I am pleased to report that after a series of false starts, the new Diplomacy World Demo Game is underway at last. 1901 is finishing up right now, and with luck you'll see the first two game years (along with the usual Diplomacy World commentary) in Diplomacy World #140 just after New Year's. Whether you are a novice or an established player, the Diplomacy World Demo Games can serve both as studies in strategy and tactics and pure entertainment. I'm sorry there was such a gap between games, but real life intervenes much more often than desired. Thanks to Demo Game Editor Rick Desper for never giving up on his goal of breathing life into this one.

Speaking of which, I'd appreciate it if you would take a glance at the Diplomacy World Staff table on page 3. If you do, you'll see a number of vacant positions. The zine can continue the way things are, but it always runs smoothest (and produces the best issues) when as few

of the Staff positions as possible are empty. Do **you** have an interest in taking on one of the vacancies? Contact me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com with questions and for more information about what each open staff position entails. They don't take too much of your time, but each one does involve commitment and responsibility. The only pay is the infamy of having your name in print, and the undying gratitude of the hobby at large (or me...take your pick).

I know I have mentioned this before, but one area I would really like to see more submissions is face-to-face Diplomacy. If you've noticed, our listing of upcoming conventions gets shorter each issue. Diplomacy World offers a page for a flyer for ANY upcoming face-to-face event. Make use of that! And then, after your event, write up a convention or other event report, and try to recruit at least one of your participants to do the same. The articles are usually very popular with the readership, and they serve as a "sales tool" to try and get more attendees at your next event. Since the decline of the postal Diplomacy hobby, face-to-face events are the main place where the game moves beyond the board and into the building of relationships and long-term friendships. More than ever, that aspect of the hobby needs to be recognized. Diplomacy is a wonderful game, but the Diplomacy hobby is much more than an anonymous email address you sent negotiations too. Those are real people you're playing against...and when you don't learn more about who you're playing with, you miss out on the opportunity to greatly enrich your own life, and the lives of other hobby members.

After all, as you'll read in this issue, some people that never met Jim Burgess were touched as deeply by his friendly and compassionate spirit as friends who saw him scores of times over the last twenty years. Don't let your only experience in this hobby be playing the game. Use the game to make new friends (and to renew old friendships).

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is January 1st, 2018.

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! See you in the winter, and happy stabbing!

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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.

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Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



The letters and comments received for this issue were about the late Jim Burgess, and so they appear elsewhere in this issue. See Page 9 for the shorter letters, and throughout the issue for a few longer tributes.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplomacy.world/> and at <http://petermc.net/diplomacy/>

I am trying to locate additional sources for Upcoming Conventions. PLEASE, if you have an event coming up, notify me, and why not make up a one page flyer for inclusion in Diplomacy World?

Dipcon/Carnage – Friday November 3rd – Sunday November 5th - Killington, VT – <http://www.carnagecon.com>

Cascadia Open – Saturday January 27th 2018 – Sunday January 28th 2018 – Burnaby, BC, Canada – Email contact Cascadia.open@gmail.com

Ask the GM

By The GM

Dear GM,

I've done a terrible thing—I've introduced Diplomacy to my office and now the whole place is in an uproar.

Last week my boss told me he would give me a favorable performance report if I would help him sabotage our new social media campaign to support our product. My boss thinks if he makes the rest of marketing look bad then we, in the more traditional areas of marketing like print and TV, can make a comeback.

My question is what should I do? Do I report him to our supervisor or HR and if not, what should I do about this?

Confused Workers

Dear Confused:

Your boss sounds like the kind of guy I want to work for. He clearly knows how to get things done and more importantly, how to stop others from getting things done. Why do you want to report this go-getter to anyone? Just jump on to his coattails and enjoy the ride. I would become his right hand man (or woman) as this person is clearly going places.

Your Pal,
The GM

Dear GM:

My cat keeps jumping on the table and destroying our Diplomacy games when in progress. I know you think I should have the cat put down but she belongs to my wife and I can't get rid of either one.

Do you have any ideas on how we can protect out on going Diplomacy games from cat attacks?

Catman

Dear Catman:

Normally, you would be right, the GM would tell you to get rid of your cat and your wife but the GM has a soft spot for pussy cats in his heart so I feel your pain.

I suggest you simply get a shock collar for your wife and zap her every time the cat jumps on the table. She will soon have a solution for you to avoid being zapped.

Your Pal,
The GM

The Italian Renaissance

By Andrew Goff

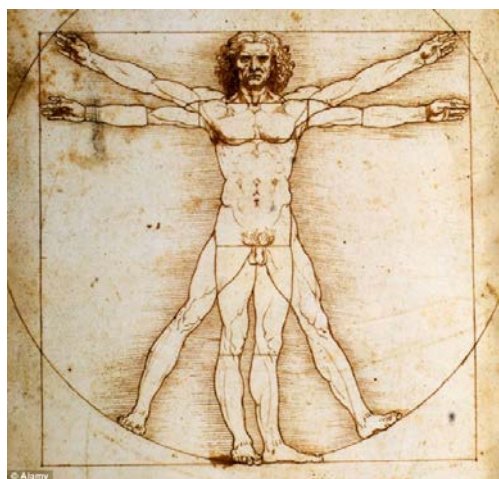


Introduction

What feels like a thousand years of darkness has passed, and the renaissance has arrived for Italy! Pictured above we see Machiavelli reaching out to a novice Diplomacy player, imparting him with the required knowledge to play the green pieces well.

In the end, it isn't as hard as it was made out. A cruel feedback loop existed for a long time and a lack of critical strategic thinking both acted to the detriment of Italian players of all skill levels, but in particular newer players. An entire generation of Diplomacy players saw no analysis of Italy and just assumed the worst. But now, just like Michelangelo's David: all is revealed.

Fundamental to the flawed perspective on Italy is a lack of understanding on the relative importance of dynamics, tactics, strategy, negotiation, and psychology. Below I will discuss each aspect mentioned, and conclude with a holistic perspective on how to succeed as Italy. I note that while I have used the framework I view Diplomacy through to classify this discussion, other paradigms should also see similar principles.



Dynamics

The simple act of understanding how to order and how moves, convoys, and supports work would seem to be

even over all the powers, but this is not the case. To cite some examples, some countries need little knowledge of convoys while others will never see the challenge of which coast to order to; conversely the knowledge of chains of support cutting may be critical in some geographies, while other countries must focus on movement optimization.

Italy is a special case. No other country can bear a misorder as easily as Italy. One mistake rarely ruins an Italian position. Some of this is due to the deep buffer zones that cushion Italy from Turkey and France, while strategic imperatives mean attacks from the North are very rare. On this basis Italy should be one of the most new-player friendly countries! However, this picture is muddled dramatically because Italy uniquely among the great powers needs to understand all three advanced dynamics: convoys, support cutting attacks, and the problems and risks of chain movement.

Put simply, Italy is forgiving of mistakes but unforgiving of a lack of understanding of second-level principles of dynamics. It's possible to win a World Championship playing Italy with a number of misorders, but not possible to win one if you don't understand support cutting logistics!

Tactics

Italy is the least tactical power in Diplomacy. While it does help to understand stalemate tactics and opening tactics, this is no more the case than for the other six powers. When it comes to achieving strategic objectives, tactics are the weakest tool in the Italian repertoire.

It is for this reason that many new players (including the vast majority of Diplomacy players from before the 21st century) struggled with Italy. There is no alliance Italy can make that usefully "Runs the board" tactically (compare this to purely tactical alliances such as Russia-Turkey or England-France-Germany). Even the Russia-Austria-Italy triple races Italy headfirst toward a stalemate in France, even before considering that Italy is always the last mentioned in the "RAI".



Further evidence to this is that the most innovative opening theory for Italy is the Lepanto, an opening that is now well over forty years old and whose tactical potentials and weaknesses are thoroughly exhausted.

It is only recently that players such as Chris Brand, with his 'fifth center' theory (and, relatedly, myself with my 'Modern Borders' concept that Trieste should belong to Italy in an AI alliance) and Toby Harris (with his 'Albanian Attack') have popularized any other useful 1902 tactic.

The reason is not laziness or a lack of effort; simply that tactics is entirely secondary to the success or failure of Italy. Even the above examples are 'strategic enablers' rather than imparting a significant tactical advantage. The reason three decades of Diplomacy players failed to find tricks that lead to 'tactical wins' for Italy is because that is the wrong mindset to play Italy with!

Strategy

Italy is a deeply strategic country, and this is why it is so very hard for new players to excel in. Apart from the first order problem of who is a correct target to attack in a given environment (which all countries face), there is a fundamental need to understand that your success as Italy depends on the speed of the game.

Who to attack appears to be limited to three options (France, Austria, Turkey), so is not so challenging at first

glance. The issue for Italy is that it is not just about who you attack, but who you work with in that attack. A clarifying example is the attack on Austria: are you working with Russia or Turkey? Working with both in the long term is not feasible, and going it alone and hoping that Russia and Turkey don't make you their next target is foolish. Italy is unique on the Diplomacy board in that it has no option where there is a natural attack (unlike England, for example, who has an obvious long-term partner to work with in almost all cases).



How to make this decision is even more complex than just the multitudinous options would suggest, however. This is because Italy's key, critical advantage is that it can control the tempo of the game. No other power has a strength as great as Italy when it comes to making things move slowly or quickly. From the opening move of Venice through to the conservatism or aggression shown in taking down a first target, Italy is the primary causal agent.

This is one reason Italy is rarely the first power attacked in a game (Note: some French players will attack on occasion – but at moderate to high level play it's a foolish play to make this move before other attacks are in motion so the rule holds). It gives Italy a strategic advantage similar to that of Sente in Go; when other

players must react to you, you can control the pace, style, and direction of play – a powerful weapon indeed.

I say 'can'. Most players don't. Most players fail to look at what is in the long-term interests of their position, looking instead at whether they can get to seven centers in 1903. For the longest time this was perceived by many writers as being a 'balance of power' attribute where everyone must be kept even for Italy to do well; nothing could be further from the truth!

Sometimes, Italy is well served by playing a slow alliance and slowing everyone else down (See: Doug Moore, WDC Top Board 2017), sometimes by playing all sides off against each other opportunistically (See: Chris Brand, WDC Top Board 2016), and sometimes by putting the foot down and going as fast as possible (See: Andrew Goff, WDC 2016, 18 center). The idea in any of these that Italy should be moving in order to 'balance' the other players is entirely misguided – Italy is trying deliberately and intentionally to unbalance the game in favor of those other players that will then benefit Italy. This is a conceptual leap too high for a new player to easily grasp, but it nonetheless is fundamental to how Italy gets good scores and why Italy, in the hands of a

good player, is the proverbial unstoppable force when played well.

If you take one thing away from this article, let it be that as Italy you must focus on strategy at the expense of all other things. You will not succeed as Italy until you grasp this.

It is tempting to dissert on the subject of what the right strategies are, but that would be to miss the point. First, there is disagreement and my opinion is no more valuable than many others. Second, I encourage a broader discussion on the subject and the idea of strategic articles being written is one we as a hobby should aspire to – this is a chance for others to share (and improve?) their ideas. Third, including my thoughts here risks them becoming doctrinaire and leading down the same cul-de-sacs as previous Italian theorists – far better that they be examined in isolation from this piece. Fourth, the article is already more than long enough. Finally, and most importantly, it really is about encouraging you to think in strategic terms rather than telling you the right thing to do. Your strategic success as Italy will always be on you, so you need to own it, not be told how to do it.



Negotiation

For some countries, negotiations can be tactical in nature and rely on fairly well documented Diplomatic techniques. Whether the framework is that of the sale, that of the agreement, or any other you care to name, when there are clear short-term objectives that lead naturally into longer term trust-building and alliances, the path is clear even if the implementation is difficult.

For Italy, there is nothing simple to negotiate. The ability to convince Russia to build a Northern Fleet (or not), or to persuade Germany to stab just at the right moment, or to keep France onside under Diplomatic pressure from England: all are more important to Italy than the simple matters mentioned above.

You'll note from the previous paragraph that Italy's objectives cover the whole board. As Turkey, you can literally talk to no-other players in 1901 and still have a good game. As Italy, you will be unable to make strategic decisions and influence their effectiveness

without deep engagement with all the players on the board.

The good news is that everyone will want to talk to you. Even better is if someone doesn't, then it is very likely they are about to make a mistake – and this is the definitive information you need to plan your strategy and then influence accordingly.

This is a very different style of negotiation to the ones most common in the game, particularly among new players. But it is what is needed to succeed. One way to think of this is that Italy is the worst country for negotiating for this turn, but the best in the game for negotiating what will happen in two or more years' time.

Psychology

The real sting in the tail of the scorpion that is Italy's reputation over the last two decades is that Italy is, at heart, a confidence country. Where England can be resolute and steady and Austria can be gung-ho and flamboyant, Italy is the single country more than any

other that needs to look in control. The second Italy is perceived to be weak (or worse, going down) is the second that it loses its influencing ability. If you don't think someone is going to be in the game in three years then you don't care what they have to say about it.



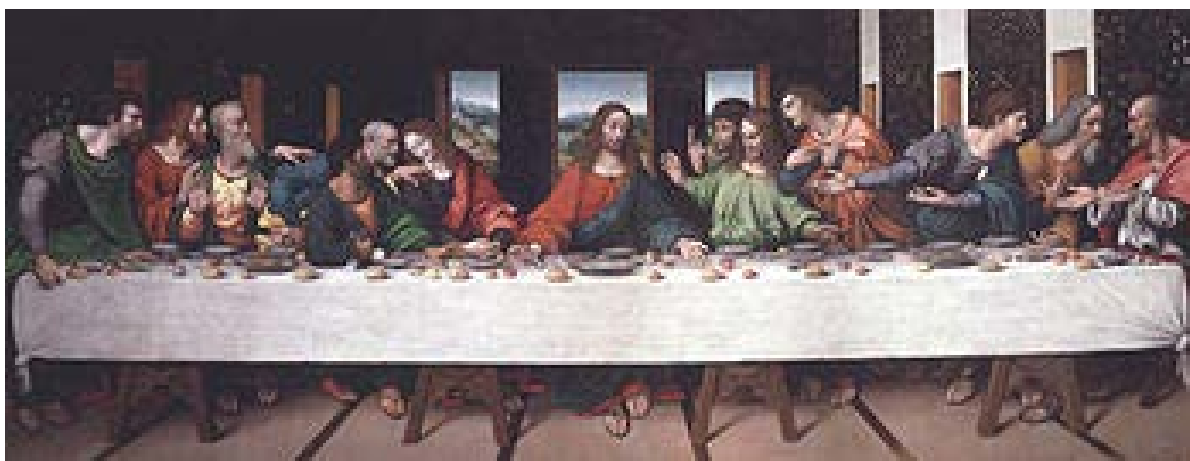
“Oh not Italy again” may sound the same as “Oh not Turkey again” but due to the different positions the psychology could hardly be more different! In Turkey,

starting a game with a “bleh” or an “I’m no good at Turkey” makes you a smaller target – a less pressing threat than someone who is known as a good Turkish player and who exudes confidence when he picks the yellow pieces. Italy, in contrast, comes over as being weak and irrelevant.

The very fact that Italy was perceived as weak by many players has led to a feedback loop whereby it becomes weaker... at which point its perception has fallen even further, and so forth. If you want to be successful as Italy, you must break out of this mindset.

This is not to advocate a ‘crash or crash through’ approach as required with some countries, but instead to suggest that quiet confidence and presenting the impression that you have a long-term plan (and that everyone else is part of it) is critical to Italian success.

A saying in Australian Diplomacy goes: “Austria owns all 34 centers, they’ve just lent them to the other powers to have a bit of fun”. This sums up the psychology approach of how to win as Austria (apparently). If Austria owns all the centers, then it is Italy who wrote the rules of the game.



Conclusion

This is not intended as an exhaustive review of how and why Italy is now performing at its highest level in tournaments (and most online sites) in recorded history. But it is intended to bring to light some of the key concepts and gameplay considerations that have driven this improvement at the top levels of play.

I’ve drawn on help from many people in constructing this article (from five continents no less!), but of course the only complete agreement is that Italy, like all other countries, has no one right way to play it and that

individual game circumstances and the people and personalities play a very big factor. Notwithstanding that, there are certain important ideas that you need to focus on to be consistently great as Italy. Whether that is done consciously or subconsciously initially is a moot point – but hopefully an awareness of the needs of managing the green pieces will allow improvement over time, so it slowly does become easy to be green.

Italy is the strategic influencer of the Diplomacy Board. In a game of strategy and negotiation, that must count for something.

Some Brief Tributes to the Late James Burgess

Adam Silverman - Jim Burgess was my first mentor when I joined the FTF Diplomacy community. I first met Jim when I was a college student living in Boston. I had been playing Diplomacy online since high school, and somewhere around 1999 I found out about a biannual Boston Diplomacy gathering called The Diplomatic Incident. I remember first meeting with Jim at one of these gatherings and over the next few years playing FTF games with him regularly. From the start, Jim's personality helped pull me into the hobby - he was always one of the nicest guys in the room, always cheerful, fun to be on a board with whether you were friends or enemies, and great company off the board as well.

Jim encouraged me to attend a tournament, which I did for the first time at WDC in Maryland in 2000. One of the few games from those days that I remember was in that tournament when Jim and I were seated next to each other, him in Austria and me in Turkey. We started rolling a successful AT, until I brutally stabbed him sometime in the midgame. As a total novice at the time, I thought this was just great, having respected Jim as one of the best players I knew in those days. I remember Jim being overly gracious about it and reminding me that one great stab does not a successful Diplomacy player make, and that I had better keep an eye on the rest of the board. I ended the game as 14 or 15 center Turkey, coughing up a solo to the guy who went on to win the tournament.

Jim went on to being instrumental in the beginnings of the Boston Diplomacy hobby; when Melissa Call began organizing regular games, Jim could pretty much always be counted on to show up and bring a smile and his always interesting perspective to the board. It is almost clichéd at this point to say that the reason many of us, including myself, got involved in and stay in the FTF Diplomacy hobby is the quality of the people. Jim was one of the very first people I interacted with in the Diplomacy community and had a huge part in my getting involved and staying involved over the years.

Thaddeus Black - As beloved hobbyists of decades past die, one does not wish to convert the hallowed pages of Diplomacy World into a maudlin obituary column. Though a sense of hobby history is grateful to every player, old and young, funerals of old men new hobbyists never knew do not serve to draw the young into the hobby. Diplomacy World has always looked forward more than back.

Nevertheless, Jim-Bob Burgess was special. Who ever quietly did more to compose differences in the hobby? Who was steadier? Jim-Bob was a rock. Under his

editorship, The Abyssinian Prince ran monthly to issue no. 384. Three hundred eighty-four! Who publishes 384 monthly issues?

Jim-Bob was working on no. 385 when he died. I had the Austrian position in the game The Abyssinian Prince was running at the end (a game of which Douglas Kent is kindly taking custody). One of Jim-Bob's final updates, June 18: "Small health update. I was REALLY wiped out last week, but now am feeling MUCH better. The recovery period on me will be really long, but I have at least SOME hope of walking again."

Such an optimist. Jim-Bob even had six players lined up to start a new game in no. 385. He was looking for a seventh when the end came.

Jim-Bob wrote me May 15 to prod me to finish within the year a hobby project he and I and some others have been working on for some time. Perhaps he wanted it done soon enough to see the final result. I made excuses: "My shed's roof sprung a leak, etc. Lots of stuff that would bore you to hear about happened. I got distracted."

Jim-Bob's reply: "I got colon cancer... I be distracted too.... ;-)"

And now he's gone. His family and professional colleagues need him far more than I do, of course, but darn it: I wasn't done with the old boy yet.

To have collaborated with Jim-Bob is a signal honor. His passing leaves a gaping hole in the hobby. I'll miss him.

Dirk Knemeyer - I only met Jim Burgess once, when I attended the Dip tournament at TempleCon in 2010 or 2011. Despite the brevity of our time together, he joined the short list of people in my life whom I aspire to be more like.

Jim-Bob went out of his way to help me with logistics around the event, and gave me a ride to and from Boston. He was enthusiastic, interested in me, and naturally curious about everything we talked about. During the tournament he gave special attention to people who had never played Diplomacy before, not just teaching them the rules and trying to bring them into the tribe but caring about them as people and catering to their experience in ways that went beyond self-interest. He was a builder and nurturer, who could also play a mean game of Diplomacy at the same time.

We kept in touch by email. Each time I received something from him it made me happy, because I knew

that a really good human being, a person of true character to match his intelligence and curiosity, was including me in his life. I'm sad that he has passed, and I hope my own growth and development emulates the example he set. Thanks for being you, Jim.

Mark Nelson - I can't believe it. After not being part of the TAP family for a long time, I recently rejoined and corresponded frequently with Jim. He was very positive about the future.

Jim was not just an important person in the diplomacy world, but he was a great guy who managed both an active professional career but a heavy involvement in Diplomacy. Amazingly he was at the peak of both these worlds.

Will Abbott - Jim was the reason I got into the Hobby, rather than just be a guy who would play Diplomacy if there were a copy of the game and six more people who would play it.

I date to a transitional time in the Hobby. There were still a few bona fide postal zines left, and Jim's The Abyssinian Prince was one of them. I was in school, and he sent me free copies as long as I was and even after that.

It was also before the utter explosion in online play. There was only play by email via the Judges, and if you wanted a graphic interface, there was the brand new USDP, the Diplomatic Pouch's interface.

The old guard was receding, especially in the long aftermath of the feuding of the '80's, and newer people, like Manus Hand, were only starting to step up. Therefore I missed several of the old hobby stalwarts: Richard Sharpe, Jeff Key, Kathy Byrne, Lewis Pulsipher, John Boardman, and so many others whose contributions continued to influence the hobby (and do so today!) but were already absent when I came in. I count myself lucky that Jim Burgess was not only not one I missed, but could be a guide to those I missed.

If it weren't for him, I'd have checked out the Hobby, and then fallen away. I wouldn't know the many of you that I know, nor have the connection with even the strangers that I do. The Hobby is immensely poorer for losing him.

Toby Harris - I would like to express my feelings for James, and genuine sorrow for those he left behind that loved him.

We only met twice. I always called him James – not sure if that was the right thing, but all of our friends call us by different names and pronunciations. I always called him James.

The first time we met was via an email game; it was the initial round of the first email WorldMasters tournament

in 1999. 553 players took part. It was thanks to James' Austria I got an 18 center Turkey in 1906.

And the second time we met was face-to-face at the World Dipcon of 2004 in Birmingham. In that game he clobbered me. He showed me good and proper that some care bears have claws and can get revenge ;-)

We stayed in touch over the years; despite the geographical distance, there was a solid friendship. I always respected him so much as a person & character.

Nobody ever deserves to die young. James especially, because he always came across as a lovely guy.

My only regret is not having known James better; a single face-to-face meeting and an email game which lasted just a few months. I would have loved to see him again.

Hugh Polley - James Burgess was a great guy and a great Diplomacy enthusiast. I will truly miss him. Unless, as is the tradition in Canadian Zines, he is voted the winner in his last game in ES; I am proud to say I contributed, as his ally, to his final solo win in a Diplomacy Variant played in ES about 2 years ago. I hope someone with a firm knowledge of his history in the hobby will put out an in depth diplomacy BIO for him. Please be sure to send it to me.

Dick Martin - For years Jim was my only connection to the Diplomacy world and that was only because he was such an all-around nice guy. I'll miss him and his good nature.

In April 2016 my ex-wife and ex-co-publisher Julie Martin-Korb also lost her brief and fairly one-sided battle with cancer. One day we're sitting around the table playing Puerto Rico with our kids and a few friends, a few months later and she's gone. Enjoy your friends and loved ones while you can, because we are all gone far too soon.

Steve Cooley - I am beside myself. He wrote me a short time ago that he wanted to get a best country award (from a February event) to me and that we should get together.

He was a wonderful man and I'm deeply saddened.

Not that it matters now, but I said to Chris Martin that Jim-Bob had the perfect temperament to run a Dipcon. He was so genial and able to make everyone feel like he was putting their concerns first.

Cascadia Open Diplomacy Tournament

Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th January 2018

Accent Inn, 3777 Henning Dr, Burnaby, BC

Round 1 starts at 9am on Saturday 27th

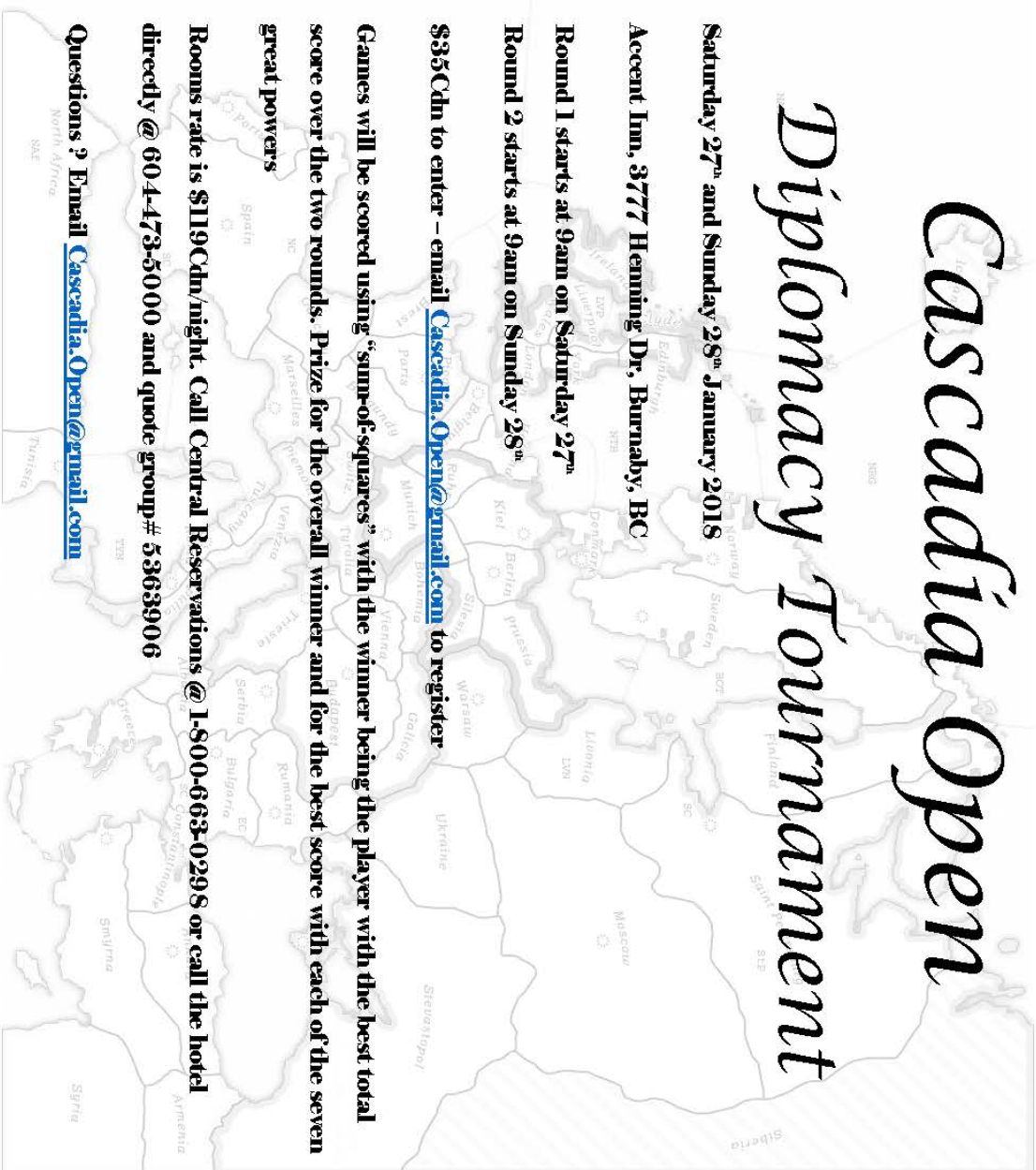
Round 2 starts at 9am on Sunday 28th

\$35Cdn to enter – email Cascadia.Open@email.com to register

Games will be scored using “sum-of-squares” with the winner being the player with the best total score over the two rounds. Prize for the overall winner and for the best score with each of the seven great powers

Rooms rate is \$119Cdn/night. Call Central Reservations @ 1-800-663-0298 or call the hotel directly @ 604-473-5000 and quote group # 5363906

Questions ? Email Cascadia.Open@email.com



Jim-Bob

By Steve Cooley

Many years ago, as I first discovered the postal hobby (yes, gaming at the speed of the United States Postal Service!), I subbed to a few zines. I don't even remember which one it was wherein this mysterious player people called "Jim-Boob" was playing in all these games. I immediately thought it was just so disrespectful. Who talks about someone else like that?

Of course, it was at the height of the postal hobby. With the feuds, the long, rambling "press" that had nothing to do with the games, and all that glorious, old-fashioned stuff. When I found out that "Jim-Boob" was actually "Jim-Bob," I chuckled. My middle initial is "B." I'm not too fond of my middle name, so for many years whenever anyone asked what the "B" stood for, I would say, "Bob. I'm Steve-Bob. You know, like one of the Waltons." I had found someone with the middle name "Bob!"

Well, not exactly. And, I never did find out what the "Bob" was all about. It wasn't important.



Every time I interacted with Jim-Bob, there were always more important things to talk about. We would talk about healthcare. He was very kind and patient with me there—him being the expert and me being the know-little. We would talk about saving faith in Jesus Christ. We would talk about family. We would talk about Diplomacy.

When our mutual friend, Don Williams, died a few years ago, Jim-Bob was determined to work even more diligently on the relationships he had throughout the

hobby. He and I live a little more than an hour from each other. However, that did not result in us seeing each other often. He was up in Maine often (people really like it up there, but NEVER believe there is a Diplomacy hobby up there!). When Jim told me about his own cancer diagnosis, I was more distraught than he was. He was ever-optimistic.

Last year, we arranged to meet in Natick. He arrived, looking like the dapper Ivy League prof. We had a great time eating, reminiscing, talking about friends, family, and how much we hated cancer. What a smart, yet humble man. We could all learn from him.

Here's a bit of one of his last notes to me, from just after the election:

"I think of you on this day, we have had very different life experiences, but you remain one of my favorite people in the world. I'm sitting in the immunotherapy chemo chair right now sending things like this and Facebook posts. . . .

I truly believe that there exists a person in this country (not anyone who actually ran) who would appeal to both you and me and would be a great President for this country. It is a shame we were not able today together to vote for that person.

Also, did you get the package I sent you?

Cheers, and very best wishes, cancer sucks through and through, but people like you help make it better for people like me,

Jim-Bob"

That gives you some idea of what he was like—consistently concerned about others, rather than himself, even when he was getting a chemo treatment! Who does that for someone other than close family?

He was the consummate tournament director. It saddens me that Jim did not have the opportunity to be TD for a Dipcon. He would have been magnificent. Jim-Bob was so even-keeled. I don't think I ever saw him get flustered.

The last time I physically saw him was in February. I went to TotalCon where he was running the Diplomacy event. When I saw him, seated at a table in the hotel restaurant, I almost started crying. He was so thin! He didn't eat much, which was, needless to say, discouraging. I am sitting here, kicking myself in the butt,

for not going to see him. I can tell myself I didn't know, but it doesn't alleviate how I feel.

I have one other regret. I think about the first Dipcon the Weasels hosted a few years ago. There I was in the ballroom before a round started (I don't remember which), talking to Jim-Bob and Don Williams. Why didn't I get a picture?

I miss those guys!

For all of our dysfunction as a hobby, and all of our disagreements as individuals, we are a funky mash of a

messed-up family. It's good to be reminded of that, even if it has to hurt this much. Jim-Bob loved the hobby and the game enough to put up with me—and all of you. His dedication to the game and his willingness to serve all of us is how I'll remember him. However, I know that is a sliver of a sliver of who he was. James F. Burgess was a great man.

There's a hole in the heart of the hobby. It will heal one day. Five or six individuals will step up and take up his roles. But, today is not that day.

It's Time for a New Board

By Bob Durf

No, this isn't a complaint about the actual game itself! Rather, this is a query to a readership that has no impact (at least I assume) on Avalon Hill or its business decisions. It's been eight years since Diplomacy's fiftieth anniversary, and consumers are still stuck with the Anniversary edition of Diplomacy unless they think of scouring the web for an older, probably well-worn edition. It is incredible to me that the greatest board game out there is saddled currently with one of the worst designed boards and kits of any game I've come across thus far. First, it seems clear, although I've heard contrarian views, that the current edition is not beloved by many. However my main question is what hypothetical route Avalon Hill should take in designing a new version (knowing of course this will play zero impact on any decision they make).



Briefly, we must cover the problems (and positives) of the current kit. First, and most importantly, the game board itself hurts play. The map, while superficially attractive, hinders gameplay in two damaging ways. First, and most annoyingly, it crams spaces far too

narrowly, sometimes out of apparent necessity (the low countries are difficult to space, understandably), and sometimes out of confusing boundary choices (Rome is much too small for no clear reason). This leads inevitably to messes on a cramped board in a game that should not be messy with such a clean design. Secondly, the board wastes space in almost hilarious proportions. Russia looms large...much too large. There is no reason to have Russia take up almost half the board, and among new players, it causes the unfair perception that Russia is much larger and more dangerous than it is. On the other side of the board, the Atlantic Ocean takes up almost the same amount of ludicrous space for no reason (perhaps the Avalon printers were attempting to use up blue ink).

The rest of the kit is a mixed bag. The armies and fleets are cheap cardboard chits, which I understand, although they could at least be more distinguishable if that is the route that needs to be taken. The supplementary maps are a welcome addition, although the usability is hurt by the poor design of the map discussed above. The rulebook is nothing to complain about either, it covers the rules and potential issues well and it is large and well produced.

The first question I have is whether a new edition should scale up or maintain the same cheapness of the current edition, and it doesn't present an easy answer. The obvious benefit for the current edition is of course the cost, which presents a low barrier for new players to enter the hobby. It's at a price point that allows easy spontaneous purchasing, which can draw in a wide range of consumers. A more expensive product does not allow such easy purchasing from consumers who might know very little about Diplomacy, which is a definite negative. Yet, I think consumers who know nothing about Diplomacy upon purchasing it are unlikely in any case to become hobbyists, or potentially even every complete a full game. A more pricey copy, while posing a barrier to entry to wide eyed newcomers, may be more

attractive to present hobbyists and a more attractive and functional set may lead to new players sliding into the hobby as well.



Given that a new edition should scale up, for purposes of argument, what improvements should be made? First and foremost, the board itself. The simplest improvement is achievable with Microsoft Paint: to cut off the unneeded empty spaces on the sides of the map and increase the size of the area where play actually occurs. This does no artistic harm to the current map, and would in addition, be extremely easy to implement. There are other easy 'quality of life' improvements that can be made: increasing the size and visibility of Supply Centers, as well as borders inside each Great power. Some veterans may want territorial abbreviations present on the main board as well, but I personally think that would take too much away from the simplicity of the current board.



More radical map changes could be made, of course. A board with the map projections used in a WWII game called Unconditional Surrender may look geographically odd, but it could be useful for making those smaller territories a bit easier to discern. A more radical change could be made in a style used in Virgin Queen (a

superlative game in and of itself), where different geographical areas are stylistically increased and decreased in size for play purposes. While perhaps not necessary to the extent used in that game, where the Low Countries had to be far larger to fit more areas within them, it could be a unique stylistic choice to blow up the center of the Diplomacy map with smaller geographical areas on the peripheries. These more radical options would be unlikely, but could make the map more unique and at the same time maintain playability.

Outside the map, the change most would probably want to see is a change to the player counters. The current cardboard chits have already been asserted as terrible, and while cardboard chits are not inherently bad, a game like Diplomacy with only two different unit types would be served well by wooden pieces, as in some past editions. Unlike those past editions, it would also be nice to have markers for supply center control (I've only played on an older edition map once, and to my knowledge it had no such markers). If cardboard chits have to be used, cleaner graphics between the powers would be nice, as the muted colored cannons on the muted background of the chits is dull and bland.

In addition, the paper maps are very nice, and even nicer would be some paper order sheets along with them to use during games. This is minor for me, as part of the fun in my group perhaps is the scavenging for blank scraps of paper and substituting false moves from someone's discarded scraps, but it would be nice, especially for new players picking up Diplomacy, to have an order sheet that might give a template for how to write down orders. I do not believe the rulebook needs any serious changes, although for a game like this, it could be nice to include some broad or engaging strategy articles to encourage new players, especially given the amount of content available from the community free of charge.

In conclusion, this article is certainly a waste of time, given my lack of influence on the production of Diplomacy board games, yet I think the community would be well served by an attractive new edition with quality of life improvements. While the price point of the current edition is attractive, a higher quality edition would lead to less sales among a certain consumer group, yet arguably could lead to better retention from gamers who are more willing to stick with a higher quality physical edition.

[[Editor's Note – Hasbro currently owns the rights to Diplomacy, via Wizards of the Coast via Avalon Hill (a.k.a. Monarch Avalon). It was Hasbro that released the latest edition. This doesn't invalidate any of Bob's arguments for a set of higher quality.]]

Is it Time to Bring Iceland Out of the Ice Age in Diplomacy?

By Larry Peery

The last time I had a serious discussion about the role of Iceland in Diplomacy was back in the 1980s when the topic came up in Gary Coughlan's EUROPA EXPRESS, perhaps the best Diplomacy 'zine of the hobby's Second Golden Age. You can judge that for yourself here:

<http://whiningkentpigs.com/DW/kent/e.htm>

Gary was stationed at Keflavik Air Base near Reykjavik, Iceland's largest city during the height of the Cold War. You can learn more about that at:

<http://coldwarsites.net/country/iceland>



This 1986 map shows the Iceland Military Air Defense Identification Zone with the ground radar coverage in Greenland, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, Scotland and Norway. The black spot north of Iceland shows additional coverage based on an Iceland based AWACS aircraft. The red spot shows the location of Kola Peninsula, the center of the Soviet Northern Fleet. It was the starting point of most Soviet navy and air force activities in the North Atlantic which can be described as a Soviet military main route to the south. (Comments and map by Fridthor Eydal).

Gary mentioned this in EE and started a search for other Dippers that might have been stationed at the base or passed through it. Not surprisingly, he actually found a few since a lot of early Dippers had gone through the military during the Cold War and Vietnam War eras.

Among important "diplomacy" events in Iceland during that time were the 1986 Summit in Reykjavik between US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev; which accomplished very little; and then in 1991 Iceland became the first country to recognize Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania as independent countries following the collapse of the USSR. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the

end of the First Cold War the US military basically pulled out of Iceland --- until the country's near economic collapse brought it back onto the international stage. Today, things in Iceland are again going well, but there is a storm cloud brewing over the old Keflavik Air Base. The growing size and qualitative improvements in the Russian Navy and its increasing "blue water" presence has once again made Iceland an important spot on the Second Cold War global strategic game board. The long-gone P3 Orions (based on the old Lockheed turboprop Electra jets) are being replaced with new Boeing P8 Poseidons (based on the B 737 jet). More about that:

<https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2016/02/us-military-returns-iceland%20>



P-3C Orion aircraft at Keflavik air base in 1977. Photo: U.S. Defense Imagery/Wikipedia



A P-8A Poseidon in 2015

FACTOID: COMPARING THE P-3C AND P-8A
Role:

P-3C: Maritime patrol aircraft

P-8A: Anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, and maritime patrol aircraft

National Origin/Manufacturer
P-3C: USA/Lockheed, Lockheed Martin,
Kawasaki Heavy Industries
P-8A USA/Boeing

Introduction:
P-3C: 1962
P-8A: 2013

Status/Primary Users/Produced/Number Built
P-3C: USN, JMSDF, 1961-1990m Lockheed
650, Kawasaki 107
P-8A: 51 P-8A and 8 P-8I

Unit Cost
P-3C: USD 36M in 1987
P-8A: Program cost USD 638B by FY 2013, Unit
cost, USD 125M in 2016

Crew
P-3C: 11
P-8A: 9

Max. Take-off Weight
P-3C: 142K pounds
P-8A: 189K pounds

Speed: Max. and Cruise
P-3C: 750 kph, 610 kph
P-8A: 907 kph, 815 kph

Range, combat radius, ferry range
P-3C: 4400 km, 2450 km, 8944 km
P-8A: 2200 km combat radius, 8300 km

Endurance
P-3C: 16 hours
P-8C: 4 hours on station

Service Ceiling
P-3C: 8625 m (28300 ft)
P-8A: 12500 m (41000 ft)

Armaments
P-3C: 0 rockets or guns, missiles, bombs,
mines, torpedoes, sonobuoys (conventional and
nuclear).
P-8A: 5 internal and 6 external (1 more than P-
3C) stations for missiles, torpedoes, mines, bombs and a
"High Altitude ASW Weapon system).

Bottom line: There doesn't seem to be much quantitative improvement in the P-8A over the P-3C, so the question is this: does the P-8A offer a 375% qualitative improvement to justify the additional costs? Only time and mission success rates will tell.

With that background let's look at the Diplomacy game board. Do you need a map or can you picture it in your head? Traditionally "Iceland" didn't even exist in the game since it had no name and wasn't even considered an impassable space. It was just sort of hanging out there taking up space in the northwest corner of the board. Pity.

Let's see if we can change that.

First, let's give it its name, Iceland. (ICE).

Second, let's rule it is a space that can be occupied. The space is bordered by two other spaces, the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic. Those are the only way in or out.

Third, let's make it interesting and make it a supply center equal in value to the other unoccupied supply centers at the start of the game.

Fourth, but not to make it too easy for England let's add an (optional) unit at the beginning of the game in Iceland. Let's make it a fleet instead of an army to give it a bit of an offense. The fleet can be ordered just like any other fleet, with one big exception --- it can only move to the Norwegian or North Atlantic or support another unit moving to one of those spaces. Simple enough? (And you're wondering how does it move, right? Simple: each interested player in the game submits a separate order for that space/unit as long as Iceland remains unoccupied by any power. When that happens it loses its unit and becomes just like another other neutral supply center.)

In the grand geopolitical scheme of things having Iceland as a useable space and supply center doesn't change the game a lot but it does have potential value to whoever can occupy, keep and use it. The question is, is that value worth the price of gaining it?

Historically Iceland has usually been a place one stopped off on the way to somewhere else. That's still true today and Icelandair has found a profitable niche in the trans-Atlantic air market doing just that. A similar role in Diplomacy seems reasonable.

But, looking back, we see that Iceland did play a role in WWI. That came as news to me and you might find the story at <https://grapevine.is/mag/articles/2014/06/26/icelandic-blood-has-been-shed/> interesting as well. Iceland's role in WWII, as a neutral territorial part of Denmark that was first occupied by the British and then the Americans, can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iceland_in_World_War_II The role of Cold War Iceland has already been briefly touched on. Here's a quick reprise of what's going on.

As tensions mount between Russia and NATO, the alliance has had to refocus from external support missions to border security. For over five decades, Iceland's sprawling Keflavik air station served as a front line for the West during the struggle with the Soviet Union. The station is the size of a small town or a large shopping center, and it once housed thousands of U.S. servicemen who were tasked with tracking Soviet submarines and aircraft as they crossed into the Atlantic and made their way through the GIUK Gap. Yet as the Cold War waned, so did Keflavik's importance. The base was unceremoniously closed in 2006 and parceled up by domestic entities --- some of it became student housing,

other portions were transferred to the international airport, and what remained was to be maintained by the Icelandic Coast Guard.

But buried within the 422 page Pentagon's 2017 budget is a request for somewhere between \$19M and \$21.6M to renovate and clean-up Keflavik's facilities to make them suitable for a new generation of U.S. P-8A sub-hunting aircraft. Although the base has closed, the base's airfield has been kept in use for commercial flights, and the Icelandic Coast Guard has kept up with maintenance for facilities as part of Iceland's contribution to NATO. The investment heralds a more active response to Russian machinations, but also revitalizes a critical defense relationship that has been dulled by a decade of neglect. Note, however, that this does NOT mean the US will automatically be basing P-8Cs at the station but will, on need, rotate them in and out on a temporary basis. The reason for this need becomes obvious when you look at the chart above. A four hour endurance time on station is not viable for P-8Cs coming from bases in Canada, Norway or the UK.



Keflavik Air Base in 1982 Can you identify all the planes?

A view of the U.S. Naval Air Station Keflavik, 19 August 1982. In the foreground are the ramp areas and facilities

of the U.S. Air Force 57th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, with other facilities in the background. The two aircraft in the foreground are Lockheed P-3Cs of U.S. Navy patrol squadron VP-26 Tridents. Also visible are three USAF McDonnell Douglas F-4C/D Phantom II fighters. In the background are three Lockheed HC-130 Hercules', a Lockheed C-141B Starlifter, a Boeing KC-135A Stratotanker and a Boeing E-3A Sentry. (Photo by MSgt. Michael E. Daniels, USAF).

As for the future? Perhaps we can say that much hangs in the balance for the future of Iceland and the North Atlantic as the heating up of the area due to both political and geological forces grows. Who knows, perhaps that old P-3C and new P-8A hangar being built at Keflavik Air Base to house P-8Cs will prove as important to future historians as the Viking ships and the Norse sod longhouse at L'Anse Aux Meadows is to current historians? I like to think so.



L'Anse Aux Meadows Norse sod longhouse in Newfoundland, Canada

[[Editor's note: There are, of course, many Diplomacy variants that use Iceland as a supply center (some of the Woolworth versions being the first that come to mind).]]

The Compassion of Jim Burgess

By Heath Davis-Gardner

When I learned of Jim's passing a couple of months ago, I was surprised that I immediately began to cry. I wasn't surprised at the sadness, but at the intensity of it. It had been a couple of years since Jim and I had corresponded, and I wasn't even aware of the serious nature of his illness — or maybe of the illness at all.

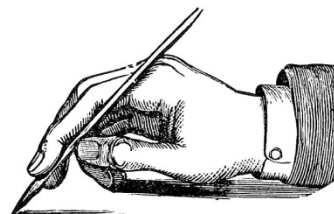
After reflecting on it that day, though, I understood why I was more devastated to hear about Jim than I have of other somewhat distant friends I've had that have passed. It's because of the major impact Jim had on my life at two very key junctures. I owe him a lot for the

kindness and attention he showed me during those times, and part of the sadness was realizing that he likely didn't know how important he'd been to me and that I'd realized it too late to ever be able to tell him about it.

The first big impact was when I was a fifteen-year-old Diplomacy neophyte who quickly became obsessed with the game to the point of getting involved in all areas of the hobby: I went to WDC (granted, it was practically in my backyard that year, at UNC-Chapel Hill), I joined the

I was a smart kid, but I wasn't the type to really apply myself in school. I was too marginally crazy for it, and as a result I had begun to devalue my intelligence and abilities. I also wasn't great at the game I'd gotten so obsessed with — and never would be, as time would demonstrate — but one thing I noticed a natural ease with was writing press in email and/or postal games. And I was fascinated by the postal SZINES (making sure I spell it correctly here), particularly TAP. Jim sent it to me for free and would continue doing so well past my college graduation.

My interests always ran in obsessions that would fade over time, and Diplomacy was definitely that sort of interest. But the joy I got from writing that szine and the other writing I started doing at the same time never did. To this day, writing is the great pleasure of my life. I went on to college, where I majored in English, and continued on to get a master's in English with a 4.0 GPA and a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. I really don't know if I would have claimed writing as part of my own turf or thought of it as something I had a talent for without Jim's encouragement. I hate to consider what I might have done instead.



Jim also helped me a good bit more recently. In 2013, I had a truly insane fall (tripping on a rug at the top of the stairs and falling down the stairs, except without hitting any stairs on the way down) and broke my femur. It took two months of hospitalization and inpatient rehab to be able to walk again. I was in intense pain — the surgery resulted in a non-union, as well as giving me bad osteoarthritis in my knee and hip — and was prescribed ever-increasing doses of OxyContin by a doctor that just wanted to write me a script and be able to get on with his day.

THE ABYSSINIAN PRINCE #348

May 23, 2014

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E-MAIL/WEB ONLY ISSUE! PDF will be available on the website. We also are being reproduced in *Eternal Sunshine*.

Web Page Address: <http://www.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/index.html>

A SAD DAY FOR EVERYONE IN 'THE HOBBY' - DON WILLIAMS (1957-2014) PASSES AWAY

We dedicate this issue to Don's memory.

We continue with Kendo Nagasaki, join ANY time, just send me a guess!!

This issue continues the *cdine/subzine* inversion. As most of you know, this thing began as a "sub-zine" to Terry Tallman's *Nord Seattle, West George*, then became its own szine with a host of subzines. The subzines remaining will appear as sub-subzines to our new flipflop home in Doug Kent's *Eternal Sunshine*. Doug's incessant nagging is not keeping us on schedule, but will make it so we keep going. I'd like to keep writing and doing some game GMing (note that has been expanding). I'm set on the GMing, and I'm starting to write a bit, though there might be more.

For production, in addition to the HTML's of each separate product on the web page, I will also have a PDF that you can print of the entire subzine (including my famous handdrawn maps!). You can just print the maps if you like, but remember maps are for pilfers anyway, you don't need no steenkin' maps, keep them up in your head where they belong.

General information about the mailing list is at: <http://www.diplom.org/mailman/listinfo/tap> You can sign up from there, or send E-Mails to: Tap-request@diplom.org with the word 'help' in the subject or body (don't include the quotes), and you will get back a message with instructions. You must know your password to change your options (including changing the password, itself) or to unsubscribe.

THE ABYSSINIAN PRINCE FEATURES SECTION (CONS/LETTERS/MUSIC)

(For upcoming cons around the world: <http://dev.diplom.org/Face/cons/index.php>, but note that some of the Americans have stopped posting the tournaments there. Shame shame, shame... The Chicago hobby continues on its active track: they had a great CODCon and Wound Meat is coming up on July 26th and 27th. Although we know that Carnage in Vermont will end off the Nor'Easter sequence of events the first weekend in November, the rest of the year in the Northeast is clarifying slowly. Cheers to Christian Pedone and the Philly crowd for organizing a patriotic July 4-6 Philly Massacre again this year. The website is at www.philadelphiamassacre.com, check it out. Rob Prensas hasn't said anything about his tournament though either. But expect updates in this space... of course the big upcoming tournament, that I am missing as we speak, is World DipCon at DixieCon on Memorial Day weekend!))

NEW FEATURE ROCK AND ROLL BANDS AND MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Andy Bate (Tue, May 20, 2014 at 4:27 AM)

Also thanks for pointing me in the direction of Human Switchboard - had a listen on Spotify and enjoyed what I heard.

I've got Enter The Haggis lined up for later, but currently I'm listening to James Taylor's Greatest Hits which Doug mentioned.

Wonder how many peeps on the ES mailing list do Spotify? Collaborative playlist could be fun. And article material.

Andy, andybate@gmail.com

((Thanks for commenting, Andy, I'm taking a break this month from adding an additional moment, but that's good for adding Andy's question, also to the TAP list. If anyone from TAP or ES has ideas here let

TAP inspired me. I thought it was so cool that it was completely self-produced by Jim, and had a dedicated readership that wrote him interesting letters about things I didn't know much of anything about, especially the Mekons. The szine was such a treat to read, you'd get all this commentary from Jim and correspondence with regular writers, then some interesting side-game results, and finally glorious action reports of Dip games that had been going on for years. I followed every single game, making little predictions on Jim's Xeroxed maps about what might happen next, underlining sections of press that I really loved.

That began a really troubled period for me. I'll spare the gory details, but all my previously minor-seeming addictive impulses became ravenous and ever-present. When I started announcing to friends I was planning to quit using OxyContin, Jim got up with me and offered encouragement as well as words of warning that really got through to me. The concern/warning of others seemed either patronizing or Pollyanna-ish, but Jim's argument was respectful — he was aware that I didn't understand the issue, but also that telling me I didn't understand it would harden me to actual useful information — but also highly informative about the perils of opiates. He told me things doctors never did, and it all checked out when I looked at the sources he provided me, as did collaborative sources.

What that ultimately resulted in was a decision to live in total sobriety, which is now a nearly three-year deep way of life that has changed everything for me. My addictions prior to this instance hadn't been affecting my life in an obvious way and seemed to be perfectly reasonable indulgences, but they were undermining my potential and my interest in expanding my potential. I would never have advanced my career to the degree I have without undertaking this journey, and I would be far less content with my place in life. Jim didn't do all that for me, but just as with writing, he was an early influence that put the idea in my head in a serious way.



Some of this stuff is just chance, I suppose, but the heart of it all is this: Jim, a guy I never met in person, cared about me from the start, as he cared about all of his friends. He showed that care in the form of cheerleading, encouragement, and honest advice when it was needed. The amount of compassion he showed me for almost twenty years would seem fairly normal, I suppose, if we were friends who'd met in real life and who hung out together on a regular basis. But I never met Jim. For all he knew, I could be another Sara Reichert-style wacky character creation. But he believed in me (that I was a real human being, and that I had some potential for something or other) and he showed it. He was almost a pen-pal father figure to me. And his brilliant intelligence

combined with his open-hearted compassion for others keeps him in my mind as one of the more inspiring people I've crossed paths with in my life.



I will miss Jim-Bob, and have done for the past several months. Not only was he great for the hobby surrounding the game of Diplomacy, he was a genuinely good human being who touched my life in really important ways, and I'll be grateful forever for that. I apologize for the length of this thing (edit away, Doug, lord knows I didn't) but I really felt I had to join the chorus when it came to remembering this very special guy.



www.tagxedo.com

The Strongest Country on the Diplomacy Map, Revisited

By Thaddeus Black

Which is the strongest country on the Diplomacy map? *Diplomacy World* no. 81 has quantitatively answered, based on game data gathered by Bentz, Boardman, Fitzpatrick, Lebling, Massey, Minshall, Nelson, Ver Ploeg and Walker. In no. 85, B. M. Powell rounded out the

sample, adding data by Richardson, producing the classic table that remains, as far as I know, the standard reference on Great Power performance in the game of Diplomacy.

TABLE 1: B. M. POWELL'S HETEROGENEOUS SAMPLE OF 1385 NORTH AMERICAN POSTAL, 986 BRITISH POSTAL, 458 CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN POSTAL, 227 HAND-ADJUDICATED EMAIL AND 565 MACHINE-ADJUDICATED ONLINE RESULTS OF DIPLOMACY GAMES COMPLETED DURING THE YEARS 1963 THROUGH 2000. [DW no. 85]

POWER	SOLO	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	LOSS	TOTAL
Austria-Hungary	278	122	173	156	56	14	4	2818	3621
England	294	177	267	189	54	16	4	2620	3621
France	355	168	275	195	68	17	4	2539	3621
Germany	322	147	207	134	69	17	4	2721	3621
Italy	217	118	166	146	66	16	4	2888	3621
Russia	440	132	178	123	60	14	4	2670	3621
Turkey	319	146	261	153	57	14	4	2667	3621
NO. OF GAMES	2225	505	509	274	86	18	4	—	3621

Table 1 reproduces Powell's sample, which ends in the year 2000. In the table, column D2 counts two-way draws, column D3 counts three-way draws, and so on. A loss in the table is a game the Power in question neither won nor drew.

TABLE 2: CALHAMER SCORING VERSUS ALTERNATIVES, EACH COLUMN HAVING CONSTANT SUMS [DW 133]

RESULT	CALHAMER	DRAW-DISVALUED	DRAW-ZERO
Solo victory	1 = 420/420	1 = 840/840	1
Survival in a 2-way draw	1/2 = 210/420	1/ 4 + 1/14 = 9/28 = 270/840	1/7
Survival in a 3-way draw	1/3 = 140/420	1/ 6 + 1/14 = 5/21 = 200/840	1/7
Survival in a 4-way draw	1/4 = 105/420	1/ 8 + 1/14 = 11/56 = 165/840	1/7
Survival in a 5-way draw	1/5 = 84/420	1/10 + 1/14 = 6/35 = 144/840	1/7
Survival in a 6-way draw	1/6 = 70/420	1/12 + 1/14 = 13/84 = 130/840	1/7
Survival in a 7-way draw	1/7 = 60/420	1/14 + 1/14 = 1/ 7 = 120/840	1/7
Loss by elimination from a drawn game	0 = 0/420	0 + 1/14 = 1/14 = 60/840	1/7
Loss of a game won by another Great Power	0 = 0/420	0 = 0/840	0

Naturally, more data could today be added to the table, and the added data would be interesting to see; yet Powell's data were gathered in an era in which players' identities were usually known, if not always during the game, then upon the game's conclusion. Data gathered today might have a different quality. Indeed, arguably, for the aforementioned and other reasons, Powell's sample might remain canonical even after a larger, newer, alternate sample became available.

And, though a larger sample could today be assembled, Powell's classic sample, with its 3621 complete postal and slow-time-control[*] online games, is hardly small. At any rate, the article you are reading will follow Powell's sample.

So what does Powell's sample say?

It says that Russia is strongest and Italy, weakest, by any likely metric. France is next strongest after Russia.

TABLE 3: OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF DIPLOMACY'S SEVEN GREAT POWERS, ACCORDING TO TABLES 1 AND 2, BY SCORING METHOD

POWER	BY CALHAMER	BY DRAW- DISVALUED	BY DRAW- ZERO
Austria-Hungary	12.42	12.80	13.18
England	14.71	14.17	13.63
France	16.47	15.89	15.31
Germany	14.23	14.31	14.40
Italy	10.61	11.06	11.50
Russia	16.87	17.27	17.66
Turkey	14.68	14.50	14.32
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

My subjective view (as detailed in no. 133) is that the middle, draw-disvalued column probably affords the most illuminating result.

So, how do the several Powers come out? By the middle column:

1. Russia
2. France
3. Turkey
4. Germany
5. England
6. Austria-Hungary
7. Italy

Nearest in performance are Germany and England. Indeed, had England seized only three of Germany's solo victories, England would have edged Germany in fourth place. On the other hand, if Germany had instead

Austria-Hungary is next weakest after Italy. As far as the other three powers go—England, Germany and Turkey—that depends on how you count. See Tables 2 and 3.

Allan B. Cahamer, the game's inventor, prefers to award each Power an equal share of any draw in which the Power survives. *Calhamer's method* in this way affords the several Powers the relative strengths in the left column of Table 3.

Not all players value draws, however. Some might wish to learn only how often a Power attains solo victory. The *draw-zero method*, netting credit only to a solo victor, affords the several Powers the relative strengths in the right column of Table 3.

The middle column of Table 3 compromises, averaging the left and right. This is the *draw-disvalued method*.

seized four of *Turkey's* solo victories, then Germany would have edged Turkey in third place. The middle three Powers seem to perform nearly equally.

Italy, by contrast, would have had to seize 122 of Russia's solo victories to catch up to the white bear, and *then moreover* (by my count) would have had to seize 34 of France's solo victories to vault into first place. *Viva l'Italia!* Italy evidently still has work to do.

[*] I do not know that all of Powell's 3621 games were at slow time controls. Most of them were, certainly. Having helped Powell to assemble the data at the time, I suspect that the set does include a few games at time controls faster than 24 hours per season. How many? Probably fewer than 100, perhaps fewer than 50, maybe none (I don't actually remember any), but I do not know for certain.

Jim Burgess – From Foe to Friend

By Rick Desper

I first became aware of Jim Burgess in the early 1990s, when I was a grad student at Rutgers. Jim was an eager participant in the budding Internet hobby, and was one of the key figures, if not **the** key figure, helping the hobby transition from a postal era to an email era. Jim was the first 'zine publisher I was aware of to actively create an electronic version of his publication to be read world-wide.

I met Jim at an early (for me) house con in Boston called Diplomatic Incident. I cannot remember if he was at the first one or if I didn't meet him until the second one: the first was jointly hosted by David Kovar and Dave Partridge, but Kovar moved away at some point. In any case I vaguely remember meeting Jim and playing on a board with him where I was Turkey to his Austria. We didn't get very far.

I got on his subscription list and started getting The Abyssinian Prince via mail. Wow, postal Diplomacy! Over the many years of being a subscriber to TAP I have hardly played any Diplomacy games. Like I may have only played one, in addition to being called in as a substitute in one or two. Mostly I've played the side games like the continual bike races and the Kendo guessing game. I enjoyed TAP for all the writing, about current events, music, movies, and whatever else happened to be going on.

In 1998 I finished grad school and got a post-doc position in Germany. And Jim kept mailing the 'zines! He didn't really need to do this, but I think he liked having the 'zine being distributed postally to Europe. So that was a nice bit of "home" to get every few weeks. He did the same thing when I had a position in London.

Jim became one of my favorite people in the hobby. When so many people would bicker, Jim just wouldn't. Not that he **never** would get upset, but it took a lot, and it would require something a lot more important than hobby politics. Jim was also notorious for allowing people to kid him. He embraced an image of boobishness, but those clever enough saw right through that.

Of course that means it took me several years ;)

Jim and I both had professional interests in statistics, health care, and fixing our disastrous system, though we approached the topic differently. Jim's knowledge base was far more comprehensive, whereas I have mostly been a math guy for hire. For a while I worked in a support position at a government health care agency, and would run into his papers fairly often. Even up through his last months he was trying to help me jump start the career, setting up contacts and helping me network. I think he kind of new the second occurrence of cancer was very serious. Sadly, it often happens that way. What happens is a process of evolution: the cancerous cells that are more vulnerable are killed off in the first round of treatment, leaving behind a core of cells that are much harder to deal with. (Sorry if that's grim.)

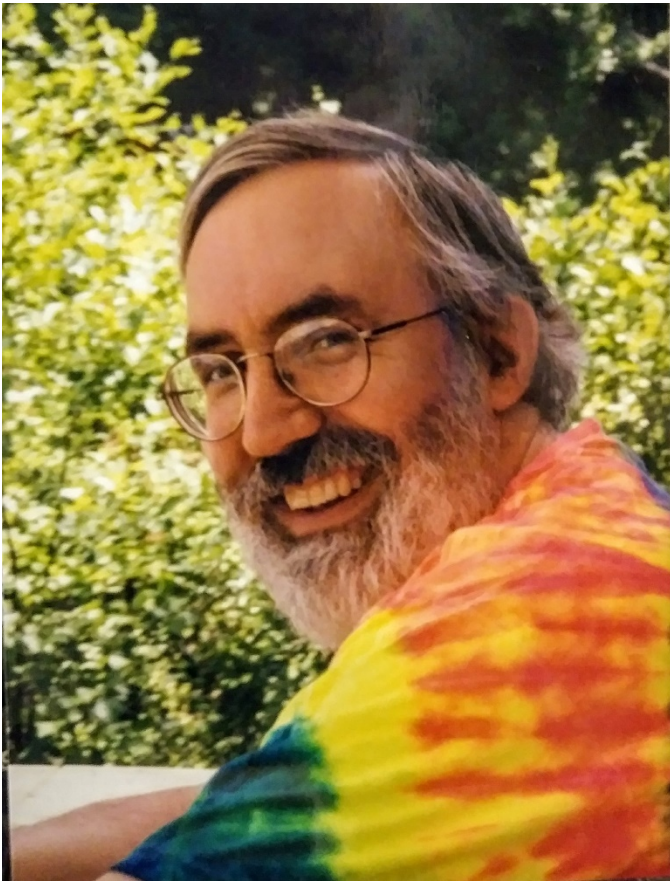
As a Diplomat, Jim was always fun to play with. He never took hostile actions in game personally, and was always willing to try unusual strategies. I think was so enamored with trying out new things that he'd occasionally be easy to stab. He didn't usually have the greatest results, but he always had fun, kept games interesting, and kept people on an even keel. I will miss Jim.

An Interview with Siobhan Nolen

By Jim Burgess

[[Editor – Jim loved doing these interviews, but two things always got in the way. The first was time; professional and personal obligations mostly, and in the last few years his health became a major roadblock. The second was coming up with someone he really wanted to interview who would agree to the time commitment. Jim's favorite interviews were people he know more OF than knew ABOUT. When it came time to start this interview, he was having trouble coming up with someone. Given the state of his health, which was up and down (and more down) at this stage, it had to be someone he felt true excitement about getting to know better. Here I can take credit for one of my only good ideas of the decade: I threw three names out there that I had been speaking to recently. As soon as Jim say Siobhan's name his email response read like he'd just slapped himself in the head and exclaimed "Of course, Siobhan! That's exactly who I want to interview!" As was often the case, the interview took a number of months, with emails back and forth...but Jim kept mentioning it to me. In nearly every discussion about a coming issue he'd add "and I have that interview with Siobhan which I am really excited about and happy with where it's going, but it won't be ready for this issue." Sadly, the cancer won out before the interview was fully completed, but Siobhan and Jim had gotten to where they were considering a

few final questions and what bits needed to be expanded on. Siobhan was kind enough to send me the email thread, and even more gracious with her time to read it over and clean up some parts, despite eating for two ☺ and having a busy life. Diplomacy World is proud to bring you the final article from Jim Burgess, An Interview with Siobhan Nolen.]]



Jim Burgess

DW: So Siobhan, thanks for being willing to be interviewed, we usually start by asking for a brief Diplomacy bio on how and where you got into this and what made you latch onto it as a game?

The short version of the long story is pretty simple actually I got into board gaming through my father, who took my brother and me to all the local Gaming Conventions in the area whenever he went. In 2000, at Conquest, I was wandering around the convention space when Edi Birsan (who used to run tournaments at all the local cons) convinced me to take the 7th slot on one of his boards. I played Russia in that game. Not only did I top that board, but I won that tournament.

Aside from the fact that I like winning (I mean who doesn't?!), something about the game intrigued me. For a game that has rigid rules that don't alter much, it is fascinating to me that every game is perfectly unique. You could sit the same 7 players in the same 7 countries a hundred times and see completely different games every time.

DW: Wow, I also won the first tournament I ever entered, and haven't even come close to winning one since.

What really kept me coming back to the game was the community. The people I met through this hobby continue to surprise and impress me. These are people who I never would have had the opportunity to meet otherwise. I now know people from all over the country and the world who I now consider some of my closest friends.

DW: Yes, I say the same thing all the time. And you're well known for being an active tournament traveler, and I'll come back to that, but do you play in other forums, like on-line? Which if any do you like and why?

I tried playing online for a little while on BackStabbr, using Cisco Spark for negotiations. I enjoyed it, and did well enough. But I found that it tended to take over my life too much and had to take a step back. It also lacked some of the nuance that I had come to love from the Face to Face hobby.

DW: I'd like to start by asking you about getting interviewed in DiplomacyCast #44 (add link) by the intrepid correspondents Nathan and Eric. I'm most interested in some behind the scenes stories that are not necessarily obvious. How did you come to be a guest? How do they do the technology for you being interviewed? How much prep is there vs. just doing it cold stream of consciousness? Anything else interesting you want to say about your appearance on the podcast?

I'd actually been on the Podcast three times before as well. Once was with Chris Martin in an intro for an April Fool's episode. Then there was a standard interview in Episode 27 (near the end of the episode). Next I appeared briefly in Episode 34 for their Supply Center extravaganza. And then, of course, the Code of Conduct episode that you mention above.

For my initial interview in episode 27, there was no prep (as you can tell on occasion when I am left with nothing to say...). For that episode, we did a Skype call that they recorded and used.

For episode 44, there was more prep, as we wanted to make sure that we had our formatting and content more or less in line before we started. I flew up to Seattle for that episode. The three of us basically just huddled around the microphone for a couple of hours and got it all done. For the most part, it was stream of

consciousness. As for technology, I am ashamed to say that I did not take much notice of it. But, the microphone was plugged into a laptop which was recording the file. Whatever work is done to edit it afterward I saw none of.

The podcast is an excellent addition to the hobby, and I look forward to being back on the show someday. It is definitely a lot more fun to be in studio with the guys, and I would fly up to do it again given the chance.



Siobhan Nolen

DW: There is an obvious issue I definitely want to ask about, and that is gender. I've been part of the Diplomacy hobby for over 40 years and I've known and played with many great female players. In fact, I've known and played with very few women who I don't immediately consider better players than me. Many of them have been from other countries, like the U.K. or France, others have been Americans. One of the acknowledged all-time great players, Kathy Byrne Caruso, was a great friend of mine and she beat me up on many a board, both in-person and by postal games (she was a brilliant letter writer and also used the phone a lot). Asking the open ended question [I may sharpen with follow ups], what are some of your thoughts and opinions on gender and Diplomacy?

That is the big question. And I get asked it a lot. Obviously, I talk about this at length in episode 44 of the podcast.

It can be difficult being one of the few women in the hobby. No matter how many strides we make, there is an obvious difference between me and the rest of the players. This does, on occasion, lead to interactions that

are awkward, embarrassing, or even downright over the line. But those instances are by far the exception.

I have thought a lot about this dynamic over the years, and am still somewhat at a loss as to how to communicate this difference. What sets me apart from the majority of other players is an obvious and unavoidable difference. To some extent, I can acknowledge and accept that this will always mean that I am treated differently than others. I may not like it, but it is true.

These differences crop up in all manner of ways. There have been players who I have known for years and consider good friends of mine that have confided in me that they avoided me at first because I was a woman. They did not want to be seen as "creepy" or "predatory". And while I appreciate and understand their intent, it has been known to leave me feeling a bit left out, despite the good intentions.

And then there are players who treat me very differently than they treat the rest of the hobby. There is a perception at times that I am easier to offend, or more sensitive, and therefore some people tend to walk on eggshells around me. The Code of Conduct Podcast episode did not help this in many ways...more on that in a moment.

What remains still the absolute outlier (thank goodness) are the instances of harassment. Some players feel the need to make sexualized comments about my appearance, or talk about what they might like to do to me, or any number of things. It saddens me that I have to keep saying that THIS IS NOT OKAY. As stated, this is by far the exception and by no means do the majority of players do this. But...enough do. And about once a tournament does an interaction like this occur. If anyone still has any doubts as to this topic, I refer them back to episode 44 of the Podcast. If there are still any questions, I'd be happy to discuss what is and is not appropriate with me.

Back to what I said I would come back to. The Code of Conduct episode, and how it, in some ways, hurt my interactions with other players. I hear a lot of "Well, I'd say something but I wouldn't want to offend Siobhan" or "I'd make a joke here, but some people might think that's a violation of a Code of Conduct" or any number of variations on that theme. So, while I have you all here for a moment. Let me remind you of something. I am just a person. I like the jokes and the banter of this community as much as I ever did. I am not trying to insert some sort of politically correct mandate down on the hobby that prohibits the way we've always interacted. I do, however, draw a line. I will take issue with commentary that is blatantly offensive, cruel, or discriminatory. So, that's where I draw a line. Conversations can, will, and have been had surrounding this very topic. We are far from coming to an agreement on what any of this means. I

encourage you to enter the conversation. The goal, I would hope for all of us, is to make our hobby a more welcoming and open space for new players regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or even their skill level at the game. We want more players in this hobby. I, for one, would love to see it grow both in size as well as diversity.



Stylish Siobhan

DW: I know you're a Doctor Who fan, as am I, and in my observation many Diplomacy players. Let me ask the obvious, which places people, who is (or are) your favorite Doctors?

Yes, I am a fan. At Tempest this past year, the hashtag for the tournament was #ImpossibleAstronaut in fact, as a nod to my unexpected and last second attendance.

Favorite doctor? EASY. Christopher Eccleston. He's goofy, snarky, and just a bit odd.

But really, at the end of the day, what makes Eccleston great is the humanity he brought to the doctor's role that had not really been seen before, or since in my opinion.

DW: What about your favorite companions? Do you see any connections between Doctor Who and your interests in Diplomacy?

Again...easy. Donna Noble. In the modern incarnations, she's the most relatable and real. I also appreciated that she wasn't star struck by the doctor. They were just friends. Her ending also broke my heart the most.

DW: Yes, mine too. Donna was great. It would be great to use time travel to augment one's game, wouldn't it? What are some techniques you have

used to sharpen your Diplomacy game? What are the growing edges of your skills??

Time travel would be amazing! But, since that is not going to be an option...

What I have been working on a lot over the years is forming a pattern. The people of this hobby are less unpredictable than they like to think. Forming a profile on these personalities and how and why they interact within and without the game has been a long project of mine.

Also, I have spent many many years crafting the way I want the other players in this hobby view me. This is harder than it sounds, but if I can help shape how they view me then I have better control over how my actions play out in the game. It's a bit trite but the game of Diplomacy is twofold. You are both playing the board (position) as well as the people (personalities).

While tactics are not a weakness of mine, I am constantly sharpening that blade.

I have been playing a lot of gunboat online recently, which has given me a chance to explore some tactics and strategies I might not otherwise have had the chance to. I think it has helped me a little in my face to face play, mostly in pointing out some weaknesses of mine that I had been blind to.

What I find helps most though, is talking over positions with other players. The back and forth of looking at a position, and bouncing ideas off one another has been vastly helpful in exploring not just WHAT to do, but WHY one might do it.

DW: It's a bit of a hoary old saw, but do you have a favorite country to play? Why??

Absolutely I do. Austria.

For the most part, you're not going to be stuck playing at 3 or 4 centers for a long boring game. Either you die quickly and are put out of your misery, or you have a good game. I also find Austria to be a remarkably dynamic power in ways that the others are not to me.

I also love the fact that so many other players seem to hate it. I like to be contrary. :)

DW: So, according to the Tournament database, you've been in 33 tournaments, about to be 34 this weekend, all in the US. As you've met a lot of the international players, have you thought at all about going to Europe or Australia for a Tournament? I've had some of my most fun experiences at the European tournaments in France and the U.K. that I've been to?

I think there are a few missing as well Off the top of my head...I attended the return of Boston Massacre in 2016 and the return of Vancouver's Cascadia in 2017.

I was hoping to make it to WDC in Oxford this year, but unfortunately that is going to be impossible for me. I would love to travel outside the US for Diplomacy, but a combination of time, money, and personal conflicts have stood in the way. One of these days.

Right now, my priority is traveling within the US to build my reputation, which is what pays off when encouraging people to come to my own event which debut its return in the first weekend of April 2017.

DW: You were a regular at BADAss Whipping for many years through 2009, and then missed the last few before going back this year. Is there a story in that? What do you find special and fun about BADAss?

I took a break from Diplomacy between 2009 BADAss Whipping and 2013 WAC. It is unfortunate, but life gets in the way of Diplomacy sometimes, and I needed a bit of a break from it. There were many factors that went into it, but mostly I knew I needed the time away to focus on my own things for a while. I played a few house games in the Bay Area in that time, but not many. Thanks to the WAC organizers for getting me back into the fold!

DW: You've made an effort to be at DipCon since 2014, so presumably also are coming to the 2017 DipCon at Carnage, where you've been before. Having been to many DipCon's over the decades with little success myself, you've been beaten up a bit at the last few, any thoughts on how the DipCon's are different from other Tournaments? Are you making a real effort right now to be more successful at these larger tournaments?

I have made a point of it to be at DipCon, and WDC when it is in North America. The main encouragement for that is in seeing the travelers who I would not have a chance to see otherwise. I am aiming to be at DipCon this year. And as of the very moment of typing this, I would say I am at 80% yes to make it to Carnage for DipCon. Life has that still a tiny bit up in the air...

As you point out, my results have not been extraordinary. A couple of things go into this. As a consequence of my 4 years off, I lost a lot of my skills, and those are still rebuilding. I'm also not THAT good at this game. So, when pitted against groups of world class players, my results tend to suffer.

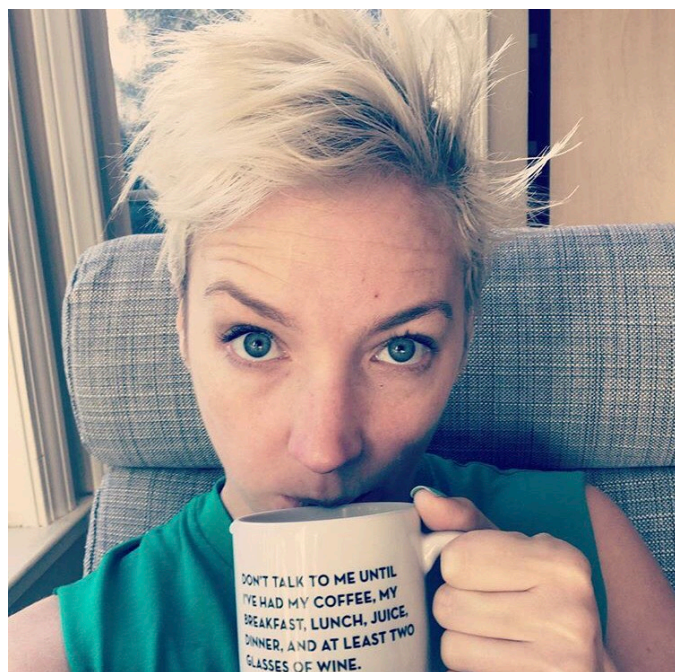
Also, and I'm not sure when this started but I've had something of a target on my back the last few years. I'd understand if I'd won a major tournament, but that hasn't

happened. It's only in the last couple years that my results have begun to pick back up again. I suppose, being a frequent traveler and a name people recognize is enough to paint the target. So, it's going to take me some time to adjust my play to compensate for the way people play against me now.

DW: This bright Sunday morning over breakfast, I had great fun listening to DiplomacyCast 51!! You three did a really nice job with it. I am beginning to wonder if it is getting almost to a trihost model!

It's always a fun time hosting DipCast with the guys! It happened sort of accidentally actually, as I was just chatting with them before they were about to record and they just sort of tagged me in to the episode at the last second.

It's a (not so) secret goal of mine to become the most interviewed guest on DipCast. Eric and Nathan don't know it yet, but I'm angling toward that goal because I want to be the third host. I'm easing them into this idea slowly. :)



Siobhan With Her Infamous Bed-Head

DW: One comment/question to you, with background first. I acted as Tournament Director [TDed] my first Diplomacy tournament in 1979 when I was in college and have done it off and on since then, including of course presently running TotalCon annually. My first and strongest lesson to TD's I talk to is being firm/consistent/alert about watching writing/misordering/handwriting in orders with a strong "player" eye.

Now the comment/question: it sounded like you might have had a little tension or concern about some adjudication or order writing rulings at Whipping. When I TD, even when I'm occasionally also playing two boards at once in a round to fill out a round, I always work hard as I possibly can as orders are being adjudicated across all the boards (central running clock) about how everyone is reading and interpreting messy order writing. Always being helpful and encouraging, trying to spot issues where players are taking them but players are writing nonstandard or even wrong. Incrementally, we want them to write them correctly and readable.

This is both anticipation and improving everyone's tournament experience. I think that is a very important TD role. And I think I do it well. In DiplomacyCast 51, you seemed to indicate there were Whipping issues in this space that went on, but weren't specific, possibly for confidential or sensitivity issues, since obviously the podcast is out there very public.

As for Whipping, I didn't have too much concern about adjudication ruling. But, I was certainly careful with my words on the podcast, because I didn't want to call anyone out.

There weren't too many calls for rulings that I recall, but I do remember one table that called me over to interpret orders a few times. What happened was one of player, who isn't the best at writing clear orders, had several occasions where his orders were unclear/incorrect. The table called me over to read what I thought the orders were, and I interpreted them as I read them. This happened several times throughout that game and I ruled as I saw fit. The player in question was less than pleased with my rulings, as they often did not shake out in his favor.

For the most part though, my role as TD was very light, and nothing too interesting happened. I do recall one instance where I watched an order being adjudicated incorrectly, and I had a bit of a quandary with my role in that event. One of the things I both love and hate about Face to Face play is that it is messy, and mistakes are made. As TD, I saw my role as being the one to step in if, and only if, the table required it. Stepping in without being asked changes the dynamic of the board, and I believe it is up to the board to police itself. It did turn out that the board noticed the mistake that was made and it was corrected without my involvement.

DW: I get you, but probably because I'm a Professor, I try to do "teachable moments" so you can lessen the impact of these things IN this tournament and to increase people's orientation to coming back. So, in your example, I would be trying to HELP them do this better. I do this pretty freely and do not think I am "interfering" or "kibitzing" if I am just trying to help players write orders the way the other players expect to see them.

Oh, absolutely. And I definitely took the opportunity for the teachable moments. Didn't change the ruling, but not helping or teaching in these moments runs the risk of turning people off the game and the tournament scene altogether. The seasoned players in our local hobby also take these moments a lot during our house games, as a way to consistently reinforce good order writing and adjudication.

[[Editor – And sadly that is where the interview came to an end. Even if he didn't get to everything he wanted to cover, I think it's a terrific interview, and with Jim so happy with the way it was coming out I knew it had to find its way into Diplomacy World. There's probably no better issue for it to appear than this one, and no better way to finish an issue remembering Jim Burgess than to place it as the last piece in the issue. Now, a final word from Siobhan:]]

I'd just like to say that I didn't know Jim very well, but was both excited and honored when he reached out to me to do this interview. We had both hoped to get more out of it than we inevitably did, as things got in the way for both of us. I can only hope that he got as much enjoyment out of our chats and back and forth as I did. Thanks Jim...you were one of the good ones, and you will be missed.

