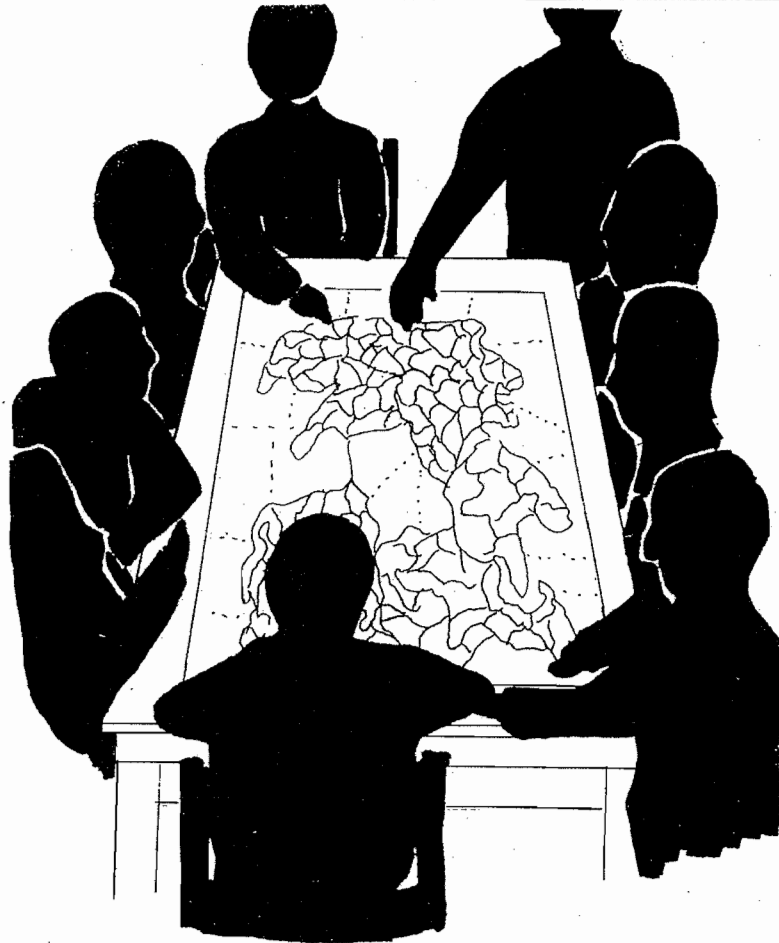


Spring 1991

No. 62

# Diplomacy World



## The Colonia Variant: Conquer the World In One Sitting

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## Editor's Desk

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Welcome to my third issue of *DW*. The major focus this time is variants, although there should be plenty of material for those who prefer to read about other aspects of the hobby. In response to your many requests, the variant maps this issue should be big enough to actually use for playing purposes, or clear enough to blow-up. If you ever want a bigger (and probably better) version of the maps and rules for any variant printed in *DW*, get in touch with Variant Bank director Lee Kendler, Jr. His address is printed on page 16.

There are a great many articles which will have to wait until my next issue, due out in May. We have a series of pieces on postal elections games, two more variants, contest results from the problem featured in *DW* 61, and several more articles. Don't let this slow you down, though, if you are writing me something for publication. Your article will be published, I assure you.

We still need an Electronic Mail Editor, to help *DW* stay in touch with developments and personalities of the PBEM Diplomacy hobby. Please contact me about this if you are at all interested. Given that much of the recent growth in the hobby has come from gamestarts on various Email networks, we really need to fill this position. All of you people who resent being left out of things by the play-by-mail crowd should stop complaining and instead sign up for the *DW* staff.

There has been some interest in the first-class mail rate of \$12/4 issues, but not a whole lot. I take it, then, that y'all are pretty much willing to deal with bulk-mail issues for the

savings that it produces. Continue to let me know, though, how we at *DW* can improve our product and make you feel more comfortable. We will try to respond as promptly as possible. (Great, now I sound like one of those promos in a movie theater...)

Don't forget the upcoming Diplomacy tournament circuit this summer. The first tourney will be DixieCon V, hosted by David Hood, your erstwhile *DW* editor. This is a three-round Dip event over Memorial Day Weekend in Chapel Hill, NC. Next will be SunCon / MadCon, hosted by Marc Peters in Wisconsin. Contact him at: 370 North St, Sun Prairie WI 53590 for more details about this early June gathering. Probably the biggest turnout event will be the Diplomacy tournament at this year's AtlantiCon / Origins in Baltimore. Held over the July 4 weekend, information about it is available from Robert Sacks, 4861 Broadway 5-V, New York NY 10034. That same weekend, Vince Lutterbie will host a more intimate gaming event next to his pool in Missouri. Get details on PoolCon from 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall MO 65340. Don't forget the N. American Championships, held this year in Toronto, Ontario. There is an ad elsewhere in this issue about this CanCon / DipCon event. Also look for the ad about AvalonCon, held in late August. Next issue, we will print information about the other events, such as Vertigo Games in Pennsylvania and PeeriCon in California. Until then, hope to see you in at least one of these Diplomacy events this year. There is simply nothing like tournament Dip.

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## DipWorld

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Editor and Publisher	David Hood 104-F Terrace Drive, Cary NC 27511
Assistant Editor	Michael Lowrey 3241-G Walnut Creek Pkwy, Raleigh NC 27606
Senior Writers	Jack McHugh 280 Sanford Rd, Upper Darby PA 19082 Dave McCrumb 3636 Old Town Rd, Shawsville VA 24162
Strategy and Tactics Editor	Mark Berch 11713 Stonington Place, Silver Spring MD 20902
Variant Editor	James Nelson 112 Huntley Ave, Spondon, DERBY, DE2 7DU U.K.
Interview Editor	Brad Wilson PO Box 126, Wayne PA 19082
International Editor	Mark Nelson 21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds, W. Riding, LS12 2AP U.K.
Contributors	Gary Behnen, Larry Botmer, Eric Brosius, Jim Burgess, Chris Carrier, John Caruso, Pete Clark, Larry Cronin, Randy Davis, Don Del Grande, Bob Greler, Melinda Holley, Michael Hopcroft, Bill Hunter, Fred Hyatt, Stan Johnson, Joel Klein, Eric Klien, Andy Lischett, John McCausland, Phil Reynolds, Mickey Preston, Robert Sacks, Randolph Smyth, Conrad von Metzke, Jim Yerkey
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## Contents

2	Editor's Desk	Conventions, Tournaments, <i>DW</i>	
3	Hobby News	BNCship, Demo Game, Etc.	David Hood
4	Strategy/Tactics	Playing Diplomacy like Poker	Joel Klein
		Playing Italy Cavalierly	John McCausland
5		Why I Hate Triples	David Hood
6	Ratings	Best Dippers in the World: 1990	Don Del Grande
7		The Perpetual Tournament	Larry Cronin
8	Variant	Colonia: An Overview	Jack McHugh
9		Colonia VII Rules and Map	Fred Hyatt
12		Colonia versus Diplomacy	Stan Johnson
13		Strategy in Colonia	Jack McHugh
14		Fun, But Certifiably Insane	Dave McCrumb
16	Novices	An Overview of Available Publications	David Hood
		North American Hobby Services	
17		DW Back Issues for Sale	
18	International	Fly Fandom	Mark Nelson
		French DipCon Comments	Bruno Berken
19	Variant	Variants in Diplomacy World	James Nelson
20		Middle Earth Rules and Map	Mark Nelson
22	Lettercol	The Astounding <i>DW</i> Letter Column	
28	Zines	1991 Runestone Poll Ballot	
29		Removing the Offensive Side	Burgess / von Metzke
31		Poll Talk #7	Eric Brosius
		New Blood / Game Openings	
32		Mailer	

## Hobby News

The first piece of hobby news this time concerns the BNC, who categorizes regular Diplomacy gamestarts in the postal hobby. Don Williams has finally passed the job along to Gary Behnen, address on page 16. This will likely mean that completed Diplomacy games will soon be reported, which will in turn mean that the Dragonstooth Rating System can finally be updated to include games finished since 1989. The DTRS is a project of *DW*, so the updated results will appear in a future issue of the zine. A full copy of the DTRS listing is available from David Hood for \$1.50.

The next *DW* Demonstration Game is almost ready to begin, featuring many of the top players in the DTRS. David Hood will GM the game here in the pages of *DW*, along with commentary on the game appearing from both Fred Townsend and Garret Schenck. Players signed up so far include Mark Fassio, Dave McCrumb, Mark Berch, Mike Ward, and Randolph Smyth. We should be able to start the game very shortly.

One sad item to report is the death of hobbyist Haden Haworth, who died in a plane crash around New Years. Haworth played Dip in a number of zines and was a lawyer in Muskogee, Oklahoma. He is survived by his father,

William Haden Haworth II.

One Con I forget to mention on page 2 is DafCon South I, hosted by Pete Gaughan (1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947.) This house Con will take place May 3-5, and will feature lots of Diplomacy, Titan, Circus Maximus, etc. All you California gamers should make plans to attend this event right away.

While we're on the subject of Pete Gaughan, I neglected to inform the readership last time about his Marco Poll. Basically, all you need do is send Pete a list of your top five zines in order. I'm not sure if you will make the deadline or not, but you might as well as send him a postcard right away so that your favorites will maybe get another vote.

This will also get you warmed up for the other two polls currently running to measure the popularity of zines, GMs, etc. One is the Runestone Poll, about which you can read later in this issue. A Runestone ballot is reprinted for your convenience as well. The other poll, the Xyns People Read Poll, is done by Tom Swider. *DW* will print a copy of that ballot in the May issue. Before then you can write to Tom for a ballot at 75 Maple Ave A, Collingswood NJ 08108. He runs this poll in alternate years with his Games People Play Poll.

# Playing Diplomacy like Poker

by Joel Klein

I've come to enjoy poker playing over the past few years. I played Dippy long before I ever started with poker, and my experience in one has helped me in the other. I'll describe how some lessons from poker can be applied to Diplomacy.

The first lesson: You cannot evaluate anyone's skill from their play in any one session of poker or Diplomacy. The best indicator is "the long run," which means looking at each session as part of a single, long session. This allows you to put your play in perspective, roll with poor games and unworkable players, and deflate any delusions of grandeur that follow a winning session.

While this now seems obvious to me, it wasn't when I started playing Dippy as a teenager. I thought each game was to be won, period. Happens in poker games where everybody plays like "rocks" (i.e. only bet when they have the best hand, only play the games they know best). Happens in face-to-face Dippy games. I know. The FTF group I played in in New York City in the 1970s was frustrating - no one could win a game! I don't remember any 2-way draws - we would invariably have 3-5 way draws because no one could bear to let the reader win. The game started dying when the younger players moved into Dungeons and Dragons.

Another poker concept that applies is: "don't fall in love with your hand." This refers to a poker player who has drawn a hand that he thinks is just great, and bets and plays without regard to what is happening around him. One of the most common errors is in not considering how your position at the

table affects your play. For example, the first player to bet in a draw poker game really needs to play more carefully than the dealer, since the dealer will have seen how other players have acted before he commits any money. If you don't make some allowance for your position, you will win less than if you adjust for it. And if you tend to do the same thing all the time, your opponents will certainly get the better of you.

How about you? Do you "fall in love" with the country you've drawn and the position you've built? For example, you're Germany, you've been attacking France for years, and now Austria is up to nine centers and looks like he's going to go after you. How willing are you to reconsider the French attack? If you play Turkey, do you come out as aggressively as you do when you play Germany? Do you need to? Suppose you're Italy. Would you play a safe opening and plan normally, but perhaps consider using a Lepanto opening against a Turkish opponent you know to be tough?

These ideas are not new; the best players use them and will continue to use them. I was delighted to find how the same skills that we learn at Diplomacy, and at poker, can be modified for use in all endeavors of human game-playing (for fun and for real.) I hope you can use some of these ideas the next time you play (although preferably not against me.)

>Joel Klein (326 N Cuyler, Oak Park IL, 60302) is one of the newest contributors to DW.

# Playing Italy Cavalierly

by General John McCausland

Although much maligned by commentators and players, Italy is an exciting Power to play. They can make a cooperative alliance with every Power in Spring 1901. They can also attack every other Power in 1901, except Russia and England. (And these two can be attacked in 1902 quite effectively with a little allied help.)

Italy's greatest threat is clearly France. The French can swing into the Mediterranean quickly with an overpowering force, and can subsequently build evil fleets in Marseilles. I have seen a vibrant, powerful Italy decimated in only three seasons by a well-timed, well-executed French stab.

Austria and Turkey are also real threats, but the fronts they cover are small compared to the western approaches into Italy. Austria can easily take Venice, but anything further can be very difficult to come by. Taking Tunis is almost

impossible, for example. The Turk is farther away, so their builds frequently telegraph their intentions. In addition, the Ionian Sea can generally be held by the Italians for a long time, slowing significantly any real Turkish expansion into the Italian homeland.

While all games are obviously different, there are still some generalizations which can be drawn. I will spell out what I believe to be Italy's best alliance options, based upon their goals.

For a win, Russia is your best ally. A combined attack on Austria and Turkey can pick up quite a few centers because the targets will have trouble in a two-front war. This is true even though the forces involved may be the same on both sides. Once Austria and Turkey are gone a quick move on France, followed by a stab of Russia 2-3 seasons later if

necessary, should give you the victory.

For a draw, Italy cannot ask for a better ally than Austria. You both will have a common enemy in Turkey. In addition, the units involved will be easy to figure out since Austria will want armies to ward off Russia while you will want fleet control of the Med. The only better alliance on the whole board is England / France.

Does Italy need Tunis? No! I GMed a Diplomacy game in which Italy was up to 8 centers without owning Tunis. They hit a rough year, fell back to collect Tunis while remaining constant, and never looked back again. If you can convince Austria to give you another center, guaranteed, by all means pass up on Tunis in the beginning. Trying to get a

unit into Greece, moving to interesting places like Aegean or Eastern Med, or going after the Western Med / Gulf of Lyo area would be more likely to lead to long term rewards. Tunis is an easy center to pick up later.

In conclusion, you should try to play Italy with a cavalier attitude. Be open to new and kinky alliance prospects and remember that you will face little invasion threats in the Opening stages of the game. If you play too cautiously, you will end up as some other Power's second course.

>General John McCausland is the pseudonym for one of the most experienced tournament and postal Diplomacy players in the Hobby.

## Why I Hate Triples

by David Hood

I hate triple alliances, with a passion. Doesn't matter to me that some of the hobby's best writers have praised the triple in magazines from *DW* to Avalon Hill's *The General*. People like Melinda Holley and Mark Berch have outlined various strategies and methods by which triple alliances can be originated and maintained. Rod Walker's famous *Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy* discusses the possibility of a triple between the Western powers of England, France and Germany like it was a normal option in a normal Diplomacy game. And for that matter, I have been in numerous games, both face-to-face and postal, that featured triple alliances enjoying some measure of success.

No, I still hate 'em. The biggest problem with triple alliances is that most players know the danger of facing one and will take steps to stop you in your tracks. Particularly in FTF games, a triple is difficult to hide and thus opens you up to the formation of an opposing triple on the other side. For example, there are telltale signs that a smart Austrian will notice when the Western powers are setting up for a triple. He will have little difficulty getting his Eastern neighbors to organize against the Western Triple, that is, unless these people are rank novices.

Not only does this mean that the Triple is unlikely to progress; it also means that the game is about to settle into a boring fight over stalemate lines that is about as much fun as jumping in a pit of hydrochloric acid. The fun of Diplomacy is in the fluidity with which experienced players will make and break alliances to suit the problem at hand. When the game boils down to a nasty tactical exercise, you might as well be playing Squad Leader or something.

Probably the least emotional reason I have for opposing triples is that joining one is often a terrible blunder in terms of expansion. Obviously, when three guys gang up on somebody else, the loot has to be divided three ways and

Triple units will have limited avenues of movement. It may be neat to beat up on Russia and Italy for a while in a Western Triple, but you often will have little ability for growth afterwards.

Now, I know the counterarguments to this. Since the Triple is often penetrating the stalemate line, there is good tactical reason for participating. After all, a later stab can get the goodies you left behind on your side of the board. Yeah, but the problem is that the stab potential would be much better had you gone the traditional route of two against one in your own area of the board. A France who just finished off Germany with English help is going to be in a better position to stab England than if he had worked in a Triple against Italy. The bottom line here is that a Triple is fine if you just want to play an alliance game and call a three-way draw. But if you want to wheel-and-deal, then the Triple is inferior.

Now, I do not mean to say that the offer of a Triple is not a good negotiation tactic. Even commitment to such an alliance for a year or two is not a bad idea. My beef is with actually thinking that the Triple is a good idea in the long-term. Lie all you want to about wanting a Triple, but don't actually believe yourself!

Another problem with Triples is that they are really a myth. All communication in Diplomacy is bilateral in nature, and this is especially true postally. When you talk, the actual communication is taking place in the mind of each one of your Triple partners. My point is that what you say will be interpreted, judged, debated, etc. by each individual player involved. If you delude yourself into thinking that talking to one partner means you are talking to "the Triple" then you will make serious errors in judgment. A "Triple" is really just a series of bilateral alliances, so remember to play it that way if you "do the wrong thing" and Triple up. Even if you are thinking multilaterally, your partners may not be.

# Best Dippers in the World: 1990

By Don Del Grande

The International Diplomacy Tournament Ratings (IDTR) seeks to rate tournament players around the world against each other based upon the system noted below. There was little doubt about it this year - Harry won in Sydney, finished second in Melbourne, and took fifth at Canberra. As for the ManorCon winner - well, while the first three Manorcon champs took first in that year's IDTR, this year Toby Harris placed fifth. The World DipCon winner, Jason Bergmann, took third.

The 1990 system worked like this: 1. First place is worth 100 points in any tournament with 30 or more players (subtract 10 for each player short of 30.) 2. Subsequent places score  $100 \times [N - (10 \times P) / N]$  rounded down, where N is the number of players and P is the number of places below first (P=1 for second place, 2 for third, and so on.) No one scores below zero. 3. Ties are handled by a complex tiebreaker system.

The list of sanctioned 1991 tournaments include:

Australian Diplomacy Championships, CanCon, Can-

berra, January 26-28.

Victorian Diplomacy Championships, Conquest, Melbourne, March 29-31.

New Zealand Championships, Auckland, Easter Weekend.

DixieCon, Chapel Hill NC, May 25-26.

New South Wales Diplomacy Championships, Sydney, June 8-10.

Origins / AtlantiCon, Baltimore MD, July 4-7.

ManorCon, Birmingham, England, July 12-15.

CanCon / DipCon, Toronto Ontario, August 2-4.

PacifiCon, San Mateo CA, September.

Gateway, Los Angeles CA, Labor Day Weekend.

MidCon, Birmingham, England, November. (Results count towards 1992).

>Don Del Grande (142 Eliseo Drive, Greenbrae CA 94904) publishes *Lemon Curry* and runs the IDTR.

1. Harry Kolotas (AUS), 207
2. Adrian Fegan (AUS), 142
3. Jason Bergmann (USA), 129
4. Jim Mills (GBR), 125
5. Toby Harris (GBR), 124
6. Matt McVeigh (GBR), 103
7. Pete Mason (GBR), 102
8. Andrew Ofeish (USA), 100  
Jim Vann (AUS), 100  
Jim Yerkey (USA), 100
11. Kyalo Brooks (GBR), 91
12. Scott Beckett (USA), 89  
Yama Dharma (USA), 89
14. Jeff Bohner (USA), 88  
Stan Plummer (USA), 88
16. Luke Clutterbuck (AUS), 84  
Steve Gould (AUS), 84
18. Simon Bouton (GBR), 81  
Chris Kremer (USA), 81
20. Steve Cooley (USA), 76  
Gabe Dambaugh (CAN), 76
22. Frank Meerbach (AUS), 71
23. Robert Wessels (AUS), 70
24. Paul Cook (GBR), 69  
Richard Young (GBR), 69
26. Marion Ashworth (AUS), 68
27. Jeff McKee (USA), 65
28. Garth Thorpe (CAN), 64
29. Bob Odear (USA), 62
30. Richard Dunkle (USA), 58
31. Robin Levy (GBR), 56
32. Erik Adenstedt (AUT), 53
33. Jeff Freymuller (USA), 52
34. Paul Leyland (GBR), 47
35. James Vickers (AUS), 44
36. David Hood (USA), 43
37. Eric Roche (AUS), 42
38. Bart de Palma (AUS), 41
39. Eric Zakin (USA), 37
40. Graham Lee (GBR), 34  
Terry Richardson (GBR), 34
42. Shaun Derrick (GBR), 30
43. Eric Schlegel (USA), 24
44. Adam Harris (GBR), 21
45. Jonathan Heaney (AUS), 20
46. Marc Peters (USA), 18



- 47. Dave Grabar (USA), 16
- 48. Clive Lane (USA), 14
- 49. Colin Donoghue (GBR), 13
- 50. Robert Albrecht (USA), 11
- Dan Mathias (USA), 11

- 52. Cathy Ozog (USA), 6
- 53. Dave Harshbarger (USA), 5
- Steve Jones (GBR), 5
- 55. Carl Chang (AUS), 4
- 56. Pat Lenihan (GBR), 2

# The Perpetual Tournament

by Larry Cronin

I recently read Paul Milewski's ideas for a scoring system accomodating players of unmatched skill. Such scoring systems often work in golf and bowling and certainly have been applied in the world ratings of chess players. Little has been pursued in this regard in our hobby of Diplomacy. The novice player is rarely concerned with such problems, but the serious Diplomacy player seems to yearn for just such assistance. I have an idea that may accomodate the wishes for an official, non-amateurish, ranking of serious-minded Dip players.

It could work as follows. A game number custodian could keep track of official games. Within the rankings of such a system, points would be deducted from a player's ranking whenever a game is begun. I would propose approximately 10 points would be deducted. At the end of the game, 34 points would be awarded to the winner or divided among those included in the draw. In addition, each player surviving would receive the number of points for how many supply centers in their possession. This would equal a total of 68. To balance the 70 points put in at the beginning of the game, 2 points could be awarded for an outright win to the winning player. (This system encompasses most every concern for giving credit for the playing style of Diplomacy as originally envisioned by Allan Calhamer.) For those players who drop out of the game, there would be the net loss of their original 10 invested points. This would discourage wanton starting of many games, and also resignation. Standbys could be encouraged by allowing them to take over positions requiring no subtraction of points from their official rating. (Some interesting alternatives could include allowing players to make deals with their replacements.)

After an initial round of play such as this, players could be assigned to "classes." In future "official games," only players from a similar class could play in the same game to insure challenging and fair play. Certainly not all games would have to exist within this system, nor would all players have to be playing within the system at a given time. Games could be assigned as part of the "perpetual tournament," and

as gamesmasters and players elect to play a game under the system. The system could work as a total of points reflecting the number of games players have been in, or work on an average, or both. I have not thought out this whole scheme far enough, although I feel it is a semi-original idea worth consideration by those interested or inclined to meditate upon it. Comments?

>Larry Cronin (PO Box 40090, Tucson AZ 85717) publishes the gaming and current affairs monthly *Perestroika*.

## ZINE ORDINATIO 1991

### EUROPEAN ZINE POLL

What is a "zine"? A zine is an amateur magazine with random periodicity, publishing at least one issue each year.

What is a "diplomatic zine"? A diplomatic zine is a zine where a negotiation game is mentioned at least once in a year.

What is "Europe"? It is a geographic area stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Urals.

What zines may be elected? They are the European zines, i.e. the zines of whom at least one editor lives in Europe or Siberia (the only exception, because of the high quality of the zine *Peredychka*).

What is the "Zine Ordinatio"? It is the record of the votes for each of the eligible zines, measuring their influence, in terms of numbers of votes and zine to zine comparison.

Who votes? Anyone reading one or several eligible zines may vote.

What is a vote? A vote is a number between 1 and 10 estimating the interest of a zine that one reads regularly, or used to read since 01/01/1989. One may cast as many votes as the number of zines read, and it is possible to vote for a zine that one doesn't read regularly.

Ballots will be sent before 30/06/1991 to the following address:

**Xavier BLANCHOT, 99 Bd Raspail,  
75006 PARIS, FRANCE.**

Votes will be kept confidential by the jury who will examine them. But, to be eligible, a ballot has to mention a name and an address.

Why should you vote? To defend one or more zines and to encourage those who are in charge of them: to spread their renown, to contribute towards wider cooperation between the various European hobbies, as well as the European hobby as a whole and the world hobby.

To get the *Ordinatus* publication, enclose a donation of 25, or send the last issue of your zine (in order to describe it). The result booklet will contain various lists, statistical analysis and contributions to many other topics (the European Hobby, zine and convention linkage, information diffusion...).

# Colonia: An Overview

by Jack McHugh

Colonia is a worldwide Diplomacy variant by Fred Hyatt that is set in the mid 18th century. Fred runs the game in his excellent zine *The Home Office*. Subscriptions can be had for the low price of 12 issues for \$9.00, and games are otherwise free. Fred can be reached at 60 Grandview Place, Montclair NJ 07043. Other zines that run or have run Colonia include *Crimson Sky*, Mike Gonsalves, 530 Treasure Lake, Dubois PA 15801; and *The Appalachian General*, Dave McCrumb, 3636 Old Town Rd, Shawsville VA 24162.

The variant has undergone several revisions as Fred updates the game. The version reprinted in this edition of *Diplomacy World* is the latest version, Colonia VII, though Colonia VI is still in play throughout the variant sub-hobby. The first game of the newest version is presently running in Fred's *THO*. The game consists of 254 provinces, both land and sea, with 138 supply centers. The latter assumes we got the math right, since the game is won with 50 supply centers owned by one power (or the votes of 3/4 of all non-neutral, non-civil disorder centers for multi-power draws.) Fred states in the rules that if all are owned this would mean 102 centers would have to agree to a draw. For example; Russia, Ottoman and France at 25 each and Portugal at 27 could pass a four-way or any other draw so long as they voted all their centers for the same draw. (If some centers were neutral or in CD the four would need even fewer centers to impose a draw.)

The game begins in the year 1750 with a total of nine powers on the board. Six are European powers with overseas colonies: Austria, England, France, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Two others are Eurasian powers, but also have overseas colonies: Ottoman and Russia. The final power, China, begins with no colonies but is alone in Asia with only some European enclaves on the periphery of the continent.

In terms of rules, Colonia is virtually identical to Diplomacy. Fred sends out two pages of rules along with the map, mostly to flesh out the starting set-up of each power. The major difference in set-up is that each power, except China, has a collection of overseas units in their colonies. Colonies are essentially non-contiguous supply centers which may be used for building units by **any power who owns them**. This last point obviously sets such centers apart from those in Europe, and adds interesting strategic complexities to regular Diplomacy.

In addition to the regular colonies, there are three "special build centers" that certain powers may build in if they own them. These are Crimea (Russia or Ottoman), Naples (Austria or Spain) and Nanking (China). Only the powers mentioned may build in these supply centers. Essentially they are additional home centers which start out neutral and must

be conquered by one of the listed powers.

That is it for the rules. However, the maps are the real heart of the game. Did you notice that I said "maps" plural? This design comes with more than one map. Generally, it comes with four legal-sized sheets of paper and two letter-sized sheets. In addition, Doug Acheson has made a conference map by shrinking the originals (via a copy machine) so that they fit onto one 11" by 14" sheet. (I don't think anyone has made a conference map for Colonia VII.) Fred has also made up three sheets that are simply the province abbreviations and what they stand for.

A comparison with Final Conflict (FC), another worldwide variant by Tom Swider, is instructive here. FC depends more on rules rather than size to set it apart from regular Diplomacy. Swider's variant has only one small map, but adds significantly to the rules by adding planes, money and nuclear weapons. Also, this game is kept to seven players rather than the nine in Colonia.

The difference between the two games can be seen when we examine the style of play. FC tends to be a much more integrated game due to the map's small size and the rules ("I'm nuking your home center halfway across the board, so there!") Colonia, on the other hand, tends to be regionalized due to the size of the board and the fact that units move no faster than regular Dip. (In FC, planes and nukes are capable of faster travel, for obvious reasons.)

The Colonia board can be divided into six basic regions. These are: Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, South America and the Pacific Islands. The players that do best are those who concentrate their power in one or more of these areas. This leads to the main weak point of the game's design, which is play balance. Some powers, notably China and Ottoman, are better able to concentrate their forces. Others are spread much too thin, such as Russia and Austria. Although the latest Colonia design purports to address this balance problem, the issue is not a new one. (Indeed, China herself was added in earlier versions to check Russia's ability to force her way into a draw by conquering Asia.)

Has the Ottoman-China hold on the game been broken? That remains to be seen. In the Colonia VI games played in *THO*, one of these two countries was in every draw. It was simply impossible to end the game without the involvement of one or both, and rarely was either eliminated. Further, it was virtually impossible to eliminate one without the help of the other.

If you like to win with a strong alliance, Colonia may be the game for you. It is difficult to get more than 30-35 centers, so almost all games end in three or four-way draws. The chief difficulty lies not in getting the dots but instead in building the



units, both to avoid playing short and to deploy build units where you need them. Although the list of Colonia centers that are available appears to be large, it is in fact small given the size of the board. There are a total of 18 colonies scattered throughout the board, and only three special build centers. Units don't move too fast, so it is generally useless to try and conceal a 10-15 unit stab that has to develop over several turns to be effective.

Having said all that, whether you want to maneuver units all over the map or limit your imperialistic adventures to Europe proper, you simply must give Colonia a chance. Nothing beats Colonia for a large worldwide variant or for interesting choices between starting powers. The game is very playable if one is willing to put in the time. However, care must be taken to avoid the easy mistakes that come from ordering 15-20 units at a time, on average.

From a GM standpoint... Let's just say that even the

designer refuses to run more than two games at once. All that can be said is that on Compuserve, some maniacs are trying to get up a Colonia game with two-week deadlines. Such people should undoubtedly be committed to the nearest asylum at once lest they infect the rest of us.

It is easier to play the game face-to-face, but the greater time for reflection in postal games probably leads to superior play. That is not to say that it cannot be comfortably played by mail; indeed it is a blast. However, if you are interested in more compact variants or more complex rule changes, then this game is not for you. This game is highly recommended for those who enjoy the basic rules of Diplomacy, yet long to try them on a more diverse board situation.

>Jack McHugh (280 Sanford Rd, Upper Darby PA 19082) is a Senior Writer for *Diplomacy World* and an experienced variant player.

## Colonia VII Rules

by Fred Hyatt

1. The rules are the same as those in the 1971 Diplomacy Rulebook, except as noted below.
2. The Powers and starting positions are:

Austria	Armies: Vienna, Budapest, Florida Fleets: Trieste, Tahiti
China	Armies: Peking, Xian, Wuhan Fleets: Amoy
England	Armies: Ecuador, Nigeria, Malaya Fleets: Edinburgh, London
France	Armies: Paris, Bordeaux, Quebec, Dakar Fleets: Toulon
Netherlands	Armies: Antwerp, Surinam, Angola, Goa Fleets: Hague
Ottoman	Armies: Izmir, Jerusalem, Baghdad Fleets: Istanbul, Hawaii
Portugal	Armies: Lagos, Alaska, Cape Colony Fleets: Lisbon, Melbourne
Russia	Armies: Moscow, Kiev, Omsk, Brazil Fleets: St Petersburg(sc), Vladivostok
Spain	Armies: Madrid, Mexico, Somalia Fleets: Valencia, Manila

3. Note that the provinces on the easternmost edge of the map are the same as those on the westernmost edge. Thus, a fleet could move from Bismarck Sea to South Pacific Ocean to Peru, and vice versa.

4. Those islands which are marked as "neutral supply centers" as well as Island Colonies may be occupied by an army. An army dislodged from an island center may retreat to another island or mainland province via fleet convoy provided there

is a fleet available to make the convoy and that the convoy does not exceed one sea-space. The retreating army and convoying fleet must be of the same nationality. This rule applies only to armies dislodged from island centers. For the purposes of this rule, Britain and Australia are considered to be mainlands.

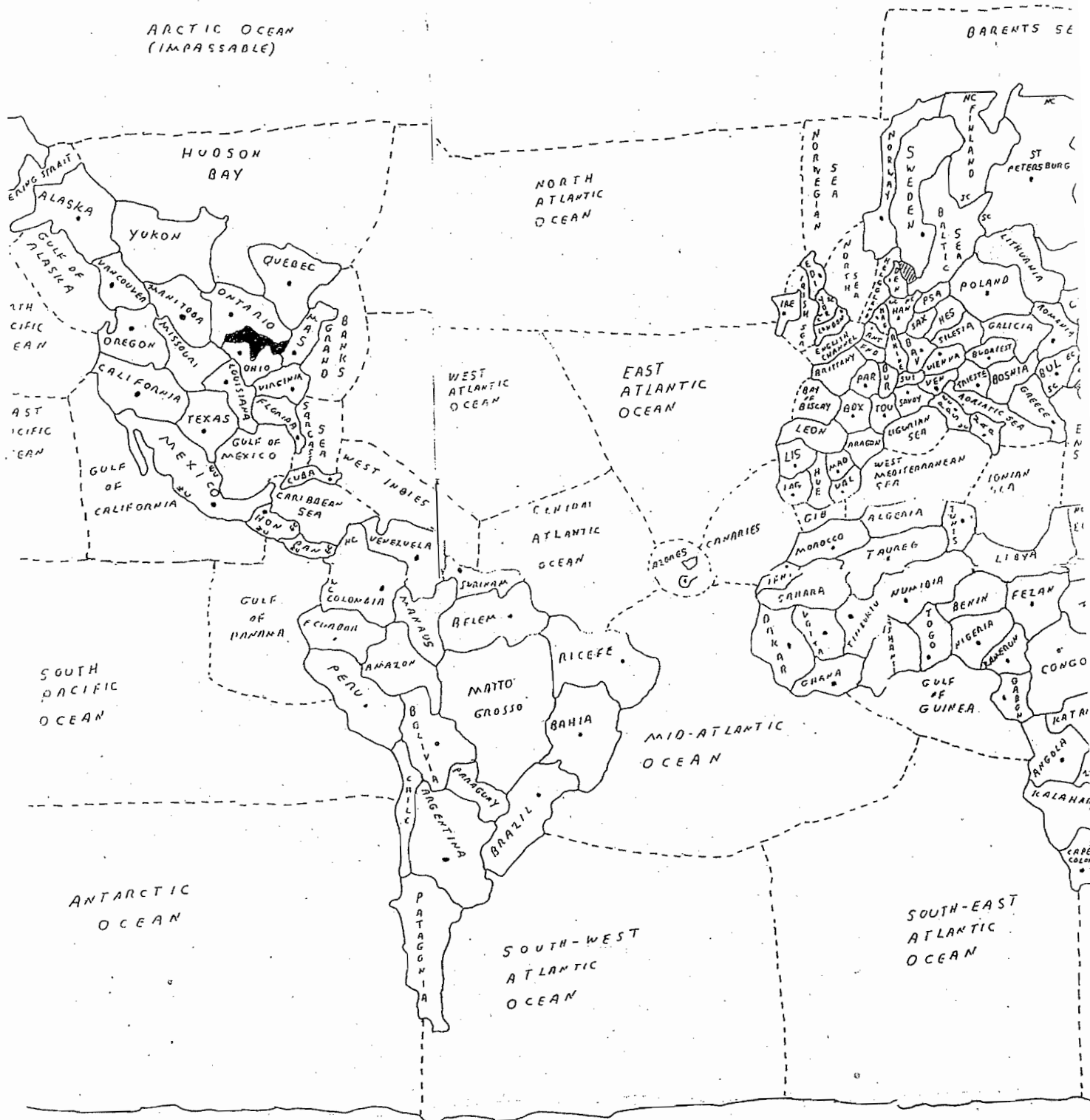
5. There are certain supply centers which are "colonies." Colonies are building centers for whichever Power owns them. They start under the control of the Power with starting units placed there. The colonies are: Alaska, Quebec, Florida, Mexico, Ecuador, Surinam, Brazil, Dakar, Nigeria, Angola, Cape Colony, Somalia, Goa, Malaya, Manila, Hawaii, Melbourne, and Tahiti.

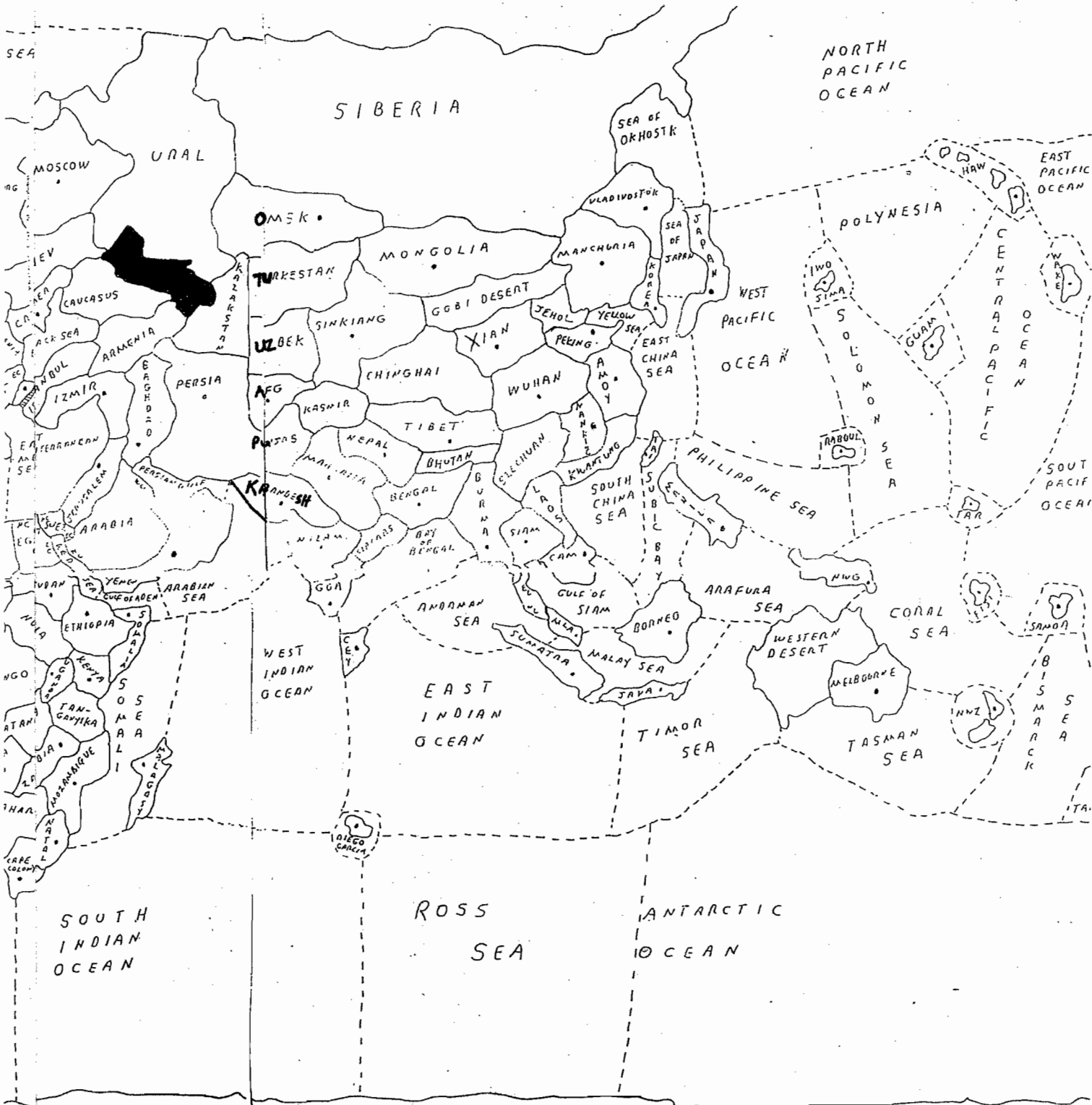
6. There are three "special supply centers" which may be used for building purposes by specified Powers. The centers and Powers are: Crimea (Russia or Ottoman), Naples (Spain or Austria) and Nanking (China). The centers may be used for building only after being occupied. For all other Powers these centers function as neutral supply centers.

7. The Arctic Ocean and the continent of Antarctica are impassable. The Arctic Coast of Siberia is passable to fleets.

8. A victory shall consist of ownership of 50 supply centers or by a concession vote. In order for a concession proposal to be approved the proposal must carry by a three-fourths majority of all supply centers, excluding centers neutral or in civil disorder. Thus, with all centers occupied, Powers controlling 102 centers can end the game by vote.

>Fred Hyatt (60 Grandview Pl, Montclair NJ 07043) runs Colonia and other games in his zine *The Home Office*.





# Colonia versus Diplomacy

by Stan Johnson

Colonia is Diplomacy on a grander and wider scale. There are more players, and one's tactical and strategic options have expanded exponentially. Gone are the corners and edges that so limit one's play in regular Diplomacy. The problems of digging Corner Powers out of their cozy little pockets are eliminated, as are the advantages that accrue to these Powers, England and Turkey. This makes Colonia a much better balanced game.

However, the chief difference between the two is the addition of colonies in the Colonia variant. (Hence the name.) These are centers scattered throughout the world at a great distance from the homeland of the Power owning a colony. Colonies differ from ordinary home centers in that, if captured by another Power, the colony can be used as a build center by its new owner. This makes them very important militarily, and allows colonies to be traded between players to facilitate alliances. A myriad of strategies may be pursued by the thoughtful Colonia player.

There are nine Powers in Colonia, four of which are in regular Diplomacy: England, France, Austria, and Russia. (A fifth, the Ottoman Empire, can be seen as a predecessor to the Turkey in Diplomacy.) Added to this list are Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and China. Obviously the board situation is vastly different from regular Diplomacy.

A short discourse of the strengths and weaknesses of each Power in Colonia VI may be helpful to the novice:

*England* is the power most similar to its Diplomacy counterpart, and begins in its typically strong position. The expansion of Finland greatly reduces the prospects of an Anglo-Russian war in Scandinavia. England also has three very valuable colonies that allow for expansion in any direction. There seems to be a tendency for England to attack Netherlands early in the game given the proximity of all the Dutch possessions around the board. However, unless England gains the upper hand quickly, the protracted struggle which results can greatly impede England's growth.

*France* loses out on the Iberian peninsula. Both Spain and Portugal, traditional French possessions in Diplomacy, are now foreign Powers which must be placated. France's options in Europe are severely limited due to this fact, among others. The French usually get a couple of Italian centers, but must then run right into potential trouble in Austria. There must be some accommodation made with Netherlands and Austria, while at the same time keeping in mind the potential threat posed by Spain and Portugal to the rear. The two French colonies represent the best opportunity to expand. In

North America, though, the French must be wary not to step on Austrian, Spanish and Portuguese toes. And in Africa, the colony of Dakar is soon threatened by the Iberian armies that seem inevitably to arrive in Ifni and Morocco. In all, I would say that France is one of the toughest countries to play in Colonia VI. However, the change in Colonia VII of moving France's fleet from Bordeaux to Toulon was a good one, and will improve France's starting position.

*Austria* is France's chief threat, but Austria itself faces threats from many directions in the beginning. As in regular Diplomacy, Austria's fate hangs on diplomatic skill. Austria must reach agreements with many of its neighbors, and its colonial possessions are not quite as useful in this regard as is the case with other Powers. Taken in toto, the situation looks bleak. However, Austria does enjoy some advantages. Both Netherlands and Russia face almost as many problems and thus will be all too willing to cut a deal. Ottoman is strong, but it is really easier for them to expand away from rather than towards Austria. In North America, Austria must tread lightly, leaving the Pacific as the best opportunity to expand.

*Russia* has two big threats in China and Ottoman. If they team up against Russia, there is almost no chance of doing well. The key, therefore, is to work with one against the other. Of course, during this process peace must be maintained with Austria, Netherlands, and England. The chief problem in the game's early stages is that very few units exist that can aid Russia against Ottoman or China. The more game years elapse before the major Asian war, the better chance that European colonies will have produced enough units to help Russia out.

*Portugal / Spain* are the Gemini Powers. They are so closely intertwined that an early war between them almost always dooms both. This fact generally forces Spain and Portugal to be allies. Working in concert they are a powerful team; but the more experienced players will recognize this danger and possibly gang up on the early Spain / Portugal alliance. It should also be noted that a strong alliance between these two is usually a nightmare for the French. Portugal and Spain can cooperate everywhere. In North America, besides the cooperative possibilities, they have the natural Austria-France rivalry working for them. In Africa they can coordinate versus England or Netherlands right from the start. They can both land forces in Northwest African areas as well, allowing them to attack Dakar and/or link up with their other forces in Africa. The latter can allow Spain to outflank the Ottomans as well. In the Pacific, they give each other secure flanks and two possible attacking fronts. Defeating the Spain/

Portugal alliance will be difficult unless their opponents begin to do so early.

*Netherlands* is, in my opinion, the weakest Power at the start. European expansion leads to serious run-ins with Austria or France. If a war in Europe develops, the possibility of an English dagger in the back must also be borne in mind. In Africa, the Dutch colony is caught between the Spain / Portugal Rock, and the English Hard Place. Goa, the colony in India, is the best bet for expansion in Colonia VI, but even there trouble with Ottoman and China may be inevitable. In short, the Dutchman needs a sharp pen.

*China* has the advantage of concentration and the disadvantage of more limited avenues of expansion. The Chinese player is chiefly concerned with Russia; of secondary consideration are the Ottoman player and the colonies of England and Spain. If China can conquer the Asian sections of Russia, they will be in very good shape.

*Ottoman* is one of the strongest starting Powers in Colonia VI. Unless neighbors gang up on Ottoman from the

start, the expansion of Ottoman borders is nearly unstoppable. The primary disadvantage is starting out with only one overseas colony. This means that there will be many parts of the world beyond Ottoman's reach.

Since only one unit can be built per year in each colony, one often winds up with clusters of widely separated units. One way to avoid this tactical problem is to swap colonies with another Power. For example, one Power can take the North American colonies, with the other taking over those colonies in Africa. Concentration of one's strength is the key.

The best advice I can give to the new Colonia player is this: acquire as many centers as you can peacefully, making no early enemies, unless you are one of several Powers ganging up on one lone target.

> Stan Johnson (10 Pine St, Edison NJ, 08817) is a longtime member of the Diplomacy Hobby, and frequent participant in games of the Colonia variant.

## Strategic Concepts of Colonia

by Jack McHugh

Colonia, while using the mechanics of Diplomacy, is a somewhat different game in strategy from Dip. Colonia puts more emphasis on the grand strategic view than its parent game, and leads to more stress on alliance play.

A game of Diplomacy begins with the players' objectives dictated, to a large extent, by the board. That is to say, Austria will attempt to be Balkan power, England a naval power in Scandinavia and northern Europe, Italy a Mediterranean power, etc. It is difficult, and in some cases impossible, for the players to significantly alter these enforced stratagems.

Not so in Colonia. Although it is true that most players have a home area in Europe, the players can change the nature of their holdings by trading various pieces of real estate around the globe. For example, France could trade Dakar to Portugal in exchange for Alaska, accomplishing a switch of colonial build centers in America and Europe. The result strengthens both powers as they each have concentrated their build centers in one area. This also reduces the possibility of stabs as neither player now would want the other's centers on their respective continents.

No longer is one power in the board designated the "naval power" when one plays Colonia. In Diplomacy, England generally builds little but fleets and is alone in doing so. However, in Colonia there are often other powers, such as Portugal or Netherlands, that also may adopt the fleet policy

with some measure of success.

What Colonia asks of its players is strategic imagination and flexibility. It is possible for a player to completely relocate from Europe to his colonial holdings. A power could, for example, gain control of all the build centers in North America by trading his European holdings for help in America. This would give that power four new build centers in America, which is more than anyone (except Russia) starts out with in Europe.

Those are my opening remarks. Now I would like to enunciate some strategic rules that future Colonia players may find useful.

**Rule 1: Play Game Long Alliances.** Since there are so many units it is almost impossible to win solo in this game. Given that fact, why not have an ally or two right from the beginning and increase your chances of winning?

**Rule 2: Don't Hesitate to Concentrate Strength.** As I said earlier, it is possible to do some horse trading early and thereby concentrate your holdings. This will strengthen your hand and discourage stabs. Decide where you want to be a major power and don't be afraid to trade away or lose the rest.

**Rule 3: Control the Choke Points.** On the Colonia VI board there are a number of choke points, the control of which is imperative for a successful strategy. Geography should influence your tactics in this regard, though not as much as it

would in regular Dip. If you are playing Austria and decide on a Pacific strategy, you should count on keeping both Polynesia and the Central Pacific Ocean clear of foreign units after the first few turns.

**Rule 4: Draft Orders Carefully.** Because Colonia involves a large number of units, you will need to spend a lot of time both in planning and actually writing your moves. I find it necessary to number my units so as not to overlook any of them. You will also need time to check out where other countries' units are and where said units can move to.

**Rule 5: Develop an Overall Growth Plan.** The first two years of any Colonia game are spent with all powers gobbling up neutral centers that surround them. This early period is ideal for talking to other players and deciding exactly where builds are to be concentrated. If you are playing the Netherlands, this is the time to decide to cut a deal with the Turks about Goa or to talk to Austria about trading your help into Poland for their help in the Pacific.

**Rule 6: Be Open to Other Offers.** Although I have emphasized the importance of making your own plans, sometimes an uncooperative neighbor will make those plans difficult to execute. There are more players in Colonia than Diplomacy, so if someone wants to work with you don't be

afraid to radically alter your plans to make such an alliance practicable. In fact, it may be better to plan to grow in more than one area. Down the road you can decide which area to concentrate on based upon least resistance and/or most cooperative allies.

**Rule 7: Write Early and Often.** The most critical part of any game, whether it be Diplomacy or a variant, is early in the game. Even if you can't follow up your first letters within a turn or two, it is crucial to write everyone the first turn. This is even more true in Colonia, as many powers who are not European neighbors may be close to one another overseas.

I can scarcely overemphasize this latter point. Once players hear nothing from you while other powers are in contact with them, they are less likely to change their plans later even if you become a more reliable communicator. And, of course, don't think that other players aren't busy telling everyone what a louse you are and how you never write in any game you are in. And how you should be killed here in this game, immediately, for this breach of Diplomacy etiquette.

>Senior Writer Jack McHugh publishes the subzine *The Popular Front* in Tom Swider's *Comrades in Arms*.

## Fun, But Certifiably Insane

by Dave McCrumb

If you think GMing a Diplomacy game is tough, try GMing a game of Colonia. With 135 centers (and close to that many units), it takes great care to properly do an adjudication, type up the moves (with correct abbreviations), and mail the results in a timely fashion.

Having just finished GMing a game of Colonia VI, I have come to the conclusion that Fred Hyatt is insane. Anybody that GMs or plays in every Colonia game offered has to be certifiable. It takes a lot of detail, correspondence and space to do well.

Players have only two non-European Powers to be concerned with in this game, China and Ottoman. However, as the name implies, the existence of colonies put each Power in direct contact with every other Power some place on the board. Just keeping track of one's promises is a monumental task. Did I tell Austria I would support him in the Pacific, the Mediterranean, or North America? And support him against whom? Oh, my.

Space is a must for Colonia. Nobody (except the five or six Colonia fanatics) has the board memorized. Therefore, one must have space to lay out a map. The best method is to place the map on a large piece of cardboard and use stick pins for the units. This also allows one to periodically look on the

game. However, a new board is required for each game for that purpose, and they do take up a good amount of space even when hung on a wall.

GMing the Colonia variant is a painstaking task. Europe is similar to the Diplomacy map, with just enough changes to throw one off, but not enough to make remembering the changes easy. There are over 200 provinces to keep track of! A frequent occurrence has 4-6 Powers fighting over one region, making it doubly important to carefully adjudicate moves. Keeping track of center changes is also a chore because this is such a fluid game. It is not unusual for ten centers to change hands every game year.

Yet, with all its difficulties, this is still one of the best variants around, both to GM and play. It is exciting given its constantly changing focus. It is also very interesting as a strategic matter, since each Power must figure out which part of the world should be sacrificed in order to allow for the domination of another region.

>Dave McCrumb, a Senior Writer for *Diplomacy World*, publishes *The Appalachian General*, a Diplomacy variants zine, and *Twains*, a zine for the postal play of *Empire Builder* (3636 Old Town Rd, Shawsville VA, 24162).



# can\*con

## DIPLOMACY

Toronto

### HOSTING: **DIPCON XXIV**

Just what your eyes need is another promo, right? Don't sweat it, this one ain't important - MUCH !!

The title just about states it all as to content and this newsletter will fill in the cost aspect. But, just in case you've been incommunicado for the last four years or have just discovered the game of Diplomacy, here's the low-down.

CAN-CON is basically a glorified house-party set in the more accommodating facilities of University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus. It is scheduled from 1900hrs Friday August 2nd until sometime Sunday August 4th with an extra night for those who wish to stay until Monday (Can. Civic Holiday). It, CAN-CON, is the vehicle that post-by-mail Diplomacy players have used for three years now, to get down'n'dirty in a face-to-face environment to decide a national/international champion. This year's CAN-CON is hosting the North American Diplomacy Championship forum - DIPCON XXIV. A first for Canada!

Enough of the history'n'hype.

This year's Con will have 4 scheduled rounds of Diplomacy: Friday evening, two on Saturday and Sunday morning. There will be, of course, other variants and other games which seem to magically appear out of suitcases. Amazing isn't it! A gamer's fix.

A CON program covering such important questions as: How do I get there?; What's the scoring system to be?; What's the schedule of events?; etc. AND, even a tourist's guide to Toronto as written by "Colorado Bob" Hartwig will be included as a number of you have expressed an interest in making a vacation of it - right BRIT's?? This program will be mailed out to all those who preregister.

Now for the all important COSTS involved.

**FEES:** the preregistration fee is \$20.00

**ROOMING:** shared townhouses - 5 individual, single-bed rooms with shared kitchen (fridge, stove, utensils, etc) \$30.00/person/night until March 31st/'91, then rates rise \$5.00/night. Rooms available August 1st to August 10th, so let me know the nights which you wish to book - VERY IMPORTANT!!

=====

#### CAN-CON/DIPCON XXIV REGISTRATION FORM

Name:

Address:

Fees Enclosed: \_\_\_ \$20.00 preregistration \_\_\_ accommodation at \$30.00/night/person (State nights: from \_\_\_ to \_\_\_)  
\_\_\_ \$5.00 breakfast/morning/person \_\_\_ \$5.00 patio B-B-Q Saturday afternoon.

Cheques/money orders are to be made out to Doug Acheson [or Nithgrove Health & Safety Services (if this is a business trip)].

Submit completed forms and fees to: Doug Acheson, Unit 5 Suite 330, 320 Yonge St., Barrie Ontario CANADA L4N 4C8

# An Overview of Available Publications

by David Hood

If you are relatively new to the Diplomacy hobby, you may be very interested to know how to become more knowledgeable about the game and hobby. The first thing to do is send away for one of the two novice packets available, *Supernova* and *Masters of Deceit* (see the Services listing below.)

*Diplomacy World* was traditionally a source of information about the game and hobby that players turned to often. Although not a monthly zine, *DW* is one of the few places you can go for articles and analyses. Other zines print such material now and then, but really the better reading material in such zines is the political, sports or music chat. For this reason, I recommend *DW* back issues and anthologies as a good source of strategy/tactics stuff, variants, rating system discussions, etc.

A number of back issues are listed on the next page for your convenience, along with cost and person to whom you should send your order. In addition to those listed, there are also some copies of issues 4 and 10 available from Walt Buchanan for \$2.50, but I do not have a description of those issues. If the descriptions on page 17 do not tell you which articles you want, check out the *DW Index and Menu*, available from Larry Peery for \$2.00. This lists, by author, subject and title, all the articles that have appeared in *DW* over the years.

Perhaps the most cost-effective way to get Dip articles is to send away to Larry Peery for one of the four *DW Anthologies*. These are books of reprinted articles around a certain topic that run for \$15.00. Volume I is the Best of *DW*, II has the Best of Mark Berch (one of the best tactics writers ever), III reprints all the variants ever published, while IV reprints all the demonstration games played along with the commentary.

If you really want to take a plunge, send \$6.00 (\$6.50 in Canada, \$8.00 overseas) to Fred Davis for a photocopy of the 1978 book *The Game of Diplomacy*, by Richard Sharp. This was the only hard cover book ever printed on our game, covering tactics, the Great Powers, postal play, and variants. What you get for your money is 78 sheets, with two pages from the book printed on each sheet, one side only. In the US order from Fred at 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City MD 21043. In Europe you can order straight from Sharp at 46 Whielden St, Amersham, Bucks., HP6 0HU, England for 3 pounds or its equivalent in German marks, French francs or Swiss francs.

One thing that confuses many new postal players is the terminology. The way to solve this is simple - send away to Mark Berch for his *Lexicon* and *Son of Lexicon*. These publications will answer most of your questions. I believe

they are \$2.00 each, from Mark at his address on page 2 of this issue. Mark also has back issues of his zine *Diplomacy Digest* available, and we will print a full list next *DW*.

Experienced Dippers will tell you that the trick to keeping all your addresses together is to buy the latest Census. Right now the closest thing we have to that in the hobby is the continuously-updated *DW Mailing List*. Due to increases in my costs and the tremendous demand for this list, I will now offer it at \$4.00. This 1250-person list is guaranteed to be the most complete and accurate listing of hobbyists in N. America, whether they subscribe to *DW* or not. An interesting analysis of the list by country, state, etc. is available from Fred Davis for \$1.00.

One way to size up your opposition in a Dip game is to consult the ratings list known as *Dragonstooth Rating System*. This rates postal players on the basis of completed games, and has been updated through all games ending in 1989. Further updates will occur as games are reported. The complete list is available for \$1.50 from David Hood. Another way to gauge some of the players in your game is to send away for the *1990 World DipCon Report*, available from David Hood for \$1.00.

At \$1.50 is the latest review of Diplomacy magazines, the *CCC Review of Zines*. This is a partial list of zines, with reviews by three of the staff members of the zine *Carolina Command & Commentary*. Normally the *Zine Register* would be a better source, but it has not come out since last June. Send \$1.50 to Michael Lowrey, address on page 2.

## North American Hobby Services

Boardman Number Custodian (BNC): Records Dip gamestarts and finishes. Gary Behnen, 13101 S. Trenton, Olathe KS 66062.

Miller Number Custodian (MNC): Records Variant gamestarts and finishes. Lee Kendter, 4347 Benner St, Philadelphia PA 19135 or Brad Wilson, PO Box 126, Wayne PA 19087.

Canadian Diplomacy Organization (CDO): Cal White, 1 Turnberry Ave, Toronto Ontario M6N 1P6.

Zine Register/Zine Bank: Sends sample zines or list of zines. Tom Nash, 202 Settler's Rd, St Simons Island GA 31522.

Novice Packet: Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown PA 19401 or Bruce Reiff, 432 Caldwell Dr, Cincinnati OH 45216.

North American Variant Bank (NAVB): Keeps a catalogue of variants available for sale. Lee Kendter, Jr., 376A Willowbrook Dr, Jeffersonville PA 19403.

Here is a partial list of back issues available, and the prices. The name in parenthesis is the person you should order from: Walt Buchanan 3025 W 250 North, Lebanon IN 46052; Larry Peery PO Box 620399, San Diego CA 92102; David Hood 104-F Terrace Drive, Cary NC 27511. There are also some of issues 24-38 available from Larry Peery at \$4.00.

**14 Winter 1976 40pp 2.50 (Buchanan)**  
Articles on England, Diplomacy Convoys, Diplomacy Puzzle. Variant: Twin Earths II. Authors include John Leeder, Eric Verheiden, Len Lakofka, Allan Calhamer.

**16 Summer 1977 40pp 2.50 (Buchanan)**  
Articles on Germany, Austrian Game Performance, Cross Game Ethics. Variant: Swiss Variant II. Authors include Fred Davis, Mark Berch, Randolph Smyth, Adam Gruen.

**17 Autumn 1977 40pp 2.50 (Buchanan)**  
Articles on Being a Master Diplomacist, Do Yours Stand Erect, France. Variant: Cline 9-man. Authors include Pete Birks, Robert Sacks, Doug Beyerlein.

**18 Winter 1978 40pp 2.50 (Buchanan)**  
Articles on Do Yours Hang Limp, Designing Variants, French Game Performance, Italy, England. Authors include: Cal White, Adam Gruen, Lew Pulsipher, Mark Berch.

**19 Spring 1978 40pp 2.50 (Buchanan)**  
Articles on Guest Gms, Dip Trivia Quiz, Austria. Variant: Nuclear Dip. Authors include: Conrad von Metzke, Rod Walker, Eric Verheiden, Walt Buchanan.

**21 Spring 1979 40pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Articles on the Joy of Diplomacy, How to Lie Diplomatically. Variant: Ancient Empires II. Authors include: Jerry Jones, Dave White, John Lipscomb.

**22 Summer 1979 40pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Features include The Best Choice, by Leland Harmon. Variant: Holocaust, by Steve McLendon. Edited by Jerry Jones.

**23 Fall 1979 52pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Two famous articles: How to Run a Diplomacy Party, by Fred Davis; and Beware of English Bearing Gifts, by Mark Berch. Variant: Excalibur, by Kenneth Clark.

**41 Winter 1986 70pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
First issue edited by Larry Peery. Authors include: Al Pearson, Kathy Byrne, Mark Berch, Stephen Wilcox, Rod Walker, Fred Davis, Tom Hurst.

**42 Spring 1986 72pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Theme issue about The Maritime Strategy. Variant: SkinnyDip. Authors include Tom Hurst, JC Hodgins, Mark Berch, Rod Walker, Malc Smith, Lew Pulsipher.

**43 Summer 1986 60pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Extensive coverage of DipCon XIX, in Fredricksburg VA. Most of the commentary is by Larry Peery.

**44 Fall 1986 100pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Biggest issue ever, with articles by David Hood, Dave McCrumb, Steve Cooley, Mark Berch, Melinda Holley, Dan Stafford.

**45 Winter 1987 76pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Another theme issue on Diplomacy Around the World with articles from eleven different countries, ranging from North America to Europe to Asia.

**46 Spring 1987 84pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Focus on the Midgame in Diplomacy, with articles by Pete Gaughan, Mark Berch, David Hood, Tom Hurst, JC Hodgins.

**47 Summer 1987 80pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
A look at variant Diplomacy, with articles by Mark Berch, Fred Davis, Kate Robison, L. Nocella. Variant: Asian Diplomacy.

**48 Fall 1987 64pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Focus on Diplomacy Endgames, with articles by David Hood, Larry Peery, Mark Berch. Variant: 273 b.c., by Fred Davis.

**49 Winter 1988 60pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Theme issue on the Computer's Effect on Diplomacy, with articles by Frank Cunliffe, Mike Maston, Les Casey, Steve Heinowski.

**50 Spring 1988 80pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Anniversary issue, with articles by Walt Buchanan, Robert Sacks, Tom Kane, Rex Martin, Bruce Linsey, Rod Walker, Doug Beyerlein, Eric Verheiden. Variant: U-Boat Dip.

**53 Winter 1989 76pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Focus on WWI, Diplomacy's historical background. Other articles on Italy/Turk alliances, Email Dip, World DipCon. Authors include: Dave McCrumb, Herb Barents.

**56 Fall 1989 80pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Articles on Convoys, Variant Player Rankings, Game Reports in Zines. Variant: Continent II. Authors include: Michael Lowrey, Edi Birsan, Ron Cameron, David Hood.

**57 Winter 1990 72pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Articles on Power Rankings, ManorCon, Ten Year Hobby Retrospective. Variant: India 1501. Authors include Eric Brosius, James Nelson, Allan Calhamer, Michael Lowrey.

**58 Spring 1990 52pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Articles on Italy, World DipCon, 1990 Hobby Awards and nominated articles. Variants: 1499, Hardbop Downfall. Authors include: Larry Botimer, Francois Cuerrier.

**59 Summer 1990 52pp 4.00 (Peery)**  
Articles on History of DipCon, World DipCon preview, Diplomacy Board mathematical analysis. Variant: Deluge Dip. Authors include: John Caruso, James Nelson.

**60 Fall 1990 24pp (8 X 11 format) 3.00 (Hood)**  
First issue by David Hood. Articles on postal rankings, AtlantiCon, Origins, Longest Postal Game. Variant: Fog of War. Authors include: Jim Burgess, Pete Clark, Jim Yerkey.

**61 Winter 1991 32pp 3.00 (Hood)**  
Spotlight on Postal Sports Games. Other articles on Gunboat tourneys, AI relations, Zine pubbing. Variants: Conquest of New World, Winter 1898. Authors: Melinda Holley, Larry Botimer, Mickey Preston, Bob Greier.

# Fly Fandom

by Mark Nelson

Many Hobby members are quite happy to play in one or two games in one or two zines, and given this it is possible to suggest what their "ideal" zine would be. This ideal zine would have deadlines four weeks apart, would be turned around in a weekend, would contain one or two articles, and would contain a review or two of an equally games-oriented fanzine. This is, after all, the Diplomacy (or maybe Postal Games) Hobby. The Hobby members described above are primarily games players.

Yet, when one looks at the Zine Poll results throughout the 1980's to see which zines have been popular, one sees that the games-oriented zine has rarely been recognized. In North America the *Runestone Poll* has been dominated by the likes of *Europa Express*, *Costaguana*, *Praxis*, *Fiat Bellum*, and *Northern Flame*. These are (or were) zines which do not fit into the "ideal zine" category described above. Indeed, some of these have the reputation for a distinctly poor games service.

How can fanzines which do not emphasize the games background of our Hobby do well in Hobby polls? Whilst many Hobby members concentrate on the games side there is also a ~~dark side~~ hobby side. Just as in any other hobby, there is a social side where people chat away on things not connected at all with their original reason for coming together. The zines that have taken top honors in Polls have been those which concentrated on the social side of the Hobby. They featured large letter columns (containing discussion on any number of topics), articles, and an editorial presence.

To the gamer who is still infatuated by games and gaming these "chat zines" seem irrelevant. While this may be a valid proposition, it is one with which I disagree!

Where does the international Diplomacy Hobby fit into all of this? To be honest, international games are a bit of a mockery, or even a lottery. The long turnarounds account for

both high drop-out rates and an ever-decreasing amount of negotiations. As games simpliciter, they are quite unsatisfactory.

However, if you are a fannish fan, then the attraction of overseas zines (or at least the best ones) is the same attraction that leads to home-grown social zines. If you are primarily interested in writing letters or articles, or participating in discussions, there is no reason to restrict yourself to purely domestic zines. There are a whole host of overseas zines to choose from. If you want the best zines, why not choose from a list of zines from all over the world? As well as offering the best writing, overseas zines also offer the chance to look at things from a different perspective.

What then of the gamer? Is he to turn his head and say that internationalism is not for him? Well, no. Although the primary reason for internationalism is the social side, there are zines out there which appeal to the gamer. Zines which feature articles on games are few and far between, so if that's what you want it may pay to look for overseas zines that run gaming articles. Alternatively, you may be a fan of a particular game, and the only way to play it may be in an overseas zine. If the game involved does not involve much diplomacy, then you may be able to play on "normal deadlines." For instance, a United fan may be tempted to play in Alan Parr's United game in *Hopscotch*, the longest running game of United run by the bloke who designed the first set of rules!

Although gamers can find something of interest in international zines, I have concentrated on the social reason for internationalism. Although a desire to game may attract new people, I think it is the social aspect that keeps such people in the Hobby. Without the contact between fans there would be no Hobby, and postal Diplomacy would have bitten the dust a long time ago.

Accordingly, my role as International Editor for *Diplomacy World* will not consist of reviewing who won hobby awards in which country, or what happened at certain tournaments. While previous attempts at providing coverage of the international Hobby have done that, I will instead discuss the people and the fanzines that go to making up the international Diplomacy community. The aim here is not to provide a series of dry facts explaining what is happening. Rather, I will try to persuade you to take an active part in fandom.

(Exit to the "Fannish Flag is Flying High"...) )

>Mark Nelson (21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds, W. Riding, LS12 2AP, U.K.) is the International Editor for *Diplomacy World* and publishes his own zine *The Mouth of Sauron*.

Bruno Berken wrote from Belgium about our report last time on the French DipCon: "I went to the French DipCon, which was very well organized. You had to play four times over the weekend, with the games lasting until 1906. The advantage was that you could play more in a weekend, while the disadvantage was that everyone would take centers from other players in Fall 1906 so as to finish in a better place. At the end of the game, you could vote for the best negotiator and the most infamous traitor. I hope everyone will come next year - the language is really no problem. Most of the players will understand English or German. The housing is free, but you have to stay with 2 or 3 in one room." More details on the upcoming French DipCon will appear in later issues of *DW*.

# Variants in Diplomacy World: Middle Earth

by James Nelson

This is the fourth installment of my "Variants in Diplomacy World," the DW feature authored by its Variant Editor James Nelson. I live at 112 Huntley Avenue, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7DU, England. I also serve as United Kingdom Variant Bank Archivist, and publish a variant fanzine called *Variants and Uncles*. Samples are available for the equivalent of .80 pounds (but please send it through the International Subscription Exchange. I welcome contributions and copies of variant zines so I can review such material in a future *Diplomacy World*.

Due to some confusion caused by the US Postal Service, I missed out on David's first two issues of DW. But now I'm back, with a new variant based upon an old idea. The following was written by variant designer Mark Nelson (21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds, W. Riding LS12 2AP, England.)

There are essentially two approaches to designing a Diplomacy variant based on the works of Tolkien. The first approach is to design a "traditional" variant, basically a pure map variant. The second approach is to incorporate a body of rules which attempts to recreate the atmosphere of the books.

The first approach was the more popular one in the 1960's and up into the mid 1970's. In particular, the "Middle Earth" series was a series of games set at varying time periods of the Tolkien world. The nations of Middle Earth were simply represented as military powers, often including Angmar and Mordor as two separate powers.

The second approach began with Brian Libby's "Third Age" (which has subsequently undergone three revisions) which dates from the 1970/71 period. This design included a ring piece, and tried to assign the different powers something of their historical strength. More important was Hartley Patterson's "Downfall" (first printed 1973), which included a Gandalf piece and generally tried to recreate the events of the book.

The 1960's belonged to two Tolkien series: "Middle Earth" and "Mordor vs. The Rest of the World." The 1970's were dominated by "Third Age." The 1980's have seen the rise of "Downfall" as the preeminent Tolkien variant. Over 50 games of twelve different versions have been started. Downfall today offers the best Tolkien game for someone who wants to play a game involving Gandalf, the Fellowship, Aragorn and the Ring. However, for the variant which follows I have returned to the 1960's for a militaristic approach to an earlier period of Middle Earth's history. "Middle Earth IX and X" are set towards the end of the period of Northern Kingdoms.

Middle Earth I was one of the first Diplomacy variants to be published, appearing in 1965. Tolkien variants were very popular during the 1960's, both because lots of Tolkien variants were around and most of the players in those days were Science Fiction fans who liked writing reams of press. Setting a game against Tolkien's own offered many new press possibilities and so many games were started. Additionally, the mid 1960's saw the first wave of Tolkien fandom spreading across the States and many of these fans were

interested in playing games set in Middle Earth.

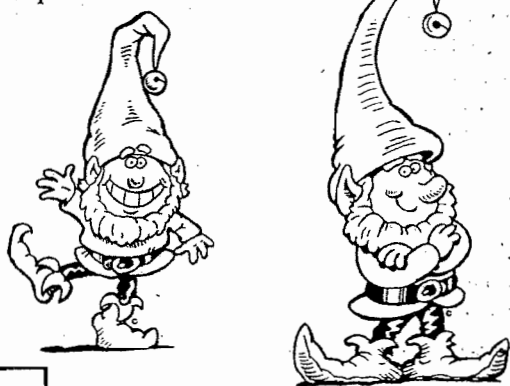
The vast majority of Tolkien variants concentrate on providing simulation of the events at the end of the Third Age. These games run into problems in playability in the sense that it isn't possible to produce a balanced game. Because of Mordor's strength, the majority of the remaining players have to unite against him if they wish to survive. A number of powers have no real hope of winning - hardly a desired state of affairs in a Diplomacy game. This is tolerated in Downfall and Third Age games because they have a charm of their own. If you are willing to accept the limitations, they provide good games. Imagine what it would be like to play in a "realistic" First Age variant! After all, Sauron was a mere shadow compared to the might of Morgoth! The two First Age games that have been designed are unsatisfactory as one is unbalanced and the other downgrades the power of Morgoth too much in its quest for game balance.

This narrow balance between playability and realism was avoided in many of the early games because they were set away from the times when there was an all-powerful Dark Lord. By choosing a different historical period it was possible to set up more playable games. Of course, that does mean that press-writers can't rewrite sagas based directly on the War of the Ring, but they really have an equally good background to write on.

This was the mean reasoning behind my design of Middle Earth IX and X. I wanted to produce a Tolkien variant that did not run into playability vs realism problems, a game which is hopefully interesting and worth playing for all the players in a given game. The setting was relatively easy to find. (For role players out there, the ICE Middle Earth book is great when it comes to finding details for new variants!)

There are a large number of possible variants still to be designed that could be set in Tolkien's Middle Earth, and I hope the more adventurous variant designers will devote their talents to these games rather than produce new Downfall versions. As an example, it would be possible to design a game set around the Kin-Strive in Gondor, when the ruling families fought for power.

In conclusion, there are essentially two approaches to designing a variant based upon the works of Tolkien. One may design a traditional variant that basically just changes the map for Diplomacy; or one may develop a body of rules which attempts to recreate the atmosphere of the books.



# Middle Earth Rules

by Mark Nelson

Middle Earth IX (Catalogue No. ta06/05)

1. The 1971 rules of Diplomacy will apply, except where modified below.

2. There are five players. Their starting units and locations are:

Angmar:	A's (CDu, SAn, Gun) and Nazgul (Gun)
Arthedain:	A's (Fm, Tfo, WTo) and 2A (Anu)
Cardolan :	A's (HGi, Tin) and 2A (TGo)
Dunlendings:	A's (Ene, Mag, SDu)
Hillmen:	A's (CBr, EMo, PTe)

Players' home supply centers are the supply centers where the units start, except that Cardolan doesn't own TGo but instead Tha.

3. Double armies are the same as single armies except that they have double strength. Thus, a move by a double army dislodges an unsupported single army. A double army may support with the strength of two supports, though it may not split the support between two different units. A single attack cuts the support of a double army. When retreating a double army retreats with the strength of a single army. Once destroyed, a double army cannot be rebuilt.

4. The Nazgul (N) is a special piece. When it starts a turn in the same location as an Angmarian army and finishes a turn with the same army (i.e. it duplicates the army's move) that army may be regarded as a double army for purposes of rule 3. In addition, the Nazgul has a movement factor of two when it moves on its own. The first move takes place with the movements of armies and the second move afterwards (but before retreats). It may move into a province occupied by another Angmarian army but not a province occupied by an army of another nation (if ordered to do so the Nazgul is destroyed.) If at any time the Nazgul is on its own in a province and a non-Angmarian army orders to that province then that move goes ahead and the Nazgul is destroyed (except in the case of a standoff.) If a unit with the Nazgul has to retreat, the Nazgul must retreat with that unit.

5. There are no fleet units in this game.

6. CDu, Gun, BCa, Eld, Eke, Fm, CBr, Tfo, WTo and Tha are all forts. A value of one is added to a unit in a fort (i.e. holding or supporting.) This extra strength is purely defensive. Hence, a single army successfully holds (or supports) in a fortress even when attacked by an unsupported double army.

7. Mountain passes enable direct movement between Gun-SAn, Gnd-Gra and Gnd-GHi. Otherwise mountains are impassable.

8. Direct movement is possible between PFe-Mai, PFe-Dun and EDa-Dun in an autumn season only, due to the presence of rivers.

(Movement between MBr-Oio is possible at all times, whereas NWR-Hfe, CBr or NNI is impossible at all times.)

9. Due to their knowledge of the hills, the Hillmen may nominate one unit starting in PFe, Mai, Pte, Dun or NNI to be a double army for the next season's movement. He does this by simply writing 2A(xyz) instead of the normal A(xyz). The double unit reverts back to being a single unit on the following move. However, a different unit starting in one of the above provinces can be selected as a double army.

10. Bef must be occupied each Autumn season or it will rebel and become an unoccupied neutral supply center again.

11. There are 36 supply centers in the board (note Eke and Eld are fortresses but not supply centers), 19 of which are required for victory. The Angmarian player, however, needs 24 for victory.

12. The game starts in Autumn 1409, so there will be a construction phase after the first move.

## Options for less than Five Players:

(These options have not been playtested. They may be suitable for face-to-face play but are not intended for play-by-mail.)

1. Four Players: Remove the Dunlending supply centers. Victory requirement is 17 centers.

2. Three Players: Use option 1 but also place the Hillmen into civil disorder.

3. Two Players: One player takes Arthedain and Cardolan while the second player takes the remaining three powers. The Hillmen start with a unit short (no unit in EMo.)

Middle Earth X (Catalogue No. ta07/05)

1. The rules of Middle Earth IX (ts06/05) apply except where modified below.

2. The Hillmen player is replaced by the Rhudaur player. Starting units for Rhudaur are Cbr, Mbr and Eld which are also its home supply centers.

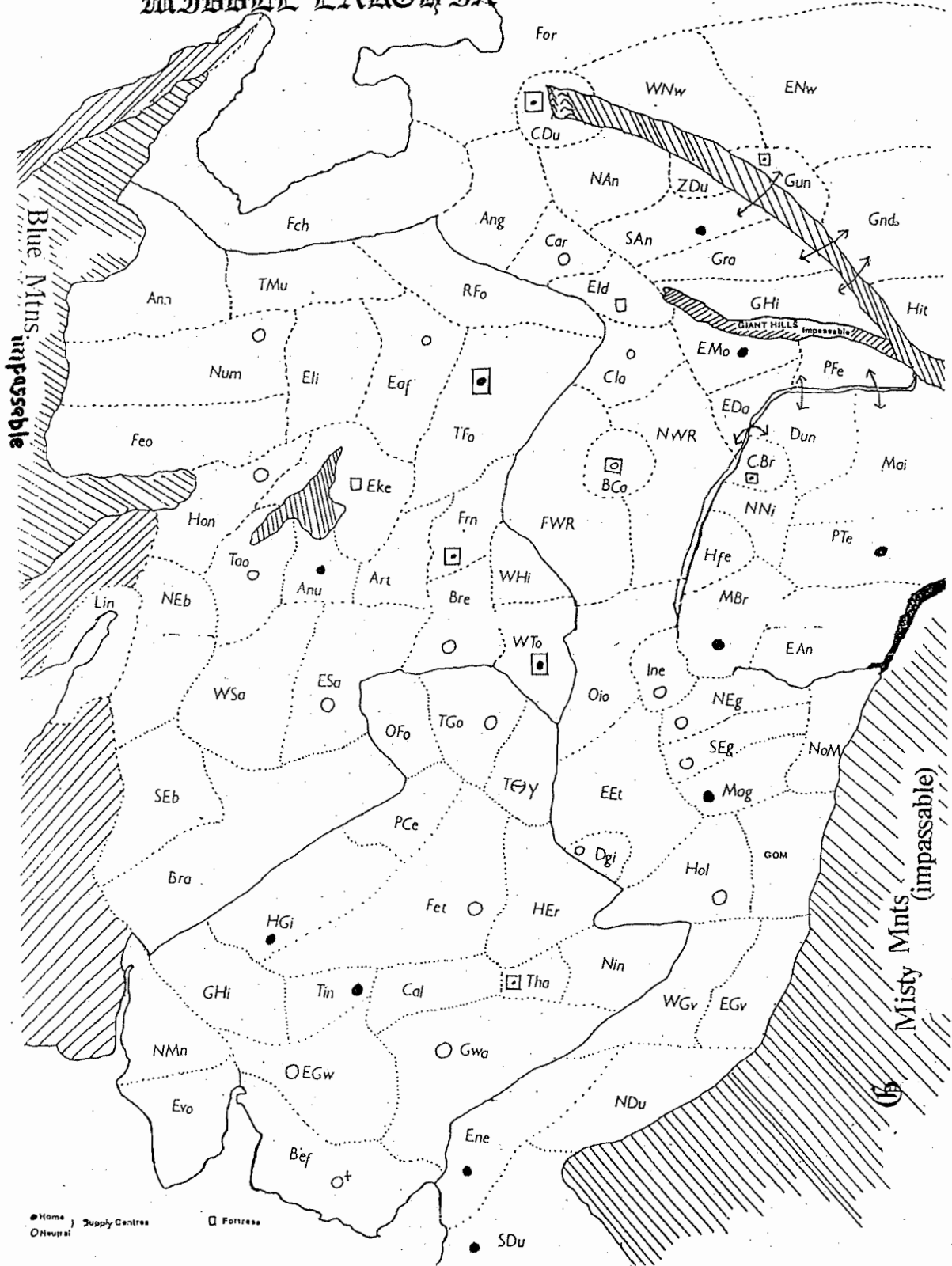
3. PTe is no longer a supply center, and BCa is occupied by a Rhudaurian single army at the start of the game.

4. The game starts in Spring 1350.

*Middle Earth IX and X are copyrighted by Mark Nelson in 1988, 1989 and 1990. The UKVB may not distribute this variant, but the NAVB may do so.*



# MIDDLE EARTH IX



# The Astounding DW Letter Column

This is the second installment of the *DW* letter column, a forum for the discussion of the zine and its contents. Please feel free to write in with your comments, particularly of the negative variety, as such criticism is the best way for the *DW* staff to improve and grow. The editor will not comment on the letters unless asked a specific question, so you can be sure we won't try to get the last word in. So, tell us what is on your mind.

## Layout and Graphics

Randy Davis (3019 Bertram Ct, Concord CA 94520): *DW* #61 is the most professional looking Dipzine I've seen. I think the newsprint is just fine, survived the mail while reducing your cost. The only thing is I hope I never mistake it for junk mail, as it almost always will get mixed in with all the wasted pulp advertisers are constantly sending me.

Lee Kendter, Jr. (376A Willowbrook Dr, Jeffersonville PA 19403): When publishing variants, please make the maps bigger. Some of the names are so small that I can't even read them. Most people who pick up on a variant in *DW* want to be able to try it out. There is no possibility of doing so with the map of Conquest of the New World you printed. I don't even have the option of blowing it up, as I have done with variant maps before.

Mike Maston (PO Box 620399, San Diego CA 92102): I'm not sure what kind of strings that you had to pull, but the format is much better than the offset printing that Larry had done. The physical look of the zine is excellent. I find that it is easy to read and handle, and presents no problems that I can see.

Andrew York (PO Box 2307, Universal City TX 78148): The cost isn't great, nor is the use of newsprint; but even kept "as is" I'll probably maintain my sub as long as I'm in the hobby, and can afford it.

Rex Martin (Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Rd, Baltimore MD 21214): For my part, I prefer the new layout (and the newsprint-weight paper stock doesn't bother me in the least.)

Russell Fox (5841 W Judy Ct, Visalia CA 93277): First, issue 61 took a long time to reach Visalia. I received in on February 19; you mentioned in *Carolina Command & Commentary* that it was sent out in January. The zine is much more readable than before. I don't like the newsprint much but high quality

offset printing on twenty pound stock costs a lot of money. Also, there were numerous typographical errors.

Garret Schenck (40 3rd Pl Basment Apt, Brooklyn NY 11231): *DW* is looking pretty good these days - you should be happy with it. I don't mind the paper you use - so what if it'll fall apart in a couple of years. The world is falling apart anyway. I presume you're holding onto either hard copy masters on acid-free, or the electronic files themselves. That way in 20 years nobody will be able to make head or tail of the thing - I presume you've heard about all the NASA data stored on tape from missions in the 60s and 70s that nobody can now understand because the machines that recorded them are no more. Just make sure you print out a final copy before you junk your Mac in five years or so (to make room for your wrist-watch computer that'll be a thousand times more powerful!)

John Breakwell (62 Shackleton Way, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 4UT, England): The layout of *DW* is superb and look very professional though a word processing spell-checker could make an appearance. How about a different font for editorial comment in the lettercol?

Editor: Okay John, what do you think about this? I don't want the fonts to get too weird though...

## Eric Klein Interview / Electronic Mail

Pete Gaughan (1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947): It was nice to see some counterbalance to Eric Klien's comments, both in the Interview and Lettercol.

Rich Campbell (7509 Murray Hill Rd #522, Columbia MD 21046): I really liked the coverage of PBEM games in #60 through the interview with Eric Klien. I've been playing in his zine *EP* since September, and response times have been great. I do question whether PBEM will bring more players into the Hobby (as opposed to them just playing in *EP*) due to the nature of PBEM Dip. I guess the fact that game results are sent outside of an "issue" (i.e. like receiving a flyer for only the games you are in) doesn't lend itself to really reading the chapters of *EP* that get published. PBEM is great for actually playing Dip, but I'm not enthusiastic as to its effect on the Hobby itself.

Rex Martin: Best of luck with your venture. It's the best thing to happen to the Dip hobby for some time. For my part, I have discovered the joys of PBEM Diplomacy on the Genie online

system (being an 11-center England in 1906 facing a sudden stab by a once-allied German and his Austrian/Russian cronies.) Most impressive to me in Genie is the quality of the GMing and the extremely (after PBM games) rapid pace.

### *Demo Game Finish*

Randolph Smyth (1023-555 St Mary Ave, Winnipeg Man. R3C 3X4, Canada): I do have a comment on the 89AM "E/E/G/G/I" draw. As far as the Calhamer Point Count is concerned, I'll be scoring it as a regular three-way draw once it appears in *Everything*. Edi Birsan's idea is interesting but would obviously lead to a lot of secondary negotiations and distorted endgames. Consider: "I'll agree to a draw if I'm allowed 0.65 of the Calhamer point, but not just 0.60." "We'll throw you 0.20 of a point if you stab Austria." "It will take you about four game years to eliminate me, but I'll concede now if you cut me in on 0.04 points." This sort of stuff could make for a clever variant, but the resulting games would be significantly different from what the Hobby has been doing for the last 30 years. As far as I'm concerned, Edi (E) and Steve Heinowski (G) didn't care to push Steve Cooley (I) to the wall, so Cooley is entitled to an equal share of the draw.

Dave McCrumb (3636 Old Town Rd, Shawsville VA 24162): I disagree with the type of draw proposed and passed in 89AM, the Demo Game. It's bad enough we allow finishes where Draws Include All Survivors (DIAS) is not in effect. Let's not get into percentages. How about an A/A/A/A/R/R/R/R/F draw? See, it can get ridiculous. And as for rating such a finish, I wouldn't even begin to touch it.

### *Fog of War Variant*

Randy Davis: About Pete Fuchs' question on Fog of War Diplomacy. I usurped the throne of Austria in the first playtest, "No Lullaby." I feel it could be an immensely interesting game, though as a standby, I've been more in the dark than in the fog. I began in 1905 with six units on two fronts. Needless to say, things look bleak! I'm now down to four centers in Winter 1906, and just hope for survival. It appears to be a G/T draw (hear that guys?)

### *Letter Column*

Mike Maston: Most of all, I do enjoy the lettercol. I know that you have to edit some of the correspondence that you receive, but the lettercol is outstanding! This is the type of thing that dippers, novices as well as old hands, would really enjoy reading. So keep up the good work!

Randolph Smyth: You seem to be precisely on the right track

for my tastes. I'm especially impressed by your editing of the letter column, keeping it to the interesting bits.

Dave McCrumb: DW 61 was great. The only objection I have is to the length of the letter column. Try to keep it to two pages.

### *Hood's All Relations Article*

Randy Davis: As I enjoyed most all the articles, your article on Austro-Italian relations was superb. I hope sometime to try the "Key Opening." If Austria had the immense trust in Italy required to perform this maneuver, it would be a landslide A/I victory. Giving Italy two builds in 1901 is the "Key," a fleet for the Lepanto and another unit to defend/attack France/Germany.

### *Carrier's Monopoly Article*

John Breakwell: The Monopoly piece was hard to follow as it used the US board but I think I got the idea.

Larry Cronin (6431 E Placita Zacatecas, Tucson AZ 85715): No other games / articles like the one on Monopoly. Get rid of 'em.

### *Caruso's PDORA Auction Allocations*

Andrew York: Could you fill us newcomers in on the PDORA program? How was it started? Why was it started? How are the recipients chosen for the ballot? How are the committee members chosen? It all is something new to me.

Editor: The People's Diplomacy Organization Relief Auction has been up and going since I came into the hobby in 1986, but I am not sure when it started. The basic purpose is to raise money for hobby services like the Boardman Number Custodian, who categorizes regular Dip gamestarts, and the Miller Number Custodian, who does the same for variants. I think, but don't bet the house on this, that John Caruso picks the Committee and that Committee votes on proposals submitted by the various hobby service providers. The items auctioned off are donated by hobbyists throughout North America, and include everything from gamestarts and free subscriptions to pictures of Melinda Holley. (!)

### *Hobby News*

Andrew York: I would very much like to attend some of the conventions you listed - and the registration/housing costs seem quite reasonable. The only problem for me is the transportation cost. Being underpaid (and who isn't) flying is out of the question, and driving would be difficult given my

job disallowing lengthy vacations. Oh well, maybe next year... AvalonCon would be spectacular, like a throwback to Origins II.

Larry Cronin: I loved the roundup of upcoming Cons and the list of new blood!

Fritz Juhnke (Reed College, Box 447, Portland OR 97202): For me, the least interesting articles are personal descriptions of "What I did at 'FudgeCon.'" I got the overriding sense that the people who go to tournaments live and breathe Diplomacy. I do not, and do not know who any of these people are. I do not care how little sleep people get between rounds, nor about their minivan breaking down. I am a fan of the game, so I did like the descriptions of how individual games were played. That gives me some insight into what good players think about when they play. Who cares what they think about when they don't play? I would like to see a slightly greater proportion of articles about how to play in specific situations. For example, although Jim Yerkey's description of how he got a win as Germany at Origins was instructive, it would have been more so if I could have seen the position. Then I would have been in the position to see why it was so devastating for France to have few armies and England to have few fleets. Perhaps more experienced players would find this kind of analysis boring, but it definitely would arouse my interest.

#### *Interview with Gary Behnen*

Dave McCrumb: The interview was excellent. Not only were the questions good, but Gary's answers were intelligent, thoughtful, and full of good advice.

Andy Lischett (2402 S Ridgeland Ave, Berwyn IL 60402): Brad Wilson is a good choice of interviewer. Your last interview with Gary Behnen read more like a questionnaire. The interviews will benefit from more of Brad's "bite," and need not be in every issue.

John Breakwell: *DW* articles on the whole are good reads though the writing could be improved in certain cases. The interview questions were stilted, for example, but the text of the answers was okay.

#### *Holley's Gunboat Tournament Article*

Randy Davis: It was interesting to read how each Power has fared in Melinda Holley's round robin Gunboat tournaments. This should tell people a little something on how to strategize their regular games. Seems to me, A/I would usually want to ally, at least through midgame. Interesting that the Western

Powers placed 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Turkey may take a beating in Gunboat now, thanks to this article. Perhaps Jeff McKee, Karl Hoffman and others might favor us with the outcomes of their tournaments for comparison's sake.

Dave McCrumb: I disagree with Melinda's premise in the Gunboat article. When I get all the gunboat games from Lee Kendter, Sr. (the new MNC) I plan to update my Gunboat rating system and write up a response. I will shoot for *DW* #64, but it will depend upon when I get the results.

Larry Cronin: Melinda Holley's article was well intentioned but dull. Too much detail on too little data. What I would like is for someone to write about openings and their relative success. I felt her conclusions were unconvincing.

#### *Greier's Zine Publishing Article*

Russ Fox: Bob Greier, in his article "So, You Wanna Publish a Zine?", left out a very important factor: time. Publishing a zine takes much more time than you think. When I published *Centurion* in the 1970s, I initially underestimated the amount of time it took to GM, type, copy, staple and lick stamps. I also found that more subscribers caused a multiplicative effect rather than an additive effect.

#### *Davis' 1898 Variant*

Fred Davis (3210K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City MD 21043): I was interested to read of the new Winter 1898 variant by Randy Davis. This reminded me that I had created a variant back in 1979 called Gusher Dip, where each Great Power started out with just one home center. However, I had two units in that center, to speed things up.

Editor: Fred's variant Gusher Dip will appear in *DW* 63. There was no space for it in this issue. Also appearing will be the latest version of Larry Cronin's variant "Perestroika."

Randy Davis: I hope nobody was confused with my typos on game year; certainly people could figure it out. I'm curious to see what kind of feedback we receive. Considering I'm not yet a publisher, I hope some other pubber out there will run a game or two. If there's any pubber out there willing to try it, I'm willing to sub and play in it. Perhaps the variant could be tried at DipCon?

Larry Cronin: I really liked the 1898 variant, and will probably run it.

John Breakwell: 1898 was a cute idea and I may try it in a FTF game just to add variety.

## Feature on Postal Sports Games

Dave McCrumb: The various Postal Sports Games were interesting. I am starting to get into these games more and

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As a GFL team owner, you'll start by drafting a team of real NFL players. You play a schedule against the rest of the League, and your scores are based on how well "your" players perform in their actual NFL games that weekend. You make the trades with other teams, you give your starting lineup to the Commissioner each week, and you coach your team -- if you can -- to victory in the coveted Gonzo Bowl.

Gonzo Football is played by mail. Game results are sent to you every week during the football season. You keep your team from year to year, participating in the draft each summer to try and keep your team strong for the upcoming season.

*This game is a blast! If you watch football on Sundays, you ~~own~~ players on TV!*

A new league is being organized, and you are cordially invited to play. We'll be drafting our 1991 teams in the next few weeks. If you're interested, write the Commissioner:

Bruce Linsey  
P.O. Box 1334  
Albany, NY 12201

...or call me at (518) 426-3022. I'll send you a free Gonzo starter kit containing: scoring rules, a sample game, and info on how to join.

*Just one! Just two! Play!!!*

more. I hope you continue to keep one page each issue on other types of PBM games. Not only could that broaden the Dip player's horizon, it might also bring new people in if they realize the diversity of games available.

## Berch's Dangerous Assumptions Article

John Breakwell: On the GM errors piece, there are a few things to bear in mind. You don't have to play in a zine if you don't like the house rules. A GM is likely to make amendments if a few players object strongly enough. Also, if you do accept the rules and they produce some problems, it is just another layer of complexity and makes the game a little harder - corrupted information from one's battlefield sources, perhaps?

## Dragonstooth Rating System

Andy Lischett: Like others who commented on the Dragonstooth listing, either I don't understand it or it's not accurate. If I remember correctly, since 1978 I've had 4 wins and 1 3-way draw out of 5 games started as an original player; plus a win, 2 or 3 draws, and 3 or 4 survivals or eliminations in standby positions. That should be better than Don Scheifler's 1 win and 1 draw out of 11 games.

Editor: This is what I get for relying on the records of the previous custodian of the Dragonstooth system. I will have to depend on player's sending me corrections to fix the various inaccuracies. Another problem is the lack of any reported 1990 game finishes.

## DW History

Walt Buchanan (3025 West 250 North, Lebanon IN 46052):

Receiving DW 61 made me feel like a proud father. You are doing an excellent job with the zine and have raised it to its highest professional standard yet. In my opinion your content is also right on track and the issue is just the right size so as not to tire the reader. I also like your idea of a letter column by subject matter. Your readers may be interested in the following listing:

Issue	Publisher	Editor
1-15	Walt Buchanan	Walt Buchanan
16-20	Walt Buchanan	Conrad von Metzke
21-27	Jerry Jones	Jerry Jones
28-38	Rod Walker	Rod Walker
39	Kathy Byrne	Rod Walker
40-59	Larry Peery	Larry Peery
60-now	David Hood	David Hood

It is amazing to me to think that a number of your readers were not born when DW was started in 1974. Anyway, keep up the good work. If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know.

Editor: Actually, one of the most pleasant surprises I have had in doing DW was the help I have received from past editors and publishers of the zine. I had thought my drastic format and layout changes would alienate the old guard, but so far this has not happened. I would personally like to think Conrad and Walt for their help to date, as well as a special thanks to Larry Peery. Without his efforts to rescue the zine back in 1985, none of this would have been possible. The DW Old Guard will have their two cents in next issue, when we do a feature on the history of *Diplomacy World*.

David Charlton (150 The Parade, Island Bay, Wellington, New Zealand): I subscribed to DW in the late 1970s, and was extremely interested in Adam Gruen's articles - a seven part series on the countries of Diplomacy. As far as I am aware, Turkey and Russia did not appear up to issue 22 in Summer 1979. Any similar articles on strategy and tactics are looked forward to. I could be interested in back issues of DW if there is an indication of contents.

Editor: I'll look up those Gruen articles and tell you if they ever appeared. There should be a list of available back issues somewhere else in this issue of the zine, along with other items for sale by the DW family.

## Contents in General

Fritz Juhnke: I am afraid that beginners like myself are often scared away from postal Diplomacy by a sense that an elite club controls everything that happens. Either I must commit oodles of time to breaking into the inner circle, or I don't



count. This keeps people from staying on the periphery. A few are brought in, while most are pushed out. Those criticisms aside, however, I enjoyed reading *Diplomacy World* 60. The Fog of War variant sounds intriguing. I may use the Lisbon Leapfrog as an anti-English opening. I am fascinated by Pete Clark's tabulation of the success rates of the seven powers in postal Diplomacy. I also like the discussions of scoring and rating systems.

Rex Martin: The content looks to be as good or better than anything else available - a nice mix of strategy, hobby news and personal opinions. I will be placing a small blurb in the next *General*. Hopefully it will bring you some new subscribers.

Alan Levin (7042 Carol, Niles IL 60648): I just received the Winter 1991 issue of *Diplomacy World* and liked it a lot. By the way, I really enjoyed the letter column and "The Unabashed Bo(t)" and wouldn't mind seeing more of both.

Pete Gaughan: Again a good issue of *DW*. Packed with stuff. I hope you'll keep a balance - you could wind up using too much of your material and running short in a future issue. Hold something out for the future, as I'm sure everyone would be happy to get 28 pages for the price you're charging. I thank you for the con plug, but why didn't you mention the Marco Poll?

Editor: Oversight on my part. It shall be rectified. My format requires a page count of 32, so that is not likely to change. (I guess I could

It's the time of year again for the People's Diplomacy Auction to try to raise money to help fund hobby services. Last year we raised \$406.37. It's you the hobbyist who makes the auction a success. So please plug the auction if you are a pubber. By all means contact me if you something to auction off. Just send me a description of the item(s), including any minimum price or postage costs. All items will be listed in a booklet which will be mailed out at the end of June. Possible auction items include zine subscriptions, game openings, games, horoscopes, coins, stamps, old zines, Diplomacy memorabilia, photos, etc. Thanks for your help: John Caruso, 636 Astor St, Norristown PA 19401.

go up to 40 at some point...) So far I have had articles left over every time, but I will keep your warning in mind.

Larry Cronin: I'd like to see some articles on the psychology of playing Dip, given what goofballs, obsessives and otherwise loony my fellow Dippers are. No one writes much about how to exploit your fellow players' character or lack thereof. In general, brevity of articles is best. I like the one-page articles.

Andy Lischett: Reprinting stuff like "The Unabashed Bo(t)"

is a good idea because lots of good stuff is otherwise only read by 30 or 40 people. You might also consider reprinting good non-Diplomacy stuff once in a while (but not often) to give people a taste for things offered in other Diplomacy zines.

Mark Nelson (21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds, West Riding LS12 2AP, England): I have spent the rest of this week writing letters to various North American hobbyists severely rubbishing *DW* 60. I review the zine from an international perspective and find it wanting and of no use whatsoever to the internationally-minded. It should perhaps be renamed *Diplomacy USA*. Now, I hope that you don't get the wrong idea from all this criticism that I am out to lash out against you. I hope in fact that you will find my comments positive and comments worth mulling over. My criticism is intended to achieve a truly internationally-oriented *DW* in the future.

Editor: Obviously no offense is taken, and I welcome the criticism. Indeed, I have put Mark in as International Editor so that he can address whatever problems he identifies with international coverage.

### The Zine in General

Bruno Berken (av. de la Basilique 331 - Bte 5, B-1080 Bruxelles, Belgium): *Diplomacy World* is a real professional zine! The quality of the articles, and also of the printing and layout, are exceptional. All these are positive points, but there is an important negative point: the price. \$20 for four issues is too much for a young student. It's a pity; I really wanted to subscribe to *DW*. A second negative point is that *DW* runs no games. How come?

Editor: The zine is really meant to be more of a discussion and articles zine than a games rag. Quarterly would be just too slow and cumbersome for games. The only exception is the Demo Game, which becomes more of an article than a game report. As for costs, you could also sub at the surface mail rate, five dollars cheaper.

Bruce Linsey (PO Box 1334, Albany NY 12201): I have decided, after all, to sub to *DW*. Why did I change my mind? Several reasons. 1) You are doing an astonishing job and I wish to support it. 2) You are completely even-handed when it comes to feud-type material and situations. 3) I wish to keep in touch with the hobby I loved for years. 4) Your New Blood listing, which I hope will continue, may be a good way for me to recruit people into Gonzo sports.

Robert Staats (300 Cresta Vista, San Francisco CA, 94127): You have a wonderful zine running now. It is leaps and bounds better than before issue #60. Right now I cannot think of anything that would improve *DW*, but I am sure that something will come to me by the time the next issue is out.



# AVALONCON

## If you hold it, they will come

**HOLD WHAT?** AvalonCon—Avalon Hill's first game-playing-only convention.

**WHEN?** August 23-25, 1991; Friday 9am thru Sunday 5pm.

**WHERE?** Penn Harris Inn & Convention Center, Camp Hill (Harrisburg) PA. A pleasant suburban setting nestled between I-81, I-83, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

**HOW MUCH?** \$20 to Pre-Registrants. That's it! Two sawbucks covers three days of play. No extra fees. You'll get a FREE T-Shirt, FREE A.R.E.A. rating membership, FREE parking, and a convention program mailed to you prior to the festivities. Children 14 and under and spectators admitted FREE.

**LODGING?** Only \$60 per room per day at the Penn Harris when you mention AVALONCON. That's 50% off the regular rate every day—whether you stay just Friday and Saturday or come early and stay late. With four in a room that's only \$15 a night per person. Make your hotel reservation now by calling Toll Free 1-800-345-7366 to reserve your room with most major credit cards, or write P.O. Box 839, Camp Hill, PA 17001-0839.

**THE GAMES?** You'll be competing in either Avalon Hill or Victory games in a wide variety of formats. Among the 40 tournaments will be ASL, AFRIKA KORPS, BRITANNIA, BULGE '91 (brand new), CIVILIZATION, DIPLOMACY, FLIGHT LEADER, KINGMAKER, PANZERBLITZ, RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN, RUSSIAN FRONT, SQUAD LEADER, THIRD REICH, TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD, UP FRONT, VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC, WAR AT SEA, WATERLOO, and WS&IM. Plus there will be round-the-clock Open Gaming and special events such as a weekend long Campaign Game of SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

**WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?** Association with fellow boardgamers. This is YOUR convention! Be part of the greatest assemblage of boardgaming talent since ORIGINS '75! Revel in the knowledge that you have competed against the very best the hobby can offer during the Avalon Hill Championships. Winners will receive personal plaques, plus a permanent place on the Roll of Champions Plaque displayed at all future AvalonCons and acknowledgement of their prowess in The GENERAL.

**WHAT ABOUT THE FAMILY?** You don't pay if you don't play. Spectators get in free, as do children 14 and under. Our entire staff will be on hand to demonstrate the Avalon Hill entry level games. Today's novice may be tomorrow's champion.

The non-players in your family can swim, watch cable tv or the live comedy in the Sensations nightclub, or visit the many attractions (including nearby Hershey Park and Gettysburg battlefield) that make central Pennsylvania a veritable vacationland. Make a week of it!



**WHAT CAN I BUY THERE?** Zilch! Well, maybe a coke and a bite to eat. There will be no dealers. No flea markets. No auctions. No event tickets. Just pure, unadulterated boardgame competition. However, Avalon Hill will have a representative on hand to fill any special order direct from the factory to you before you leave Sunday afternoon.

**WHAT'S THE CATCH?** You're right; this is not a money-making venture. Our intent is to promote renewed interest in the world's best strategy boardgames. This show of support to gamers is our way of saying that come Hell or high water, Avalon Hill is, has, and always will be 110% behind the competitive play of our games. We hope to restore the pride of achievement that playing our games can bring.

**SUCH SELFLESS DEDICATION IS ADMIRABLE. HOW CAN I HELP?**

Recruit others to attend. Bring a team of four to participate in the Boardgaming Team Championship. Volunteer to run an event. Bring an interested youngster.

**WHAT DO I DO NOW?** Mark the date—August 23-25. Reserve your room. Then pre-register as soon as possible. At-the-door admission is higher and does not include a free t-shirt, so send your request for pre-registration forms to:



## The Avalon Hill Game Company

4517 Harford Road ★ Baltimore, MD 21214 ★ PHONE: 301-254-9200 ★ FAX: 301-254-0991

# The 1991 Runestone Poll

## ZINE POLL

You may rate any amateur postal or e-mail zine that you've read enough of to rate fairly. This means you've seen (or would have seen if not for delays) *at least* two issues since August 1, 1990. Only North American zines are eligible, but anyone may vote. Rate each zine from 0 (the worst) to 10 (the best)—no fractions, please. Do not rate your own zine. Blanks are for zines I forgot to list.

— The Abyssinian Prince	— Disoriented Express	— Pereleandra
— Acropolis	— DMZ	— Perestroika
— Against the Odds	— DOGS of War	— Pilot Light
— Alpha & Omega	— Dimer Dip	— Pirate
— Angst United	— Down at the Mouth	— The Prince
— The Appalachian General	— Electric Trains	— Protocol
— ark	— Electronic Protocol	— Protozoan
— The Armchair Diplomat	— Empire	— Punt Formation
— The Assassin's Blade	— The Encounter	— Ralls by Mail
— Been There, Done That	— Excelsior	— Ramblings by Moonlight
— benzene	— fast track	— Rebel
— Blade Wars	— The Gamer's Zine	— Retaliation
— Boast	— Get Them Dots Now!	— So I Lied
— The Boob Report	— Gonzo Rails	— Son of Flip
— Buckeye Rail Gazette	— Graustark	— Starwood
— The Canadian Diplomat	— Heroes of Olympus	— The Swiss Observer
— Carolina Cnd & Cmnty	— The Home Office	— The Tactful Assassin
— Caveat Emplor	— Hoodwink	— Ter-ran
— Cheeseake	— Kathy's Korner	— This Train...
— Comrades in Arms	— Kempelen's Turk	— Thorzeen
— Concordia	— Lemon Curry	— Twains
— The Continuing Crisis	— Mad Dog	— Tyronania
— Costaguana	— Maniac's Paradise	— Upstart
— Countermeasures	— Massacre by Treachery	— Verigo
— Crimson Sky	— The Megadiplomat	— Victims Wanted
— ... David Watts	— Megalomaniac	— War Fair
— Dipadedoodah!	— The Messenger	— Well, Martha...
— Diplocus	— The Metadiplomat	— White House Mania
— Diplomacy Digest	— Moiré	— Why Me?
— Diplomacy Downs	— Niccolo	— The Zine Register
— Diplomacy Tribune	— Northern Flame	— BOOT HILL
— Diplomacy World	— Not New York	—
— Diplomag	— Ohio Acres	—
— Dippy	— Orphan Son	—
— Dippy Doings	— ... Pedro...	—
— Disease City	— Penguin Dip	—

## ADVERTISEMENT

For copies of the main lists (zines, subzines, and GMs), check here — and enclose \$0 cents, two 29 cent U.S. stamps, or an issue of your zine in which you publish a ballot. For the Poll publication, check here — and enclose a donation of \$5.00 or more. Last year's publication was 100 pages long. It contained main lists, articles, statistical analysis, and everything else you'd want to know! Thanks for your donations; they really help.

## SUBZINE POLL

A subzine is a regular section of a zine which is (a) edited by someone other than the zine editor(s), or (b) edited by the zine editor(s), but devoted to a specific hobby service. Any subzine of a North American zine is eligible. The other instructions are the same as those for the Zine Poll.

— Asterion	— Poll Talk	— Top Knife
— The Blind Wars	— The Popular Front	— The Unabashed Bo(t)
— CDO News	— Reginald Maundling...	— The Unzine Voice
— DIDOES	— Ring Finger in Rear	— War Correspondant
— The Eccentric Diplomat	— Seriously Folks	— Water on the Knee
— Extremism in Defense...	— Shut Up Jack!!!	— The Whipping Post
— The First Negotiator	— Slappy's Sports Section	—
— Foot in Mouth	— Sports Beat	—
— It's Me Again	— Standard Deviation	—
— Karmel's Panorama	— Subwithoname	—
— Notes from the Bunker	— Tennessee Rails	—

## GM POLL

You may rate any GM under whom you played any postal or e-mail game since August 1, 1990 for long enough to assess his or her competence. Only North American GMs are eligible, but anyone may vote. List GMs alphabetically by name (not zine). Rate each GM from 0 (the worst) to 10 (the best)—no fractions, please. GMs may not rate themselves.

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Send this ballot to **Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St., Milford, MA 01757.** You have until June 30, 1991 to vote, but please vote early.

Indicate one way in which you take part in the North American postal or e-mail gaming hobby (sub to zine XXX, play in game 1989YY, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (If I can't tell who you are or your ballot isn't signed, it may not be counted!)

Print your name neatly \_\_\_\_\_

Check here — if you do not want your name on the list of voters.

## RUNESTONE POLL CONTEST

Guess the Zine Poll winner—this year's prize is a travel Diplomacy board with magnetic pieces. To be eligible you must vote in the Poll and correctly guess the winning zine; I will pick the contest winner at random from the set of eligible entrants. The names of the winner and any other eligible entrants will be published in the Poll publication.

To enter, \_\_\_\_\_ The zine you think will win: \_\_\_\_\_  
 print your \_\_\_\_\_  
 address \_\_\_\_\_  
 neatly: \_\_\_\_\_

# Removing the Offensive Side

by Conrad von Metzke and Jim Burgess

Of all the hobby award schemes that have been advanced over the years, only the "Runestone" Poll — the annual ranking of all the hobby's amateur journals through open balloting — has achieved anything approaching universal acceptance and durability. The huge participation garnered by the poll (usually ranging between a quarter and a half of the hobby) gives it the aura of validity that only high-percentage voting can impart. It also reflects the essential simplicity of the poll's premise: which Diplomacy journal is the best in a given year, and how do they all compare to one another? Is it any wonder the "Runestone" simply is called the "Poll" by nearly everyone in the hobby? Unfortunately, there is an inherent weakness in this very simplicity. For every winner there necessarily must be a loser and for every journal that is shown to be of high quality by its positive standing in the Poll, another must be shown (at least by implication) to be of poor quality by its low result. Leaving aside the question of whether publishers of amateur journals should be forced to have their publications judged in this way, these are not necessarily valid conclusions.

One major dilemma is the apples-and-oranges syndrome. All journals do not come to the Poll on an equal footing and in quite a few cases this is intentional. Some editors have large amounts of time, money, design capabilities and access to printing technology. They are able to spew forth issue after issue of a journal of large size, beautiful printing and graphics using unique designs, and numerous games being well-managed consistently. Unquestionably, a journal meeting these specifications must be ranked "excellent" and would be a top finisher in the year's Poll. Other editors lack the luxuries of one or another of these resources. So, rather than foolishly trying to do what they cannot sustain, they shoot at another target. They issue a small product of limited circulation running just a few games.

Is it reasonable to suggest that the larger, slicker journal necessarily is better? Based on voting patterns, the hobby obviously thinks it is. No small journal (under a ten-page average) has won the Poll in the past ten years. Moreover, only a tiny handful of such journals has been among the top ten finishers. Conversely, no journal exceeding twenty-four pages per average issue ever has finished in the bottom ten. Thus the hobby obviously feels (to quote from a recent letter from Randolph Smyth) that "bigger is better."

Doesn't this automatically reduce the Poll, or at least the Top Ten aspect of it, to a competition among the big fat publications whose editors possess the resources to make the fight? Doesn't this tend to undervalue and discourage the smaller efforts, disregarding the achievement or perhaps

even over-achievement of their stated aims?

A second weakness in the Poll is the automatic assumption by the hobby that the bottom of the heap must be bad, inasmuch as that is the logical opposite of the top of the heap, which is (of course) good. In the 1990 Poll there were seventy-five journals listed in the final results. Without specifically knowing the journals involved, how would you feel about number No. 75? Isn't it almost certainly the worst, that the hobby has to offer? Would you be inclined to subscribe or join a game? If No. 75 is too extreme, what about No. 60 — four-fifths of the way down the list? For that matter, what about the lower 50%?

If you have a 1990 listing take a look. The journals in the bottom 50% have these characteristics: they are smaller, they garnered fewer votes and the majority are relatively new. Is this the way to encourage new publishers in the hobby? If the encouragement is to get bigger, to live beyond one's means, then is it difficult to believe that the Poll might be contributing to folds and be a discouraging input to publishers?

Of course, in a perfect world, all publishers would be able to distinguish their peer group (those journals of the same size, running similar number of games, having similar types of features and using similar printing technology) and compare themselves in a meaningful way. Those of us who have been around a while and see most of our peer publications probably do this without thinking, though a poor number can't help but be distressing. Now, to be fair, there are a few journals in the bottom half that deserve to be there; this hobby does contain its share of trash. But there also are journals there because they have slipped from their own prior standards — not that they are necessarily "poor" now, just that they aren't as "good" as they once were — and at least a couple are there as a specific slap to the editors, who just happen to be relatively obnoxious and offensive people (but whose publications may be perfectly decent when taken by themselves.)

These are not the criteria on which the Poll was founded, nor toward which it is currently strives. They are inevitable consequences of the fact that the voters are human beings. Thus, given that there is no reasonable way to change the voters, we might consider changing the Poll so that such extraneous factors don't intrude on the process quite so much and so that bottom-ranked journals automatically do not appear to be "the pits."

But first, the other end of the Poll seems to have a disturbing impact on the hobby as well. A "Runestone curse" seems to have developed where almost all of the recent top

finishers have been guilty of "living beyond their means," blowing out resources to win the Poll that they can't sustain over the long haul. This certainly doesn't serve the hobby very well as games are abandoned or slow to a snail's pace. This is a human nature problem as well. Put out the brass ring and people lean off the merry-go-round horse to try to grab it. More often than not, they fall off. In a hobby these things happen anyway and you can't stop people from making the effort. No recommendations are to be made here, except to emphasize the importance of long term consistency. The Poll book already does all it can by publishing long term trends for the top journals.

One possible change discussed over the years, and more or less abandoned as a viable alternative, is to sort out the eligible journals into categories. Small journals would compete against other small journals, intentionally irregular journals with others having the same goals, letter column journals against other wordy personality-oriented publications. Fairness would be bought at an impossible price since

#### 1990/91 British Postal Diplomacy Zeen Poll

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Electric Monk       | 10. Ode                   |
| 2. Y d'draig Goch      | 11. Prisoners of War      |
| 3. A Step Further Out  | 12. Bloodstock            |
| 4. Realpolitik         | 13. Arfle Barfle Gloop    |
| 5. Home of the Brave   | 14. Now Eat the Rabbitt   |
| 6. Cut & Thrust        | 15. Mopsy                 |
| 7. Dolchstoss          | 16. Ac Mong               |
| 8. C'est Magnifique    | 17. Springboard           |
| 9. Take That You Fiend | 18. Small Furry Creatures |

This is a list of the top half of the Zeen Poll results. A full listing is available from pollster Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, York, N. Yorkshire, YO3 7JD, U.K. Ask for his analysis of the results, or ask for Pete Sullivan's (address on page 31.)

you would have to give up simplicity. Either the pollster would have to make arbitrary assignments to categories or you would have to make the voters categorize the journals they vote for, greatly complicating the voting and compilation. Besides, within categories some journals still have to be last. With more categories more journals will be ranked last. This is not an improvement.

The other principal idea to take the edge off the downside of the Poll is to ask the pollster to release voting only for the top third or so of the complete list of journals reaching the minimum number of votes. Thus a journal could fail to make the main list either by not getting sufficient votes or by not achieving a score in the top 30. All of these journals would be listed alphabetically (as is done now for the group with insufficient number of voters.) The fanatic statistic-freaks who seem to be driving the call for "completeness" would not suffer since they could re-create the "Bottom 45" if they so wished. It also strikes us that these amateur statisticians are capable of plying their trade in other areas of the hobby where

completeness is not only less offensive, but more useful. (The author who is professionally trained in statistics will spare you a discussion of the reasons why such attempts to use the Poll as statistical data are a great example of "how to lie with statistics" since such discussions in the past have sidetracked the essential point that completeness is offensive and unfair!)

If you want to avoid the objection that the bottom rung of anything looks like a bottom rung, we suggest listing the top thirty journals as a "Gold Medal List," "Silver Medal List" and "Bronze Medal List" for each respective group of ten to keep the listings strongly focused on the positive achievements. There is no question that this is mere veneer. Fine, the odd bit of gloss here and there never hurt a soul.

Another objection to softening the reporting of the bottom of the rankings is that some of the journals in the bottom rank really *ought* to be there as a warning to the hobby. Indeed it does; however, we suggest that implicit accusation of severe improprieties is grossly unfair. Specifically accusing poor journals of their failings is not, to our mind, a proper function of the Poll or the Pollster. If warnings are needed — and in some cases they may be — a mechanism other than a supposedly neutral Poll needs to be found to issue those warnings. Since we support abolishing the "0" vote as a feud weapon and its general incompatibility with an amateur hobby publications poll, we do not support using low votes to establish these warnings. The Poll *should* rate journals on a 1-10 scale, but the pollster could require a zero vote to be accompanied by a reason or reasons from a checklist including GM honesty, deadline reliability and other non-feuding items. As we said, we don't believe this should be a part of the Poll, but if that is the point of completeness, do it right. Besides, word of mouth seems to have worked rather well over the years to issue appropriate warnings and the few major rip-offs in hobby history invariably have been "top ranked" journals that were being touted by one and all until suddenly...

The final objection to limiting the list worth mentioning is that the full polling data are needed so that the hobby can verify the accuracy and honesty of the pollster's work. This, to us, is silly. You need the complete set of ballots to verify the results, not a complete listening of the votes. You have to double-check the original data entered into the Poll, matrix, a task none of us should have the time or inclination to undertake. The concern that publishers have had at this point is whether or not people who haven't seen a particular journal were voting for it anyway (presumably with a feud-driven low vote.) If a particular publisher is concerned about voter credentials, that is an entirely different issue from communication of results. All a publisher needs to lodge a complaint is the voluntary list of all voters and the number of votes the journal received. That seems to be best dealt with on a personal basis between the pollster and the publisher. Then the pollster can double check the actual ballots if it seems

necessary. In the present context, we consider this to be more of an excuse to avert change than a genuine reason.

And the bottom line is, you ask, who cares!? Just how important is this matter? Well, in the context of world famine and the liberation of Kuwait, it is a pretty marginal matter. Yet, some changes might give marginal incentives to run solid turnaround games in a wide variety of publishing styles rather than the all-too-common belated flashy journals we all see. There certainly is no harm in exploring ways to remove unnecessary negatives from a generally "Good Thing" to

make it an "Even Better Thing." The precise method for doing this is open to discussion. For the moment, it is sufficient to establish the principle that improvement is felt by many to be needed if the Poll is to have the stature and influence it deserves. Give the matter some thought; comments and criticisms are welcome.

>Conrad von Metzke (4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117) publishes *Costaguana*, while Jim Burgess (100 Holden St, Providence RI 02908) publishes *Boob Report*.

## Poll Talk #7

by Eric Brosius

Welcome to a special edition of *Poll Talk*! This subzine usually lives in Bruce McIntyre's *Excelsior*, but this issue it is vacationing in *Diplomacy World*. Conrad von Metzke and Jim Burgess have written an article which discusses some problems associated with the Poll, and they have asked me to write a reply presenting my viewpoint as Pollster.

There is no question that there are problems with the current system. Perhaps the most serious is the fact that smaller and less glamorous zines often finish far down the list, despite that they appear regularly and accomplish what they set out to do. I publish a small and rather "warehousey"

zine myself, and I assure you that reading the anguished protests of my fellow editors gives me no joy.

The authors decry the popular sentiment that "bigger is better." They have a point, although to me they almost seem to be claiming that the reverse is true. Both sides of this controversy have their supporters, but I believe it is a red herring. The Poll does not pretend to rate zines on an objective basis; if it did, I would not bother to send out ballots. The Poll is an attempt to measure the popularity of the hobby's zines — to reflect the opinions of the mass of hobbyists. Think of it as you would think of a best-seller list, or as an All-

## New Blood

Here is a list of people relatively new to the Hobby. You publishers send these people some samples!

Nick Benedict, 16 Duggan Ave, Toronto Ont, M4V 1Y2  
Chris Evitts, 802 North St #1, Murphysboro IL 62966  
Allen Mohs, 1611 Maryland Ave, Sheboygan WI 53081  
John Noah, 1171 W Main NH #2 rm313, Decatur IL 62522  
Brian Youse, 8191 Turn Loop Rd, Glen Burnie MD 21061  
David Charlton, 150 The Parade, Island Bay, Wellington NZ  
J.D. Hudson, 8485 E 22nd St #350, Tucson AZ 85710  
Terrence Miller, PO Box 28, Lynnwood WA 98046  
Charles Ramsey, 220 W Bell Rd #3110, Phoenix AZ 85023  
Ram Avrahami, 3650 Chestnut St Box 7, Philadelphia PA 19104  
Kurt Kuhlmann, 39 Maxwell Rd, Chapel Hill NC 27514  
Marc Selby, 236 Laurel Meadows Dr, W Columbia SC 29169  
Mark Offutt, OTA 107-11 Wakayama City, Japan 640  
Rick Weindel, 6685 Greenback Ln, Citrus Heights CA 95621  
James Pelton, 1365 Bradbury Rd, San Marino CA 91108  
Brad Torgan, 303A Ridgecrest Dr, Chapel Hill NC 27514  
Ed Averett, 1002 W Forest Hills Blvd, Durham NC 27707  
Ken Hausle, 509 Church St, Chapel Hill NC 27516  
David Kohburn, 7712 White Dove Dr, Indianapolis IN 46256  
Don Snemis, 8558 Appleby Ln, Indianapolis IN 46256  
Arul Inthirarajah, 7500A Beach Rd, the Plaza, no 23-315, Singapore, 0719  
Keith West, 4828 Gatwick Dr, Virginia Beach VA 23462.

## Game Openings

Here is a list of zines with game openings:

*Costaguana*, Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117 (Dip, Gunboat, standbys for Downfall).  
*Carolina Command & Commentary*, Michael Lowrey, 3241G Walnut Creek Pkwy, Raleigh NC 27606 (Dip, Viking Dip, International Dip).  
*Ohio Acres*, John Fisher, 20811D Bear Valley Rd #120, Apple Valley CA 92308 (Dip, Acquire).  
*Dogs of War*, Kevin Kinsel, 21561 Oakbrook, Mission Viejo CA 92692 (Gunboat, Machiavelli, Midway, Stellar Conquest).  
*Crimson Sky*, Mike Gonsalves, 530 Teasure Lake, Dubois PA 15801 (Dip).  
*Orphanson*, Bob Hartwig, 6612 W 113th Ave, Westminster CO 80020 (Gunboat, Dip standbys).  
*C'est Magnifique*, Pete Sullivan, 16 Neile Close, Romanby, NORTHALLERTON, N Yorkshire, DL7 8NN U.K. (International Diplomacy, International Downfall standbys).  
*Moire*, Tim Moore, 405 Fair Dr #101, Costa Mesa CA 92626 (Dip, Gunboat).  
*Diplomacy Downs* Bruce Reiff, 432 Caldwell Dr, Cincinnati OH 45216 (Dip, Origins of WWII, Win Place or Show).  
*Perestroika*, Larry Cronin, PO Box 40090, Tucson AZ 85717 (Perestroika VI, Dip, Anarchy Perestroika).  
*The Diplomat*, Thomas Franke, Haarenufer 12, D-2900 Oldenburg, Germany (Inf Dip, Dip for Germans)



Star game. It may honor the deserving and the undeserving alike, but it does reflect the opinions of the masses.

For this reason I do not believe the article's suggestion that voters be required to justify their votes is appropriate. In many cases I know perfectly well why a particular voter gives a zine a "0". If Bugs Bunny published a zine, Daffy Duck would give it a "0" in the Poll. We all know why — everything Bugs says and does drives Daffy crazy. It wouldn't be objective — of course it wouldn't be objective — but that's how Daffy feels. Every All-Star game includes over-the-hill players whose skills no longer justify the honor, but whom the fans still want to watch. It's the same with the Poll.

On the one hand, I agree that voters should not be allowed to vote for zines which they are not qualified to rate. I can and will throw out votes if I am certain this is happening. On the other hand, while I have done no extensive study, I'm certain that almost all of the votes used in the Poll are legitimate. \*

The part of the article that I find most thought-provoking is the discussion of "softening the reporting of the bottom of the rankings." This is a worthy objective; it is not the Poll's job to put the bottom of the list in its place. Last year I provided a Poll summary which listed only those zines that finished at or above the average, and most zines printed only this summary. The article suggests that a

"Top Thirty", but top half would be better suited to lists of different sizes, after all, the top thirty subziness would comprise just about the whole list! I would like to take further steps in this direction if I can do so without withholding information from those who want it.

\* Any publisher or GM who is concerned about vote fraud may send me a distribution or player list, and I will check it against the ballots. Of course, there are problems. Players in Gunboat games are eligible to vote in the GM Poll, and you can hardly list them. Voters often read zines belonging to someone else; this is perfectly legitimate. But if a pattern of abuse is present, I will probably be able to spot it and do something about it.

Years ago you could obtain a list of those who voted for your zine. This led to publishers printing stalments like "I've gotten the list of voters for *Zine Heaven*, and the only person who could possibly have given me a '0' is John Doe. Well, he can just..." From my experience entering ballots, I suspect such staements were incorrect. I'm determined not to be a party to such abuse.

>Eric Brosius (41 Hayward St, Milford MA 01757) publishes the postal rail games zine *Ark* along with running the Runestone Poll. *Poll Talk* is an infrequent feature in several zines, focusing on the Poll, its methodology, and its results.

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