

Summer 1992

# Diplomacy World

No. 67



## Napoleonic Wars

by James Nelson

## Editor's Desk

This issue is being distributed free to attendees of the Diplomacy event at the 1992 AvalonCon. Welcome to the Diplomacy hobby! This magazine can serve as your entry into our hobby, with articles on the game, variants, hobby features, and letters all for your enjoyment. If you have any questions about this zine, or about the hobby at large, do not hesitate to contact the editor either at the Con or later by mail.

This hobby is centered around postal and email games, but as you can see from the zine's contents, that is not the exclusive area of interest. You should find reports on two other Diplomacy events of the summer later in this issue, along with announcements about various awards and polls conducted by the hobby each year. You can also tell from the discussions in various features that our hobby's zines do much more than just run Diplomacy games. There are lots of other types of games being run by mail, as well as reading material in many zines on such subjects as sports, politics, and music, just to name a few. (There is even a zine focused on professional wrestling, we are ashamed to say...)

You old hands will know that I often spend time in this column talking about the articles left over that will be going into the next issue. This will be no exception. Next issue will include, among other things, Larry Peery on Choosing a Zine, Paul Glenn on the slow approach to playing Germany, and Fritz Juhnke on his fruitless search for a Diplomacy ratings system. There will also be, of course, the normal features

from the Demonstration game moves and commentary to the hobby news section and lettercolumn review. Deadline for submissions to next issue will be October 1.

Those of you receiving this by mail need to take a look right now at the number in parenthesis on your mailing label. That is your subscription expiration number. If it says "67", this is the last issue you will receive unless you renew at the rates printed below. There have been many readers who miss one or two issues before realizing it, so make sure you send in those renewal checks promptly if you don't want to miss any spine-tingling issue of *DW*.

Please note that I am now taking applications for the position of Strategy and Tactics Editor for this zine. Mark Berch has served in that capacity ably for many years, but given his lower level of hobby involvement, he's decided to step aside for newer blood. I have some ideas about whom I would select as his replacement, but want to throw the floor open to anyone who thinks they could do a good job. Basically what I need is someone to commit to writing 2-3 articles per year, as well as to consult with me on story ideas and actual submitted articles.

The first submissions from newly installed Interview Editor Phil Reynolds and Email Editor Eric Klien appear this time, and I think you'll agree with me that they are off to a good start. If anyone else has a story idea out there, do not hesitate to let me know.

## DipWorld

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## Hobby News

Topping off the hobby news section this time are the results of various Polls and awards in the Diplomacy hobby. First off, kindly note the DipCon and Runestone Poll results printed elsewhere in this issue.

Second, let me announce the hobby awards results as released by Ron Cameron's ~~teady~~ agent Andy York at this year's Kansas City DipCon. The Don Miller Award for hobby service was won by John Boardman, with 22 votes. John began the entire postal Diplomacy hobby back in 1963 with the publication of his first *Graustark*, a publication which is still going strong. The John Koning Award for outstanding play went to Gary Behnen, 1991 DipCon winner and postal Dip master, for the THIRD YEAR IN A ROW! 'Nuff said. The Rod Walker Award for literary excellence went to Garret Schenck for the publication of issue 19 of the *Zine Register*. Yep, that's the same one that got all that bad press. Finally, the Melinda Holley Award for quantity participation went to Kathy Caruso for her many standby positions throughout the hobby. I can speak from experience that Kathy is a big boost to any standby list.

Next year, Ron Cameron will no longer be running the Hobby Awards - that job will have passed to Dave McCrumb.

One thing I did not have room for this issue is the new PDORA Auction booklet put out by Doug Kent (54 W Cherry St #211, Rahway NJ 07065). This is an auction consisting of

materials donated by Dip hobbyists, from gamestarts and free zines to things like copies of *Tactics II* and *Afrika Korps*. The purpose here is to auction the material off to interested bidders, with all proceeds going to support hobby services. I encourage everyone to write to Doug for a copy of the booklet so that bids may be submitted by the deadline of October 2. Don't forget to bid on all those back issues and subscriptions to *Diplomacy World*.

My report on this year's DixieCon is somewhere towards the back of this issue. For the record, let me tell you the top finishers in this year's 54-person event - 1) Mark Franceschini, 2) Tom Kobrin, 3) Phil Sasse, 4) Mark Stegeman, 5) Bob Odear, 6) Phil Reynolds, 7) Jason Nichols. We had an absolute blast this year, and I even managed to come in second in the first annual DixieCon Open United tournament. A DixieCon Results Booklet is available from me if you are interested. Those interested in more gaming may want to try my housecon in Hickory the second weekend in November.

The results for the first annual European Zine Poll results are out, and are available in their entirety from Xavier Blanchot, 99 bd Raspail, F-75006, Paris, France. The top ten zines in the Poll were: 1) Rhein Necker Zine (Lukas Kautzsch), 2) Trahison! (Blanchot), 3) Lepanto 4-Ever (Per Westling), 4) Enkidu (Roland Rolling), 5) Amtsblatt (Michael Blumohr), 6) Prisoners of War (Wallace Nicholl), 7) Small

Furry Creature Press (Theo Clarke), 8) La Gazette des Spo (Fredric Abrassert), 9) Electric Monk (Madi Smith) and 10) Dolchstoss (Richard Sharp). By my count, that is four British, one Belgian, two Swedish, two French, and one German zine. Not bad for the first one. You may also want to write Xavier to find out details about the First European Diplomacy Championships, to be held in Paris the first weekend in September.

Issue #27 of the Miller Number Custodian zine *Alpha and Omega* came out recently. The MNC, currently Lee Kendter, Jr. (376A Willowbrook Dr, Jeffersonville PA 19403) is basically responsible for cataloguing game starts and finishes for Diplomacy variant games. Just for fun, I calculated the types of games reported in the finishes section. Here are my results: 19 Gunboat, 5 Colonia (plus some stale Colonia games from the 1979 period only now reported), 6 others. It's obvious which variants enjoy popular appeal - Gunboat because of its relative simplicity, and Colonia because of its relative complexity. (For the uninitiated, Gunboat is simply Diplomacy without negotiations, while Colonia is a worldwide variant with nine powers and over a hundred supply centers that was profiled in *DW* #62).

One of the most interesting features of the summer was a list in the latest *C'est Magnifique* (see Game Openings, page 31) of the games that hobbyists generally play at conventions and elsewhere. Pete Sullivan did a fairly exhaustive list, at least for British Cons. Cads, Madlads, and other assorted gamers will be chagrined to note that Pete did not list Titan at all. A Diplomacy event without a side game or two of Titan would be very strange indeed...

What I hope to make an irregular feature of the Hobby News section of *Diplomacy World* is the Lettercol Roundup. Much of the diversity in our hobby's zines comes from the wide variety of topics discussed by both editor and reader in our "lettercols", or letter columns. Some zines stake their reputations on their lettercols, like *Northern Flame* while others have letters only as a sidelight to the games or other content, like *Crimson Sky*. In any case, I have found some of my most enjoyabl experiences in the hobby have been in the give-and-take of the lettercol.

There is, of course, the zine that is only a lettercol, the recently begun *Foolhardy* by Doug Kent. This is almost exclusively about the Dip hobby, and is a must-see for any hobbyist interested in trying a lettercol. The topics in Doug's latest issue range from novice recruitment to the PDORA vs. *Zine Register* spat. Write away to Doug for a sample at the address listed on page 31.

Doug also publishes a "normal" zine, *Maniac's Paradise*, which features a fairly broad lettercol. In issue 40, the letters include John Caruso on Turbophreaks and race relations, while Robert Stimmel writes in about the WLAF final results.

As I said before, one of the seminal zines in terms of

It's always good to note the start-up of a new zine, but these days it's even more important given the rash of zine folds. Mark Luedi has broken away from *Frueh's Folly* to begin his own gamezine *Wild Gypsy Rose* (see Game Openings on page 31). Mark is a hobbyist of longstanding credentials, so I'm expecting great things from this zine. Right now he is running 1830 and 1835, with openings listed for both those games plus the obligatory Diplomacy. Check him out - I'm guessing this zine could turn into something really good if given the proper support. And if you haven't tried postal 1830 yet, I encourage you to do so. Some swear by it, though I find it less dynamic than the FTF version.

If you look at pages 17-18 of this issue, you will note the Hobby Census form printed for your convenience. One of the projects Larry Peery has launched this year is this questionnaire for all hobby members. His hope is that we can gauge where we are as a hobby with this thing, so I encourage everyone to take a few minutes and send it to Larry. I think you will find some of the questions rather interesting.

Another project of Larry's is the Worldwide Postal Diplomacy Championships. I have been asked to organize a U.S. team, and have assembled what I believe is a strong one. Country assignments are not set in stone yet, but here are the team members: Ron Cameron, Fred Townsend, Melinda Holley, Gary Behnen, Steve Cooley, Mike Gonsalves and Edi Birsan. Let's go kick some butt, what do you say?

Cal White has given us the definitive word of how many "Turbophreaks" there are in the Hobby - hobby breakdown is 35% fen, 64% gamers, and 1% Turbofolks...

lettercols is Cal White's *Northern Flame*. In the June issue, Cal prints letters from John Leeder on hobbyist origins (Sf vs gamer), James Nelson on the British University system, Brent McKee on Canadian and US network TV, Thomas Franke on the German/Austrian spat over World DipCon and BNC's, as well as many other letters. Cal's address is on page 16.

Another big lettercol is the one in Garret Schenck's *Upstart* (403rd Pl, Basement, Brooklyn NY 11231). Issue 53 in May featured John Schultz on environmentalism and Native American spiritualism, John Boardman on Russian naval history, Brad Wilson on the Runestone Poll and national Senatorial elections, Mark Lew on Columbus-era history, Pete Gaughan on female politicians, and Steve McKinnon on the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes*. This only scratches the surface of what appears here every month.

*Crimson Sky* has had an interesting lettercol discussion going for a few months now on the relative competency of the Union and Confederate generals in the War of Northern Aggression. Recent writers include Stan Johnson and Joe Brooks. This past issue also includes comments on the income tax system and the Rodney King beating. Write Mike Gonsalves at 530 Treasure Lake, Dubois PA 15801.

# The Good! The Bad! The Ugly!

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The good! You lead your nation in an exploration of the New World!

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native uprisings, storms at sea, harsh climates, and the incursions of their neighbors anxious to stake out a claim on valuable territory. The Discovery version wherein players must flip hex tiles as they enter new areas even adds the element of chance as players must strike out into uncharted areas not knowing what rewards or dangers that area holds.



The bad! You develop the ruthless politics necessary to win Consulship in Republic of Rome!

### REPUBLIC OF ROME

\$38

A diplomatic game for three—six players in which each represents a faction of influential Senators vying for the Consulship of Rome—and all the power, wealth, and influence that entails. Naturally, each faction opposes the others, but must also court the others to get what it wants. Consequently, the “you-scratch-my-back, I’ll-scratch-yours” of modern day politics is much in vogue, but the

game holds far more than that in store as it hurls a bewildering array of temptations and dangers before the players in the form of 192 cards depicting all the events of the ancient world. The result is a fascinating four hour trip through time as players relive the 250 years of the Roman Republic from the tremendous struggle against Carthage to the assassination of Julius Caesar.

The ugly! You maliciously apply an assortment of “legal” holds against opponents in Wrasslin’!

### WRASSLIN’

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A quick-playing game that pokes fun at Pro Wrestling while remaining a surprisingly accurate simulation of the mayhem that occurs between the turnbuckles. Players have their pick of 24 individually rated, fictional grapplers—half “good” guys and half, well, you know. Each can play an assortment of holds on his opponent based on his current ratings for Strength, Agility, Stamina, Skill,

and pure bulk. The result is a more “realistic” view of what happens in the ring than actually takes place there most of the time. Not to say that everything is above board; “bad guys” with managers can distract the referee to allow illegal holds or restart pin counts. Matches can be over in five minutes or last upwards of an hour. Tag Teams, Handicap matches, and Battle Royals allow any number to play.



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# The Six P's

by Mark Fassio

In the title above, I was going to add what the "six P's" stood for. However, like any good salesman, I'm hoping you've at least read this far in the hopes of determining just what it is I'm squawking about this issue. So here goes: the Six P's stand for a phrase I heard in the "old Army" way back when - "Proper Planning Prevents Piss-Poor Performance." Both in military planning and in Diplomacy operations, the six P's take on critical importance.

In my opinion, the most crucial planning occurs at two points in the game: in the Winter 1900 negotiations, and again in the beginning Midgame (1904 or thereabouts) when bodies usually start dropping. Any Dip player worth his/her salt can usually schlep along after these two phases and make do, barring some bizarre occurrence.

In both your negotiations and your war plans, there are a few basic tenets that should be readily apparent, and I won't waste typespace in the zine by repeating them. Of course, the following will not be agreed upon by all players; little of anything in this hobby is so agreed upon (except the fact that it's hard to make Portugal fit into a geometrically adaptable shape for whatever new variant someone is proposing.) As Rod Serling used to say, however, the following planning Tenets are "submitted for your approval--"

1. *One Enemy, One Ally.* I find that, for me, the best situation in Winter 1900 is to latch onto a solid ally and then concentrate on who is to feel the Wrath of Khan. You need to size up the board and determine which player would best fit your gameplan for early pillage and plunder. After that, figure out which enemy would die the quickest and without attracting a lot of undue attention in the early game. Both ally and enemy picks are determined by a variety of factors: temperament of the players involved (easy going or obstinate); playing skill and style (alliance types or solo barracudas) and frequency of their writing. I would rather ally with an average Joe who writes regularly than with a "big name" player who deigns to drop a postcard once in a blue moon.

2. *Go Ugly Early.* Anyone who's been around aircrew members (or hangs around college bars) knows this phrase also refers to scoping out a blah-looking girl and then spending the night discussing proton physics rather than trying to land that good-looker in the corner until closing time. For my purposes, however, this simply means "Don't delay; hit your planned enemy as early as possible" (assuming you have at least that one ally mentioned above.) You should not waffle in your early game moves - if you want to waffle, go to the store and buy a box of the frozen ones that say "Aunt Jemima."

I know, a lot of you probably figure, "But gee, Faz, it's absurd to commit so early in the game, when there are neutral centers, etc., etc. After all, a good player needs to remain flexible." Well, in my old unit we used to say that "Indecision is the Key to Flexibility", meaning that the senior staff would always make it look like they were fluid and adaptable, when in reality they were just without a clue and just muddling along. You wanna be flexible and work out ad hoc arrangements, hey, have at it. But ask yourself: using true historical analogies, did any of the Great Powers do ad hoc planning (other than Italy, which jumped ship from the Central Powers and grabbed a Free Agent deal in 1915?) Heck, no; these countries didn't just wake up in August 1914 and say, "Gee, we're at war. I guess we'll look for allies and then pick out an enemy." They had their plans and their targets ready for years, and they moved decisively (and/or stupidly, in some cases) and immediately. Should you do less? After all, most everyone else on the board is going to be "Mr. Flexibility" and look for the cheap thrills of neutral centers in 1901, not wanting to "rock the boat" early on. You can get away with some really neat stuff if you plan it right.

3. *Follow-Up Operations: Desert or Crabgrass?* The second phase where the Six P's are best used is, as stated earlier, when someone has bitten the dust (hopefully your target). If it's not your target, however, you still need to decide what your follow-on plans are going to be. In other words, do you turn on another player while the first enemy is still on the board? Normally one shrinks from such an idea, because it defies logic to leave "unfinished business" lying about. In some cases, however, you may be forced into it - your ally may need to be bailed out of a jam, or you may have to hit some other fast-burner before the person turns into a Mega Power. If you are faced with such a decision, you need to again refer to the player's character traits mentioned in paragraph 1. If the player is a "desert" (someone who plays poorly, or who craps out and NMRs/goes CD when they are down to 1 or 2 centers), then you may be able to reduce the rest of this person's nation at your leisure, allowing you to bail out your buddy - or to stop another player.

However, if your first enemy is a "crabgrass" person (someone who is so good or so tenacious that they are a rallying point and diehard threat even with just once center) then you need to consider them as the "crabgrass" they are and root them out completely before starting elsewhere. As anyone doing yardwork knows, if you don't get the weed out completely the first time, it'll come back later in droves to haunt you. Many of the Old Heads left in the hobby are



crabgrassers, if only because they're so doggone obstinate to have remained as PBM Dippers to begin with! Kathy Caruso is (fondly) considered by yours truly as the Queen of Crabgrass (a bizarre compliment, but a compliment nonetheless.)

There are many ancillaries and corollaries to these points, and these are by no means a complete list of "How to Win at Dip." (I'm certainly not an avowed expert in that field.) But, armed with these three points, you can at least make some pseudo-intelligent planning moves that will get you out of the starting gate. But, if you trip when the buzzer sounds, you're probably history. With this plan, you at least allow yourself (and an ally) the opportunity to get a jump on a hesitant 1901/02 board.

The biggest caveat to this all is a phrase from a Clint Eastwood movie: "A man's got to know his limitations." Plan

on a good ally in Winter 1900; plan for joint action if possible; and plan AHEAD of your assault, to ensure your best possible opening move(s) can be accomplished. But plan WITHIN your limits - don't attempt what you as a player are incapable of achieving.

Not every game will be won by some mad fool charging across the steppes and attacking his enemy in Spring 1901, even with half the board as allies. But, of course, some games will indeed be so won. Dip games are all crap shoots anyway, so who's to say your game won't be one of the winning ones?

➤Mark Fassio (CAD-B, Unit 26708 Box 5265, APO AE 09235) is an Air Force Detachment Commander in Berlin, Germany, and has been playing Diplomacy since 1976, mostly in the zines *Terran* and *Europa Express*.

## Balance of Power: A Problematic Strategy

by Paul F. Glenn

For me, the biggest surprise in Rod Walker's classic *Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy* was the discussion of the "balance of power" style of play. Of course I had studied all about the concept of balance of power in various history and political science courses, but I had never seen it applied in Diplomacy. It seemed to be almost an alien concept in the game. Yet it seems to enjoy a certain amount of prestige in the hobby. It is a fairly common topic of discussion in hobby literature. Even the game's creator, Allan Calhamer, has described balance of power as the proper way to play the game.

This seemed strange to me also because I had never before seen a player use this style in actual play. At first I thought this was because of my relative inexperience in the hobby - I wasn't involved in the postal hobby at that point. However, even after subscribing to and playing in several zines, I have yet to see this strategy implemented in a game.

Why is there this dichotomy between hobby literature and the play of the game itself? The answer is that the balance of power playing style, while fine in theory, is largely unplayable in practice. By this I do not mean that a player should never use this strategy as part of his arsenal of tricks - it is very useful at times. There is an important distinction between balance of power as a tool and as a strategy in itself. While the use of the balance of power as a tool is quite useful, I don't think it works as a game-long policy.

The pure balance of power strategy, as opposed to its use as a short-term tool, is based upon the policy pursued by several countries in the past, most notably Great Britain. It involves siding with the weaker side in any conflict, so as to prevent any state from becoming so powerful that it threatens the existence of the other states. This policy inherently

includes the survival of all nations in the international arena, for the conquest of even a small country could seriously undermine the balance. Mr. Walker's description of the balance of power style of play fits this historical model - the balancer "is concerned that no player, no alliance, will become strong enough to eliminate any of the others." (my italics) The balance itself is the goal.

I think this policy is unplayable for two principal reasons. First, it is an unrealistic policy. In order for the policy to be successful, the player pursuing it must be able to intervene (or threaten intervention) in any conflict to redress the balance. In many cases, this is impossible. For example, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for England to intervene in the Balkans until late in the game (which would require the balance to already have been broken in England's favor.) Unlike its historical counterpart, England cannot subsidize its allies to save them. A few countries have the potential to intervene in a wide range of theaters, but even then limited forces prevent wide-ranging interventions. It is true that diplomatic intervention can be applied anywhere, regardless of geography. However, this type of intervention is rarely successful, unless it is backed up by the use or threat of force.

Also, the role of other players in the game hampers the balance of power strategy. Part of the greatness of the game is that no one player can effectively act alone - he or she needs allies. In almost any Diplomacy game played, there will be two or three players (if not more) hell-bent on winning the game. These players would certainly not be willing to help maintain the balance of power, and their aggressive actions would seriously undermine any attempt to preserve the balance, making it an all but impossible task. One player

could not hope to maintain any balance over a long period of time, because sooner or later the other players' actions will upset the balance.

Because of these factors, attempting to maintain the balance of power in Diplomacy is an unrealistic goal. If the policy is doomed to failure, why try to follow it?

The second problem with the balance of power style of play is that if it is successfully applied, it would make the game very boring. In the unlikely event that several balance of power style players became involved in the same game, that game would soon deteriorate into boredom. There could be interesting and elaborate negotiations to prevent victory, but even this would wear thin after a while. Any players who sought to win would soon realize that no matter how hard they tried, they could not win. This would inevitably lead to

frustration, a lack of interest in the game, and probable NMRs. The game would either die from lack of interest, or end in a seven-way draw (which is, in effect, the same as ending the game before it even starts.) Either way, it would not be a memorable or enjoyable game.

While I do think that the pursuit of the "pure" balance of power strategy is unplayable, I still felt that the idea can be an extremely effective tool. If nothing else, it is always a good argument to use in one's diplomacy, especially in the beginning of the game: "We have to stop [blank] or he'll get too powerful!" Sometimes enforcing the balance is the only way to prevent one country from achieving a runaway victory.

➤ Paul F. Glenn (1532 Endsley Pl, Crofton MD 21114) is one of *Diplomacy World's* newest writers.

## The 1992 Runestone Poll Main List entries finishing at or above average

### Zines (59 on main list)

Rk	Zine Name	Votes	Score
1	Perelandra	34	9.081
2	Maniac's Paradise	30	9.078
3	Northern Flame	27	8.977
4	Kathy's Kurier	26	8.716
5	Pilot Light	11	8.236
6	Upstart	35	8.161
7	ark	12	8.126
8	Ramblings by Moonlight	24	8.109
9	Chesscake	25	7.705
10	Hoodwink	18	7.562
11	The Abyssinian Prince	17	7.543
12	Carolina Cmd & Cmnty	23	7.528
13	Penguin Dip	19	7.504
14	Orphan Sun	12	7.500
15	DOGS of War	18	7.455
16	Lemon Curry	17	7.403
17	Diplomacy World	51	7.370
18	Well, Martha...	21	7.208
19	The Home Office	25	7.064
20	The Zine Register	54	7.028
21	The Encounter	10	6.977
22	Rebel	26	6.806
23	Your Zine of Zines	24	6.636
24	Excelsior	21	6.510
25	Concordia	14	6.496
26	The Tactful Assassin	11	6.438
27	Frueh's Folly	12	6.394
28	Crimson Sky	21	6.388
29	Rambling Way	26	6.382
30	The Curator	11	6.297

All the zines listed above finished at or above average.  
The 29 zines that finished below average are not listed here.

To order the 1992 Runestone Poll publication, send \$5.00 to Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St., Milford MA 01757.

I expect to mail the publication around September 1.

### Subzines (22 on main list)

Rk	Subzine Name	Votes	Score
1	The Hounds of Hell	7	8.857
2	DIDOES	17	8.322
3	You're The One	8	7.701
4	Notes from the Bunker	16	7.438
5	Close Your Eyes...	14	7.302
6	Poll Talk	19	6.786
7	The Unabashed Bo(t)	13	6.191
8	Standard Deviation	12	6.010
9	It's Me Again	15	5.893
10	The Unzine Voice	5	5.825
11	Water on the Knife	12	5.738

All the subzines listed above finished above average. The 11 subzines that finished below average are not listed here.

### GMs (54 on main list)

Rk	GM Name	Votes	Score
1	Bruce Linsey	8	9.236
2	Andy Lischutt	17	9.033
3	Lee Kendler, Sr.	8	8.474
4	Eric Brosius	8	8.431
5	Kathy Caruso	13	8.377
6	Fred Hyatt	14	8.115
7	Chris Hassler	6	8.081
8	Douglas Kent	18	8.077
9	Jim Burgess	10	7.877
10	Scott Cameron	11	7.874
11	Garret Schenck	22	7.864
12	Russ Wallace	7	7.683
13	Kevin Brown	9	7.677
14	Michael Lowrey	10	7.627
15	David Hood	5	7.605
16	Jim Meinel	7	7.593
17	Stephen Dorneman	8	7.553
18	W. J. New York	7	7.395
19	Steven Carlberg	6	7.359
20	Michael Goncalves	13	7.303
21	Pete Gaughan	18	7.287
22	Mark Frueh	5	7.261
23	Eric Ozog	9	7.165
24	Conrad von Metzke	8	7.156
25	Steve Heinowski	7	7.093
26	Bob Hartwig	6	7.061
27	Don Del Grande	5	7.031

All the GMs listed above finished above average.  
The 27 GMs that finished below average are not listed here.



# Mitotic Diplomacy

(Revised 7-6-92)

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- 1) Unless stated otherwise, the 1976 Rules for Diplomacy are in effect.
- 2) **Abstract:** The basic idea of Mitotic Diplomacy is that builds occur by duplicating existing units in their current spaces.
- 3) **Adjustments:** During the Unit Adjustment phase (i.e., Winter) of each year, if a power is entitled to build additional units, it designates existing units to be duplicated in their current spaces, rather than strictly building in home supply centers per the normal rules. A second unit of the same type as a designated unit is placed in a given space, as necessitated. *A duplicated unit must be the same type as the original unit.* Only one duplication per space is allowed each Winter. (I.e., a unit cannot be triplicated, etc.)
- 4) **Example:** After Fall 1901, England has A Bel, F Nth, and F Nwy, entitling it to two builds. The English player can choose two of the three following options: put an additional army in Bel, put an additional fleet in Nth, or put an additional fleet in Nwy. If the first two options are chosen, then England begins Spring 1902 with A Bel, A Bel, F Nth, F Nth, and F Nwy.
- 5) **Unit Independence:** *Two units in the same space act independently.* For example, one unit can attack a space while the other unit supports some attack (including the first unit's attack). The case of two units existing in the same space occurs only after a Winter season and subsequent seasons when neither of the units moves from the space.
- 6) **Cutting Support:** *An attack from a space into which neither unit is supporting another attack cuts the support of both units.* If any one of the two units is supporting an attack into that space, then its support is cut only if it is dislodged (per the normal rules).
- 7) **Defensive Strength:** *Two units in the same space automatically defend (hold) with a combined strength of two.* (I.e., for the purpose of defense only, they act like a single double-strength unit.) Neither unit can support the other to hold; to do so would be superfluous. Other supports are added normally.
- 8) **Retreats:** *Both units in the same space are dislodged by a superior outside force. They must retreat to different spaces.* If both units are ordered to retreat to the same space, then they are disbanded per the normal rules.
- 9) **Note to GM:** Two units in the same space are listed as separate units. For example, "Turkey: A Bul-Ser, A Bul S F Aeg-Gre." If successful, the result would be Turkish armies in Bulgaria and Serbia, and a fleet in Greece.

## Designer's Notes

I got the idea for Mitotic Diplomacy after one of the players in my zine mentioned that he had played a variant called Amoeba Wars (or something like that), where players' units literally divided and conquered. I don't know the exact rules of that game, but I would guess that Mitotic Diplomacy is different enough, since game designers have individual ways of doing essentially the same thing.

The rules that I have designed are quite simple, yet they make for an intriguing game. As powers begin to expand, units will be built on the front lines, rather than in home supply centers that might be far from the war. This could create some explosive empires. On the other hand, home defense might suffer by the continued duplication of front-line units. If a player lacks foresight, he could find himself wide open to a flank or rear attack.

Another important factor is the strict duplication of unit types. This could influence whether a power takes, for example, Belgium with an army or a fleet, since the power might put another unit of the same type in that space, affecting the means of further attack. A player easily could find himself with several units of one type and very few of the other if he isn't careful.

All of these things should make Mitotic Diplomacy highly entertaining, as players throw out old standard strategies for new bold campaigns. Only extensive playtesting will reveal if the balance of power found in Diplomacy will be present here, too.

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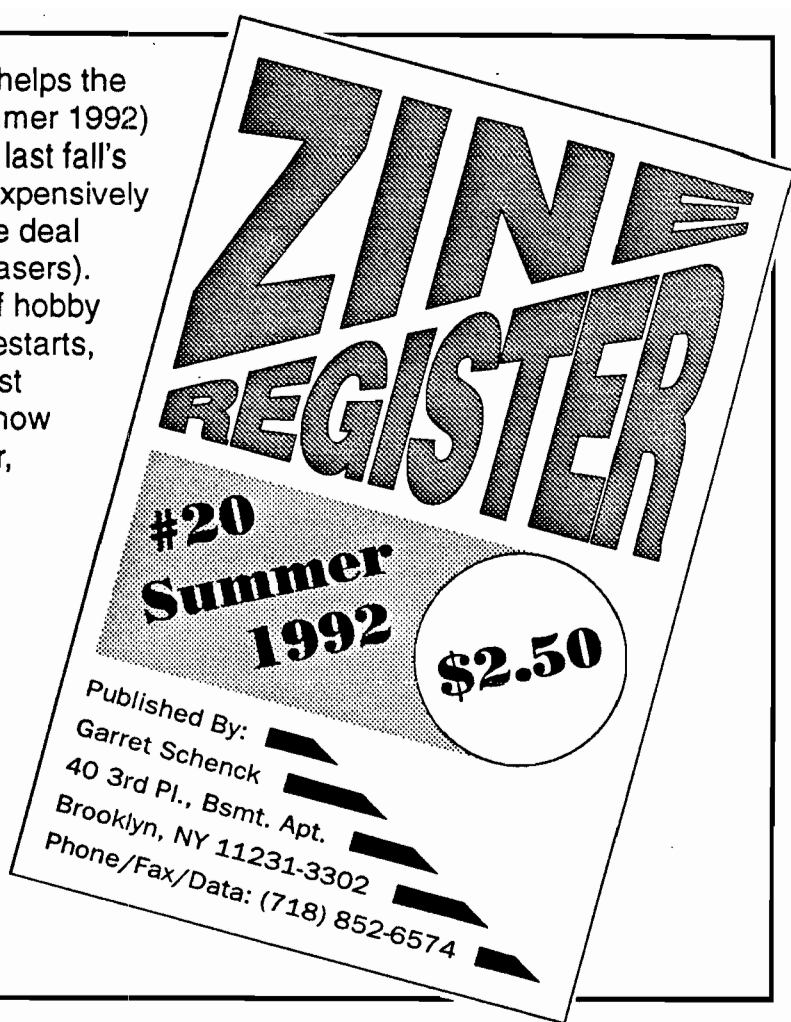
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Variant

## Napoleonic Wars

by James Nelson

The Napoleonic era, that so graphically described in such books as C.S. Forester's Hornblower series and Bernard Cornwell's Sharpe series, has long excited me. The United Kingdom was at its height of power; republican and revolutionary ideas were emerging on mainland Europe; the Ottoman Empire, long the despot of the east, was on the slippery slope of decline. This was a period rich with flavour and character.

Such a glorious period has been inadequately served by Diplomacy variants. I know of only three proper ones, and a fourth I can squeeze into the classification. Napoleon (hn 05/05) by Steve Agar is essentially standard Dip rules but with rules allowing states of "alliance" and "war" between powers. 1810, by Steve Doubleday, is for five players and is on the standard Dip board with only a few map changes. The last of

the proper ones is Napoleonic Dip II (hn 03/06) by Gary Gyax. Gary might have found fame and fortune by designing the Dungeons and Dragons series of games, but he was no variant designer. It is unbalanced, unresearched, and quite frankly hideous (indeed some would call D&D hideous also...) Lastly, one of the modules in Lew Pulsipher's The Struggle for Hegemony in Europe series covers the era in question, but since it is only a module of a variant covering several hundred years of European history, it is inadequate in capturing the charm of the period.

For me, a fan of the Napoleonic period, each of these variants has something missing. Only Lew's design had any minor powers in it which the players could seek to influence and control. Europe at this time was, with the exception of the big six powers (Prussia, Austria, Russia, France, Ottoman

Empire and England), a collection of small nation-states. In 1803, "Germany" consisted of 112 states, and although the Italian city-state era was gone it too still consisted of several minor powers. Not all of the powers represented in my variant are realistic, of course - Wurzburg has been placed as a minor power for balance rather than history, while Saxony, one of the most important German states, is a neutral (unoccupied) center. Likewise, Naples shouldn't really have a fleet, but for the sake that the Mediterranean was a major region of conflict and I wanted to heat up the action somewhat, it seemed like a good idea...

I referred earlier to the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) being a "big" power. It was, territory-wise, but it had been on the decline since 1533 and the failure to besiege Vienna successfully. Its armies were ill-equipped and poorly disciplined. Barbaric hordes would be a better description than an "army." Neither was it a naval power. Therefore, I decided to ignore it as a major power (as indeed did Steve Agar and Lew Pulsipher). As a minor player in the European power game it resisted attempts at manipulation by both England and France, but in this game, who knows which power, if any, will hold sway at the Court of the Sultan...

This was, without doubt, the height of the power of the wooden sailing ship. Were it not for the English Channel, a strip of water just 21 miles wide at its narrowest, England would have succumbed to Napoleon. Likewise, were it not for the blockading of his ports, the strangling of his trade, and the destruction of his fleets, Napoleon may well have formed a European super-state. (Some people say that Europe today, the EC in particular, is dominated by the French... Some would say that Napoleon may have failed then but his successors are succeeding now...)

I felt that, for my variant, the standard rules were inadequate. I've invented a new concept in fleet movement hoping to recreate the agility and grace of the Napoleonic fleet. Additionally, Army/Fleet rules have been used due to my dislike of the standard convoy rules. Also, during this period, fleets could not transport troops to the end of the earth without stoppages due to the problems of disease, fresh food and fresh water. And, of course, ports may be blockaded. Hoist the Flag, Jim Boy!

I have some doubts about my rules on allowing units to merge. I still agree with the concept; else how does one represent the Great Army of 500,000 men which marched with Napoleon into Russia in the summer of 1812? No, it is the rule not allowing armies and fleets to merge in coastal provinces that I now dislike. My advice is to use the standard Multiplicity rule, which allows all units to coexist with each other and act as a combined unit where this doesn't contradict the individual unit type-allowed orders. For example, a fleet cannot support or move inland, an army cannot move to a sea province, and if it does it must board onto a fleet, etc.

As I said earlier, the map and powers have been altered

from the strict historical perspective for reasons of play balance. Prussia, no doubt, is the greatest alteration from historical facts. In 1789, the starting year of the game, it was a major German power, but a minor European nation. By 1803 it had expanded roughly 500%, and by 1815 by 800%. It is placed in the game as a major power to try to prevent a France-England versus Austria-Russia alliance structure from being inevitable. My major worry is that it might be squashed between various minor powers and A/R. I have modified the "historical" map to enable it to take two centers without the help of minor powers. The first bidding season will be crucial for Prussia as it must hope to gain influence over at least one of its neighbors. Unlike other powers, it must seek to eliminate its minor power neighbors as soon as possible, not unlike what happened during the Napoleonic period.

I pondered for a while about the inclusion of Russia. Russia proved to be important as an ally in the early coalitions against revolutionary France, but it was a matter of game balance and tactical choices I was concerned about. I didn't want to force the Russian player into expanding in a certain direction, but I wanted other powers to be able to expand into it. The combination of northern sea provinces and the two movement phases of fleets should help open up the north for Russia and England. Russia can also expand south into the Middle East and Egypt without too much hassle. Forget history!

Unlike standard Dip, Austria must look westward for expansion. Throughout this period Austria had designs on various Italian and German provinces. Never a sea power, I decided to allow her a fleet to prevent potential blockading of her only port in the first year. It should also, I hope, allow a three-way A/E/F sphere in the Mediterranean. Couple this with the fleet in Naples and the potential for Ottoman fleet builds, and this should result in an interesting state of affairs in that region...

The power I was most concerned with was England. Despite opening up her coasts (due to the number of sea provinces around them) I still feel that she has a massive advantage at the start due to her fleet numbers. She is also very strong if she can prevent her opponents from building fleets. I therefore decided to allow her only three centers to be with, but to place a fourth unit in the Med. With no center to protect in that area, this is a floating unit and should open up some diplomatic possibilities. By no means should this unit be considered anti-French, as it might even help produce E/F joint action in the Med.

Revolutionary France is the last power in the game. France has several options available, and could come to early blows with everyone except Russia. And, of course, Russia would a good ally as she can attack all three of France's neighbors. In my opinion, France must establish some naval presence in the Med to soften the blow of any blockading of

## Brest in the Midgame.

Some comments on the map. The cluster of centers from Denmark to Naples will no doubt be the cause of some fierce fighting for the three central powers. England and Russia will have both defensive advantages and strategic weaknesses from being on the outside. Lastly, I should point out that the design is still experimental. As I have not yet tried it postally, I will not seek an ARDA/NAVB classification number yet for this variant.

## Napoleonic Wars

1. The standard Diplomacy rules are used apart from where amended below.

2. The major powers, and their starting positions are:

Austria F Dal, A Vie, A Bud, A Tra

England F Lon, F Sco, A Lpl, F Sar

France F Bre, A Par, A Bor, F Mar

Prussia A Ber, A Kol, A Kon, A Bar

Russia A Stp, A Mos, A Sib, A Azo

Note: England starts with four units, but only three centers.

3. There are also a number of "minor powers" which players try to control through the use of Influence Points (see below). The minors are:

Bavaria	A Bav	Denmark	F Den
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Hanover	A Han	Naples	F Nap
---------	-------	--------	-------

Portugal	A Por	Sweden	F Swe
----------	-------	--------	-------

Spain	A Mad, F Val	Wurzburg	A Wur
-------	--------------	----------	-------

Turkey	A Con, A Smy		
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4. Minor Powers. Each Winter season the major powers gain a number of Influence Points (IPs). These are used in order to try and gain control of minor powers for the coming year. Winter seasons, including bids for minor powers and adjustments, are held separately from the Autumn season. There are, therefore, three reports for each game year. Additionally, if a minor power is controlled by a major power then that major power gets the use of the minor power IPs.

For a major power, each supply center held nets 3 IPs. For a minor power, two IPs are gained for each supply center. In addition, Supply Points may be changed into IPs (see below). IPs have no other use apart from bidding for minor powers, and cannot be saved for future years. They cannot be transferred to another power, although they can be used to bid for a minor power on the behalf of another power. However, if a power does this, and the helped power gains control of the minor power, it generates no benefits for the helping power - control of the units passes to the helped power. It must be specified which country is being helped to control which minor power.

Each Winter season the players bid for the minor powers. Points cannot be split into fractions. There is no reason, though, why all IPs must be used. There is no minimum bid for a minor power above one IP. The minor goes to the power that bids the most for it. If a power is helping another to bid,

Various people deserve credit for ideas borrowed and examination of concepts. The following variants have been examined whilst designing this one: Napoleon (Steve Agar), Napoleonic Dip II (Gary Gyax), 1810 (Steve Doubleday), Multiplicity II (Keith Black), Africa II (Richard Egan), The Struggle for Hegemony in Europe (Lew Pulsipher), the Army/Fleet Module (Fred Davis) and the Colonia variants (Fred Hyatt).

the two totals are counted as one. If two or more totals are the same, then control rests with neither, unless the minor was previously controlled; in which case control rests with the power that controlled it last even if it bid no IPs for that minor that round. Control enables the player to order all the minor's units during the upcoming year - including adjustments. All unordered retreats are made by the GM. If builds or removals are not ordered, then the GM disbands fleets before armies and always builds armies.

A major power is free to attack a minor power which it controls. However, if the major power moves into a minor's supply center or has more than one unit in that power's home province(s), then the power loses control of that minor power for the remainder of the game, and power immediately transfers to one of the other major powers. If the major power attacking the minor power is clearly being attacked by another major power, control passes to the attacking power. Otherwise, control passes to a randomly determined major power. The only minors who have home provinces other than their supply centers are Spain (Ast, And, Cat), Sweden (Fin), and Turkey (Tre). An uncontrolled minor power acts in a similar fashion if attacked by a major power (i.e. an uncontrolled Denmark attacked by England passes to a power clearly fighting England, or to a random power if not).

Every consecutive year that a minor is controlled by the same major power a permanent IP is gained. So, if England gains Sweden in Winter 1900, and keeps it in Winter 1901, it gains one IP in addition to those normally generated. In addition, a major gains 2 permanent IPs for each center gained by a minor while under that major's control. If a power loses control of that minor it loses any permanent IPs accumulated.

5. Supply Points. Each supply center provides 3 SPs. The cost to maintain an army or fleet for a year is 3 SPs. SPs can be transferred into IPs at the rate of 2 IPs for each SP. SPs may also be given on a yearly basis to other majors for their use. However, SP transfers must be ordered each Winter for the upcoming year.

6. Fleet movements. In addition to fleet movement at the normal time, fleets may make a second move after normal movement. They cannot make this second move if the first move failed, nor can they move into a coastal province on the second move. The only valid order during the second turn is a movement order. They may not support or embark/disem-

bark armies. Naval combat can occur in the second move.

7. Blockades. A fleet in a sea province adjacent to a home supply center (either of a major or minor power) may choose a Blockade order. The fleet may not perform any other order, nor may a "B" move be made on a fleet's second move. A fleet may not order a Blockade if it has an embarked army, nor may it receive an army while ordering a "B".

If the blockading fleet is attacked, whether successfully or not, the blockade order is cut. This works similarly to the support order in regular Diplomacy. A fleet in the supply center being blockaded cannot cut the "B" order.

The effect of a successful Blockade is that it prevents any fleet build in that center in the Winter season if the Blockade was performed in the Autumn.

8. Building in neutral centers. In any unowned vacant center, a power, minor or major, may build armies. No fleets builds may be made in them.

9. Army/Fleets. The Army/Fleet rules are used. (See the Army/Fleet Module produced by Fred Davis). It should be noted that no multi-power AFs may be built, and armies may not embark on the second phase of fleet movement.

10. Multiple units. Units may merge together to form multiple units. Multiple units must be of the same nationality. In order to merge, the order "M" must be used. This enables self-standoffs to still be used. For example, A Vie M Gal, A Bud M Gal creates a 2A in Gal, while A Vie-Gal, A Bud-Gal would result in a standoff in Gal. Units merging in this fashion move into the third province with a combined strength of one (i.e. both are stood off by a single enemy unit moving to the third province). The "M" order may be supported by non-merging units as in the case of regular moves.

A Unit may merge into a province where a unit already exists, but the stationary unit may still be dislodged by an attack of two enemy units, in which case the moving merging unit's order fails. Of course, the stationary merging unit may be supported in place to prevent this.

Fleets may be merged in either of their two moves.

Armies may not merge with a fleet in coastal provinces. Armies and fleets may not coexist in the same space unless they are an A/F at sea. If an order tries to merge them in a coastal province, the army order succeeds over the fleet order. An army merging with a fleet at sea can only merge via an embark order, as in the A/F rules. An army at sea may merge only with the fleet it embarked upon. If at any stage the number of armies exceeds the number of fleets at sea, the difference in armies drowns and must be eliminated.

Multiple units attack and support with the strength of the total number of units with one exception. Multiple A/F's at sea only count the fleet strength when attacked at sea.

Builds may be made in a supply center containing a unit of the same nationality in order to form a multiple unit.

To demerge, units simply move to different provinces. It is not necessary for one of the units to stay stationary in the

province.

11. Arkangel is a Russian build center. Only Russia may build units there, and only fleets may be built. If occupied by a foreign power, no builds can be made. Likewise, Sardinia is an English build center, except that both armies and fleets may be built there. Again, if occupied by a foreign power, no builds can be made there, nor does either center generate any SPs to the occupying power.

12. There are direct passages between Ire-Sco, And-Mor, Sic-Nap, and Den-Swe. These make no difference to fleet passage through the seas. However, a fleet in the respective sea province (Iri for Ire-Sco, Wms for Est-Mor, Tys for Sic-Nap, and Ska for Den-Swe) may deny direct passage to a unit if the fleet is on its first move. This is irrespective of what order the fleet has made, though it must be specified in the orders. For example, the order would be F Ska X Den-Swe.

13. The Canary Islands count as a land province. An army can exist in the center, but it must enter and leave via a fleet.

14. Two double-coasted provinces exist: Han (ec/wc) and Pap (ec/wc). Note: there is no Kiel canal!

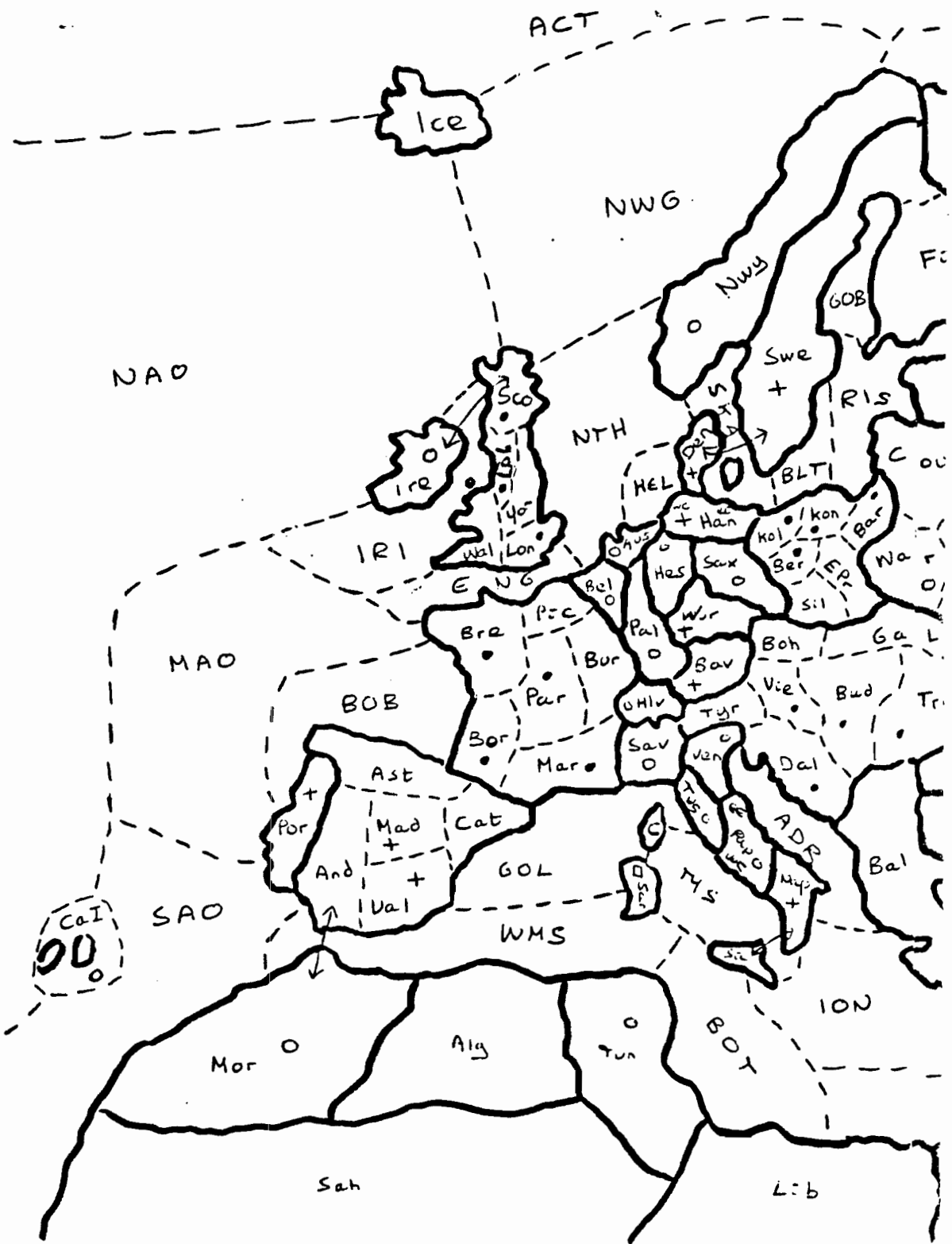
15. The game starts in Winter 1789 with bids for minor powers.

16. Victory criteria: a major power wins by control of 20 supply centers. This can be a combination of centers owned by the major and any controlled minor powers. Note that there are 50 supply centers on the board.

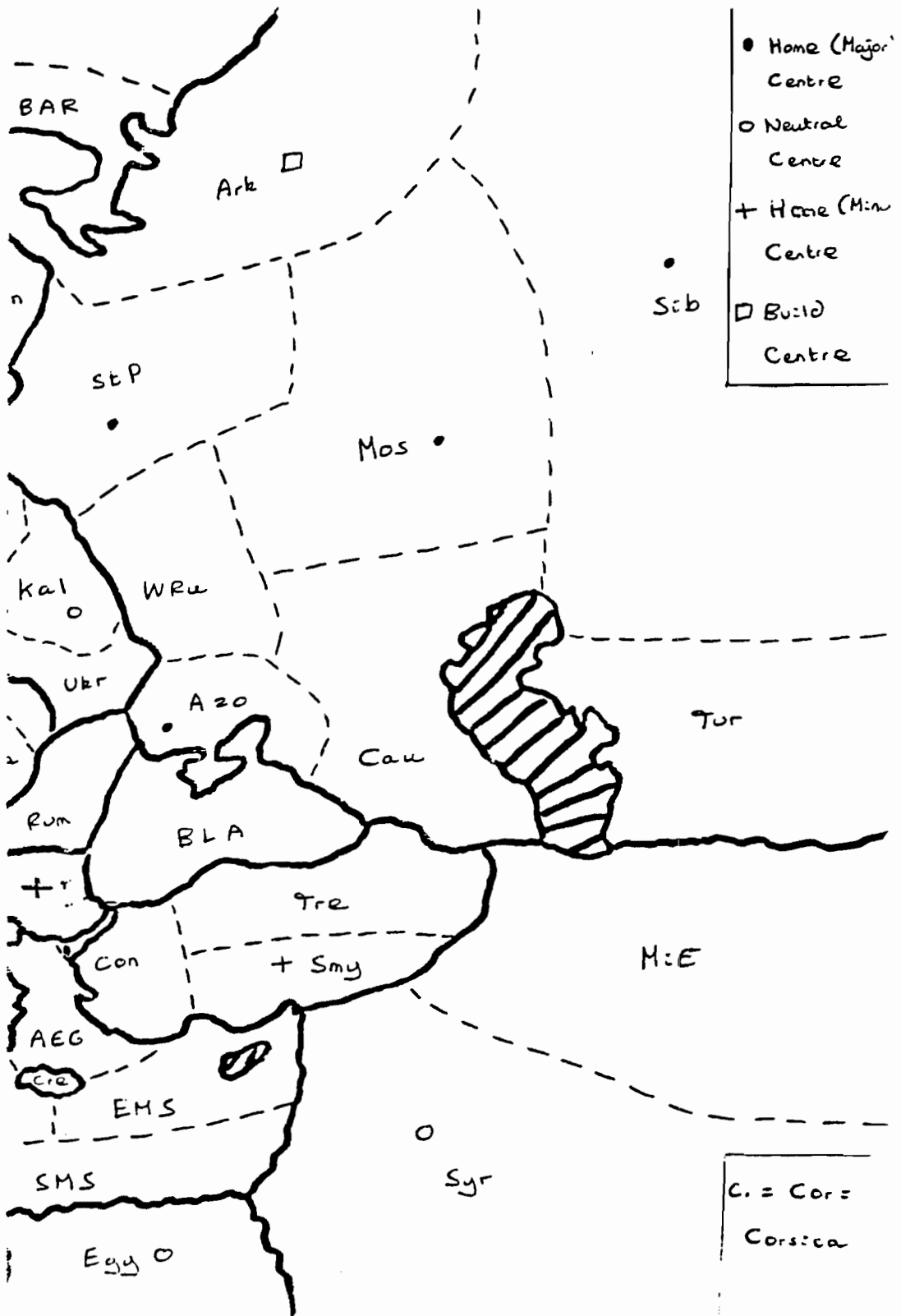
17. (Optional) If at any time a major power controls a minor power who has at least four centers, the major power may elect to become that minor power. The minor becomes for all purposes a major, and, likewise, the major becomes a minor for all purposes. Minor powers which become major powers have for home supply centers their original center(s) and any of the then-owned centers in order to make a total of four.

18. Abbreviations (excluding standard Dip ones): Algeria (Alg), Arkangel (Ark), Asturia (Ast), Andalusia (And), Austrian Netherlands (Aus), Azov (Azo), Balkans (Bal), Bartenstein (Bar), Bavaria (Bav), Bordeaux (Bor), Canary Islands (Cal), Catalonia (Cat), Caucasia (Cau), Couland (Cou), Crete (Cre), Dalmatia (Dal), Egypt (Egy), East Prussia (EPr), Hanover (Han), Hesse (Hes), Helvetian Republic (Hlv), Iceland (Ice), Ireland (Ire), Kalis (Kal), Kolberg (Kol), Konigsburg (Kon), Libya (Lib), Madrid (Mad), Middle East (MiE), Morocco (Mor), Palatinate (Pal), Papal States (Pap), Sahara (Sah), Sardinia (Sar), Savoy (Sav), Saxony (Sax), Siberia (Sib), Sicily (Sic), Scotland (Sco), Syria (Syr), Transylvania (Tra), Trebizond (Tre), Turkestan (Tur), Valencia (Val), White Russia (WRu), Wurzburg (Wur), Arctic Ocean (ACT), Baltic Sea (BLT), Bay of Biscay (BOB), Bay of Tunis (BOT), Riga Sea (RIS), South Atlantic Ocean (SAO), Southern Mediterranean (SMS).

➤ James Nelson (112 Huntley Ave, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7DU, England) is the Variant Editor for *Diplomacy World*.







# A Look at the Runestone Top Five

by David Hood

It's Runestone Poll results time again, folks, so time for another look at the top five zines that made the list this year. For those of you new to this Diplomacy hobby of ours, the Runestone Poll is the annual event wherein each zine is rated by the voter on a 0 to 10 scale, with results going through some statistical gymnastics to eventually become an important voice on zine quality in the hobby for that year. For a full listing of the results, along with analyses of every dotted "i" and crossed "t", send five bucks to Eric Brosius at 41 Hayward St, Milford MA 01757.

Coming in first this year was the Pete Gaughan product that has swiftly rose through the ranks the past few years. *Perelandra* is not primarily a reading zine, so its first place finish is somewhat anomolous. On the other hand, you would be hard-pressed to find a more enjoyable zine in the entire hobby. Pete (1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947) runs many types of games, from Monopoly to Snowball Fighting to regular Diplomacy, and runs them to a very regular schedule. The reading material, though sparse, is usually good, including a subzine by his wife Cathy entitled *It's Me Again*. I know that I have thoroughly enjoyed my games in this zine, and recommend it to anyone who wants to play. Actually, since Pete is going to expand the zine shortly to include more writing, and he has lowered to price to a reasonable \$1.00 per issue, you would be a fool not to sign up.

Coming in second we have the original Turbo Phreak zine, Doug Kent's *Maniac's Paradise*. (Yes, I am only kidding. As far as I know, there are no publishers anyone is willing to call a TP.) Doug runs lots of Diplomacy and variants, and runs them very quickly. The part of the zine I most enjoy is the subzine by Jack McHugh, which generally focuses on hobby news and controversies. You don't always agree with McJack, but you enjoy the subzine just the same. I believe the subzine is now entitled *And the Horse You Rode in on*. Write to Doug (54 W Cherry St #211, Rahway NJ 07065) for a sample, particularly if you want to play Diplomacy to regular deadlines and pretty good GMing.

Ah, *Northern Flame* finally fell off its high horse. Cal White (1 Turnberry Ave, Toronto Ontario M6N 1P6), after winning the Poll two years in a row, only managed third in 1992. I believe this was just a case of people wanting to see someone else win more than anything else. *NF* still has everything that made it popular before - great letter column, good hobby news, interesting subzines from Mike Agnew and Mike Hopcroft. The letter column is probably even more interesting, I think, than it was a year ago. I heartily recommend this to anyone who wants to read hobbytalk and sports/politics chat, but I really don't know much about how the games are run.

The fourth place finisher, *Kathy's Korner*, is folding after its current games end. This one has been a perennial favorite of many hobbyists for many years, so I am sure it will be missed. Kathy Caruso has decided to move on to bigger things, such as more postal wins as Italy, no doubt, so we all wish her well. At its height, this was a zine of abuse, abuse and more abuse, and was generally a good time for all concerned. No need to send for this one given its impending fold.

The fifth place finisher is a little curious, as the editor of *Pilot Light* himself admitted in his latest issue. Sure, the zine runs a postal soccer simulation called United, and no Diplomacy; but non-Dip zines have done well before. No, the surprise here is that it is *not* a physically attractive zine, nor does it have much reading material other than the games. What it does have is a devoted following of players, most of whom are die-hard Diplomacy hobbyists as well. I resisted the United urge for a long time (years, actually) but once I tried it there was no turning back. Those of you who like games but don't want to hassle of real complicated ones, I offer United to you as a great diversion from serious Diplomacy. There is some interaction in United, but it's mostly just a strategy and luck game. Editor Kevin Brown (6703 St Augustine Rd #209, Jacksonville FL 32217) could use some standby players, so drop him a line. Also ask him to point you to openings in other United leagues.

## 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, Jr. 376A Willowbrook Dr, Jeffersonville PA 19403. 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. Garret Schenck, 40 3rd Pl, Basement Apt, Brooklyn NY 11231.

Novice Packet: Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown PA 19401, or Bruce Reiff, 2207 Smokey View Blvd, Powell OH 43065.

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

Pontevedria: A list of game openings. Phil Reynolds, USF #4286, 4202 Fowler Ave, Tampa FL 33620

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4. Residential and/or mailing address as appropriate: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ under 20, \_\_\_\_\_ 20-24, \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29, \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34, \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39, \_\_\_\_\_ 40-44, \_\_\_\_\_ 45-49, \_\_\_\_\_ 50-54, \_\_\_\_\_ 55-59, \_\_\_\_\_ 60+.
6. Highest level of education completed: \_\_\_\_\_ 9 or fewer years, \_\_\_\_\_ 10-12 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 13-16 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 17+ years
7. Occupation/Profession \_\_\_\_\_
8. List three other hobbies, besides Diplomacy, you have: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are most \_\_\_\_\_ some \_\_\_\_\_ a few \_\_\_\_\_ none \_\_\_\_\_ of your close friends Diplomats?
10. Comparatively speaking, would you say that Diplomacy is (select one option for each game listed): A-Easier than, B-Same as, C-Harder than) to play well: \_\_\_\_\_ Bridge, \_\_\_\_\_ Chess, \_\_\_\_\_ Monopoly, \_\_\_\_\_ Risk, \_\_\_\_\_ Poker
11. Year you first played FTF Diplomacy \_\_\_\_\_
12. Year you first played PBM Diplomacy \_\_\_\_\_
13. Year you first played PBEM Diplomacy \_\_\_\_\_
14. In terms of strategy, do you consider yourself to be: Superior \_\_\_\_\_, Excellent \_\_\_\_\_, Very good \_\_\_\_\_, Good \_\_\_\_\_, Average \_\_\_\_\_, Fair \_\_\_\_\_, Poor \_\_\_\_\_
15. In terms of tactics, do you consider yourself to be: Superior \_\_\_\_\_, Excellent \_\_\_\_\_, Very good \_\_\_\_\_, Good \_\_\_\_\_, Average \_\_\_\_\_, Fair \_\_\_\_\_, Poor \_\_\_\_\_
16. In terms of diplomacy do you consider yourself to be: Superior \_\_\_\_\_, Excellent \_\_\_\_\_, Very good \_\_\_\_\_, Good \_\_\_\_\_, Average \_\_\_\_\_, Fair \_\_\_\_\_, Poor \_\_\_\_\_
17. How many regular FTF Diplomacy games have you played in toto? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Of those how many ended in: Wins \_\_\_\_\_, 2 way draws \_\_\_\_\_, multi-player draws \_\_\_\_\_, your elimination \_\_\_\_\_, your resignation \_\_\_\_\_, your being dropped \_\_\_\_\_
19. How many regular Convention/Tournament Diplomacy games have you played in toto? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Of those how many ended in: Wins \_\_\_\_\_, 2 way draws \_\_\_\_\_, multi-player draws \_\_\_\_\_, your elimination \_\_\_\_\_, your resignation \_\_\_\_\_, your being dropped \_\_\_\_\_
21. How many regular PBM Diplomacy games have you played in toto? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Of those how many ended in: Wins \_\_\_\_\_, 2 way draws \_\_\_\_\_, multi-player draws \_\_\_\_\_, your elimination \_\_\_\_\_, your resignation \_\_\_\_\_, your being dropped \_\_\_\_\_
23. What is your primary strength as a FTF or Convention/Tournament Dipper? \_\_\_\_\_
24. What is your primary weakness as a FTF or Convention/Tournament Dipper? \_\_\_\_\_
25. What is your principle strength as a PBM or PBEM Dipper? \_\_\_\_\_
26. What is your principle weakness as a PBM or PBEM Dipper? \_\_\_\_\_
27. Which do you think are the three easiest Powers to win a regular FTF Diplomacy game \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

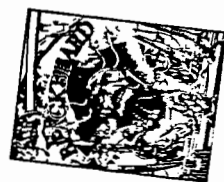
28. Which do you think are the three easiest Powers to win a regular PBM Diplomacy game with? (as above) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
29. Which do you think are the three easiest Powers to lose a regular FTF Diplomacy game with? (as above) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
30. Which do you think are the three easiest Powers to lose a regular PBM Diplomacy game with? (as above) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
31. Who do you think is the best PBM gamemaster you have played under? \_\_\_\_\_
32. What is your present degree of interest in the game of Diplomacy?  
Extremely high \_\_\_\_\_, Great \_\_\_\_\_, Moderate \_\_\_\_\_, Low \_\_\_\_\_, Non-existent \_\_\_\_\_
33. What is your present degree of involvement/participation in Diplomacy?  
Extremely active \_\_\_\_\_, Great \_\_\_\_\_, Moderate \_\_\_\_\_, Low \_\_\_\_\_, Non-existent \_\_\_\_\_
34. Is a draw always better than a second-place finish? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
35. If No, how many members need there be in the draw to make it a worse finish than second place? \_\_\_\_\_
36. Briefly describe your current role in the hobby: \_\_\_\_\_
37. On the average, how many hours a week do you spend on Diplomacy? \_\_\_\_\_
38. On a weekly average how many of your national monetary units do you spend on Diplomacy? \_\_\_\_\_
39. What is your present degree of interest in each of these hobby groups:  
(As applicable) Extreme \_\_\_\_\_ Great \_\_\_\_\_ Moderate \_\_\_\_\_ Low \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Existent (Pick one only)  
Local \_\_\_\_\_ Regional \_\_\_\_\_ National \_\_\_\_\_ International \_\_\_\_\_

40. What one substantive change would you make to the Rules of Diplomacy (latest Avalon Hill edition in USA, commonly used versions in other countries). Identify the version/translation of the Rules being used, the original rule, and the change(s) to be made to it. \_\_\_\_\_ (attach additional sheet if needed)
41. In your opinion who are the three best Diplomacy players in any style of play: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (in no particular order, and you may include yourself)
42. Rank the following types of Diplomacy play in the order in which you enjoy them, with 1 as the highest and 5 as low: FTF \_\_\_\_\_, Convention/Tournament \_\_\_\_\_, PBM \_\_\_\_\_, PBEM \_\_\_\_\_, Variant \_\_\_\_\_
43. All other things being equal, would you go for: the possible win \_\_\_\_\_ or the certain two way draw \_\_\_\_\_?
44. In any type of Diplomacy game should draws include all survivors \_\_\_\_\_, or be voted on by the players \_\_\_\_\_, or not allowed at all \_\_\_\_\_?
45. What person, or what publication, or what group first introduced you to Diplomacy? \_\_\_\_\_
46. Which of these two choices appeals to you more: The gaming (strategy, tactics, diplomacy) aspect of Diplomacy \_\_\_\_\_; or the social aspect of the hobby \_\_\_\_\_ (if you can't pick one of those, mark here \_\_\_\_\_)
47. Excluding Diplomacy, name your three favorite board games: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
48. What percentage of your total gaming activity does Diplomacy represent? \_\_\_\_\_
49. Do you consider yourself: a New Blood Diplomat (e.g. have yet to complete a seven player game) \_\_\_\_\_, Novice (have yet to win a seven player game) \_\_\_\_\_, Experienced player (one plus win; some FTF, Con/Tournament, PBM play) \_\_\_\_\_, Old Timer (2 plus wins in 2 or more mediums of play) \_\_\_\_\_, Hobby Old Fart (can't remember, but I \_\_\_\_\_)

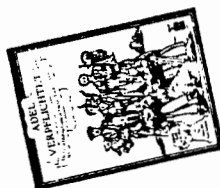
*From the dawn of history ...*



*...through the ages of mankind ...*



*...the epic conflicts of human history,  
on the battlefield, the playing field,  
and the arenas of commerce ...*



*... we put them in your hands.*



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50. Listing in order of preference (1 high, 5 low), do you prefer to play: FTF  
Convention/Tournament, PBM, PBEM, Variant, Diplomacy?
51. Do you think your reputation as a player helps, hurts, or has no effect  
on the results of your games?
52. Do you prefer to play with players you know, or don't know?
53. Do you prefer to play with players who are: not as good as you, same as you,  
better than you, or a mixed group?
54. Would you prefer to ally with a strong or a weak player?
55. Do you prefer to play with some arbitrary deadline (a specific clock time, or a  
specific game year) to end the game, or until the game has reached a definitive  
conclusion?
56. Do you have any specific suggestions for ways and/or means to promote the game and/or  
hobby of Diplomacy?
57. How can we make the game and hobby more attractive to non-Dippers?
58. How can we make the job of recruiting new Dippers easier?
59. How do we prevent "burn out" among players, gamemasters, publishers, and custodians?
60. Do you favor the establishment of an International Diplomacy organization?  
Yes No No opinion
61. If Yes, or No, why?
62. If Yes, what would it do?
63. In North America, the PDORA raises funds to support hobby services. How do you think  
the hobby should raise funds to promote itself?
64. In your normal Diplomacy activities which of the following items do you regularly use:  
typewriter computer modem fax answering machine other

You may use this form, attaching additional sheets as needed, for your answers; or  
you may use your own paper (but please number each response). A word or a phrase should  
answer most questions, but some require more. Please be concise and specific.

This is the **SHORT** form of this survey. There is a longer form, called the **LONG**  
form, strangely enough. It has many more questions, most designed for members of various  
hobby sub-groups. If you would like to respond to that form please obtain a copy from  
the source that provided this form. Our goal is to have 10% of the worldwide Diplomacy  
hobby complete this form and 5% of that same hobby complete the LONG form. Obviously,  
we need your help.

If you have suggestions for other questions to include in this Census please write  
them out and include them with your responses.

The forms being distributed at DIPCON XXV are the final pre-publication testing of  
this form. If you have any comments, or questions about the questions, please send them  
along with your answers to us ASAP, or give them to Larry Peery at this event. If you  
wish, you may give them to David Hood. If you would like, you can volunteer to help in  
distributing this form throughout the hobby. Contact me or Steven Carlberg concerning  
that.

I know your time at this event is limited, so if you wish to take this form home  
with you and complete it there, please do so, but please return it to me at the above  
address by **mail**.

Even if you have no intention of returning this form, I think you will find that if  
you take the time to answer its questions you will learn a great deal about yourself. If  
you do take the time to return it to us, can you imagine how much you will learn about  
the hobby as a whole, and how much we will all learn about ourselves?

Keep in mind, there are no right or wrong answers to this Census. And the more  
responses we get from the widest possible sampling of the hobby, the more accurate will  
be the picture that results. That puts it in focus, I think.

# DixieCon VI: Director's Report

by David Hood

DixieCon for me this year began on Thursday night. After one of my partners and I settled a big libel case (or thought I settled it; we're still arguing about the paperwork with the other side) Sandi and I set out for Chapel Hill. I was surprised upon my arrival to find no gaming already going on. Seems the early attendees, like Tom Swider, Jack McHugh, Mark Frueh, Vince Lutterbie, and others had found other things to do that night, including a bridge tournament in Raleigh! So, I settled down instead to talk about the World, the Universe, and Everything with Larry Peery while watching bad PBS drama. (Well, I think it's bad, anyway, Mike...)

Friday morning saw the first signs of Diplife in Carmichael Hall. Tom, Jack, Mark and Vince joined Larry and I on the patio for some hobbytalk and commentary about the various swimmers with whom we would be sharing the building the entire weekend. As both Vince and Iain Bowen have said in their DixieCon reviews, "Pause, throw cold water on face. Continue." I also took a gander at the first of several special zine issues released by various pubbers at DixieCon - this one was Comrades in Arms. Tom's cover was particularly funny with a Hobby Feud Index set to look like that one in the game Pax Britannica. I also released my Diplomacy World #66 at that point with an equally hilarious cover - Jack McHugh writing about how to play Diplomacy!

Oh, sorry Jack. Didn't realize you were reading.

After much heming and hawing, the games began in the Carmichael Ballroom. People began to arrive in droves towards the later afternoon, including our British Connection of Iain Bowen and Denis Jones. The early games were mostly Republic of Rome and Titan, but later on Friday night I played my first game of the Con, an 1835 game in the upstairs lounge. This was later to be the setting for one humdinger of a Jack McHugh/Tom Swider whine session, but first things first...

Round One of the Diplomacy tournament began on Saturday morning, when we had enough for six boards and some more to spare! Wouldn't you know that someone always has a win in the first round of DixieCon - this time it was Tom Kobrin, playing France in Game 1D. Another notable thing about that game was the reappearance of Ken Peel to the Con scene, this time playing Germany. It was an unexpected pleasure to see Ken again, as the last time I had seen the Old Fart was five years before at DipCon 1986 in Fredricksburg. Hm, let's see, France won and Germany is next to France, right Ken? Must have been cobwebs in the old negotiation lobe of the brain, eh Mr. Peel?

Other First Round tidbits: Game 1E would eventually have championship ramifications as a 2way draw between Mark Franceschini (E) and Phil Reynolds (F) would help both to catapult to the Top Board by the end of the tournament... There was a second EF draw, this time in Game 1C between Phil Sasse and Todd Craig. Phil was playing in his first FTF Diplomacy tournament. Perhaps we are seeing a new Southern Conmonster, this one from Georgia... Denis Jones, the draftee Turkey in Game 1B, came away with a piece of the 4way draw, exciting the poor bugger so much that he signed up to play Dip again that night... Steve Koehler (E) took a 2way with Stven Carlberg (T) in Game 1A, in Steve's first DixieCon game ever. Perhaps a little bit of Carlberg rubbed off in Koehler and we

will begin to see "Stv Khlr" signing up for postal games... Does the 2way between Kevin Brown (F) and Chris Kremer (R) in Game 1F frighten you as much as it does me?

The 1830 tournament also began on Saturday morning, under the watchful eye of GM David Harshbarger (AKA CAD 1830 GHOD). Tom Swider was the victorious one here. Before I forget, the other three finalists for Sunday's final board turned out to be: Bruce Reiff, David Harshbarger and Bob Odear. Bruce, the Burned Out One, was the eventual winner. Bruce, I have the prize for you - I forgot to give it to you at the Con. This was graciously donated by the Baltimore Mob, but to get it you'll have to come back to DixieCon next year! (What am I saying?) Nevermind, Reiffster...

Round Two began Saturday night, along with many other games in subsidiary events. Game 2A saw a 3way draw finish, but only after it played for many hours well into the next morning. Congrats to Phil Reynolds (A), Ken Mathias (R) and Phil Sasse (I) for their stamina... Another draw for Mark Franschini (R) was the result in Game 2B, this time with Bob Odear's France. Mark decided not to play Dip on Sunday after this result virtually guaranteed him a top spot... Is anyone really surprised by the participants in the 2way in Game 2C: Mark Stegeman and Dan Mathias? This was just one of several EF 2ways achieved during the weekend... Game 2D saw a well-served win as Italy by Bruce Roberts, over very stiff competition, including 1991 AvalonCon winner Bruce Reiff and numerous AtlantiCon and Origins winner Jim Yerkey.

On other fronts, the Second Annual Miniatures Event recreated the First Battle of Manassas with Tom Kobrin and Ray Phillips as the chief generals. The First Annual DixieCon Open United soccer event drew 16 participants, and was run by postal United GM Dave McCrumb. This turned out to be great fun, and was an exciting diversion for those playing in other games simultaneously as well as others just kibbutzing. I am proud to say that my DixieCADs advanced to the final round, only to be cheated out of victory in a 7-6 decision against Dan Sellers' Club Fubar III team. I hope those of you who played United for the first time will consider signing up with Dave or Kevin Brown for postal United - the real fun is scouting and trading individual players, which cannot be easily done in the FTF event.

About seven of us opted to try the new Advanced Civilization, which should be renamed Disaster City! After Tom Swider and Jack McHugh started losing, they started whining... Let's just say this did not go too well, though I do like the new Civ rules. I did get to share a pizza with Iain Bowen, though, so I guess the game was not a total loss...

Let me just interject here that a Titan tournament went on throughout the weekend whenever four got together for a board. The finalists turned out to be Mark Frueh, Morgan Gurley, Mike Carwane, and Chris Kiker. Mike came later and missed the Sunday noon final, in which Morgan came out victorious. Mark, the Whining One, lost, just as he was being pummeled by ME in an 1835 game going on simultaneously. Sure, come back next year O Puppy of Chicagoland!

Round Three Diplomacy began bright and early on Sunday morning. We again had four boards worth with several to spare for

the final Titan board and 1835 game. I was excited about the turnout this year, particularly given the strong play of many of the boards. The most important developments occurred in two games. The draw in Game 3D included eventual second-place overall Tom Kobrin, while the win in 3C game Mark Stegeman a strong fourth-place finish overall after a disastrous elimination in Round One. (At DixieCon we do not drop your lowest score, rewarding consistent as well as good play. There are good arguments both ways on this item of tournament procedure) At any rate, it was also good to see tournament newcomer Jason Nichols take a 2way as Italy in Game 3B as it gave him the last spot on the Top Board in his first DixieCon.

All in all, this was a great Diplomacy tournament, I think. There was a significant amount of gaming on Sunday night, including a late-night Titan game with Jason Bergmann (always, uh, interesting) and some Acquire and Junta. (The latter included old-time CAD Frank Tate up from Fort Bragg. You all can blame this entire thing on Frank - he was a regular in our senior-year Risk circle, and mentioned one day something about having a game called "Diplomacy" somewhere in his house that was "Risk without the luck." We never did find that game, but Mike Lowrey and I did go

out and buy one later that month...) One thing I did miss on Sunday night was the sports bar trip with Mike Lowrey, Phil Reynolds, Jack McHugh, the Brits, and others.

I want to thank everyone for coming to DixieCon, and I hope everyone had a good time. Please make plans to attend next year's event the first weekend in June. Let me tell you that Steve Cooley and Gary Behnen have threatened to come next year, so watch your back!

My final pitch will be for my housecon in HickCon, held appropriately enough in Hickory, NC. Last November 1-3 we had some 17-18 people show up in all, including many CADs and people like Kevin Brown and Dave McCrumb. If you can deal with the North Carolina mountains in the fall, and with two inside cats, then this is your Con. Last year we played everything from Dip to Titan to 1830 to Cosmic Encounter to Miniatures. There is also the added bonus of the second annual HickCon Open united event run by Dave McCrumb. Right now I believe my trial schedule in October looks as little daunting - let's plan on November 6-8 as the dates. If you let me know you want to come, I will keep you abreast of any changes in the date.

## DipCon 25 - A Loser's Report

by David Hood

Well, I sure liked the half-price air fare I got on TWA for my trip out to the Kansas City DipCon, but the flight times were a little ridiculous. But, anything to get to the DipCon run by Vince Lutterbie and Gary Behnen, so I got up at 4:00 a.m. on Friday morning (!) and went to Charlotte to catch my flight to St. Louis. Just what to do before the sleep-deprivation that is a Diplomacy Convention...

Dan Sellers, of course, was ready and able that early since he operates on a completely different schedule than the rest of the civilized world. We embarked on our trip, playing Lost Worlds boardgames in the plane and generally psyching each other up to be the first two-time DipCon champion.

OK, so much for that. We got to the Con and immediately got into an Acquire game with all sorts of interesting folks, including Pete and Cathy Gaughan and Vince and Melody Lutterbie. Did I say "immediately got to the Con"? Nope - Vince took us the "scenic route", which took hours. But we did see all of KC's worst neighborhoods, dead-end streets, dilapidated buildings, and so forth. Thanks, Vince. (If Lutterbie is driving, don't get in the car. DON'T GET IN THE CAR!)

My first Dip game that Friday night was one of the most frustrating games I've ever played in and also one of the most enjoyable (in a perverse sort of way). I was Italy, with a strong initial alliance with Eric Newhouse's Austria against the feared Marc Peters, as Turkey. France (Lance Anderson) was also friendly, allying with a relative novice England (Ken Nied) against the Germany of Eric Brosius.

Essentially, this was any Italian player's dream. The West *never* really shook out until the very end of our 9-hour game, which meant that I faced no early invasion from England or France. The offensive against Turkey went well, with Peters down to two centers and likely worse the next move. Austria agreed to let me have Greece and to stab Russia for Rumania. I stood to build two in the fall turn.

So I stabbed Austria for one center, Trieste. Remember what your mommy told you - never stab for just one dot. Eric was pissed because he thought I was just being a dot grabber. But I do think it was the right decision. Since I was already building two, a build of anything but two fleets would have tipped Austria off that all was not well. Yet, a build of two fleets would have made France stop his relatively ineffectual attack against Germany and stalemate me. Lance hadn't made much progress against Brosius, but he had the units to set up defensive line if I had attacked him at that point. So I stabbed.

Unfortunately, while Turkey was eager to help, Russia hopped back into bed with Austria. The French attacked me just the same turn I was making headway against the Austrian position. A bloody mess ensued, with an eventual *seven-way draw* after 9 hours of Dip hell. Actually, I had a ball matching wits with Eric Newhouse, a top-notch tactician. And it's always fun to work with Marc Peters...

Who went right ahead and attacked me as France to my England the next morning. Dan Sellers (Russia) and Melinda Holley (Germany) joined in for good measure. Let's put it this way - I build an *army* in Winter 1901, while everyone else built *fleets* in the West. It was ugly, and shows just what can happen to a corner power once it gets diplomatically isolated. I miswrote an order to eliminate myself later, which was real bright. Warning: Melinda is a good FTF player, and fun to play with. We need to get her to DixieCon *real* soon.

The biggest success of the Con for me came in the third round, where I allied as Austria with James Wall's Turkey. I got to stab Melinda's Italy and Eric Brosius' Russia, and eventually settled for a four-way with Edi Birsan (France) and Jeff McKee (England). As it turns out, I probably should have stabbed James the year before the game ended. As Austria you rarely have the chance to pull off a good stab of Turkey, and my chance here wasn't all that good. However,



in one fall turn I could have taken his Sevastopol and Russia's Warsaw, and built two more units. I could also have put units into Greece, Ionian and Serbia. It would not have been a death-blow, certainly, but as Edi pointed out later, in tournament play you've got to assume that the game would end some time before its natural conclusion. So, instead of the EF that might have happened if the game was open-ended, I may have been able to knock Turkey down low enough for A/E/F to claim a three-way.

If you recognize lots of the names I have mentioned so far, it's because this field of players was one of the strongest I have seen in some time. There were five former DipCon champs there - me, Sellers, Edi Birsan, Jason Bergmann and Gary Behnen (though he did not compete) along with all sorts of regional tournament winners like Steve Cooley and Marc Peters. The Diplomacy was fast and furious.

Some interesting notes: The inventor of the game, Allen Calhamer, was there with a vengeance. His Austria stabbed Vince Lutterbie's Italy to claim a win and eventual second place overall in the tournament. Marc Peters won the game I played in as England; though the time had run out before he got 18, the remaining players on the board voted him the win anyway, saying he would have won without the time limit.

I had an absolute blast at Dipcon. The list of people I met and played Titan/1830/Acquire with would be hard to do right, so instead I have included the final results in the Diplomacy tournament along with this report. While the numbers were small (total attendance was in the 30's or 40's) the quality of the people was high. And I got to buy a magnetic Diplomacy board from Claire Brosius and save the \$2 shipping charge. (By the way, Eric and Claire are selling these items from their home at \$10, with a \$2 shipping charge. I recommend it as an excellent conference map for tournament play as well as a convenient medium to set up one's postal games for study. Contact them at 41 Hayward St, Milford MA 01757).

Hobbystuff. Rex Martin spoke to some of us at Cal White's publishing seminar about Avalon Hill's new Classic Diplomacy Set and plans to promote the game. Somehow I was drafted to head a committee of folks to submit articles for the new *Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy* and to compose the game box flyer. You will be hearing more about this at a later date, in a newsletter to be sent to interested parties. Right now the list includes Vince Lutterbie, Melinda Holley, and all those publishers in attendance at the seminar, including: Gary Behnen, Jason Bergmann, Larry Peery, Steve Cooley, Bob Acheson, Cal White, Edi Birsan, Andy York, Don Del Grande and Bob Hartwig. If you'd like to be added to this list and become involved in the latest push to promote our game and hobby, just let me know.

Sunday morning saw the DipCon Society meeting, which occurs every year at DipCon. The purpose is, mainly, to pick the site for the next year's DipCon. This year we had three bids to choose from, all from the Western region. (Under the Charter, bids from the Eastern region would also have been acceptable.) In close voting, the bid of Don Del Grande and Pete Gaughan for PacifiCon near San Francisco won out over Steve Cooley's bid for Gamex in Los Angeles, Larry Peery's bid for Salt Lake City came in third. I admit that I voted for San Francisco mainly for geographical reasons - the

## DipCon 25 Results

1.	Marc Peters	Wisconsin	73
2.	Allan Calhamer	Illinois	61
3.	Steve Cooley	California	61
4.	Bob Acheson	Alberta	45
5.	Eric Newhouse	Massachusetts	42
6.	Pete Gaughan	California	40
7.	Tom Johnston	Illinois	35
8.	Mark Frueh	Illinois	35
9.	Cal White	Ontario	35
10.	Edi Birsan	California	30
11.	Jeff McKee	Maine	30
12.	James Wall	Wisconsin	30
13.	Mark Elliott	Missouri	27
14.	Lance Anderson	Texas	23
15.	David Hood	North Carolina	23
16.	Vince Lutterbie	Missouri	20
17.	Melinda Holley	West Virginia	15
18.	Dan Sellers	North Carolina	15
19.	Randy Davis	California	12
20.	Eric Brosius	Massachusetts	8
21.	Buz Eddy	Washington	8
22.	Ken Nied	Kansas	8
23.	Jason Bergmann	Texas	0
24.	Bob Hartwig	Colorado	0
25.	Bob Herbst	Missouri	0
26.	John Jordan	Kansas	0
27.	Rex Martin	Pennsylvania	0
28.	Larry Peery	California	0
29.	Andy York	Texas	0
NR	Don Del Grande	California	
NR	Brad Schuman	Missouri	

### Best Countries:

Allan Calhamer (Austria), Vince Lutterbie (England), Marc Peters (France), Pete Gaughan (Germany), Cal White (Italy), Mark Frueh (Russia), Steve Cooley (Turkey)

last two Western DipCons have been on extreme opposite ends of the coast, San Diego and Seattle. It made sense to me for the DipCon to be held in the middle.

We also voted upon a proposed amendment to the DipCon Charter proposed by Don Del Grande that would suspend the normal site rotation system whenever World DipCon is also slated to be held in North America. I voted against this idea as I don't believe we should play around with the site selection system for what seemed to be little benefit - a coastal region is always eligible for DipCon anyway, under the current system. I also don't want the DipCon to become beholden to the World DipCon rotation system - I don't see why the 15-20 WDC attendees will change the needs for a DipCon site to any great extent.

I want to thank Gary and Vince, along with their wives Ginger and Melody, for a most enjoyable tournament. Thanks also to all the players who made sure I had fun coming in 15th in my first competitive DipCon since my win in 1987. And I hope to see many of you at next year's DipCon, in San Mateo CA over Labor Day weekend.

# The Electrifying DW Letter Column

This is the seventh 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. So, tell us what is on your mind.

## *The Puzzler's Seven Guests Puzzle*

Pat Conlon (7180 Shoreline Dr #510, San Diego CA 92122): The Puzzler should be shelling out lots of money for all the free issues he's giving away. You're doing a fabulous job. Here are the answers to last month's puzzle:

Cathy Ozog, Don Del Grande, Phil Reynolds, Kathy Caruso, Gary Behnen, David Hood, Tom Nash.

Editor: Yes, I know the contest was easy last issue, but I wanted to make sure some of you were paying attention. I mean, after no one got the Sherlock Holmes puzzle before, I was getting a little worried. Thanks to Mark Lew, Mark Fassio, Bruce Linsey, Ron Newmaster, and Doug Kent for also sending in the right answer. All of you get a free issue.

## *Linsey's Sherlock Holmes Puzzle*

Ron Newmaster (37 George Cir, Mechanicsburg PA 17055): I especially enjoyed Bruce Linsey's Sherlock Holmes mystery. I put about 20 hours into trying to solve it, but came up short!

Editor: Yep, you and several other people, I've heard.

## *Davis' History of the Hobby Awards Article*

Bruce Linsey (170 Forts Ferry Rd, Latham NY 12110: One correction to Fred Davis' article on page 8 of DW 66: Bob Olsen was never the BNC.

## *Hood's Keeping an Open Mind*

Pete Gaughan (1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947): I'd like to take exception with your depiction of DipCon. I really think it's a disservice to think of it as the North American Dip "Championship". DipCon's real purpose is to bring together players who, because it's a PBM hobby, would rarely if ever see each other.

Playing in the tournament is a fun part, but it's not why I go. This is also what disturbs me about the idea of multiple DipCons, or the proposal to hold World DipCon separate from DipCon when the US/Canada host. These ideas defeat

the purpose of helping people to meet face-to-face.

I don't remember what the DipCon Charter says, but I think it's the North American Diplomacy "Convention". I think the hobby would be much better if everyone tried harded to support their major regional event *and* DipCon, so let's give them as many reasons as we can to do so!

Andy York (PO Box 2307, Universal City TX 78148): Your article on Upcoming Cons was informative. It is funny you should mention my name in passing about running a Con (and Jason's as well - did you know he had a housecon last January?). In my last issue of *Rambling Way*, I put out a feeler about holding a Con here in San Antonio. (I also mentioned it in my regular column in the AHKS newsletter.) We'll see how many people respond as I'd hate to commit my time and money if no one will show.

Editor: Yes, I knew the Berg-Man had hosted a housecon, which I think is great. But we also need some actual Diplomacy tournaments, even if they consist of two rounds with the same seven people. I believe that novices want to play the game, and play it competitively. I know I certainly did as a novice, and still do. If we ever want to attain the status as a hobby of say, Bridge, we've got to put on more organized events and appear, well, organized.

## *Demonstration Game*

Fritz Juhnke (PO Box 44, N Newton KS 67117): The Demo Game is by far the best feature in DW. No more nebulous discussions of "How to Play England So You Can Win". Here we have concrete examples of what sort of factors affect the decisions of the pros. The commentary is superlative. I can hardly wait for the endgame statements by the players.

## *Nelson / Derrick on World DipCon Rotation*

Chris Carrier (1215 P St #12, Sacramento CA 95814): I was glad to see that the WDC rotation was discussed in DW 66, and I have some ideas on that subject which I would like to see considered by the WDC committee.

The ideal rotation should: 1) ratify the pattern of past WDCs; England in 1988, US in 1990, Australia in 1992). 2) Be flexible enough so that countries as they get big enough to host the worldwide event will be automatically eligible every so often by virtue of their home region coming up. 3) WDC should be handled by and be part of the national DipCon in whatever country is hosting it. This prevents two big events in the same country in the same year, with the resultant split in attendance.

I would propose dividing the whole planet into three

equal regions from pole to pole, giving WDC to each region for two years at a time (meaning it circles the globe every six years). My proposed regions, and the years in which they would be eligible, are:

- Region I: From 30 W to 90 E (1988-9, 1994-5)
- Region II: From 150 W to 30 W (1990-1, 1996-7)
- Region III: From 90 E to 150 W (1992-3, 1998-9)

Such a rotation keeps things loose: if an area can host two DipCons in two successive years (such as England 1994 followed by France 1995) this allows it. It also ratifies the informal rotation we already have. And it would allow, say, the Scandinavian countries to bid for it when they get enough players.

I would also suggest that when we have WDC again, it should be held twice at the two successive DipCon sites. The North American continent is big enough that there is no reason why, say Charlotte and San Diego cannot hold a WDC in separate years. If we do not have a double WDC DipCon then I suggest adopting Don Del Grande's suggestion of suspending the rotation for DipCon for the year when WDC comes here. If we do not, our four-year rotation combined with the six-year WDC rotation will permanently bar two regions. Though two regions are technically eligible for DipCon each year, we all know the con goes to one region only.

#### *New Blood List*

Andy York: About the "New Blood" comment on your Editor's Desk last issue, I totally agree with you. In fact, since I've started my zine (it originated as a flyer) I've sent a copy to all "New Blood" that haven't previously received one. This is a policy I use for the list in *World Diplomacy* as well.

#### *McIntyre's Article on Tournament Scoring*

Pete Gaughan: I'm not sure I've run into the problems Bruce sees in tournament scoring. I've never scored replacement players - starters who drop out get a zero. And his disdain for "calligraphists" (under Slow Play and Order Sheets) hasn't been an issue in a tournament I've been part of.

#### *Fassio on Letter Passing*

Andy York: Regarding Mark Fassio's article on letter passing, I am against the tactic. Next he'll want to tape phone conversations and pass those along as well. "Here's what he said, in his own voice." You do have to draw the line somewhere, otherwise you'd have forged orders sent to GMs, phone calls from one person claiming to be another (how many folks do you know well enough to recognize their

voice? - someone tried this on me, once) and the ilk. For me, I draw the line on the other side of Mark's and I won't ever pass letters in a game.

#### *The Zine in General*

Ron Newmaster: Keep truckin' with *DW*. I think you have a good mix of strategy, current events and letter column. You could devote a half-page or so to original cartoon Dip art.

Jim Lewis (14741 Balsam, Southgate MI 48195): I must say the wait was worth it. Your zine gets better each issue! You are a "boffo" editor and publisher! Mark Fassio is right! I'm "Keeping an Open Mind", but every DipCon is so far away. I also like the stapled format - Peery is wrong.

Andy York: Last issue was enjoyable as always. I like your mix of different topics (better than theme issues, I believe). Also, the exposure of the various Polls is important to bolster the hobby-wide interest. Granted, certain folks take these polls and the results all too seriously, but I enjoy them anyway. Mike Lowrey's piece on the Runestone was excellent.

Mark Lew (5390 Broadway #2, Oakland CA 94618): Of the three words Mark Fassio discusses in the letter column, the explanation of "boffo" is the only one I haven't heard before - and the only one I believe. The "Port Out, Starboard Home" story sounds extremely suspicious to me, though I have no evidence for or against it. The "Without Papers" story for "Wop" is false.

The word "Wop" derives from "guappo", an Italian word meaning "handsome". Italian immigrants used the word colloquially to refer to certain ostentatiously well-dressed dandies. Others shortened the word and applied it to all Italians. Another story which is frequently heard but not mentioned by Mark is "For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge."

Myths such as these can be more interesting than actual etymologies. If a story is colorful enough, it can be widely repeated and widely believed to be true.

Fred Davis (3210K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City MD 21043): I have a slight correction on Mark Fassio's definition of the term "Posh". It is possible that this may have applied to rich people sailing from New York to South America, but the term is older than that. It dates back to shortly after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Rich Englishmen who had to sail to the Middle East or India wanted cabins on the shady side of the ship both ways. Remember there was no air-conditioning or fans in those days. The most desirable cabins to India were the ways facing north - this would have been on the Port side outbound and the Starboard coming home. Hence they ordered cabins "Port Out, Starboard Home" - "Posh".

# Winter Results Appear in Short Report

The pace of the game has slowed while the pace of DW has picked up some in recent months. To assure that the commentary that appears here does not impact the game itself, this report on the ongoing Demonstration Game will feature only the adjustment turn of Winter 1903, with the accompanying commentary. Spring and Fall 1904 will appear next issue.

Winter 1903

91AH

Russia and Germany Leave Northern Seas; Turks Stay Even

Austria (Bill Quinn): Build A Tri

England (Mike Ward): Build F Lpl

France (Mark Berch): A Bel r Pic. Remove A Par

Germany (Mike Gonsalves): Remove F Hel

Italy (Randolph Smyth): Build F Nap

Russia (Kevin Kozlowski): Removes F Swe

Turkey (Dave McCrumb): Even

Commentary:

*Garret Schenck:* No real surprises here. The only one I didn't call was Russia's removal of Fleet Sweden, which makes the move last turn to St Pete a little more understandable. This wholesale abandonment of the north doesn't strike me as all that wise. I'm not sure what a fourth army is supposed to do to help Russia in the south. I think it will just get in the way. Can Russia afford to let both Sweden and St Pete just hang without *any* military support? I doubt it. At least one unit should be detailed to prevent Germany/England from picking up a couple of cheap builds - and if so, why not keep the Fleet Sweden, historically a Russian center, at least in the early stages of the game, and a spot from which a "fighting retreat" back to St Pete could be waged. I fear Kozlowski will live to

regret his lack of naval power in the north.

The broad outlines of E/R/G versus I/A have been sketched out. Turkey will not last long, and will likely be divided between A/I/R in the coming year. If Russia knows what's good for him he will endeavor to support Turkish forces to hold, although it may be too late for this, given their mixed relations to date.

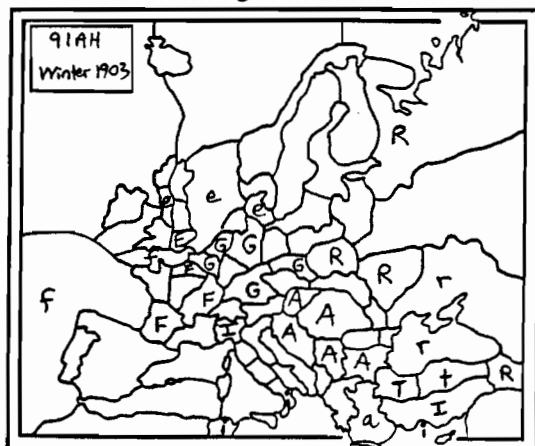
France is in a tough spot - both sides are attacking France and Berch has no allies left (at least immediate allies). His one hope is that England is not set up for a southern move, and that Italy's attack is still at least a year away from developing its full force. Berch does not have much time. He must convince E/G that A/I are the true threat, and that his moves into the Channel and MAO were terrible mistakes. "Comrades, I have erred", is what he will have to sing, and soon, now, immediately. Still, he is at best a front-line state, never a very happy prospect. Should he turn to face the Italian threat, he must do something to get England from sticking units into his rear. Sending England up against the weak Russian northern flank looks pretty good to me, and should probably look pretty good to England, too. That's why Kozlowski's disband of Fleet Sweden is a fundamental strategic error, though diplomacy could yet save Russia's northern dots.

In fact, England, apparently through weakness rather than strength, has been able to secure what is often a prime directive for that country - the removal of all northern fleets except the Royal Navy. This is truly an enviable situation to be in, especially with both Germany and Russia under siege and unable to do much more than hold back Austro-Italian armies. France and England now have much to talk about - assuming France removes the Channel fishbone from the English craw, that is.

England's general weakness and divided fleet will probably not lead to a solo win. But it could very well lead to an E/A/I three-way draw, assuming Italian fleets are prevented from leaving the Mediterranean.

*Fred Townsend:* A well-timed separation of seasons. Players could have made conditional orders based on builds and removals, but there were, as an estimate, 20 combinations of plausible German-Russian removals. The separation certainly helps England, particularly, to plan his moves. And it gives England extra negotiation time if his two fledgling allies failed to remove the northern fleets. But they did, and the E/R/G alliance is off and running.

Down south, Italy's build of a Fleet Naples and not in Rome is mildly curious, but his move will almost surely be to the Tyrrhenian. A move to the Ionian would be a pointless threat to his Austrian and Turkish allies. Joining the new



English fleet in Liverpool and all those German armies will be three Italian pieces, all to strike France this spring.

France is going to need all his years of Diplomacy experience to salvage this game. But maybe winning *two DW* Demo Games is too much even for this Dip veteran. On the

other hand, France is always a tough nut to crack, and three-way alliances are notoriously fragile. So stay tuned.

*Spring and Fall 1904 moves and commentary will appear in the next issue of Diplomacy World.*

## Email

## Email: Exploding Out of Control

by Eric Klien

During the spring of 1988, I joined the Diplomacy hobby by entering the huge postal zine, *Rebel*. By that summer, I had located the email zine *The Armchair Diplomat*, on Compuserve and had also entered a game there. Unfortunately, there was some mix-up in my very first turn and I was given an NMR. I was so upset with this NMR policy that I resolved to start my own Diplomacy email zine. By October 1988 I had started a little electronic Diplomacy zine on a small BBS called Portal. I had checked around for a BBS that was willing to support a Diplomacy zine, and Portal seemed to be the best. I should note that Portal was based in California while I was based in Boston, so I was forced to use a computer long distance service to call Portal that was called Telenet (it's now called Sprintnet).

At first, my email zine was struggling from a lack of players. However, in the spring of 1989 I discovered that Portal had a free connection with Usenet, the largest BBS in the world. I quickly siphoned off all the players from that BBS, eliminating a dozen established GMs who had been running games there using conventional house rules. I should point out that pretty much all of these GMs simply adopted my house rules and joined the zine. One GM continued to hold up against my competition. That GM's name was Judge. Judge was a program who I have grown to admire and respect.

Judge proved to be an awesome GM, better than any human. Judge almost never made an adjudication mistake. Judge would immediately let a player know if his orders were illegal and would ask for new orders. A mere human would probably take at least a day to notice the orders were no good. Results from a turn would be released within minutes of receiving everyone's orders. This is faster than most people can do a coffee break. Judge was also a whiz at immediately looking for standbys as well as keeping beautiful records of the entire game.

But Judge was having a problem with games collapsing due to NMRs. So eventually (I forget the date) Judge adopted my no-NMR house rules as its standard. Judge had already been using my no-illegal moves house rule from the beginning. Once Judge adopted my house rules, I began to send

more and more of my players its way because Judge is such a good GM. To make a long story short, 175 games have now been started in my zine with players from nearly 20 countries. Games have been conducted in English, German, Dutch and French. Also, a huge smorgasbord of variant games has been run. For some time I had serious problems keeping up with the paperwork.

I plan on moving nearly all my gamestarts to the Judge in the near future. Instead of Judge games being the exception, I will make human games the exception. Since Judge keeps beautiful records of the games that it runs, this will enable me to finally catch up on my records (I hope). You will know if I've been successful if the BNC and MNC start getting a ton of number requests from me. I should point out that all Judge games in my zine must be overseen by a human if they wish to be included. This hasn't proven to be a problem because Judge really does all the work anyway, so one GM could easily handle a half-dozen games.

One problem that I quickly ran into was that putting all the game results of 50+ games into one issue was a real pain for my subscribers to wade through. My initial solution to this was to break up my zine into many chapters, with one guest publisher in charge of each chapter. Therefore, subscribers could just ask for the chapters they want to read, usually just those with their games and the one I published with articles in it. This whole plan proved to be a miserable failure as no one really wanted this thankless job, and therefore no one did a consistently good job at it.

I have finally been forced to adjust to the computer world and I no longer publish ongoing results for games run by Judge. A summary of the game is published when it is over. The main reason that I wanted to publish results was to make sure that the games were going well. But with Judge, you can be assured that the games will never collapse due to poor GMing. I hope to soon have nearly all my games run by Judge so that the zine will eventually just have two chapters: one for the human-run games and one for the Judge games. My Judge chapter, run by Diplomacy expert Danny Loeb (who lives in France) currently includes more than just the endgame



summaries of Judge games. He also publishes what season Judge games are up to, letters from subscribers, selected updates on interesting games, and various Diplomacy articles. But if Danny were to slack off, I would let the chapter run down to just summaries of Judge games.

In another attempt to lower my Diplomacy load, I have made use of a sister program to Judge, DIP-L. This program sends my zine to a list of Diplomacy players. This saves me a lot of time because I became unable to keep up with the constant flow of players joining and also leaving the Email Diplomacy world. I also use the rec.games.pbm and rec.games.board conferences on Usenet as another big distributor of my zine. Surprisingly, most of my subscribers on Usenet see my zine in rec.games.board and not rec.games.pbm. I was under the false impression for many years that rec.games.pbm was where I had attracted most of the players.

Oh, as far as my no-NMR rule goes, I have found that it works better in Email games than in postal ones. The biggest advantage of Email is that if you are forced to throw out a

player for being sluggish it doesn't take long for a player in Email to take over the position, while in postal play you lose a month under the same circumstances. Also, in Email games, each game can go at its own pace, so you don't have to worry about a disaster game slowing down the other games in the zine. This is important when you are running 50 games at a time. Also, Judge handles the no-NMR rules much better than most humans, because it has the guts to immediately start hounding a player who has been late while making a general call for standbys. I have had a continuing problem with GMs being too lenient on players and consistently giving them an extra day or two to turn in orders. The no-NMR rule works best when players are quickly ejected for slowness.

Finally, I would like to thank Eric Brosius, Jim Burgess, and Dave McCrumb for venturing out of the postal world and GMing in my electronic zine. They are some of the very few who can GM better than Judge.

>Eric Klien (8124 Bridlepath Way, Las Vegas NV 89128) is the Electronic Mail Editor for *Diplomacy World*.

## Postal Play

# Humor and Diplomacy

by Jack McHugh

Humor and Diplomacy... you mean like this: How many Dip players does it take to screw in a light bulb? Just one but he'll take credit for it even if the light doesn't need to be changed.

Well, that's not exactly what I was referring to in the title of this article. How about this one: how many Email Dippers does it take to screw in a light bulb? One, but if it takes longer than a week, he will lose interest and not do it at all.

No, no, you're missing the point. This article goes beyond media types. I want to get to where humor stands in your average Dip game and how it can be used to increase the amount of fun.

Okay, one more try. How many East Coast Cliques does it take to put in a light bulb? None - they can find beer and centers by smell, so who needs light?

Forget the jokes. The point of this article is to show that you can increase your enjoyment of any Dip game by simply using a little humor. Press, when done cleverly, can relieve the tedium of playing out a doomed position. Trading barbs in the press can give you a reason to look forward to getting a zine again, long after the game you're in has ceased to become much of a mystery. Banter in a zine can also make for ripping good reading in a zine without taking much time from either the pubber or the players.

Having said that let me add a few caveats. First, keep your audience, especially the target of any ribbing, in mind. It is not a good idea to pick some humorless serious-gamer type to make fun of, as they won't appreciate it. Check out a player's reaction in other games - does he go ballistic when made fun of?

The zine itself may give you a clue as well. What you could say in *Kathy's Korner* and *Comrades in Arms* are completely different. Some zines tend to have more "humor" in them than others. Also, look at the games in progress to see if they have lots of humorous press.

If you're really unsure of how a press release in your game will be taken, then write to the player involved and ask. Most people get upset - I know, having done it once or twice - when they take something you said seriously that was not meant as such. Usually if you tell someone in advance that the coming press item is meant as a joke, they won't mind.

If you're afraid of how someone might take a specific comment then you have two choices. You can send it to them and ask how they feel, or you can just not use the item at all. I recommend the latter. If you're afraid a comment might be taken the wrong way, don't use it. This is only a game, after all!

Pick your topic carefully. The best topic of all is the game



itself. Give the countries governments and make fun of them. Use pseudonyms for the players to distance them from the governments. Do what makes the press harmless but fun.

The easiest way to show you are kidding is to make fun of yourself first. If you start off by making fun of your own government, for example, most people will see that your comments are meant as comedy and won't take them seriously.

Try not to pick a topic that the player or GM is sensitive about. Don't make fun of a sore point of a particular hobbyist. If a player has indicated in his letters he is aware his handwriting

is lousy and doesn't appreciate it being pointed out, then don't go yapping about it in the press. He probably won't see the "fun" in it.

Relax, have fun, and generate a few laughs. Don't get so wrapped up in winning that you forget that this is only a game. No one has to be here - including the other players and the publisher. Keep those last two points in mind and you and your fellow players will enjoy the Diplomacy hobby.

➤ Jack McHugh (280 Sanford Rd, Upper Darby PA 19082) is a Senior Editor for *Diplomacy World*.

## Preference Lists: First Things First

by Larry Peery

More Dippers lose their games before they even start to play than as a result of all their strategic, tactical, and diplomatic mistakes committed during the game. Why? Because their very first decision - which Power they will play - was a mistake from which they never recovered.

Many game masters and publishers today use preference lists as a means of allowing players to pick which Power they would like to play in the game. Although a player may not always get his first or second choice, more often than not he will. Yet, few players, especially novices, give much thought to selecting which Power goes where on their list. Usually it's a matter of "Well, England and Turkey win a lot, so I'll put them at the top. Austria and Italy lose a lot, so I'll put them at the bottom. The rest fall in the middle." The deed is done, the list goes out in the mail, and the game is lost before it even starts.

Let me suggest an alternative method. Put aside the list mentality for a moment and consider a three-dimensional cube with the seven Powers aligned down one side, the types of choices down a second side, and a player profile across the third. There are three types of choices: a good choice, a neutral choice, and a bad choice. For my purposes a non-choice, which is a form of choice, is a bad choice. I include that because if I don't somebody like McBruce will jump on me.

Now, on to that third dimension, the player profile. This is something you can do yourself. In fact, only you can do it accurately, but you must be absolutely truthful with yourself about yourself when you do it. There are four areas I want you to consider in developing this player profile.

First, what is your level of experience as a Diplomat playing in the medium involved? If you are an experienced postal player in their first face-to-face game, you are a novice, not a pro. I've divided players into four groups: New Blood,

Beginners (some experience but no completed games or wins), Pros (multiple completed games and perhaps a win) and Old-Timers (lots of completed games and wins.)

Second, what is your style of play? Are you a Tactician, good at moving pieces around the board? How about a Strategist, good at playing Powers off against each other? Or do you dare call yourself a Diplomat, a negotiation whiz, irrespective of your tactical or strategic position?

Third, determine what type of personality you have. Are you an aggressive Extrovert, or a passive Introvert. Or are you a Pervert (a non-negotiator)?

Fourth, what is your temperament? Are you Consistent, a dependably loyal ally? Inconsistent would be the term if you are undependable, likely to stab or NMR. Are you Unpredictable, a strong ally but may miss the critical move?

These are some of the elements you should consider before picking a Power to play in a Diplomacy game. And you are not done yet. Once you do your own Player Profile, try to do one on the other players you know in your game. In the PBM and tournament circuits there are enough game results floating around, not to mention gossip, to allow you to construct some pretty reliable profiles. Remember, the more you know about the other players before the game begins, the better starting position you will have.

I would be interested in hearing from anyone who decides to test my little system and see what results you come up with. And if anyone actually wants to assign Powers to the various possible personality profiles, let's see that as well.

As for me, I'll just do what I always do: England and Turkey at the top, Austria and Italy at the bottom. What else does a French-Irish Double Leo from Sandy Ego Old Fart do?

➤ Larry Peery (PO Box 620399, San Diego CA 92162) publishes the zine *World Diplomacy*.

# Diplomacy World Interview with Melinda Holley

by Phil Reynolds

Take a large sampling of Diplomacy games and you might find her name in half of them. Add a ton of games being run in both *Rebel* and *Starwood*, plus the BNC publication *Everything* . . . , and it's no wonder how Melinda "Hobby" Holley earned her nickname. To many hobbyists, though, she is still something of a mystery. Who is Melinda Holley? *Diplomacy World* decided to find out.

**DW:** Melinda, tell us a little about yourself and your family.

**MH:** I was born August 9, 1954, in West Palm Beach, Florida. I moved to West Virginia when I was 15 months old. Both my parents were from West Virginia. I have an older sister and a younger sister in Huntington. Since my father was the sixth of 14 children and my mother was the youngest of ten, I have numerous cousins. I have three nieces, too. I love the mountains of West Virginia. This is a good place to live. If I had to live elsewhere, I think I'd choose North Carolina.

**DW:** What is your occupation?

**MH:** I am an office manager for a firm that sells lighting equipment. I guess we're proudest of the sports lighting. A company we represent has done lighting for the Olympics, several movies (mobile lighting technology), a lot of televised football games, and most recently it introduced a radical new lighting system for nighttime car races.

**DW:** Despite your extensive hobby involvement, you seem to have a reputation for being a bit of a recluse. Why do you think this is?

**MH:** I do have the reputation of being a recluse because I haven't participated in any cons. My appearance at DipCon this year will be my first con. Personal real life problems and conflicts basically precluded any prior participation. Hopefully, this will change.

**DW:** There also seems to be a fascination with what you look like. PDORA accepts bids on photos of you every year. How did this start, and what do you look like?

**MH:** If I tell you, then the photos won't sell! Nothing spectacular: dark hair, glasses, grey eyes. Someone (John Caruso, I think) suggested I offer an autographed picture of myself for PDORA. The next year, he suggested I offer a few more since it was a big draw.

**DW:** PDORA also offers a personal horoscope by you. How did you get interested in astrology?

**MH:** I've been into astrology since I was 14. I had a crush on a guy who was into it. Learning about astrology didn't help me with the guy, but I got interested nonetheless. I like seeing how accurate the horoscope readings really are to people. Of course, no one sees himself or herself as others do, so it'll never be perfect.

**DW:** What other hobbies do you have?

**MH:** I like music and listen to just about anything except jazz, opera, and most country-western. Basically, though, I like rock and roll. I'll read maybe two or three books at a time (biography, history, and nonfiction; some mystery, science fiction and romance novels).

I'm also into genealogy. Because I like history so much, it's a lot of fun to track down family members. For instance, both my

father's and my mother's families were split pretty much down the middle during the Civil War (half were Union supporters, half were Confederacy supporters), which made for some interesting stories.

I'm still into fantasy role-playing games, especially *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*. My other main hobby is embroidery. My mother got me started on it when I was four years old. It's about the only traditionally feminine pastime she was able to drum into my hard little skull! I don't cook, I detest cleaning, but I will do laundry!

**DW:** Is there something you could tell us about yourself that we might find surprising?

**MH:** You want a surprise? I love WWF Wrestling! Beyond that, I'm not that extraordinary. I have a temper which I've learned to keep under control since childhood. Despite all the rumors, I do *not* have a torture chamber in my basement. I don't have a basement. It's located in my bedroom's large walk-in closet. I don't like cats or most animals. I love chocolate, adore Mel Gibson, and am a closet romantic.

**DW:** How did you get into the PBM Diplomacy hobby?

**MH:** I got into the hobby through fantasy role-playing. I saw an ad in *Aries* magazine for a fantasy role-playing-by-mail game and wrote about it. Unfortunately, the person running the game was Elmer Hinton, about whom the least said, the better. The only fortunate thing was Hinton said he was also running a PBM Diplomacy game and asked if I'd like to join. I said sure, and then I went out to find the game and see what I had agreed to do.

**DW:** Describe your first game.

**MH:** My first game (82-CN) was with Hinton as GM. Talk about starting out rough. . . . However, I was really lucky to have Kathy Caruso (then Byrne) and Steve Courtemanche also in the game with me. I was playing Russia, Kathy played Italy, and Steve was Austria. We had a ball, and Kathy showed me the ropes.

I was awful in this game. I didn't understand many of the rules. For instance, I didn't realize I could move F Sev-Rum. I thought I had to move F Sev-Bla first before I could take Rum. Kathy told me to quit fooling around and move that fleet into Rum. Then she took me under her wing. I survived with one center.

The most fortunate aspect of the game was that Steve told me there were other people who also GM'd games. Kathy gave me a start in one of her games and passed me Steve Heinowski's name.

**DW:** How many games have you played? Why so many?

**MH:** Ah, the big number people seem fascinated by. I've played in about 350 games total since starting in the hobby in 1982. A lot are Gunboat games. I shouldn't try to be in so many. I really overextended myself and I wasn't able to give as much attention to each game as I should have. That's one reason why I'm trying to cut back, but it's sort of like staying away from chocolate—one whiff, and I'm back again.

**DW:** What was your first win? How many games have you won?

**MH:** My first win was as Germany in a game GM'd by Don Williams. He seemed rather astonished that this was my first win. For

some reason, I had a reputation as a winning player before I even won a game! I've won just seven games. So much for a winning reputation!

DW: Is there one game in particular which is memorable?

MH: It was written up recently in *The General*. It was memorable because I stabbed Kathy Caruso for the win. I'd won other games, but this one ranks the highest. As I said, I consider Kathy to be my mentor in this game. I probably wouldn't even be playing if she hadn't steered me in the direction of reputable GM's and zines. To stab Kathy and win made me feel like I really had a handle on the game.

DW: *Rebel* has been host to a great many games over the years. What motivated you to begin doing it?

MH: I started *Rebel* in November of 1984. (*Starwood* began in 1987.) I saw other zines and wanted to try my hand at it. I'd talked about it for quite a while with a friend who wasn't into Diplomacy. She finally got tired of the topic and told me either to do it or to forget about it—so I did it. I've run about 50 games since *Rebel* began.

DW: Besides games, *Rebel* featured the subzine *High Inertia*, a popular and entertaining letter column by the Courtemanches.

MH: *High Inertia* was *Rebel's* first subzine, and the Courtemanches (Steve and Linda) gave *Rebel* a balance between games and chit-chat. Although *Rebel* is (and was from the start) a game-zine, I started *Foxfire* earlier this year as a subzine to give it balance again.

DW: What about your experience publishing *Everything*...

MH: I enjoy publishing, so it's no big deal to include *Everything*... in the roster. One big plus is that I've gotten to work with various BNC's and people I might not have had much contact with otherwise.

DW: Have you ever run any hobby services?

MH: Being publisher of *Everything*... has given me two chances to become BNC [Boardman Number Custodian]. It's been offered twice, and I have refused twice. Hey, I've seen the job—no, no, no, no, no! The only other hobby service I've done was being DW's Interview Editor for a very brief time. I was a lousy interviewer, though.

DW: You refused despite recent BNC's being criticized?

MH: I think the hobby has been blessed with BNC's who have tried to do an excellent job and had the best intentions of doing a good job. Sometimes personal real life intervenes, and it has priority. Each BNC has his or her own way of doing things. Other people will say it should be done a different way, but these people aren't doing the job.

DW: What has been your experience with hobby politics and some of the more colorful episodes in hobby history?

MH: I was an indirect participant in the so-called Great Feud. I tried awfully hard to get a BNC decision against Elmer Hinton (who, in my opinion, couldn't be kicked out of the hobby quick enough), and I had a run-in with the alleged Bad Boys of the hobby (who did leave quickly). In Hinton's case, I butted heads with him over some of his shenanigans. In the other two cases, I got into things because my friends were being attacked. I've never been known for staying out of a fight if I thought I should get into it.

DW: Have you had any pleasant surprises?

MH: There was the write-up of a game in *The General* by Rex Martin. He and I were both in the game. Neither of us did well, but Rex

gave *Rebel* a nice little plug. The response was tremendous! At its height, *Rebel* had 185 subbers—that's when I closed the games.

The other surprising thing was the Melinda Ann Holley Award. I was surprised so many people managed to keep their mouths shut about it! Mostly, though, I was surprised so many people thought I was worthy of having an award named after me. Of course, I was glad no one put the word "Memorial" in the name!

DW: If anything, what would you like to change about the hobby?

MH: It would be for new publishers to take a little more time to think about what they plan to do. It seems that lately a lot of zines start up and then fold within ten issues because the publishers got in over their heads. Then games have to be rehoused, etc.

DW: What do you think is the greatest problem facing the hobby?

MH: There seem to be a lot of zines folding. Some are like what I've just described, but a lot of elder zines are going, too. *Kathy's Kormor* just announced its fold. It seems strange when someone tells me that *Rebel* is one of the older zines. If newer zines can't keep publishing and the elder zines drop out, those of us still publishing will be handling a lot more games if we want to keep people in the hobby.

DW: What advice would you give to prospective publishers?

MH: They need to think long and hard about the time and money they are going to invest in a zine. It might be a good idea to publish a subzine for a while to get a feel for what they're doing.

DW: How have you stayed in the hobby so long and not burn out?

MH: I just haven't lost interest in Diplomacy either as a player or as a publisher. I get almost as much enjoyment from following the games in *Rebel* and *Starwood* as I do from playing in games. I guess when the day comes that I moan and groan at putting out a zine, or I start NMRing, I'll consider dropping out. I just don't see that happening right now or in the future.

DW: What do you think will be your future in the hobby?

MH: I'd like to continue publishing *Rebel* and *Starwood*. Of course, I'll keep publishing *Everything*... as long as the BNC wishes me to do so. I rather like publishing. Don't get me wrong—it's a lot of work and it takes a great deal of time (in relation to the finished product), but I enjoy it. I also enjoy playing, and I think I've about reached a more manageable level of games I'm in. I'd certainly like to improve my ability as a player.

DW: In closing, what do you like most and least about the hobby?

MH: What do I like the least? I guess it's the people who take themselves so seriously. It seems those people feel everybody else should genuflect towards their opinions. But I dislike that sort of character outside the hobby, too.

The thing I like most is that I've found people just as warped as (if not more than) I am! Trust me, that's something to be treasured. Actually, friends are easy to make in this hobby since we have such a diverse group, but you can find something in common with others quickly. I've been extremely fortunate to make good close friends with people I've never met!

►Phil Reynolds (2896 Oak St., Sarasota, FL 34237) is Interview Editor for *Diplomacy World*. Phil is the publisher of both *Dipadeedoodah!* and *Ponteviedria*.

# Countefeit Publishing: Dip's Underworld

by Conrad von Metzke

Scene One: You have been publishing a modest little Dipzine for some while. *Dippy Diddles* is now at Issue 43, and has scored in the mid-range of the Runestone Poll, has not been embroiled in any idiotic feud, and has not been ripped to shreds in the *Zine Register*. You are, in short, an Average Publisher doing an Average Job with an Average Reputation.

And then one day, just as you are getting to work on Issue 44, you get a letter from one of your Turkish players: "What's going on? Those weren't the orders I sent you! There's no way I could have lost four centers this turn! And why did Italy miss his move; in the last issue you said you had his orders on file!" Gee, you think, what's this all about?

So you double check - you printed the guy's orders exactly as you received them; no, he didn't lose four centers, nor did you say he did; and Italy didn't miss any moves. What's going on?

So you call the Turkish player Lo and behold, he's talking about Issue 44, the one you haven't even typed yet. The player just got it yesterday. Huh?

The answer is simple - *Dippy Diddles* has been faked!

Scene Two: You have been publishing a modest little Dipzine for some while. *Dippy Diddles* is at Issue 43, etc. And then one day, just as you are getting to work on Issue 44, a light bulb explodes in your brain. "Modest little Dipzine", you scowl. "I am so sick of publishing a modest little Dipzine. I swear, if I churn out one more modest little Dipzine, I will soil the rug! It is time, I believe, for a modest little adventure into immodesty."

A week later, Issue 44 hits the stands. Following the editorial, in which you apologize for your lateness (explaining you thought it more important to rebuild the house after the tornado, and to attend your wife's funeral) you print some, well, rather curious game results. Italy, whose orders you've had on file for a month, NMRs. England, who is Melinda

Holley, has a note printed in which she resigns from the game... and the entire hobby! And in the hobby news section the simultaneous folds of *Diplomacy World* and *Zine Register* are noted with great sadness. Perhaps, you say, it has something to do with Avalon Hil's sale of the rights to the game to Joe's Holistic Game Company of Missoula, Montana...

The answer: *Dippy Diddles* has just been faked. By you!

Twenty or so years ago, the faking of Dipzines, either one's own or another, was all the rage. Originally, the practice was linked to April Fool's Day, and after the first few efforts it became almost common procedure for publishers to do something, however large or small, to mark that event.

The giant in this realm, as in so many other areas, was one Rodney C. Walker. He spent quite a bit of money and energy faking everything from his own *Erewhon* to a thing called *Mongo* which was supposed to have predated *Graustark*. At first, these things created a sense of great mystery. Rod tended to be madcap anyway, and it was difficult to tell at first whether the fakes were the real thing gone ever more loony, or a fake gone utterly bonkers!

And then came the day when two fake *Erewhons* arrived! One was Rod's, more or less as expected, while the other one was a very different beast. It was very much like the real thing and yet perceptibly different - superbly funny and yet lacking some sparkle that would have identified it as Authentic Walker. About the same time there came the fake *Stab*, the fake *Runestone*, the fake *Costaguana*. And on, and on, and on.

After a while, of course, it got old, and tapered off. Rod Walker dropped out (again), and somehow the tradition lapsed. Every once in a while, of course, it creeps out from the woodwork to remind one of the Glory Days (such as the *Zine Register* fake of recent years). During the heyday of the genre, however, fake issues gave us some wonderful moments.

Rod, for instance, invented the Thirty-Four Unit Stand-off for one fake game report. In this, every unit on the board moved in a circle, ordered one after another to move into the province occupied by the next unit in the chain, so that the entire board bounced itself. Rod used an actual game situation to develop this, though he admitted he had to shift two units to different places to make it work. Inspired by this, John Koning gave us the Thirty Four Unit Maypole Dance, in which the exact opposite occurred - in a complete chain of all units, all thirty-four moved one behind the other, so that the entire board shifted exactly one province over.



These ideas gave rise to a whole host of other game-situation creativity, some giving rise to serious "You Be the GM" quizzes (see recent issues of *Dipadeedoodah!*). Countries get eliminated in 1902; two countries entirely conquering each other's home centers; reports of previous-season "errors" that when fixed total alter the result of the turn; and many other weird misadventures. In the process, a couple of anomalies in the 1961 version of the Rulebook were brought to light, allowing them to be corrected in the 1971 revision.

Then, there were the Outrageous Editorial Fakes - GMs making crazy announcements; sometimes based upon real hobby events at the time, some not. I doubt if anyone could ever catalogue the number of times houserules were changed in these announcements, and always in favor of the absurd. In the realm of parody, two real events gave rise to a seemingly endless series of takeoffs: Charles Reinsel's declaration that he would not accept delivery of zines unless they were in envelopes, and John Boardman's refusal to accept mail franked with the Henry Ford stamp, on the grounds that Ford was an anti-Semite. The only real difficulty with parodies on things such as these was that the original declaration was usually funnier than any parody! But did we try? Oh, did we try!

There were, however, misjudgements. The worst of all came when I, in a complete failure to assess the depth of friendship in this hobby, made the April Fool's announcement that I was terminally ill with lung cancer. First it was the phone calls: Fred Davis and Hal Naus, among the most

memorable. Then it was the letters: John Fleming in New York offered me free room-and-board while I consulted at Sloan-Kettering. And finally, the ultimate: Bob Ward, stymied by repeated busy signals from my phone, hopped a plane from Sacramento and showed up on my doorstep! I suppose it can be argued that, for an April Fool's joke to work, it must really work. There's no question this one did - because people were so shocked they did not read further into the issue to find out it was all a joke. I still have pangs of guilt about this, and use to memory to remind my self that "fun is not always fun."

(Among the messages of concern and support - of which there were many - only one actually got the joke. Cal White, perceptively cynical as ever, hurt my feelings by not falling for it.)

But of all the fakes over the years, my own candidate for the best of all (I admit to prejudice because I did it) was the fake *Moeshoeshoe*. This was a small journal published by Michel Faron in Hannut, Belgium, in both French and English. I do not know to this day why I decided to fake it; perhaps it was the challenge. I do not know French. I live in America. How in the hell was I supposed to fake a foreign zine in a foreign language?

The answer proved surprisingly easy, and it was a two-part answer. The two parts were named John Leeder and Michel Liesnard. The former, a Canadian who taught French in the schools, and the latter, a Belgian from Bruxelles,

## New Blood

The following people have recently made inquiries concerning postal Diplomacy, or are known to the editor as being interested in receiving samples of zines. So, you publishers get busy!

Ted Flor, 199-17 19th Ave, White Stone NY 11357  
 Mike Magnuson, PO Box 88, Glen Haven CO 80532  
 Paul Hendricks, 3506 B King James Ct, Richmond VA 23223  
 Tore Godager, Oksehovedveien 40, 1300 Sandvika, Norway  
 Peter Schmitt, 274 Linden Dr, Winchester VA 22601  
 Wm. Richardson, 1913 Old Government St, Mobile AL 36606  
 Hal Dace, 3 Rhodes Ave, Westville 3630, South Africa  
 Michael Handiboe, 803 S Mobile St #12, Russellville AR 72801  
 Kevin Kenz, 2830 Bard, Kalamazoo MI 49004  
 Ed Ouellette, 7454715, PSC 2 Box 7904, APO AE 09012  
 Floyd Fillenworth, 2114 NW Lakeview Dr #8, Sebring FL 33870  
 Ken Nied, 14924 W 124th Terrace, Olathe KS 66062  
 Tom Foy, 1001 University City Blvd C14, Blacksburg VA 24060  
 Ken Mathias, 509 S Royal Tower Dr, Irmo SC 29063  
 Frank Tate, 2705-9 Preston Woods, Fayetteville NC 28304  
 K.W. Lewis, PO Box 2222, Sepa PA 19399  
 Matt Schonlau, 193 Pine St, Kingston Ontario K7K 1X1

## Game Openings

*Maniac's Paradise*, Doug Kent, 54 W Cherry St #211, Rahway NJ 07065 (Diplomacy, Middle Eastern Dip)  
*Cheesecake*, Andy Lischett, 2402 S Ridgeland Ave, Berwyn IL 60402 (Diplomacy)  
*Concordia*, Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown PA 19401 (Diplomacy, Bourse)  
*Carolina Command & Commentary*, Michael Lowrey, 3005 Kenninghall Ct, Charlotte NC 28269 (Dune, Destroyer Cpt)  
*Lemon Curry*, Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr, Greenbrae CA 94947 (Dip, Trivial Pursuit, United, Road to the White House)  
*C'est Magnifique*, Pete Sullivan, 16 Neile Close, Romanby Northallerton N Yorks. DL7 8NN U.K. (Downfall, Monopoly)  
*Perelandra*, Pete Gaughan, 1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947 (Diplomacy, Snowball Fighting, Railway Rivals)  
*Rambling Way*, Andy York, PO Box 2307, Universal City TX 78148 (Dip, International Dip, Nuclear Destruction, Gunboat).  
*Heroes of Olympus*, Steve Nicewarner, 1310-11 Ephesus Ch Rd, Chapel Hill NC 27514 (Dip, United, Empire of the Middle Ages)  
*Tactful Assassin*, Eric Young, 4784 Stepney Rd RR2, Armstrong B.C. V0E 1B0 (Diplomacy, Gunboat, Asian Dip)  
*Vertigo*, Brad Wilson, PO Box 126, Wayne PA 19087 (Diplomacy, Gunboat, Philly Dip, Balkan Wars Dip)  
*Wild Gypsy Rose*, Mark Luedi, 503 W Jefferson #2, Ann Arbor MI 48103 (Diplomacy, 1830, 1835)



contributed all the French I would every need. I also went out and bought a new typewriter so I could do the various special accents. And then I printed the necessary 75 copies or so, mailed them in bulk to M. Liesnard with a cheque, and he stamped and addressed them. After a short train ride to Hannut, he mailed them as well! The aftermath was mild on this side of the Atlantic, but in Europe it brought the house down! I am not sure if M. Feron ever really did figure out who did it. Undoubtedly he suspected M. Liesnard, but I seriously doubt if he ever knew of the Metzke - Leeder connection. And I assure you, none of us ever admitted anything!

One can still fake one's own zine whenever one wishes, and I hope some people are inspired by this retrospective to mark their 1993 calendars to have some fun in April. But faking someone else's product is rather more difficult now than it used to be. The hobby is much more diverse, and more fragmented, than around 1970. Back then, we all knew one another, we all routinely published our entire mailing lists, and, failing that, we all knew someone who knew someone who could get their hands on somebody's mailing list. That is not as easily done today.

On the other hand, one aspect is much easier now: the physical appearance. In 1970 we published with mimeo, ditto, hecto, or dry copier, we each had our own typewriter with special quirks (my 1934 Underwood Standard had an "a" key that kept falling off), and we all used different paper stock depending on what we felt like buying. Today, almost

everyone uses standard copy paper and standard word processing equipment. There are a few laserjet products out there, but they are still rare enough that faking all but a few zines should be relatively simple.

But, of course, there's always the money problem. When faking one's own zine, one can always count the phony toward sub fulfillment; but when faking someone else's work, the costs get poured right down a gaping hole instead. Discounting the "price" of labor and the matter of depreciation on my equipment, each issue of *Costaguana* these days sets me back about twenty-five dollars. I suspect that is below hobby average. Before you make grandiose plans to revive the lost tradition, you had better consult your own exchequer. You would hate to find yourself with a spectacular fake of *Dippy Diddles* and no money to print your own issue!

If you can overcome the obstacles in your path, however, faking a zine can be a source of immense joy for the perpetrator, the victim, and the readership. (It is best to fake a zine with "personality" however; trust me when I say that faking a warehouse zine is boring.) If you're sneaky enough, you will almost guarantee that your effort will become the Topic of Intense Discussion for quite a while after the event.

One thing, though. DO NOT attempt to fake *Costaguana*. Unless, that is, you want to catch lung cancer...

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