

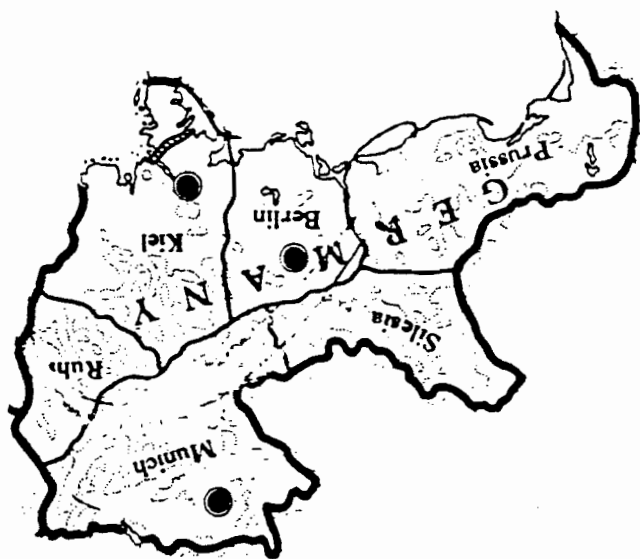
Fall 1992

No. 68

# Diplomacy **World**

An In-Depth Look at:

# Germany



by Stan Johnson and Paul F. Glenn

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## Editor's Desk

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Welcome to the ninth issue of this zine under my editorship. With any luck this is being distributed at my housecon in mid-October, so unless we drop hot pizza on the issues or something, these should go into the mail shortly.

I must say that last issue's release at AvalonCon was quite a success. The zine has picked up quite a few subscribers since August. However, there are still a large number of postal hobbyists who do not subscribe to *DW*. If you enjoy what you read here, I would appreciate your spreading the word to others in your zines or gaming clubs. If *DW* is to fulfill its mission to provide news, insight, features and serious play-of-the-game material to all of Dipdom, you need to make sure others know what is available. Sometime soon, those of you who are publishers will receive a small advertisement for this zine that I hope you will find the space to publish. Of course, if your own subscription is up, make sure you send in some more money right away so you won't miss the next issue.

Which will include some interesting tidbits that did not make it into this issue. On hand already are good strategy pieces from new S&T Editor Mark Fassio and Kevin Brown. The interview Phil Reynolds is doing with Pete Gaughan is not quite ready yet, so it will also appear in issue 69. If you have any ideas for a *DW* article, by all means get in touch with me. I am always looking for new writers to help beef up the bullpen. If you already have something written, send it in.

As stated above, I have annointed longtime contributor Mark Fassio to be Mark Berch's successor in the Strategy and Tactics Editor position. Mark the Second has really added a lot of great material to the zine while I have been chief, and I am excited about having him join the team. If you have any ideas for S&T articles, Mark is available for consultation if you want to bounce the idea off someone else. He can also critique first drafts, or whatever else is needed. (Mark, I've got this problem with the kitchen sink...) And, of course, this just gives me more of an excuse to require reams of tactical articles from the boy.

Some people have asked me if I mind dropping out of the Runestone top ten this year. Not really. I understand that *DW* is not always going to be everyone's favorite zine. What I do want *DW* to be is the best it can at its role— a zine that the whole hobby can look at and say, that's the hobby news and articles zine. In my opinion, everyone needs a zine that looks and acts professional enough to be presentable to the outside world as representative of our hobby. The hobby's big games and chat zines are fine, but are often not the best ambassadors for our hobby because of inside jokes, non-Dip topics, etc. I hope *DW* is something we can all support and be proud of, but there is no reason why everyone needs to give it a "10" in the Runestone Poll. That having been said, if you as a reader have specific changes you want made, or some specific advice about how we can improve, I'd love to hear from you.

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## DipWorld

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## Contents

2	Editor's Desk	Greetings and Comments	
3	Hobby News	Tournaments, Zines, and Projects	David Hood
5		Avalon Hill Advert	
6	Strategy/Tactics	A Hun Having Fun in the Sun	Stan Johnson
8		Germany: The Slow Approach	Paul Glenn
9	Contest	John Boardman Fantasy Travel Service	Conrad von Metzke
10	Variant	Face-to-Face Variants: Diplowinn	James Nelson
12	Ratings	Why We Can't Rate Diplomacy	Fritz Juhnke
13	International	Some International Tournament Notes	Mark Nelson
15		European Zine Poll	Xavier Blanchot
16	Novices	Homework for the Diplomacy Novice	David Hood
		North American Hobby Services	
17		DW Back Issues Available	
18	Tournaments	AvalonCon Report	Jim Yerkey
20	History	The Invention of Diplomacy	Allan Calhamer
21		British Zine Poll	Iain Bowen
22	Lettercol	The Mind-Boggling DW Letter Column	
24	Demo Game	Report on the Demonstration Game	David Hood
27	Postal Play	Why do you think it's "Postal" Dip?	Mark Fassio
28	Postal Games	A Look into the Choo-Choo World	David Hood
30	Postal Play	Choosing a Zine	Larry Peery
31		New Blood / Game Openings	

## Hobby News

Several tournament results have trickled in since the last issue of *Diplomacy World*. The AtlantiCon Dip event, held this year in College Park, MD, hosted Dippers to two rounds of stabbing delight. Gosh what a surprise that Frank "Baltimore" Jones won this again! And Jim Yerkey, tournament denizen for many years, came in second! Seriously, this same crowd does well at every tournament they attend, so, as I've said before, what is in the water they're drinking in Maryland?

Rounding out the top five finishers this year are Kevin McHugh, Kevin Kozlowski, and Michael Hault. Best Country Awards went to Jones (Turkey), Yerkey (Austria), Kozlowski (Italy), Bill Schoeller (England), Nick Dowling (Russia), Michael Fasolo (Germany), and Dan Mathias (France). The tournament itself is run by Robert Sacks, who can be expected to do the same next year. Details of next year's event will appear, as always, in the pages of *DW*.

Another east coast event occurred over the first weekend in August: the second annual AvalonCon tournament, put on by Avalon Hill. The Diplomacy event was run this year by Jim Yerkey and Bill Thompson. (A full report on this Con appears elsewhere in this issue.) The top seven finishers were Tom Kobrin, Steve Chilcote, Rex Martin, Greg Geyer, Lee Kendter, Sr., James Stevens, and David Hood. Best countries were awarded to Tom Fasko (A), Jerry Ritcey (E), Steve Chilcote (F), Tom Mainardi (G), Fred Hyatt (I), Tom Kobrin

(R), and Rex Martin (T). Jim Yerkey has been making noises about having a team tournament next year, which should add to the fun. Those of us on the east coast are lucky to have so many tournaments relatively close together to choose from.

The same weekend saw the fifth annual CanCon, which is the Canadian National Tournament, take place at the Scarborough campus of the University of Toronto. This was the site of the 1991 DipCon. The top seven finishers were Cal White (again), Mike Gonsalves, Jerry Falkiner, Frank Easton, Gerry Paulson, Martin Phillips, and Bob Acheson. Best countries were awarded to Bob Acheson (A), Gerry Paulson (E), Cal White (F), Mike Gonsalves (G), Frank Easton (I), Jerry Falkiner (R), and Doug Acheson (T). There are good CanCon reports in both *Northern Flame* and *The Canadian Diplomat* for your reading pleasure.

An interesting announcement at CanCon was that Bob Acheson may indeed try to run a CanCon West next year in Edmonton, Alberta. More power to him! As *DW* has said many times, what we need are more tournaments in more places around North America, as well as better publicity of those tournaments we do have. Bruce Reiff has thrown down the gauntlet by hosting a Dip event last month at AndCon, in Columbus, Ohio. Though small, this is a welcome beginning to what could be a fertile place for tournament Dip. Similarly, Joel Klein has announced plans to run the Diplomacy tourna-

ment at this year's Chicagoland Boardgaming Championships. Contact him for more info at 326 N Cuyler, Oak Park IL 60302.

Another Con still to go is Pete Gaughan's housecon called NovatoCon, held in early February. Contact him at 1521 S. Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947 for more details.

You can also contact Pete about next year's DipCon, to be held over Labor Day weekend with PacifiCon, in San Mateo, CA. This year's PacifiCon boasted the following tournament winners: Phillip Burk, Albert Boyle, Tim Haffey, Shelley Louie, Ean Houts, and Matt Calkins. Best Country awards went to Martin Johnson for Germany, as well as to the top six finishers, in order, for Russia, Austria, France, Turkey, England, and Italy. The top three players had actual wins in their games.

An important change for DipCon should be in tournament structure. Don Del Grande has reported that the free-wheeling style, where any seven available players can begin a tournament game, caused so many problems that it will not be used next year for DipCon. Instead, Don and Pete will use a more traditional structured-round format, which in my opinion is a welcome thing. Now if we can just get them to take affirmative steps to separate people based on friendships, geography, and past game history, we'll be in good shape for next year.

The Origins Diplomacy tournament next year will be run by zine publisher Andy York, in Dallas, TX. Andy is in the process of negotiating with the Origins folks over tournament structure, facilities, and so forth. By all means write him at PO Box 2307, Universal City TX 78148 to stay on top of the details on this event. Let's make 1993 a banner year in Diplomacy tournament attendance!

With the presidential election coming up, several zine editors are running elections games and contests for the readership. It may not be too late to get in on these if you want. Conrad von Metzke is doing one where you pick the winner in each state, with the winner being the one to guess the most states. Send your picks to him at 4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117. A very similar contest is being run by Bruce Linsey at 170 Forts Ferry Rd, Latham NY 12110, so send in your picks to both folks. James Goode is beginning a more long-term project by starting games of his own design, entitled Call Me President. The rules sound intriguing, so if interested, contact him at 211 Maplemere, Clarksville TN 37040.

A new publication has hit the post since last time. John Caruso has put together a rival zine listing to *Zine Register*, which he has called the People's Diplomacy Organization *Zine Directory*. The basic raison d'être, I believe, is to have an alternative to Garret Schenck's opinionated and, at times, rude comments in the *ZR*. John does a minimum of commentary, focusing instead on prices, addresses, openings, and that

sort of thing. Notwithstanding his purpose in doing the *ZD*, there are a few little editorial comments here and there, though admittedly nothing like that found in *ZR*. Given that there have been other not-so-friendly schisms between *ZR* and other projects entitled "*Zine Directory*", one might think feuds will result. However, now that Pete Gaughan has been tapped to take over *ZR* after next issue, I fully expect the new *ZD* to lose its market niche and fade away to let *Pontevedria* and *ZR* take care of that type of need. Contact John at 636 Astor St, Norristown PA 19401 for a copy of his first issue.

One of the most interesting hobby stories in recent times is the new publication scheme for the zine *Well, Martha*. You see, editor John Schultz is currently serving time in the Indiana state prison system, making the zine the only one from prison that I know of in hobby history. Apparently, the prison has been under a "lock-down" regimen for some time, preventing John from doing his job on the zine. In pops an anonymous benefactor, dubbed "The Keymaster", who is publishing the zine for John outside the prison walls. Given that *Well, Martha* has truly developed into an interesting read and asset to the hobby, I am heartened that somebody is taking the time out to aid its publication. Thanks, Keymaster.

The Swedish tournament Diplomacy circuit has grown in leaps and bounds over the past few years. There are a number of events held throughout the country, and there is even a tournament-wide rating system in place to determine the overall Swedish Con champion each year. This is quite similar to the system that has been in place in Australia, where there is also a great emphasis on tournament play. In North America, we have the IDTR run by Don Del Grande, but that is really a listing for all Cons worldwide. We do not have the overlap in attendance at our Cons that would allow for the Swedish-type system, but this might change in the future.

The Swedish Championships in Diplomacy were recently held in conjunction with LinCon. The top seven finishers were: Nicklas Jansson, Nils Lindeberg, Kalle Stengard, Shaun Derrick, Henrik Tonkin, Don Horning, and Roland Issakson. Yes, Shaun is an Englishman there to sample the Swedish Con scene, which he reports is quite healthy. Shaun has been trekking across the globe lately to promote the international aspects of the hobby, and publishes the zine *Globetrotter* for the purpose of discussing World DipCon and other subjects. He is also working on a Diplomacy Yearbook for the international hobby, that would focus on tournament play in a variety of countries. He can be contacted at 313 Woodway Lane, Walsgrave, Coventry, CV2 2AP, England.

This brings to mind one of the best zines you can sub to for international content, as well as international games. Iain Bowen (5 Wigginton Terrace, York, N Yorkshire, YO3 7JD, England) now has openings for international games of Diplomacy, Railway Rivals, and the Atlantica variant.

# The Good! The Bad! The Ugly!

Three great strategy games from Avalon Hill!

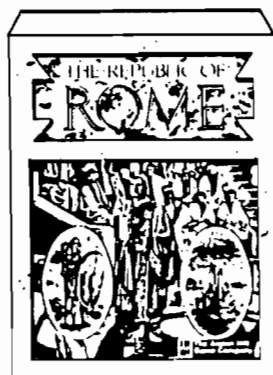
The good! You lead your nation in an exploration of the New World!

## NEW WORLD

\$25

Bursts onto the gaming scene in plenty of time to celebrate the quincennial of Columbus' voyage of discovery. Two to six players represent colonizing European powers plotting the exploration, settlement, and exploitation of the New World. Players vie with each other for the richest territory—shipping crops and gold home to finance their expansion. In the process they must deal with

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’

\$20

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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# A Hun Having Fun in the Sun

by Stan Johnson

Germany may easily be the most fun Power to play on the board. It surely can be the most challenging and rewarding to the enterprising Dip player. Being a successful Hun requires not only good tactics and diplomacy, but careful management of your own psyche.

By this, I mean that you must keep your emotions in check. Things may go so well for the Hun initially. However, he is also liable to start a war prematurely, or get big eyes and go for too much too soon, bringing the wrath of a vengeful world down on his head.

In the beginning, in a game with good writers, you seem to be friends with everyone. Perhaps it would be better said that you are hearing from everyone (or most everyone). How close chums (not chumps) you become depends on your ability to be pleasant and charming. You must point out the many benefits of being your ally.

One way of doing this is to promise things you do not have. Belgium is the best to start with. England is always hot for it, to get his second center, while France often covets it as well. Belgium can be the catalyst to get a real catfight going between England and France, which is the key to any successful German adventure. Your opening letters to both Powers should contain the offer of Belgium with a hint of possible support. If, on the other hand, you grab Belgium for yourself and get three builds it often unites England and France against you.

You also decide whether Russia can have Sweden in 1901, which gives you lots of leverage in the east. If you tie this in with the promise of Norway you can often receive a lot in return.

A problem may arise, however, if you wind up as friends with everyone. You have agreed to help France to attack England, England to attack France, and Russia to attack England. There comes a time when you must say yes to one and no to another. If you sit on the fence too long, you may feel like you are stuck on a post when everyone attacks you.

When you do decide which neighbor to attack, remember to be pleasant. Imply you were forced into the attack by circumstances beyond your control (read: you would be willing to move later against the co-conspirators if you can.) You can never know when you might need a friend. This type of fluidity is crucial to German success. You must be in close relations with three nations, and secondary relations with the other three — through alliance, one hopes.

There is no best strategy for Germany. Your relationship with each Power should be based partly on the personalities of the players and partly on your best guess of their ability.

The following are some general tips to guide this process, although it should be remembered that Germany should not deal with absolutes.

France should be written ASAP. Attempt to get a demilitarized zone for Burgundy. If he's reluctant to agree, offer him Belgium. Also, suggest an alliance against England without saying so directly. You must watch what you say because letter-passers are particularly dangerous to the Hun, who deals with so many potential enemies. Learn to imply rather than to say. Your diplomacy should have its finest hour.

While it's important to have France attacking someone else, it is often even better to have someone else attacking France since you will often want to do the same thing. You can ally with either England or Italy, but the EG has the benefit of also protecting you from the awesome British navy. You must get someone on your side, though, since otherwise Germany and France can knock heads for years with no headway, barring major screw-ups.

Unless you like pre-arranged draws, there is no real long-term advantage to the German for an FG alliance. You must constantly worry about a knife in the back no matter what he tells you.

In review, be nice to France first, then get some help or turn his back towards you, then stab him to death, completely. A small France left alive can come back to haunt you with a vengeance later.

Next there is England. You and he can often reach an amicable agreement wherein you build only armies and he builds only fleets. This arrangement can work well, and, if you want to settle for a draw, can go the whole way. If you want a win, you must position yourself so as to be able to get the jump on the isolated English coastal centers and increase your fleet strength at his expense.

A hostile England can cause you even more problems than France. If he attacks France, you ought to join in and finish France ASAP. Then, if you have been living right and playing right, Russia should be causing trouble for Mr. E. This gives your alliance a target and eliminates another potential enemy.

If England hits Russia first, you should hang back (except to grab Sweden). This is because the sight of an exposed German rear drives Frenchmen wild. You'll look pretty foolish in the siege lines around Warsaw or Moscow when the frog leaps into Munich, and is marching on Kiel. Wait until France moves against England or into the Med before you ever head east.

The way to an Englishman's heart is Belgium. It is the

quickest and easiest way to get France and England fighting. Historically, the German invasion of Belgium brought England into the war on France's side. So you shouldn't try to grab it, as that will unite them against you. If you can get Mr. E and Mr. F fighting, you can get Belgium in the end, anyway.

If you and England are allied from the start, the question is whether to land his army in Belgium or Norway. The wise German will push for Norway. This is because it will focus Russian attention on England rather than you and put a lot of water between that army and you. If the army lands in Belgium, you must be prepared to deal with a possible EF attack. Since England needs your support to Belgium, you should dictate which unit goes in. Of course, if England gets into the Channel, that English army could go to Brest or Picardy instead.

When it comes to the Russian Bear, you have one great advantage, Sweden. You can use this stick to tame the bear and make him dance to your tune. Russia may be looking to Sweden for his only build, if there is trouble in the south. Of course, you should try to make sure there is by passing on information to Austria and Turkey.

As to the price for Sweden, you should begin with DMZing your border areas. Once that is settled, you could make A Moscow - St Pete the key to Sweden. That should raise an eyebrow in London! A German who does not move to Denmark is depriving himself of a great bargaining chip, even if he intends on Russia as a friend.

The GR alliance is very powerful, and usually means the kiss of death for England. The trick is surviving after the fall of England. You need to keep Russia going west towards France, which should put you in position to call the shots. Then you and the winner of the Eastern Division Playoffs may agree to eat some bear meat.

This brings us to the eastern bloc. Many first-time Germans tend to ignore happenings in the east, often to their lasting regret. It is a fatal mistake to ignore the east if you have any intentions of going past the Midgame to the nitty-gritty.

It has always seemed to me that Austria and Germany should be the best of friends. If they used the spirit of Germanic brotherhood to its best advantage, they should be close to unstoppable despite their many enemies. Germany should stress common enemies when talking to Austria, and try to be Austria's Rich Uncle. In other words, use negotiation and moves to keep Russia out of Galicia and Italy out of Tyrolia, as well as put in a good word with the Turk.

However, I have seen few of these alliances bear the fruit of which they are capable. It seems each forgets the other and concentrates on their own affairs. Together Austria and Germany can cooperate and split the world between them. It is also wise to add Turkey to this alliance, at least until Russia and Italy are gone. Then, you can either split Austria between you and the Turk, or leave those two to battle it out while you



gather winning dots in the west.

About that Turk, I think you are a jerk if you don't write the Turk. Sure, he's far away, but he is also the only player who can't attack you in 1901. You and he can exchange much useful information about goings-on across the board. Also, it's easier to start a relationship in the beginning rather than when your units meet in the Midgame. In the short-term, you can have him tell England about the French attack he has heard about, or whatever. To the creative Hun, a friendly Turk is a real ace in the hole.

Last but not least, there is Italy. The Italian offers much potential to the Hun who knows how to tap it. It's little known, but Mussolini was the only one to ever get Hitler to back down in pre-WWII Europe. Il Duce threatened to mobilize 40,000 troops if Germany annexed Austria. However, by clever diplomatic wooing and Allied lethargy, Hitler was eventually able to win Mussolini to his side, and later took Austria with Italian blessing.

The clear lesson here should be to make Italy your friend at all costs. A war against Italy can bring little profit, but can lead to many problems. You would be left with a wide open position that is easily flanked. Instead, concentrate on fostering Austrian/Italian peace, since it could lead to Italy attacking France and Austria attacking Russia. A wise Hun will attempt to orchestrate the entire scenario of events in the east to a boil under Russia's butt, while Italy heads west.

Even if the AI you fostered goes against Turkey, Italy can still often spare a unit or two to help you versus the French. You may also plan ahead for future fun by promising both England and Italy Iberia. Of course, you will usually have the jump on Italy in the endgame as well, as you will be in a better position to grab 18 dots quickly.

While these tips focus on one country at a time, in a real game nothing happens in a vacuum. Events in the east must be balanced against those in the west, and vice versa. Due to his central position, Germany has a foot in each bloc, and must often be the fulcrum on which the whole game balances.

In conclusion, to be a successful German you must be a constant sower of discontent and confusion among your enemies. Write as if your life depended upon it, because it often does. In "Free for All", a game recently started in *Maniac's Paradise*, the German was a non-writer. In Spring

1901 he was attacked by England, France, Italy, Austria and Russia. Don't let this happen to you!

> Stan Johnson (10 Pine St, Edison NJ 08108) is a prolific postal player, often as the fun-in-the-sun Hun.

## Germany: The Slow Approach

by Paul F. Glenn

In *Diplomacy World* 65, Joel Klein's article "A Grain of Slat" advised slow and steady progress for the two central powers, Austria and Germany. I agree with him on this approach. While Joel did go into detail as to how this strategy applies to Austria, he talked little about Germany. In this article, I examine the slow strategy with regard to Germany.

Germany's location is roughly equivalent to Austria's, in that it has three neighbors who can all benefit from its dismemberment. This positional consideration is the major reason why Germany should not pursue a fast and risky strategy, i.e. one designed to rapidly eliminate one neighbor. In order to achieve such a "blitzkrieg" result, a country must concentrate massive forces against a single opponent. Certain countries, particularly the corner powers, can do this without as much risk due to their relative lack of exposure to attack.

However, for the central powers, it is usually suicidal to pursue such a strategy. They need to keep some forces in reserve for defense. If, for example, Germany attempted to blitz France in Spring 1901, and at the same time Russia invaded from the east, Germany would make an extremely quick exit. Mass concentration of force leaves too much territory exposed to attack.

Even if Germany pursues a fast opening and is not simultaneously invaded from another side, the situation is not necessarily good. Seeing Germany fully committed against France could be a serious temptation for another country to invade. This is particularly true for Russia, but also for England and Italy to some extent. Even one unit against Germany's exposed rear or flank is a huge threat.

Another reason for Germany adopting the slow but steady strategy is Germany's need to keep vigilant against threats from every corner as the game develops. Since Germany is right in the middle of the board, it is exposed to attack from all sides. Austria is unlikely to attack early on, which removes the danger from one front, but eventually a threat will develop from that area, whether it be Italy and/or Turkey overrunning Austria or Austria herself.

Because of this constant danger, it is a good idea for Germany to work to limit any threat from quiet sectors, by limiting the growth of the other powers through diplomacy

and/or intervention. No power can be allowed to grow too powerful, for you can count on them attacking you down the road. Germany should back up the weaker side in conflicts away from the main front. For example, if Germany moves west against France or England (a usual occurrence) it is unwise to ignore the east and south. Intervention, even with just one unit, can be enough to prevent any power from becoming a large and dangerous threat.

In a game I played recently, an Email game through the Diplomacy Adjudicator, I successfully followed this strategy of intervention. In an alliance with England, I attacked France early on. However, I did not commit all of my forces to this struggle — I kept one or two in reserve to intervene in other theaters. When Italy pulled a sneak attack against Austria, threatening to win quickly, I sent a unit south to Tyrolia, and captured Venice in the Fall. This one unit killed any chance Italy had of defeating Austria quickly to become a threat to me. After this, the two sides were dead even, and neither could defeat the other. This "preventive intervention" insured that my southern flank would remain secure. I later took similar action in the east. The game ended in a two-way between England and me. My success was largely due to limiting the growth of my southern and eastern neighbors.

This strategy is, in a sense, a balance of power strategy. However, it differs from the "pure" balance of power strategy in that it is only temporary. Germany only has an interest in keeping her neighbors weak and divided to protect herself while her attention is turned elsewhere. As soon as the active front becomes secure (i.e. France or England falls) Germany should turn to the quiet fronts and move in. In the game I described above, for instance, as soon as I had finished with France I turned south and east in force. The balance is not an end, but rather is a tool to protect oneself while engaged in other fronts.

All of this takes time — it can't be accomplished as part of a "fast" strategy. Intervention on one or two additional fronts draws units away from the main front, making it all but impossible for a quick victory. There is simply not enough force present. The primary enemy may not fall until 1905 or so. This is not a problem as long as Germany keeps her other neighbors in check.

The slow approach benefits Germany in another indirect way. As Joel Klein pointed out in his article, it is the corner powers who gain most from a fast start. By following the strategy I have been discussing, Germany in effect forces other countries to also grow slowly. This gives the central powers an advantage, for they have limited the growth of their worst enemies.

Finally, the slow approach is useful for Germany for a negative reason: the fast approach is largely ineffective against Germany's primary opponents, France and England. Both countries have tremendous defensive positions, making it very difficult to quickly eliminate either (unless the victim makes some very bad moves). This is particularly true of England, as any attack can only be made with a number of fleets, which France and Germany don't even have combined

at the beginning of the game. While it is a little easier to kill France quickly, it is still relatively difficult. Both countries require a protracted siege before they fall. Since the fast approach is unlikely to work against Germany's chief enemies, why try it at all?

Germany is a difficult country to play, and is frequently eliminated early in the game. However, if the German player can control the tempo of the game, and keep it slow, Germany is perhaps the best country to play. It is certainly my favorite, because of the special challenges it presents. When it survives to 1904 and beyond, Germany is very powerful, and a hell of a lot of fun to play.

>Paul F. Glenn (1134 W Loyola Ave, Box 1005, Chicago IL 60626) is a relatively new writer for *Diplomacy World*.

## Contest

# John Boardman Fantasy Travel Service

by Conrad von Metzke

Alas, gentle readers, poor souls that you are. You probably thought that John Boardman, PhD. invented this hobby, thought up some numbers for its games, and started the most enduring of all, its fanzines. And... Well, that's about it. In all other respects he's been wholly insignificant, right?

Well, ah, perhaps that is not quite the complete story. It is a little-known but highly significant fact that Dr. B. is also the cause of our ability, via the postal play of the game, to travel to a cornucopia of places which do not exist, have never existed, and will never exist. Nonetheless, they are there. "They" are mythical places which have been taken as the titles of a host of fanzines, starting with Boardman's Grand Experiment, the zine *Graustark*.

John reasoned that, since the game is set in Europe at the turn of the present century, it would be appropriate to carry those games in a zine named for a fictional European country of about the same timeframe. His choice, *Graustark*, is exactly that - an imaginary hotbed of political and military intrigue, rather like the real countries of the time, and exactly like the countries we replicate in our gaming. Following Boardman's lead, the next several zines to come along took the same pattern for their names, and the tradition (though by now sporadic) has continued to the present. Although these locales very quickly departed Europe and moved to many other points on the compass, the underlying concept of a fictional place name has remained steadfast.

Now, because this was Dr. Boardman's tradition, and because Dr. Boardman in a college professor, it seems appropriate to present the rest of this material in a form well known to him - a quiz. Readers who are of an inquiring mind, and feel like doing an odd bit of research, may have some fun playing around with this. This is not a big-time

contest, but if you send an entry your name will appear with the answers next issue. And David Hood has promised two free issues to anyone who correctly answers the quiz in its entirety, and one issue if you get twenty out of twenty-four.

It's simple. Below are the names of twenty-four fictional places after which hobby zines past and present are named. For each, identify the original source of the name, and give the supposed location:

Albion	Lilliput
Atlantis	Marsovia
Barad-Dur	Mongo
Barataria	Osgiliath
Barsroom	Perelandra
Brobdingnag	Pontevodia
Costaguana	Ruritania
El Dorado	Saguenay
Erewhon	Slobbovia
Frobozz	Talabwo
Graustark	Trantor
Lemuria	Wild 'N Wooly

This is, by the way, a very partial listing, though it does cover most of the major zines involved. Despite the many that have been used, there are many more appropriate names available for use if anyone wishes to follow the tradition. Answers are welcomed at the address below. If nothing else, I hope this has given you some feel for the aura that surrounded our hobby in its earliest days.

>Conrad von Metzke (4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117) is a former publisher of *Diplomacy World*.

# Face-to-Face Variants: Diplowinn

by James Nelson

Many people enjoy playing Diplomacy face-to-face, so why not variants? Perhaps you'd like to play a variant because you'd enjoy the change from the standard game. Or perhaps you're interested in the different tactics and strategy available in a particular variant. Maybe you only have five players wanting to play. It would be impossible for me to list rules and give my views on all FTF variants so I'll just go through the popular ones and a few of my own "ideal" variants. For the simple variants, my description will probably be enough to allow you to play. For the others, rules are available from the North American Variant Bank (Lee Kendter, Jr., 376A Willowbrook Dr, Jeffersonville PA 19403).

In general, it is best to have simple variants. Complicated variants require the players to have a comprehensive knowledge of the rules. Unless the players have read the rules prior to deciding to play the game this can cause problems. Likewise, variants on the Diplomacy board are perhaps best suited for FTF play because the players already know the strategic aspects of the map (e.g. the stalemate lines, likely regions to expand into, etc.) and can hence concentrate on the rules.

The most popular FTF variant is GUNBOAT. Quite simply, this is normal Diplomacy set up with no diplomacy allowed. Very easy to play, and very quick. I, however, dislike FTF Gunboat. This is due to there being no satisfactory way of allowing press. Without press, players find it difficult to express their intentions to the other players. This may be regarded as part of the variant, but try telling Austria that! My experience in FTF Gunboat is that Austria gets creamed from the start, and Turkey is involved in 95% of all results. Whilst this may occur in postal play as well, at least intentions and suggestions can be aired through press. In FTF games, however, I have found a way around this problem: illegal orders. For example, as Austria, I quite often order F Tri S Ita F Nap-Smy in Spring 1901! Hopefully the Italian player will realize I'm asking him to attack Turkey, and as a bonus it prevents him moving A Ven-Tri.

In WINTER 1900, the first season is a build season, with a period of diplomacy prior to this. There are two slightly different versions of this. One allows players to build only in home centers, while the other allows building in non-center home provinces (e.g., Fin, Lvn, Ukr for Russia). With the exception of this first move, the game plays as normal Diplomacy. Personally, I'd modify the game further so as to allow builds in either any home province, or any owned supply center. This allows a great deal more flexibility and should allow for some interesting builds.

Have you ever thought of pressing that red button? The

button which fires the ICBM's from your silos at your enemy? If so, play NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY! In this game, it costs one supply center to build a Missile and none to maintain a missile already built. Missiles can be built in any home province and cannot be moved except when fired. When fired, a Missile can hit any province on the board and cannot be stopped. A Missile destroys any unit in the province and makes it impassable for the remainder of the game. (If the target is a sea province the Missile has no effect.) If the target province is a supply center, the center is lost forever! Missile firing can either occur before or after movement. Also, the Missiles can be captured and used by an enemy. This is a very destructive game, not for the paranoid or weak-hearted.

Ask Diplomacy players what the major trouble with the board is, and 90% will state "stalemate lines". If stalemate lines annoy you, play MULTIPLICITY. Basically, units of the same nationality can merge together to form multiple stacks, e.g. Russian A War merges with A Gal to form 2A Gal. When 2A Gal supports or moves, it does so with the strength of two.

The last of the ideal FTF variants using the standard board is DIPLODOCUS (17 players with two centers each). There is also CHAOS II (34 players with a single supply center each). The latter of these is played each year at the UK convention ManorCon by a bunch of demented loonies (at least that's what I call them). I have even seen the Tunis player build A Tun in Winter 1900... Using the simple idea of randomly-determined supply centers, any number of players can be accommodated on the Dip board. You know the scenario - you only have six players, and the variants for six in the rulebook are crap. Just have the players choose four centers in a random fashion, have Winter 1900 initial builds, and away you go...

Alternatively, rather than change the rules, the map may be changed. Most map change-only variants are not worth playing in my opinion, so the most suitable ones for FTF are those with simple changes to both rules and map.

Perhaps the most well-known of these is ABSTRACTION II. In *The Game of Diplomacy*, a book by Richard Sharp, he described this variant as "perhaps the only variant ever designed which improves upon the basic game". It is the same seven Great Powers in Diplomacy, but there are more provinces and supply centers (four each, Russia five). It also uses the Army/Fleet rules to speed up the movement of armies. This is probably not the ideal FTF variant because it takes longer to play than normal Dip.

Another of Fred Davis' designs is SKINNYDIP. This

may be the best variant for FTF play. Again, the same seven powers are used, but this time the board has less provinces (two centers each, three for Russia). No changes to the basic game, but much quicker.

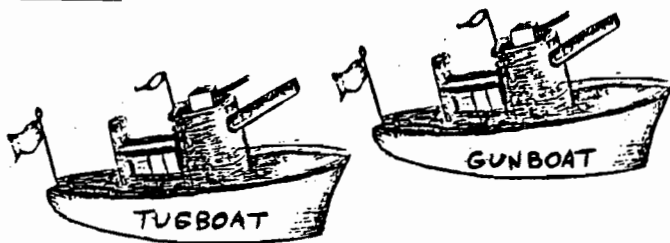
One of the major criticisms of Diplomacy is the Venice-Trieste question. The only adjacent home centers in the game, it has never been explained why Calhmer did not foresee the problems this would cause. DAVIS DIPLOMACY, another Fred Davis variant, addresses this problem along with other modifications to the standard map. The major two modifications are the addition of a province between Venice and "Trieste" (actually "Zara" in this variant) and a province linking the Atlantic Ocean sea provinces to the ones in the Mediterranean. This one uses Army/Fleets, as do most of Fred's variants.

In DW 59, I printed the rules for DELUGE, which happens to be my favorite variant. In this variant, the provinces of Europe gradually sink. By Winter 1908 only Switzerland, which becomes passable over the course of the game, remains above sea level. Supply centers are destroyed when their province sinks, with a few new centers being created in the course of the game. However, the number of centers gradually declines from 34 in Winter 1901 to just one, Switzerland, by Winter 1908. This is an ideal FTF variant because there is a set finishing year, and the number of units falls (hence the time required to negotiate and write orders goes down). Of course, the disadvantage is that board-size maps for 1902 through 1908 are needed, without which players would get confused.

Designed originally as a joke variant, FIVE ITALIES was designed for "a group of five people who, like Kathy Byrne (Caruso) are only happy when they can play Italy..." You've guessed it, the board is five interlocking Italies in a circle! Totally balanced, of course, and with a low victory criterion - 11 centers. This is a very fast variant, and fun so long as you like to play Italy!

For Diplomacy purists, DIPLOWINN, of which the rules follow, is a quick variant. Standard Diplomacy, but throughout the game a "Diplowinn Adjustment" takes place to reduce the number of units on the board after 1905. This should bring the game to a speedy conclusion.

Lastly, for those who want a game the same as regular Diplomacy but with a twist in the tail, there is TUGBOAT, which appeared in DW 35. This is played as per the normal game, but negotiations are allowed only prior to Spring moves. A compromise between Dip and Gunboat, this should run about three game-years per hour.



Bank edition, 1986. Diplowinn has been played most recently in Tom Swider's zine *Comrades in Arms* (75A Maple Ave, Collingswood NJ 08108).

Very few FTF games produce a single outright winner, even after eight or nine hours of play. Some games end in a joint win. More frequently, there is a three or four-way draw. So often one hears "If only we could play another game year or two, then..." The same complaint is heard when it is agreed that the game will end at a fixed time, as prescribed in Rule III.

Diplowinn makes one major rule change: In Winter 1905, the number of units on the board is adjusted to be one less than the number of supply centers controlled by each country. In the following Winter, this becomes two less, and so on. The Victory Criterion remains the control of eighteen supply centers.

This change should produce the desired effect. Those countries still in the game with only one or two units will be rapidly eliminated. Static battles and stalemate lines cannot be maintained, since there will be fewer units available to man them. The strong countries will lose a smaller proportion of their strength than the weak ones, and hence become relatively stronger. With a decreasing number of units on the board there is more room for movement and more need for diplomacy. Progressive weakening of all countries makes stabbing and risk-taking more attractive and more necessary.

This should eliminate the stagnation which often sets in when a game reaches the 1905-1906 period. It also bears a resemblance to reality. In real wars, a country initially gets stronger as it mobilizes its resources to the utmost, and then gets weaker as its human and material resources get depleted.

It could also encourage players with just two or three units on the board to agree to a concession or draw sooner, in order to guarantee their own survival on the game records, whether FTF or postal.

((NAVB: And, of course, with fewer units on the board, it would be easier to GM, if played postally. The name Diplowinn stands for "Diplomacy Intended to Probably Leave an Outright Winner by Nineteen Nine." The author has also suggested an alternate title of DAFTEOR, or "Diplomacy Allowing for the Exhaustion of Resources."))

## Diplowinn by Norman Nathan

This variant was originally printed in *Dolchstoss* #22, August 11, 1974. This version is the North American Variant

>James Nelson (112 Huntley Ave, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7DU, England) publishes the zine *Variants and Uncles*.

# Why We Can't Rate Diplomacy

by Fritz Juhnke

Nowadays nearly every popular game or sport has its own ratings list. Many activities, NCAA basketball, for example, have two or more organizations maintaining competing rating lists. These lists come and go as people are more or less willing to create, maintain, and believe in them. On the whole, one often feels that ratings provide little more than a starting point for arguments which are in any case silly.

Within this morass of semi-arbitrary numbers of questionable validity, however, there is a shining beacon of reasonableness. In the early 1970's, the International Chess Federation struck a bold new course by bringing genuine mathematics to bear on the issue of ratings. They adopted a rating system designed by Arpad Elo, a system which exists in slightly modified form to this day. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that the Elo system has far and away become the rating system most accepted as being reliable.

Since the introduction of the Elo system, similar systems have been adopted by the United States Chess Federation, the United States Table Tennis Association, and the American Go Association. I know of no other similarly-derived ratings lists, but would not be surprised if there were others. Each of these organizations uses the same basic model of competition, one which Elo himself borrowed from the mathematical literature on paired comparisons, and implements it in a way tailored to the peculiarities of the competition at hand, and the needs of the organization.

It occurred to me, as a fan of both Diplomacy and mathematics, that if any rating system for Diplomacy could have statistical significance, it would probably be a system arising from the roots of Elo. Conveniently, I was a math major at Reed College, in search of a topic for my senior thesis, so I resolved to invent the definitive rating system for Diplomacy by drawing upon the most successful system to date.

Now, my thesis is complete, and I am ready to share my results.

Alas, I have a disappointing (at least to me) report to make. The more deeply I understand the rating of chess and other two-player games, the more thoroughly I am convinced that there is no mathematical basis for generalization to Diplomacy and other multi-player games. The statistical difficulties which are troublesome in rating chess are insurmountable in rating Diplomacy. Let me briefly explain why this is so.

All of statistics hinges on the notion of independence. We measure something again and again, anticipating a certain degree of variability, yet confident that the data will eventually "settle down" into predictable patterns if we take

enough measurements. Our confidence, however, is based on an assumption that we are measuring the same thing every time. If what is being measured changes, the intent of the measurements is frustrated. For example, if you wanted to test the fairness of a coin, you would have to flip the same coin over and over. It wouldn't be very sensible to flip a different coin every trial.

When we talk about "independent" measurements, we mean that the result of one measurement cannot affect the result of any other. Independence is a consequence of our condition that we measure the same thing every time. Suppose, for example, you wished to measure the probability that one hard-boiled egg cracks another when the two are struck together. The result of the second trial will almost certainly be the same as the result of the first, and so provides little additional information. Successive trials are not independent, which prevents us from making repeated measurements of the same thing.

In the case of chess ratings, the quantity we are trying to measure is a player's average performance. We measure his/her performance over a number of games, and guess from our data at the invisible, intangible skill of that player. In technical terms, we infer the probability distribution, which is assumed to be generating the performances in individual games. It is at least plausible to assume that each performance is independent of all others, since each game starts anew from the same position, no matter what has happened in previous games. We can therefore put statistical machinery to good use.

If we try to rate Diplomacy players over all their games, we quickly find that the independence disappears. This mathematical notion will be intuitively clear to anyone who has played tournament Diplomacy. How one performs in the later rounds is directly related to how one has performed in the earlier rounds. An early-round win, for example, makes a late-round win much more unlikely, because the winner becomes everybody's favorite target for elimination.

A ratings list destroys independence in much the same way a tournament does, because, as Larry Cronin pointed out in his article in *Diplomacy World* 62, a ratings list is much like a perpetual tournament. It changes the game dynamics if everyone plays to get the highest rating possible, rather than to achieve the best possible result in each individual game. I could produce many hypothetical examples of this phenomenon, but the point should hardly need proving among Hobby Icons like the *DW* readership. Who has gotten a reputation for winning often, or indeed any kind of reputation, without having to face changed attitudes in their opponents?

For chess, it makes no difference whether one plays to get the highest possible rating, or plays to win each game separately. In Diplomacy, it makes a world of difference. We succumb to the eternal bugbear of science, in that we change what we are trying to observe merely by trying to observe it. I cannot shake the conclusion that applying statistics to Diplomacy ratings is a doomed enterprise.

Yet, the lack of mathematical grounding has not hindered the propagation of ratings lists in the past, and will not likely do so in the future. There may well be some future ratings list which gains widespread acceptance for reasons

other than statistical validity. In fact, Buz Eddy has developed a system which is so far superior to others I have seen that it should be a candidate for the hobby standard, if such a thing can exist.

I part with a question for the readership. If there must be a rating system, on what principles should it be based? What are the criteria which must be satisfied before a rating system can win your acceptance?

➤Fritz Juhnke (PO Box 44, N Newton KS 67117) is the *DW* expert on the intersection of mathematics and Diplomacy.

## International

# Some International Tournament Notes

by Mark Nelson

The June 1991 New South Wales Diplomacy Championship saw the re-appearance to the Australian Diplomacy scene of Andrew England, who had published the popular zine *Beowulf* before his fold almost a year before. What better way to mark your comeback than by winning the tournament?

However, there was some dispute as to the merit of Andrew's win. Two players, David Bryant and Lachlan Olive, played in three games together. And the above two played with Andrew in the same game the last two rounds. To make matters interesting, not only were Bryant and Andrew allied in both games, they also live together in the same house...

John Lawns commented in *Victoriana* 47 (June 1991): "In Round Three, Bryant supported England all the way to an 18 centre win, even though by doing so he substantially reduced his own score. It was obvious what was happening, in fact England compiled an 'Andrew-Haters' list of people from outside the game who had warned Bryant and Olive what was going to happen and how it would effect their scores. The list had nine names on it..."

"Now, I don't blame England for taking the chance while he had it. In Diplomacy one takes every chance one can get... However, for three players to play together in two consecutive rounds, with two of them living in the same house, is simply not good enough. Just what are Tournament Directors for?"

"There is no need, in a five-board tournament, for the same three players to be in the same game twice. In fact it's quite easy to ensure that they aren't. It is simply a matter of preparing the draw for the second and third rounds in advance, say the evening before each, rather than making it up

on the spot each morning."

The method of Andrew's win does not reflect poorly on Andrew, but instead upon the Tournament Director who should have prevented this situation from occurring. Additionally, it illustrates why many people are unhappy at the prospect of combining prize money and Dip tournaments. Think of the fuss if Andrew had won a substantial cash prize! Accusations might have been made that Andrew and David agreed to split the money in return for David throwing the game to Andrew.

There's nothing intrinsically wrong with having friends playing on the same board. On the whole, most Dip players are mature enough to realize that there are no pre-existing alliances when a game starts, although that doesn't stop most of us from trying to pull supposed favors! More importantly, in the game Andrew won there was a mix of player strengths: there were three bunnies, two players of limited experience, and one other experienced tournament player. Give such a line-up, Andrew must have hoped for a good score from the beginning of the game.

This raises interesting questions about the seeding of tournaments. In this particular tournament, each game was rated using STAB, a popular Australian rating system, which gives every player on the board a score. For the next round, player allocations were made so that there was a mixture of good and mediocre players on each board. To me it makes more sense to seed the boards so that the top seven players are on Board One, etc. This ensures that you roughly compete against players of comparable strength, and thus ensure a better game.

Seeding of players obviously makes more sense in a Diplomacy tournament which has three or four rounds rather

than only two. However, I would be interested in seeing such a system being run at ManorCon, the largest tournament in Britain. I wonder how British players feel about seeding tournaments in general?

Harry Kolotas, in *Victoriana* 51 (November 1991) takes the idea of seeding to one conclusion. He suggests that in a four-round tournament, the first three rounds are used to determine your table number in the final round. Table One would carry the top seven ranking players, Table Two the next seven, etc. The player who did best on Table One would win the tournament. All other tournament results would be determined in the final game, e.g. a person on Table Two would finish somewhere between 8th and 14th overall.

I'm not particularly keen on this idea. I'm not that keen on having to play four games of Dip over three days. Also, if one is forced to play four times, I believe you would get a more accurate ranking by tabulating the performances over all four games rather than just the last one.

There are a number of FTF tournaments in Australia each year. I'm not sure of numbers, but certainly there seems to be around five or six. Naturally, there is interest in trying to rank players based on their performances in different tournaments to produce an overall "Australian National Tournament Champion."

A set of rules has been devised. One's score from a tournament depends on the total number of boards played so that you score more for doing well in bigger tournaments. However, the current system has a drawback in that everyone who plays in a tournament is certain to score some points, so that could lead to a situation where someone wins the overall championship by turning up at a Con, dropping out of all your games in Spring 1902, and going on to do something else. I'd prefer a system where only the top third of the field scored points, or perhaps the top half if you're feeling more generous.

I was surprised to learn that since 1988, there have been over 800 players in Australian FTF tournaments, a number which I believe to be several times the size of the Australian postal hobby. Would a similar situation hold in the UK if there were more Dip tournaments? Australian Dip tournaments are not big conventions such as MidCon or ManorCon but instead tend to be small affairs using one room in a club. Would the organization of such tournaments have a positive effect on UK hobby publicity? Are there enough non-hobby Dip-playing members of the public to warrant such events?

As a result of the NSW debacle, Australian hobbyist Frank Meerbach has decided to collect material pertaining to the running of a Dip tournament with the aim of producing a "Tournament Director's Guide." There would be sections on rating systems, tournament rules, player allocation tables, publicity material, running team-tournaments, and other procedural topics. An admirable project, about which a

provisional set of guidelines appeared in *Victoriana* 52 (November 1991).

The UK zine *Smoldnoc* 32 (July 1991) contained a run-down on the ManorCon Dip tournament of that year, in which Toby Harris became the first person to win this event for a second time, and two consecutive years at that. There are two things of interest here; the continual references to the tournament rating system and the run-down on the game that won him the tournament.

On the first day he had finished with 13 centres, with the next player at 8 whilst his brother had finished the top dog in a 14-10 situation. For the purposes of the Individual Tournament, Toby's first day score was not going to win him the tournament, which is based on your best performance. If he was going to win he needed a high-scoring second day, which equates to either winning your game or being top dog with plenty of centres. In a game with fixed time limits, this means avoiding certain powers.

Luck granted him Russia, a country with good chances of rapid expansion. This is essential for a game with an externally-imposed time limit. Spring 1901 saw Toby experiencing the negative side of writing Dip articles. Austria wouldn't go along with his plans for Spring 1901 as he had read some of Toby's previous articles on opening strategy!

Although the *Smoldnoc* article contains good explanations of what Toby did and why, getting you into the mind of a top tournament player was truly accomplished by an extract describing Toby's bamboozlement of the remaining players into accepting the draw. Having allied with Austria, Russia rampaged through Turkey, Scandinavia, and Germany. Reaching a 14-9 situation, he had achieved a typically over-extended Russian position. The stab was coming, and with it the fall of Russia. Knowing what would happen, Toby not only proposed a draw but persuaded the other players to accept it, a masterpiece of diplomacy. And it's interesting that Toby proposed the draw at that stage in the game and not sooner. Knowing Saturday's scores he knew what result he was aiming for. At any previous stage the existing supply-centre distribution would not have been sufficient to win the tournament: he had to reach a high supply-centre position, but not so far that the other players started to ally against him.

The aim of the game was to reach such a high-centre position, but not necessarily a position that could survive in the long run. Any collection of centres would do. This shows the dedication that you need to win a tournament: know what you need to do it, reach that objective, and then get out while the getting's good. Instructive.

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

# ZINE ORDINATIO 1992

*What is a "zine" ?* A zine is an amateur magazine with random periodicity, published a minimum annually.

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

*What is "Europe" ?* Europe is a geographic area stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural mountains (*Charles de Gaulle*).

*What zines may be polled ?* The European zines, i.e. the zines whose editor lives in Europe... or Siberia (the only exception, because of the high quality of the zine *Peredychka*).

*What is the "Zine Ordinatio" ?* It's the record of votes cast for each eligible zine, measuring fame.

*Who votes ?* Anyone who reads one of the eligible zines may vote.

*What is a vote ?* A vote is counted as a number between 1 and 10, which estimates the interest of a zine since January 1st, 1990. One may cast as many votes as the number of zines he reads, and you can even vote for a zine that you don't read regularly.

Ballots should be sent, to the following address  
before 4th December 1992 :

Xavier BLANCHOT  
99 Bd Raspail  
F-75006 PARIS  
FRANCE.

*Why should you vote ?* To defend good zines and to encourage those who contribute to them, to make known their merit,

**to contribute towards  
a wider cooperation between the various European hobbies,  
to create a European hobby as a part of a World hobby.**

*Voters will receive the Ordinatus publication for free.* Please, if you edit one zine, send the last issue, it will permit to describe it. The result booklet will contain various contributions on many topics (the European Hobby, zine and convention linkage, news diffusion...). Votes will be kept confidential. Nevertheless, to be eligible, a ballot has to mention your name and address.

## VOTE. NOW !

# Homework for the Diplomacy Novice

by David Hood

One question I am frequently asked by newcomers to the Diplomacy hobby is how they can "catch up" with the history of the hobby, as well as with the trends and ideas that have been expressed in the area of strategy/tactics. One of the first steps should be to contact either Bruce Reiff or Tom Mainardi, addresses below, about getting a novice packet. These publications can be helpful in explaining how postal and tournament Diplomacy operates, as well as give some basic info on how to play the game well.

Another decent source for the latter is Rod Walker's *Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy*. This is available straight from Avalon Hill at 4517 Harford Rd, Baltimore MD 21214. The cost is \$8.00. AH is currently working on a rewrite of this publication together with a group of Diplomacy hobbyists, so it may be that there will soon be two different versions of the *Gamer's Guide* floating around. I think the original *Guide* was helpful to me when I began to play the game, although one must be careful not to take Walker's strategic advice as gospel.

Another resource that is available is the only hardcover book ever printed on the game, *The Game of Diplomacy* by Richard Sharp. Photocopies of this work are available from Fred Davis (3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City MD 21043) for \$6.00, and fifty cents more to Canada. In Europe, order directly from Richard Sharp at 46 Whielden St, Amersham, Bucks., HP6 0HU, England.

There are several aids available to help you sort through the zines available out there. For a simple listing of zines that currently have game openings, contact Phil Reynolds (address below) about a copy of *Pontevedria*. If you want a more in-depth look at zines, check out the review zine called *Zine Register*, listed below under the editorship of Garret Schenck. Be aware that some of the reviews are rather pointed and nasty, so read intelligently. You could also write to Doug Kent (54 W Cherry St #211, Rahway NJ 07065) about his *Your Zine of Zines*, which reviews 2-3 different zines per issue. Ask him which zine reviews in back issues are available for sale.

Finally, there is *The Roar of the Crowd*, which is the results booklet for the hobby's yearly zine poll, run by Eric Brosius (41 Hayward St, Milford MA 01757). The emphasis here is on statistical results of the Poll, as well as upon such features as the Runestone Poll Hall of Fame and Diplomacy Hobby Leaders. The latest edition of the zine has just appeared, and is available from Eric for \$5.00. Though it is extremely long, I still recommend it to novices in order to get a broad idea of what our hobby is about. Here, you will see all the zines, addresses, and analysis of where the hobby is going, and where it has been.

Last, but not least, there is *Diplomacy World*. This is probably the best resource for new hobbyists there is, given the vast array of information about the hobby contained both in recent issues, and in back issues. One shortcut is to buy a *DW Anthology* from Larry Peery (PO Box 620399, San Diego CA 92102) for \$15.00. These are collections of past Diplomacy articles on subjects including Best of DW, Best of Mark Berch, all variants printed, and Replays of all the past *DW* Demonstration Games. The first of these was one of the most educational items I read in my early hobby days.

In addition to the back issues listed on the next page, issues 62 through 67 are also available from me at \$3.00 each. In 62 (Spring 1991), there was a collection of articles on the monster variant Colonia, as well as an intriguing article on how to improve the Runestone Poll. Issue 63 (Summer 1991) included a major feature on the history of *Diplomacy World*, written by past staff members and editors. The switch from newsprint to white paper occurred with issue 64 (Fall 1991), which included a puzzle entitled "Sherlock Holmes and the Dip Mystery." The cover story on 65 (Winter 1992) was a look by Jim Meinel into the first postal Diplomacy game ever, and became what I think is one of the best *DW* articles of all time. Issue 66 (Spring 1992) included strategy articles by Mark Fassio and Jack McHugh, and pieces on Dip tournaments. Finally, issue 67 (Summer 1992) featured the new Napoleonic Wars variant and the Melinda Holley interview.

## 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

Here is a partial list of back issues available, and the prices. The name in parenthesis is the person you should order from: Walt Buchanan 3025 W 250 North, Lebanon IN 46052; Larry Peery PO Box 620399, San Diego CA 92102; David Hood, Address pg 2. There are also some of issues 24-38 available from Larry Peery at \$4.00.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# AvalonCon: Director's Report

by Jim Yerkey

This was quite a departure for me. Since 1976 when I played in the Origins Dip tournament at Johns Hopkins here in Baltimore, I have been at almost every major east coast Diplomacy event, plus several held in the Great Lakes region, as well as tournaments in California and Canada. This time I was able to view the situation from another perspective.

My primary assistant was that "legendary" FTF Dipster Bill Thompson. Bill and I had discussed the idea of running our own Dip tourney since the first MaryCon at Mary Washington College way back when. However, we had never got beyond the talking stage.

The folks at Avalon Hill were very flexible and helpful. When I suggested that I would like to have more awards than the single plaque they gave out to the winner last year, they said simply "how many"? We agreed on the traditional Best Country awards, the popular Golden Blade, and controversial Hammered award. The only real problem apparent was that they wanted me to have time limits on the rounds so participants could play in other tournaments.

First thing was to choose or develop a scoring system. After reading and considering some of the scoring systems I had played under over the years, I convened a meeting of what David Hood refers to as the "Baltimore Mafia": Thompson, Frank Jones, Dan Mathias, Mark Franceschini and Carl Willner) plus Bob Odear from North Carolina. My objective was to get some input from other FTF tournament players. We spent the better part of a Saturday arguing the various pros and cons of different systems and different ideas. It was a classical Diplomacy gathering. Ask seven Dip players a question, get seven very different, very strong opinions. The scoring system used, described below, was

primarily Bill's and my original concept but with some important changes inspired by our confab.

Some time in the future I will try to write an article discussing the logic behind the structure of the system. Suffice it to say for now that since we were working under a time limit we tried to get the games to develop and move along quickly. Also, I prefer a system which rewards wins more favorably than do some other systems.

On July 31, I arrived at the Penn Harris Inn in Harrisburg, and problems quickly developed. First, Bill was late showing up with the data entry cards (index cards) for players to sign up. Second, we had a problem getting enough space and tables to play on. We had been assigned to play in the Grand Ballroom and, although Avalon Hill had reserved an area for the various tournaments, and a different area for open gaming, it didn't quite work out that way. This was a problem in the second round, but thankfully not in the third.

After running some of the open games out we got the first round under way with seven boards. The second round of six boards began at noon on Saturday, with the third and final round starting at 9:00 am Sunday morning with four boards. Some important results in each round are listed below:

Round One, Board Two: Steve Chilcote (Best France) and Jim Stevens (Russia) combined for a two-way draw subduing their opposition (including defending AvalonCon champ Bruce Reiff) by Fall 1906.

Board Five: Rex Martin (Best Turkey) and Jerry Ritcey (Best England) abandoned and overcame their game opening allies on the way to a two-way draw.

Board Seven: This one ended in a three-way draw shared by Tom Pasko (Best Austria), Benoit Lauzon (England) and John Wethrell (Italy). This game also saw Marc Rosenthal (Russia) begin a headlong charge to the "Hammered" award, as his boardmates took his seven centers from him in two game-years.

Round Two, Board Four: Tom Kobrin takes the first step to the tournament win with the only 18-center victory at AvalonCon. He also lays claim to the Golden Knife award when, in Fall 1905, he stabs Turkey and knocks him down from eight centers to one in three game years.

Board Five: Tom Mainardi (Best Germany) makes a rare appearance as a player and shows all that he still has what it takes. He combined with super CAD David Hood (Russia) for a two-way draw.

Round Three, Board Two: This game ends in a three-way draw between Kobrin (Turkey), Steve Nicewarner



(Italy) and Rex Martin (Germany). In the process, Tom clinches both first overall and the Golden Knife when he pulled off a four-center stab of Russia in 1907.

Board Four: Lee Kendter (England) and Greg Geyer (Germany) ally on the way to a two-way draw and a fourth place tie overall.

After it was all over I got a lot of compliment and encouragement from participants. I want to thank them as well as those who took the time to fill out the GM rating card for Avalon Hill. Your input is greatly appreciated.

So what does the future hold for AvalonCon?

In my heart of hearts, GMing will never take the place of

competing in these tournaments. I did, however, enjoy my turn at the wheel and have offered my services for next year. There are some changes we'll be working on this winter to make AvalonCon an even more enjoyable experience. Watch *Diplomacy World* for more information.

Again, thanks to those who came in 1992. We're looking forward to a bigger and better AvalonCon on August 12-15, 1993. The full tournament results follow.

➤Jim Yerkey (4 Dutton Ave, Catonsville MD 21214) is a frequent tournament denizen, and winner of numerous tournament titles from AtlantiCon to Origins.

## AvalonCon Results

1. Tom Kobrin	47	Tournament Winner
		Golden Knife
		Best Russia (Win)
2. Steve Chilcote	39	Best France (2Way)
3. Rex Martin	36	Best Turkey (2Way)
4. Lee Kendter	33	
Greg Geyer	33	
6. James Stevens	30	
7. David Hood	28	
8. Fred Hyatt	27	Best Italy (2Way)
Vince Gialameau	27	
10. Benoit Louzon	26	
11. John Wetzrell	25	
12. Jerry Ritcey	22	Best England (2Way)
Sylvain Larose	22	
14. Tom Mainardi	21	Best Germany (2Way)
Joe Rhodes	21	

Others: 55 others played at least one game, including past tournament champs like Mark Franceschini, Dan Mathias, and Bruce Reiff.

## AVALONCON '92 Diplomacy Scoring System

1) *Supply Center Count* : Each player receives one point for each supply center held when the game ends.

2) *Bonus Points*:

Win	15 Points
2-Way Draw	7 Points each
3-Way Draw	4 Points each
4-Way Draw	1 Point each

No bonus points will be given for 5-way or larger draws.

3) *Rounds*: This is a "best two out of three" tournament. There will be three rounds played. The scores for each player's two rounds will be combined to get a cumulative scores. A player

need only play two rounds. Best cumulative score wins.

4) *Game-Ending Negotiations*:

•Negotiated Draws: Any group of players holding 29 supply centers or more may determine who is to be part of the draw.

•Concessions: Players holding 29 supply centers or more may agree to concede a win to (and only to) the player with the most supply centers (15 center minimum).

5) *Tie Breaker*: In case of a tie, we will calculate the involved players' average number of supply centers held per season for the two games being counted; the player with the highest average will be the winner.

6) *Proven Wins*: At the end of each game, any player who believes he/she is in a position to force an 18-center win will be given one move, or until the end of the current game year (whichever is greater), to prove it. That player will make his/her moves, then all other players will move their pieces in opposition to his. Players will not be allowed to help him/her to the win. In the event that a player involved in one of these "prove a win" situations has another tournament game to go to, one of the GM's will order that player's pieces.

7) *Time Limits*: Each board will keep its own time limits for negotiations, writing orders, etc. We recommend a maximum of 20 minutes per each spring and fall season (including five minutes for reading orders) and 10 minutes for winter builds. The GM reserves the right to disqualify player(s) who show up late. Such player(s) will not be able to play that round. Sometime between 6 and 6 1/2 hours after each round begins, the GM will call the round. All games are to end and the supply-center count, upon which each player's score will be based, is to be taken at that time — no matter what season the game is in.

Then the players will have 15 minutes to agree on a conclusion (draw or concession). If no agreement is reaching, the GM, following the criteria stated above, will designate who is to be part of the draw.

8) *Standbys*: Since we can't have an unlimited number of standbys, we will not have any. If a player drops out of a game, his country will be in civil disorder for the remainder of the game.

## THE INVENTION OF DIPLOMACY\*

by Allan B. Calhamer

As the war drew to a close in 1945, I read an article on post-war planning in the magazine *LIFE*. This article reviewed the history of the Congress of Vienna and the subsequent period to 1914, arguing that a world containing several Great Powers all roughly equal in strength would offer the best guarantee of peace, because whenever one or two of these powers acted aggressively, the others could unite against them, causing them to back down by overwhelming threat before a war could break out. Regardless of whether such a plan would have worked or could have been brought about in the real world as suggested, the condition of multiple and flexible checks and balances obviously offered itself as a possible basis for a parlour strategic game of some depth and color.

In the course of debating in high school, I then encountered an argument against world government — a hot topic of the late forties — which was that governments now are checked both by internal and external factors, but that a world government would have no external checks upon it, hence it might be more likely to become tyrannical. Another debater and I attempted a game simulating the grand alliance of European history of the Eighteenth Century, but as we used only two players and did not find any way to simulate an independent third or fourth part, the effort ended in failure.

Meanwhile, several of us were playing Hearts, a card game in which several players participate, each independent of the others. We observed that the game was best if all the other players played against the current leader. Thus the current lead would tend to change hands, giving more players a chance to lead and a chance to be the leader at the end of the predetermined number of hands. Competition was further enhanced by ruling that if two players tied for the lead at the end, all players shared equally in the tie. Thus, all players who were hopelessly far behind still had incentive to try and bring about a tie between the leaders, thus increasing the competition instead of detracting from it. I noticed that players who did not understand all of this would tend to play for second place, or simply to protect their own score, and thus would detract from the competition, while usually also detracting from their own chances of finishing first. It occurred to me that if negotiation were permitted, other players whose chances were diminished by this suboptimal play would have a chance to inform the suboptimal party and make a case for more nearly optimal play. If this effort failed, then they could say that their opportunities were foreclosed, not merely by the aberrant play of another, but also by their own failure to persuade, which would be an integral part of the contest.

From Chess I borrowed the number of spaces, about 80 as opposed to 64 squares, and the number of pieces, 34 as opposed to 32. My pieces move only as Chess kings, but the king is about an average chessman in mobility, and thus the board is equally saturated with force. Diplomacy is thus much simpler than most war games in its small number of spaces. I think that the game should be as simple as possible, so long as the game is indeterminate and reasonably rich in strategic choices.

In 1952 I studied Nineteenth Century European history at Harvard under Professor Sidney B. Fay of then Harvard Class of 1895 (†), whose book, *Origins of the World War*, detailed the specific diplomatic developments leading to World War I. These consisted primarily of two- or three-party arrangements, wholly or partly secret in nature, as well as similar contacts and projects which did not mature into arrangements. The arrangements were frequently almost as brief and pointed as those made verbally during Diplomacy games!

At this time I also studied political geography under Professor Derwent Whittlesey. There I became reacquainted with the concept of "geopolitics" devised by Sir Halford MacKinder around 1904, which I had already encountered in an article, again in *LIFE*. The principle element of geopolitics seems to be the consideration of the effect upon the international power struggle of the particular geometric nature of the division of the surface of the earth, altogether specifically considered, into land and sea. Thus, Diplomacy emerged as a game in which land power and sea power are almost equally significant, whereas nearly all other war games are primarily either land games or sea games. The decision whether to raise an army or a fleet is one of the most important decisions the player can make, and it is one of the most important indicators of the direction of future activity.

Diplomacy is perhaps the first or only war game played on the continental scale, in which entire campaigns are only elements of the whole. In designing the tactics, reference was made to the Napoleonic principle, "Unite to fight, separate to live." Separation is achieved first of all by requiring that there be only one piece in a space. Concentration is then arrived at by the use of "support" orders from different pieces which bear on the attacked province. Pieces farther from the crucial point are less likely to affect the struggle for it, but some of them may do so by cutting support. The use of supply centers causes further dispersion of forces and emphasizes the economic nature of objectives. It also makes the game primarily one of maneuver rather than annihilation. This aspect of the game is reminiscent of the "indirect approach" of Liddell-Hart, though I had not read him at the time.

Finally, the problem of organizing a seven-person game was not solved until I entered the study of law in 1953. I became aware that players who failed to meet their responsibilities toward the game should be made to suffer light penalties, such as the loss of a single move, so that they are encouraged to comply but are not usually wiped out by minor lapses. The game should be designed so that it can proceed along despite poorly written orders and the like. The notion that a person may tell all the lies he wants, cross up people as he pleases, and so on, which makes some players almost euphoric, and causes others to "shake like a leaf", as one new player put it, came up almost incidentally, because it was the most realistic situation in international affairs and also far and away the most workable approach. To require that players adhere to alliances would result in a chivvying kind of negotiation, followed by the incorporation of the whole of contract law, as some erstwhile inventors of variants have found out.

The game was completed in 1954 and has undergone relatively little change. The major changes have concerned adjusting the map to make the countries more nearly equal and to give them a wider range of strategic choices. Convoying was made simpler, and minor complications eliminated. These revisions occurred during 1958, when a good group of game players and Operations Research people played many games and offered suggestions for improvement. In 1959 I had 500 sets manufactured by my own capital after major companies rejected the game. Manufacture of the game was transferred to Games Research, Inc. in 1960. Sales have increased in every single year since the game has been on the market. Postal Diplomacy was begun in 1963 by Dr. John Boardman. The games are conducted through amateur magazines, of which a few dozen are always in existence. Annual conventions have been held in the United States for some years. Conventions have also been held in Belgium and Italy.

# The 20th British Postal Diplomacy Zine Poll (1992)

The annual zine poll has been part of the British postal Diplomacy Hobby since it was started by Richard Walkerdine back in the mists of time in the 1970's. Last years winner was Richard Sharp's zine Dolchstoß and the year before that Andy and Madi Key's Electric Monk won.

This years poll will be to the same tried and tested methods (a combination of modified mean vote and the infamous preference matrix weighed at 2:1 favouring the preference matrix) as the previous five polls and has had little change in both eligibility criteria or in method.

**Voter Eligibility :** Any one who has regularly read postal Diplomacy zines during the period 1/1/92 to 31/12/92 is eligible to vote. Editors may vote for their own zines, and associate editors, coeditors, editors partners may vote for the zine that they are associated with. All voters must both print their name and sign it on the ballot paper. Voters may be from any nation (not just the British Isles). Voters may vote once and only once any receipt of further votes or changes to votes after the first set from that voter has arrived are disallowed.

**Zine Eligibility :** Any zine (current or defunct) that has produced 4 issues between 1/1/92 and 31/12/92 and was published in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland may be eligible for the poll if they fulfill one of the following conditions :

- i) They are running (or have run) during 1992 a game of postal Diplomacy and/or a recognised variant of Diplomacy
- ii) The zine was not published during 1991 and has a list for Diplomacy (or a recognised variant) open.
- iii) By consideration by the pollster that the zine, whilst not running Diplomacy or a variant thereof is regarded as part of the "postal Diplomacy hobby" (examples include Greatest Hits, Take That You Fiend, Variants and Uncles, The Mark Nelson Experience, Sumo's Karaoke Club.
- iv) Must receive at least 12 votes (or 8% of the total vote number of votes cast, if higher)
- v) Is not a service zine (Globetrotter, The Numbers Game, Moonlighting, Mission from God etc).

N.B all zines must fulfill the four issues published during 1992 requirement.

**Voting :** Voters should rate zines between 1 and 10 where 1 is regarded as low and 10 is regarded as high, up to one decimal place is allowed for voting (so 7.5 is perfectly acceptable but 7.45 is not). It is preferred (but not essential) that voters should place their votes on the ballot in decreasing order of vote (i.e. high votes at the top). Ballots may be sent via third parties to the pollster, however such ballots will be scrutinized. An 'official' ballot paper does not have to be used, although the pollster prefers their use. On all matters concerning the poll, the pollsters decision is final. You may vote for as many zines as you see regularly.

**Results :** The results will be released on Sunday, February 9th at the North Yorkshire Hobbymeet, a simple results sheet will be available from the pollster for an SSAE.

**The Pimley Award :** Also on the ballot form is a ballot form for the 1992 Les Pimley Award, Les Pimley was a very active hobby member who died at an early age : however, in his memory an award was instituted for 'Service to the Hobby'. This year's nominees are The ManorCon Committee (For running the largest ever amateur Diplomacy convention in the UK) ; Andrew Moss (For hobby recruitment) ; James Nelson (for work on the UKVB and variants in general) and Mike Siggins (for his zine Sumo's Karaoke Klub). Voting is conducted by single transferable vote and the deadline is as per the zine poll. You may vote in both the Zine Poll and the Pimley Award.

Votes should be sent to Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, York. YO3 7JD U.K.

The deadline for the receipt of votes is Thursday, 31st December 1992.

# The Mind-Boggling DW Letter Column

This is the eighth 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.

## *McHugh's Humor and Diplomacy article*

Joel Klein (326 N Cuyler, Oak Park IL 60302): I liked Jack McHugh's article on humor. I have a difficult time discerning humorous from homicidally angry press. I think suiting the press style to a zine's character is good. After all, if you didn't want the abuse, why did you go to a zine that carries that?

Stan Johnson (10 Pine St, Edison NJ 08817): Who ghost-wrote that article for McHugh? If he wrote it, he sure doesn't practice what he is preaching.

Editor: Hey, it was the real McCoy, alright. Actually, I find Jack quite humorous much of the time. As with anyone, you've got to make sure he's being serious before taking umbrage at anything he says.

## *Von Metzke's Dip Underground article*

Joel Klein: On the hoax piece, I have one more. This wasn't precisely a hoax. Stan Wrobel and John Koning put out an issue in the early 70's, the cover of which proclaimed "The John Award," with a drawing of a toilet. In the bowl portion of this drawing was (in my issue) what appeared to be a calligraphic rendition of my name. I thought this was funny (and alarming!) until I spoke to some other subscriber who assured me that his name was on his copy, and I stopped at that - I'd hate to have discovered that this other fellow was putting me on, too.

## *Zine Format*

Conrad von Metzke(4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117): I'd like to offer one small "format" suggestion for you to think about. By the very nature of postal cancelling equipment, your back cover was badly marred by ink lines all the way across the page. This will happen most of the time as practically nobody hand-cancels any more. Although the text wasn't ruined, it sure would have been if you'd hit them at a time when they'd just inked the machine. So if you can, I recommend trying to reduce your issues by half a page and thereby making the back cover for mailing only.

Editor: Actually, I have toyed with the idea of putting even more text on the back page! The problem is a lack of space. I don't want to

increase the page count as that would put me over the top in mailing costs, but I also want to pack every issue up with as much material as possible. I want to throw this open to the readership: has anyone else noticed a legibility problem with the back page?

## *Glenn's Article on Balance of Power*

Mark Fassio (CAD-B, Unit 26708 Box 5265, APO AE 09235): This was well-written. I for the most part agree with him. However, I feel that you can indeed play for such balance without the game degenerating into boredom. If the players are the free-wheeling types who realize it's to their own advantage to create a balance of power as they see it (i.e. for their own advantage), then the game becomes one where you try and stiff the others while shifting the "balance" in your favor for the win. Sort of like George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm*, dealing with a "classless" barnyard environment where some animals are "more equal than others." The British Empire's concept of balance of power usually implied British naval supremacy, not equality. When someone else tried to equal their "balance", such as Napoleon or Kaiser Wilhelm, they fought. So, Diplomacy's "balance of power" is a dynamic; involving mega-change to your benefit.

## *Fassio on Letter Passing*

Mark Fassio: I have a short response to Andy York's comments on my article. For the record, I too am not all that keen on letter-passing (my last passed letter was in the mid-80s). But I'm not completely against the tactic. Much depends upon the people involved and the result expected. A game I'm currently in has seen the same person pass me two letters - but he's a "loyal ally" type, and the passing is thus limited to info against common enemies. Andy's worries about the possible ramifications, such as phone recordings, spoofing the GM, etc. are extreme. They are reminiscent of the extremist NRA types who say that a 7-day gun registration period is a similar "first step" towards, in that case, the complete confiscation of guns. Both are, methinks, exaggerated.

Editor: Well, count me in with Andy York on this one, I think. I always discourage letter-passing, and have attacked letter-passers for that very reason in at least two games. My problem with it is that it takes away from the fun of the game. If you can't be sure that your communiques are private, your ability to wheel-and-deal is extremely limited. Usually, if someone is willing to pass you a letter, they are willing to pass your letters on to others. I think that hamstrings negotiations, which are supposed to be the fun of the game. And, as a strategic question, a letter-passer is of little use to me as an ally. I tend to be very specific with my allies when it comes

to planning moves, so I don't want some peeping Tom looking over my shoulder. It's one thing to verbally pass on what you heard, as that involves skill in both the giving and receiving ends - any slob can pass along a letter. And, quit trying to register my guns!

### Demonstration Game

Stan Johnson: The Demo Game is especially interesting. It shows how exciting and wide open a Dip game can be with seven good players and no NMRs. I have often suggested that GMs occasionally offer veteran games for players with proven track records. This would include players who have completed two games with no NMRs, or players with a win. Conversely, novice games could also be offered.

### The Zine in General

Joel Klein: So, Fred Davis and Mark Lew disagree with Mark Fassio's definitions and stories about the words "posh", "boffo" and "wop"? Well, gentlemen, I don't know about the words, but I do know the character of this man, Mark Fassio. You honor him! Being right one out of three times is close to an oath from Faz!

Mark Fassio: Many thanks to Mark Lew for his explanation on the term "wop" - I'd never heard that one before. And many thanks to Fred Davis for explaining "posh" in near the same terms I did. As Meat Loaf once sang, "two out of three ain't bad."

Kevin Brown (100 Patton Drive, Warner Robins GA 31093): I appreciate your mentioning *Pilot Light* along with the other top Runestone finishers. However, you failed to mention that *PL* features the subzine *Poll Talk* by Eric Brosius. Although it appears only occasionally, it is an essential part of the *PL* experience, and I have little doubt that it contributed to the overly high poll rating. I hope you will make some mention of this oversight in the next *Diplomacy World*.

Editor: I do apologize for the omission. However, while Eric does a fine subzine, I think it had nothing to do with your Poll finish. I think it reflects instead the overall enjoyment factor of the United managers in your league. We know United soccer is time-consuming to run by mail, and you do it with a lot of extras and for a lot of team managers. Keep up the good work! And you Dip-only types out there, take note of your missed opportunities in both the sports game area and the rail games described elsewhere in this issue.

Paul Glenn (1134 W Loyola Ave Box 1005, Chicago IL 60626): Once again, I'd like to say that I greatly enjoy the magazine under your editing; I think you've done wonders with it. I enjoyed reading James Nelson's Napoleonic Wars

variant. I, too, have long been interested in that period of history. If anyone out there runs it in a zine, I'll play.

Editor: I probably would too, so you zine editors out there take notice. I particularly liked the rules for *Minor Powers* to add a different twist to the game.

Stan Johnson: You are doing a great job with *DW*. I very much enjoy the issues I receive. I also enjoyed the interview with Melinda Holley and would like to see more interviews.

Editor: With any luck, Phil will be providing us with interviews just about every issue. Also, there is a series of articles coming up that I am excited about - profiles of prominent hobbyists in our past. I believe hobby history articles should be one of this zine's primary missions, as should the study of the personalities that make this hobby worth being in.

## Maelstrom Ratings

Buz Eddy has, for some time, been compiling a new ratings list for postal Diplomacy games using a system of his own design. Though he has not yet disclosed the system, he has said that all survivals and eliminations are treated the same, and that the strength of the other hobbyists in the game is taken into account. This process has been going on for a while, as Buz incorporates game reports from old issues of *Terminus* and *Everything* into his database. He has just completed the computations through Spring 1989, up to *Everything* 80. The following rankings were published in the latest issue of his zine *Maelstrom*, which can be yours by writing Buz at: 7500 22th St #205, Edmonds WA 98026.

### Grandmasters

Gary Behnen  
Randolph Smyth

### Senior Masters

Edi Birsan	Kevin Kozlowski
Kathy Caruso	Al Pearson
Don Ditter	Mikel Petty
Mark Fassio	Russ Rusnak
Michael Gonsalves	Dan Stafford
George Graessle	Don Swartz
Nelson Heintzman	

Buz also has lists of "Masters" and "Experts." With any luck he can expand his system to give place-for-place rankings so that the hobby will finally have a ratings service it needs to increase the recognition of good play.

## Demo Game Continues with 1904

As promised, this month we pick up the Demo Game action for both the Spring and Fall turns of 1904. And, oh what turns these were, too. I am pleased to hear that so many readers are following the game with so much interest. For players just learning the game, a Demonstration such as this allows you to see how all the theories play out in actual game situations. Enjoy!

Spring 1904

91AH

## Italians Continue to Push West; France Loses Burgundy

Austria (Bill Quinn): A Vie S Turk A Rum-Gal, A Bud S Turk  
A Rum-Gal, A Ser S A Bul-Rum, A Bul-Rum, F Aeg-Con, A  
Tri-Tyl

England (Mike Ward): F Den-Nth, FNth-Lon, A Lon-Yor, F  
Lvp-Wal

France (Mark Berch): F Eng-Lon, A Pic-Bur, A Bur-Ruh  
(d.par.otb), A Gas-Mar, F Mid-Iri

Germany (Mike Gonsalves): A Hol S A Bel, A Bel S A Mun-Bur, A Mun-Bur, A Sil-Boh, A Kie-Ruh

Italy (Randolph Smyth): A Pie-Mar, A Smy S Turk A Con  
(OTM), F Nap-Tyn, F Tun-Wes, F Eas S A Smy

Russia (Kevin Kozlowski): A Arm S Italian A Smy-Ank  
(NSO), F Sev-Rum, A War-Gal, A Ukr S A War-Gal, F Bla

S A Arm, A Sip-Nwy  
Turkey (Dave McCrumb): A Rum-Gal, A Con-Bul, F Ank S

Press:

Germany to France: It was so hard to keep track of what was

a fleet and what was an army, so I decided to make the task simpler.

Germany to Commentators: You guys are batting worse than me and the Cleveland Indians on your comments. This is my kind of game: a "free for all."

**GM to Germany:** Mine too, as you know from our past games together... In fact, Fred should remember my style of play as well. I seem to remember a game at the 1987 DipCon where I was Germany and Fred Russia. Hmmm, remember, Fred?

**Commentary:**

**Fred Townsend:** Alert readers may have noticed a slight divergence between the comments on this game and the actual play. How can this be? In part this may be because we don't have access to the devious and deceptive correspondence these players are sending to each other. But David Hood reports that when he was commenting on a game before, his predictions were so accurate that the players complained he was interfering with the play. Notice how deftly we have avoided that problem here.

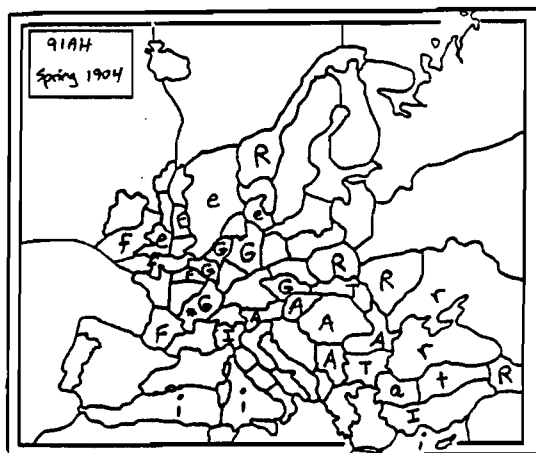
A second explanation suggested by Germany in the press is that the commentators are morons. Garret is the top-rated player in the country and I am the top-rated player in Lake Bluff, Illinois, so there must be a deeper explanation.

There are two general styles of play. First is Strong Alliance, which I favor. Second, there is Balance of Power, which Germany describes as "free for all." Free-for-all makes for a very entertaining and unpredictable game. Stabs galore. There is only one minor flaw: when the music stops, free-for-allyers can find themselves without an ally.

Look what is happening to France here. In a strong position with both England and Germany moving east, he stabbed England, only to find an uncrippled Germany turning on him. (A problem I predicted before that stab of England. Just goes to show even a blind pig sometimes finds an acorn.) What can France do? Put up a strong defense and hope the three-way alliance breaks up before he is kaput.

However, the music of the free-for-all has stopped, and the alliances are solidifying. Now it is too dangerous for any one player to betray his alliance as this would ensure the other alliance would reap the benefit. So look for France to lose Marseilles or Spain this turn and several more centers next year.

On the other hand, Mr. Free-for-all himself, Germany, is in fairly good shape. He has advanced into Burgundy, and Kie-Mun will fill the gap in the middle. But most importantly, he has established a working alliance with Russia and England. The moral here is to stab early, and to not be the last stabber. Of course, having your fate rest on another player



blundering is not my idea of good tactics.

Austria and Italy, by contrast, have maintained the only solid alliance in the game, and are now the controlling members in the AIT southern alliance. But all is not clear sailing. Assuming for the moment that the A-I-T and G-E-R alliances will stick together at least until France is eliminated (a strange assumption for free-for-allers, but even Mike Gonsalves is no fool), let us look at the prospects for the alliances as two groups.

The Northern G-E-R alliance has three advantages. First, they have 15 centers to the 14 held by the Southern alliance. Second, their pieces are not as tangled up as are the pieces of Austria and Turkey. This turn, for example, having successfully put two fleets on the Black Sea, making that the obvious move, I would attack Armenia instead. But Turkey may be insisting, as the price of puppeting, that he not lose any centers. So, the Southern alliance may be burdened with non-tactical considerations.

The final advantage for the North is the most important in my book: that alliance is already across the stalemate line. Now, there are numerous stalemate lines criss-crossing the board, but there is only one that comes into play on a regular basis, the St Pete to Spain line. St Pete and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean are two bottlenecks, of which one must be broken for the Southern alliance to triumph.

In this game, the Northern alliance already owns 3 centers past the stalemate line - Sev, War, and Mos. The Southern alliance holds none to thenorth of the line.

Despite the three advantages listed above, in my humble and maligned opinion the Southern alliance should be favored. Why? Because France appears to be defending principally against the Northern triple. This may be in part because he was stabbed by Germany (as the explanation for his attack on England is that he counted on a German alliance). So the Italian, if he has foresight, should move to the Mid-Atlantic, giving up the possibility of taking Spain, in return for getting to the MAO bottleneck and, for that matter, to leave France with another piece to be used against the North. Indeed, we might see here both Turkey and France puppeting to IA in order to destroy the countries that betrayed them, Russia and Germany.

**Garret Schneck:** The Austro-Italian alliance makes itself felt, but France seems more interested in continuing the ineffective attack versus England. Two Italian fleets head west, while there's a bounce in Marseilles. Unless Berch hurries reinforcements to the Mediterranean theater, this bouncing won't be repeated very much longer. In fact, if Italy and Germany are cooperating with one another, it could be curtains for France's southern city as soon as this fall.

However, there are signs of an Austro-German war brewing, unless the Austrian move to Tyl is merely defensive in nature (Austria has a game-long history of cautious play,

after all.) Still, with the Germans embroiled in the French imbroglio, now might be the time for Austria to head north-west. Indeed, counting the puppet Turkish forces, there are now four Austrian-controlled units bearing on the stalemate line. Just perfect for an AI alliance!

It's clear that Italy and France are fighting. Just as clear is that France and Germany are fighting. Italy and Austria are obviously allied. In my mind, all this puts Germany very much in the middle. Gonsalves has accused us commentators of batting on the low side, but I'd like to see how he pulls this one out (so far he's done a good job of confounding the pundits, but I wonder how far he can stretch his luck.)

Given that Turkey is dead, dying, or puppeting (perhaps all three), and also given that the Russian position remains strong, the AI will of necessity look to the west for centers while keeping up pressure on Kozlowski in the east. This is a recipe for disaster for both France and Germany. I feel that these countries have no real hope but to turn with the bulk of their forces and confront the AI alliance. One or two units each could be left behind to prosecute the English war, but the armies that France and Germany are using to batter each other are needed on the stalemate lines now.

The Russian army takes advantage of the Anglo-French war to zip into Norway. Nice! This is surely going to hurt England in the unfortunate French war; not necessarily good for Russia, though, if the AI turns into an AIR. But Russia may have been able to pull off a miracle and protect his three Scandinavian centers with but a single army.

The moves in Turkey are interesting. It almost looks like Quinn had cut a separate deal with McCrumb, and had not bothered to inform his loyal ally Smyth. Hmmm. This bears watching. Without a fleet Austria will find it difficult to get a solo, but it's too early, I think, for Austria to contemplate a stab anyway. This is especially true since the other power in the area, Russia, mainly confronts Austrian forces.

91AH                      Fall 1904

Fortunes are Reversed for Austria and Turkey

Austria (Quinn): F Con-Bla, A Ser-Rum, A Rum-Sev, A Tyl-Mun, A Vie S Turk A Gal-Boh (NSO)(d, tri.otb), A Bud S A Ser-Rum  
 England (Ward): F Wal-Lpl, F Nth-Lon, A Yor S F Nth-Lon, F Den-Nth  
 France (Berch): F Iri-Mid, A Pic S F Eng-Bel, F Eng-Bel, A Par-Bur, A Gas-Spa  
 Germany (Gonsalves): A Boh S Turk A Gal-Vie, A Hol S A Bel, A Bel H, A Kie-Mun, A Bur-Mar  
 Italy (Smyth): A Pie-Mar, A Smy-Ank, F Eas-Smy, F Wes-Spa(sc), F Tyn-Lyo  
 Russia (Kozlowski): A War-Gal, A Ukr S A War-Gal, F Sev-Rum, A Arm S Turk F Ank, F Bla-Bul(ec), A Nwy H

**Turkey (McCrumb):** A Gal-Vie, A Bul-Gre, F Ank S Aus-  
rian F Con-Blä

## Commentary:

**Fred Townsend:** Great moves for Turkey - teetering on the brink of extinction, crushed between IA and Russia, written off as a hopeless puppet, Turkey adroitly switches sides and actually gains a center! The German/Russian/Turkish cooperation was masterful. The Turk A Bul goes to Greece, allowing the Russian F Black Sea to slide into Austrian Bulgaria, while sucking the Austrian F Con-Blä, which allows Turkey to keep Con and build there! Wow.

Meanwhile, Germany supports the Turk A Gal into Vie, and the Russian A War slides uncontested into Galicia. Austria loses two, and by bouncing Italy in French Mar-seilles, Germany prevents an Italian build. Wow.

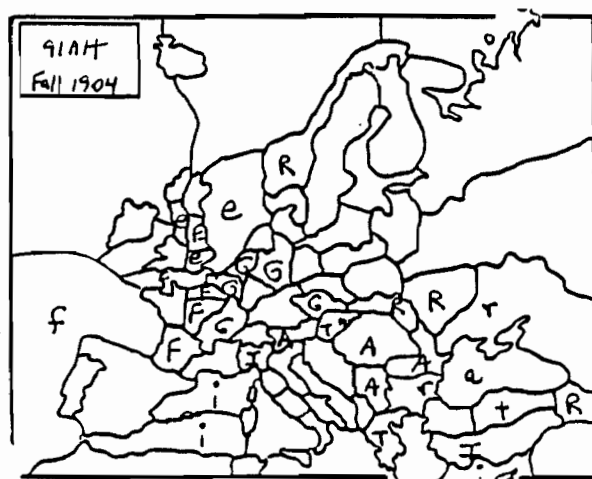
No wonder all this happened - the Austrian support of Turk A Gal-Boh and the Italian A Smy-Ank indicate these two weren't offering Turkey much anyway. Revenge only lasts so long. Now, if Austria removes F Blä, Turkey can clean Italy out of Smyrna with his new Russian ally. And Russia has a good shot at Rumania. The whole eastern picture has turned around.

Curiously, one of the main beneficiaries may well be France. With Austria on the ropes, Italy may have to break off his fruitless French attack and go east. Not that the French fat will be entirely out of the fire. There is no obvious reason why EG should not continue a slow advance against France, except that the last time Germany did the obvious was prior to Spring 1901.

Now, at this point in the commentary, I would usually focus on the alliance structure, but in this game that has proven to be a pointless task. So let's focus on probable stabs. The leading candidate is England attacking east in combination with a new French ally. Why? Because England cannot hope to advance very quickly against France, with more centers likely going to Germany. And France must be looking for a new ally as he has none at the moment. FNth-Ska, FLon-Nth, FLvp-Cly, and AYor-Lon would cover London and Denmark while leaving a guess for either Norway or Sweden in the fall. The removal of the German and Russian northern fleets would then be sorely regretted as England can pick up several centers in Scandinavia.

Besides, an English stab here would fit the balance of power theme that has dominated this game.

**Garret Schenck:** Germany pulls an amazing move out of the bag! This game gets stranger and stranger. I wish someone could tell me why Austria is down two centers, while Turkey, instead of disbanding, will be getting a build. The obvious answer is the German support for the Turkish move on Vienna. Who the hell arranged this? I suspect Mike, because for sure if I had been Germany and Turkey approached me



with the proposal, I'd have shown him the door. Remember that the Turkish army in Galicia only appeared there as a result of two Austrian supports. While we commentators may not be hitting on all eight cylinders, I doubt anyone watching this game could have predicted this move!

The German-Italian bounce over Mar-seilles is interesting. In the context of the French move, Germany saved France's bacon. Could this possibly have been arranged? Are we looking at the start of Franco-German rapprochement? Note that France could only shuttle one fleet south this turn anyway, due to the Mid-Atlantic bottleneck. Perhaps the Belgium attack and German support for that space were mere shadowplay. (On the other hand, if I were Germany I'd have wanted to get an army into Ruhr, so...) (And on the other, other hand, perhaps the bounce over Munich was a bungled Italo-German attack, with each expecting support from the other. But I really doubt this, considering the alliance between Italy and Austria - and note Austria's attack on Munich this turn.)

The Austro-Italian alliance seems to be living only in memory. Either there are communication problems, or Austria is deliberately keeping Italy in the dark. This is the second time in as many turns that signals have been crossed between the two allies in the Turkey region. The Italian support-cut move, apparently intended to protect the Austrian position in Constantinople, would have been better spent heading for that space instead.

With the withdrawal of French forces, England is looking much healthier. Look for North Sea to head back to Denmark, the army to garrison London, while the London fleet heads to cover North Sea. The Liverpool fleet will, of course, head to the Irish Sea, which will discomfit France, but one suspects the long-suffering English P.M. cares about that... not!

So who's side is Turkey on, anyway? In light of Turkey's astonishing turnaround, one might be tempted to dismiss my

"doom and gloom" in last turn's commentary regarding Turkey's chances. Clearly, though, the long-term chances for that nation remain none too good. Foreign units maintain a close investment in the home centers, and Turkey's forces are split up with little opportunity for mutual support. The one glimmer for Turkey is the fledgling Russian alliance (support for Ankara to hold) and the fact that Austria has been shaken to the core, and must disband two units this winter.

The West remains in stalemate, so the East is still ahead in this game. Some moves have been made by the Western powers to seize control of the stalemate line, but these may prove to be too little, too late. As long as EF and FG wars continue the East will grow at the West's expense (though there was no change in 1904.) The one hopeful sign for the West is a possible sleeper ally in Turkey, and a possibly serious schism in Eastern ranks between AI and RT. Russia moves from strength to strength, and is my bet (at this point!) to be the one to emerge on top.

Predictions for Winter 1904 are as follows: For Russia, the choice is pretty easy - almost half of Russia's centers (3 of 7) are now defended by a single army. And the two countries bordering that Scandinavian area, England and Germany, are

weak and involved with attacks from the south. Also, Germany has no fleets! Nature (and politics) abhors a vacuum. Look for a fleet on the south coast of St Pete. Turkey obviously has to build in Con, but will it be a fleet or army? For what it's worth, my money is on Turkey building a fleet - Turkey's home centers face a multitude of threats, but most of those are by sea. Moreover, Russia may insist on a fleet, since Russian support for a retaking of Smyrna could leave Armenia threatened, while a Turkish fleet in Smyrna is no threat to Russia. Turkish fleets, of necessity, will pretty much head west; Turkish armies could easily head north.

Austria's two disbands are harder to predict. My guess is that Quinn will keep the four westernmost armies (Tyl, Tri, Bud, Ser) and dump A Rum and F Bla. The fleet is the easy one, actually, since it isn't helping Austria that much, and just gives Russia and Turkey something to cooperate on destroying, rather than to begin to fight between themselves. That leaves A Ser or A Rum (assuming he'll keep the other three.) With Ser gone there would be naught to keep the Turks from marching north out of Greece. You can bet that whatever Austria does in the coming turns, revenge for Turkish treachery will be mighty high on the list.

## Postal Play

# Why do you Think It's "Postal" Dip?

by Mark Fassio

Maybe I'm just getting crotchety in my "old" age, or perhaps too touchy. But I've noticed a disturbing and disheartening trend over the last few years concerning the postal play of a lot of our fellow hobbyists. Too many of them "play" the game with little or no postal correspondence. As a simile, do you history types remember the old wisecrack about the Holy Roman Empire being "neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire"? Well, too many folks seem to think that *play-by-mail Diplomacy* is "neither postal, nor Diplomacy." For the life of me, I can't figure out what such players are trying to accomplish.

As such, I've drafted one of those form letters that you occasionally see in Dear Abby's newspaper column. You know, someone is venting their spleen (how does one vent that stuff, anyway?) and wants to target a mass of unfortunates with invective. So, for what it's worth, here's my input.

To the Non-Corresponding Postal Dip Player:

Well, friend, you've done it again; done nothing, that is. I can't tell you how frustrating it is to wait by the mailbox for days on end hoping against hope that you've been roused from your slumbers long enough to drop a letter (or even the deadly 19 cent postcard). Yet here it is, another banner day from the

USPS. I've given up even trying to rationalize away your slothfulness, and have stopped blaming the (admittedly) inept Army Postal System. After all, if they can deliver 453 JC Penney and/or Land's End catalogues within a two-day period, they must be equally capable of delivering your mail - if it was ever sent.

I have to ask you a question. What drives you to play this game postally if you don't actually correspond through the post? Doesn't it occasionally sink in to your cranial cavity that you're errant in your responsibility to play the game the way it should be played?

Yep, you heard right: responsibility. One might say, "Faz, you're outta line here - this is a fun game, not the Marquis of Queensbury Set of Mandatory Rules." If you believe that, then I ask you this: who has "fun" in a game where few people write? Why should the good guys waste their time trying to fulfill their responsibility if you don't? We hear so much from these "single victor" zealots about playing the game "correctly." Well, playing correctly means just that - "Playing" (i.e. showing signs of postal life) and "Correctly" (showing some consideration for the other six cutthroats.)

Now, some of you may say, "That's all well and good,

*continued on page 30*

# A Look Into the Choo-Choo World

by David Hood

As the culmination of the *DW* series on non-Diplomacy games that grace the pages of our zines, we turn this issue to one of the strangest phenomenons of recent times. "Choo-Choo" games, or train games, have been the rage of the hobby since sometime in the mid-80's. I'm not sure which of the games came on the scene first, but it was probably *Railway Rivals*. The other games in the set include *Empire Builder* and its progeny, *1830* and its ilk, and *Rail Baron*. Though each game is very different from the other, they all share the popular fascination nowadays with trains.

It's obvious that the railroad motif is trendy. You can walk into any number of restaurants or bars anywhere, and a significant percentage will be decorated with old railroad signs, posters, or even little Tyco or Lionel trains choo-choosing around the ceiling. But why have so many games been designed around trains, and why are these games so popular with today's hobbyists?

Personally, I think it's because railroads provide a competitive framework for gaming without the necessity of actually fighting a blood-and-guts war against your opponent. Though many traditional wargamers play such games because of their interest in military history, with choo-choo games it often works in the opposite direction. True gamers, the type that enjoy both *Monopoly* and *Drang Nach Osten*, are drawn to train games by their strategic aspects and the potential for multi-player games. Once they are drawn in, they become interested in railroad history.

If you have resisted plunging into choo-choo games in the past, I can tell you from experience that you are missing a great deal. I was once a "purist" who avoided the United craze and choo-choo craze like the plague. However, once I got involved with choo-choo games face-to-face, I discovered that this genre was worth looking in to. Let's take a look at each of these games and discuss both FTF and postal play.

The first train game I played FTF was *1830*. This is an Avalon Hill product that recreates, in an abstract manner, the growth and development of railroads in the Northeast, both in the U.S. and Canada. From two to six players take turns buying stock in, and developing the track of, the eight train companies in the game, some of which you *Monopoly* players will recognize: B&O, C&O, Pennsylvania, Erie, New York Central, New York New Haven & Hartford, B&M, and the Canadian Pacific. The purpose of the game is to amass the most money at the end of the game through a combination of stock values and income from train operations. (You can also lose by going bankrupt, but this is rare among experienced players.)

One of the attractive features of the game, and one quite appropriate for those used to *Diplomacy*, is that there are no luck elements in the game. Sure, you face forces in the game over which you exercise little control, but these are the other players themselves rather than dice or cards. The game is basically one of planning, strategy, and systems analysis. The dual arenas in the game, the stock market and the gameboard, interact in a way that allows players to emphasize one over the other in relation to their skills and individual situations. It is truly a gamer's game.

What are the drawbacks? Well, it can take quite a long time to play. To play a game to its completion, I think you need at least five hours. To *Dippers*, that's nothing, but it is still a concern. Another problem is the learning curve - in order to be competitive, you really need to play a lot more than once or twice. The first few times I played I had no clue what to do, and it was damned frustrating. But if you stick to it, the gaming rewards will be great.

*1830* is only one of several games that utilize much of the same rules. I have not played *1829*, based in England, or *1853*, based in India. However, I have played the other, the Germany map called *1835*. In some ways, this is even better than *1830* for newcomers to learn the system. There are much less opportunities to be totally screwed in *1835*, though the map play is more complicated.

Now, on to postal play. There are a number of zines that run *1830*, and many people seem to enjoy it. For the most part, I have been frustrated in my games because the adaptation to postal play was traumatic. Much of the game consists of reacting intelligently to the play of others. This element is severely curtailed in the postal version, which must of necessity be done with simultaneous movement. I don't want to discourage you from playing by mail, particularly if that's the only opportunity for you to play. However, be forewarned that the postal version loses much of its strategic complexity, in my opinion. *Diplomacy* also suffers some by playing in the mails, but not nearly to the same degree.

Zines which run *1830* or *1835* include: *Wild Gypsy Rose*, Mark Luedi, 503 W Jefferson #2, Ann Arbor MI 48103; *Heroes of Olympus*, Steve Nicewarner, 1310-11 Ephesus Church Rd, Chapel Hill NC 27514; *Lemon Curry*, Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr, Greenbrae CA 94904; *Frueh's Folly*, Mark Frueh, 1128 Olympus Dr, Naperville IL 60540; *Locomotives*, Dan Huffman, 311 Mallard Ct, Charles Town WV 25414; and the electronic mail zine *Electric Trains*, Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Dr, Dublin OH 43017. While this list is not exhaustive, it should at least give you some idea of where to

begin if you want to play postal 1830. Of course, some of these same zines run other choo-choo games as well...

Like *Railway Rivals*. This is a track building and racing game invented in Britain by David Watts. By far, this is the game with the biggest following outside of *Diplomacy*. RR is run in countless zines around the world, and has made significant inroads into the North American hobby. While I have never played the game face-to-face, (which may change at this year's HickCon) I can say that my limited postal experience has been fun so far.

The basic idea of the game is that each of six players uses a colored pen to build their track on a mapboard. The track connects cities, which will be either destinations or departure points during the racing part of the game. Races are simply contests to determine which player can get from point A to point B in the shortest period of time (dice are used here.) The strategy of the game is to build in such a way that allows you to travel between the most cities without having to ride on a rival's track. Doing so costs money, as does building into or through hexes already occupied by rival track.

Much of the fun for RR buffs is the play on many different maps. There are literally scores of different maps on which the game can be played, ranging from the traditional Western U.S. map to one set in Middle Earth! Some maps are designed specifically for use in five player, or four player, games, while others will support less or more than that. The game is relatively simple, and thus ideal for the casual postal gamer as well as one who wants to join 10-15 games.

Ken Hill (6199 Rockland Dr, Dublin OH 43017) is the official contact person for Watts here in the States. From Ken you can order a copy of the rules, as well as order from a selection of many maps upon which to play. As far as zines go, there are so many that I cannot list but a few of the top ones. Those are: *The Encounter*, James Goode, 211 Maple-mere, Clarksville TN 37040; *Pedro in the Rain Forest*, Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117; *36 Miles of Trouble*, Paul Gardner, 5 Timber Ln, Brattleboro VT 05301; and *YDG*, Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, York N. Yorkshire, YO3 7JD, England.

*Empire Builder* is the next game. This one has been in postal play for years, but has never caught on to the degree that *Railway Rivals* has. As a FTF game, EB (together with its sister games *Eurorails* and *British Rails*) is an excellent 2-3 hour game that can be taught to and enjoyed by non-gamers, like *Diplomacy* widows, as well as hard-core gamers.

Instead of using colored pens, this game involves the players building track with crayons (the boards can be easily erased) for the purpose of connecting cities on the board. Cards are dealt out to each player that dictate which cities they can deliver to, the commodity needed by each city, and the payoff one gets by doing so. The cities serve not only as destinations, but also as sources of certain commodities. The strategy in the game is the building of track in areas that will

be useful throughout the game, as well as in the planning of the routes to be used to maximize your profits. The game is over when someone reaches a certain monetary level, which varies from game to game.

The European version is truly one of the best boardgames I have ever played, not due to its strategic complexity (1830 is clearly better from a pure gaming standpoint) but because it is easy to learn, but does not get too tiresome after playing it a million times. The original *Empire Builder* is also good, particularly when supplemented by the *Mexican Rails* expansion. I recommend this series to the non-choo-choo people among you, as this is the easiest to learn, and very fun to play. (Of course, be warned that I always play without the calamities - so I am really a variant EB player. I think the luck factor is a bit much when calamities are used.)

Postal EB is an entirely different matter. I have played both *Eurorails* and *British Rails* by post, and I'm not impressed. While the game is playable, it is just too slow for my taste. *Railway Rivals* is far superior in adaptability to the mails. However, there are a number of dedicated postal EB fans, so perhaps I am missing something here.

While the postal EB hobby was started by Bruce Linsey, he no longer publishes an EB zine. Instead, your choices are: *Ark*, Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St, Milford MA 01757; *36 Miles of Trouble*, Paul Gardner, 5 Timber Ln, Brattleboro VT 05301; and *Perelandra*, Pete Gaughan, 1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947. There may be other zines out there, but I have never seen them.

Finally, we have the old Avalon Hill standby, *Rail Baron*. This game is essentially about buying up existing railroads on a map of the United States. One makes money by traveling between cities, and by forcing other players to travel on your track. There is a great deal of luck in the game, both to determine train speed and to determine the runs you will make. The game is won upon achieving a certain money amount and returning to your home city.

One of the chief benefits of the game is that one learns where the railroad companies were, what kind of track they had, and so forth. For train or history buffs, this is the best choo-choo game of all. I know that I have learned a great deal by playing the few times I have - it's one thing to play the *Pennsylvania RR* in an abstract way in 1830, but quite another to see which cities it actually connected.

To my knowledge, this has been adapted to postal play only in *Heroes of Olympus*, run by Steve Nicewarner, 1310-11 Ephesus Church Rd, Chapel Hill NC 27514. So far it seems to be working pretty well, though the game is in its early stages. For FTF play, I recommend trying *Empire Builder* first. For postal, try *Railway Rivals*. For a great mental workout, play some 1830. And to learn some choo-choo history, play *Rail Baron*. Once you see how fun these games can be, I hope to still be able to interest you in a little *Diplomacy* every now and then.

*continued from page 37*

Faz, but geez, I work 10 hours a day." Or, "I have 10 kids and they all attend Jello Wrestling and Lip Synch classes," etc. It's time to zip the lip and pick up the Bic, pal. I mean, I've done or been in almost all the similar things, yet managed to exercise my responsibility. In college I played and still managed to be both a party animal and Magna Cum Laude. For the last 12 years I've been in the Air Force, and I've been sent to Saudi Arabia, northern Iraq, twice to Germany, and a variety of other strange and exotic lands, such as California (sorry, I couldn't resist). Many's the time I worked a 14-hour shift and had to face the responsibility of formulating and sending moves to the States. Ask some of my GMs (and my wife) how many times I cut short my once-a-week "morale call" home so I'd have time to call the GM and ensure my moves made it.

And with 2.5 kids, don't tell me how precious your free time is; I know first-hand the joys of a 20-minute break to think out a wargame move.

Mark Fassio Appreciation Society propaganda aside, you probably catch my drift by now! What's the harm in trying to increase your communication in the game? It

certainly would improve your survival rate - the more reliable writers are usually the diehard, savvy players to boot, and they take a dim view of the non-writers. Writing even short, frequent cards gets you more good will than you could imagine. I try, as a rule, to write immediately upon receipt of someone's letter - always within a day of arrival, unless I just wrote them already, or if they've pissed me off by six months of silence. Try to set yourself a deadline of 1-2 cards and/or a letter a night. Heck, usually you'll be in two or three games with the same person, so one letter can kill many birds.

Ok, friend, I've wasted enough of your time and mine. You seem like a real good guy/gal when you do write, but it's just not adequate. Your lack of writing ruins the atmosphere of the game worse than a stab by a supposed game-long ally, because at least until the point of the stab you had some correspondence and some fun. With non-writers, there is neither. You do a disservice to yourself and to your fellow Dippers by remaining a postal ghost. In this case, the pen is indeed mightier than the sword.

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## Choosing a Zine

by Larry Peery

Finding an appropriate Dip zine can take considerable time and effort. Here are some guidelines from the advice of players, gamemasters, editors and publishers.

*How to Proceed.* Start early. Some zines, especially those most in demand, have a lengthy waiting list and only infrequently offer new game openings. One way around this wait is to volunteer to serve as a standby player for abandoned game positions.

Explore all options. Look to the zines published by people in the hobby you already know, or at least have heard of. Look at zines, including foreign ones, published by complete strangers. Check out regular Dip-only zines, Dip variants, and almost any kind of postal gaming zines, if only to form a basis for comparison.

Review materials. Get a copy of the latest *Zine Register* (zine reviews) and *Pontevedria* (game openings), and check out the zine reviews in major hobby zines like *Diplomacy World*. Solicit opinions from your Dippy friends, but remember that everyone has their own viewpoint that may not be shared by others, including you.

Obtain samples. Take advantage of the *Zine Bank*, an easy way to get recent issues of a lot of zines. Send a large SASE (with extra postage on it) or a couple of dollars worth of stamps to the zines you are seriously interested in and ask for the last issue, the current issue, and a copy of the next issue. That should give you a good feel for the zine. If you are considering playing in the zine, ask for a copy of its House-

rules and read them carefully. If it's a variant zine, inquire about purchasing copies of the editor's own variant games.

Avoid overdoing it. No more than three games in three different zines to start, because more than that is too much and will require excessive amounts of work on your part. Sub to another two or three zines that feature hobby news, so that you can keep up with what's going on. Take time to learn. Take time to enjoy. If you don't learn to pace yourself early on, you will be a prime candidate for "burnout" or "brownout" later on.

*What to Look For.* Make a checklist of the things that are most important to you in a Dippy zine. Here are some things I recommend you examine, broken down into The Basics, Something More, and Something Special.

The Basics - These are the fundamentals that will tell you the minimum you need to know about any Dipzine. Remember, few, if any, zines excel in all these areas, but knowing where they are strong and where they are weak before you begin playing in them or subbing to them can save you a lot of grief later.

Purpose, Orientation, Philosophy. Does the zine have well-defined goals and expectations? Is its approach to the game and hobby communicated clearly? How does it deal with problems in the games and zine? These issues may seem nebulous, and many GMs and publishers do not readily articulate them, but you should try and determine them as early as you can.

**Quality of staff.** Is the zine a one-man operation, with the same person acting as GM, chief writer, editor and publisher, or is it a team effort? How much experience in all these roles does the staff have? Even though it's an amateur effort, it can and should still offer a professional approach to the way the games are run and the zine is published. Remember, if the games are sloppily run, that's probably the type of experience you will have. Of course, if you are a Sloppy Joe yourself, this might be the zine for you.

**Discipline.** Does the zine demonstrate self-discipline and a sense of responsibility for its games and readers? Is it fair and impartial with its readers and the hobby at large? Are the house rules reasonable and strictly adhered to, or does there seem to be an element of favoritism in the games? (Beware of zines where the house rules are too far away from hobby norms.) Do there appear to be a lot of drop-out players, and if so, why?

**Administrative Details.** Every zine should state its game fees and sub fees simply and clearly, preferably on the back cover or the inside front cover. Is a sub included in the game fee (once a common practice, but no longer)? Are the prices reasonable? Remember, every Dipzine is an amateur publication, and thus loses money, sometimes much more than it takes in. What is the zine's stated publication schedule, and does the publisher follow it?

**Service.** The games are primarily a service to the players. What does the gamesmaster promise his or her players? What does he deliver? What is the quality of the GMing? How are

adjudication errors handled? Are there extras with the game report such as maps, press or commentary?

**Product.** The zine is a physical product that you can evaluate yourself. Consider the size of each issue, the frequency of publication, and the type of reproduction. Above all, consider the quality and variety of the contents. Is this the kind of zine you could show to non-Dippers to explain the game and hobby, or is it the kind you throw into the box under the kitchen table to pull out only at deadline time?

**Circulation.** Circulation size, alone, will not tell you how good the zine is. However, it can be a clue. Most big circulation zines either carry lots of games or they are major hobby news sources. Still, in the States, where there are many zines, a circulation of more than 50 is big, and over 100 is unusual. Overseas, most hobbies have less than a handful of zines, with quite large circulations. Try to evaluate the mix of players and readers in a zine, whether novices predominate, or whether the zine is dominated by those in a particular clique or geographical area.

**Something More** - It takes some digging to discover something more about a Dipzine, but in the long haul it will pay off in increased enjoyment for you as a hobbyist.

**Values.** Every player and hobbyist should have his own. So should every GM, editor, publisher and zine. Yours should be compatible with theirs, or you may find yourself in disagreement, or even worse, later. That doesn't mean you have to totally agree with another's views, but your views on major hobby issues should be harmonious.

## 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!

James Bailey, 8337 Lariviera Dr, Sacramento CA 95826  
Karl Koeller, PO Box 392, Hyde Park NY 12538  
Tim Snyder, 130 Atherton Hall, University Park, PA 16802  
Jeffrey Power, 3174 Bonnell Ave SE, Grand Rapids MI 49506  
Mike Wyant, 312 Elm St, Spindale NC 28160  
David Apgar, 1257 W 187th St, Homewood IL 60430  
Joel Starbuck, 8600 E Alameda Ave, Denver CO 80231  
Tom Pasko, 89 Chestnut St, Bristol CT 06010  
Joe Lux, c/o J.O.M.M.S., 242 W 14th St, New York NY 10011  
Jerry Ritcey, 9 Windemere Ct, Truro Nova Scotia B2N 5Y1  
Don Treasure, 15805 W 2nd Ave, Golden CO 80401  
Luca Barontini, Via Marradi 103, I-57125 Livorno, Italy  
Steve Shields, 1226 Bayview Rd, Middletown DE 19709

## Game Openings

*Maniac's Paradise*, Doug Kent, 54 W Cherry St #211, Rahway NJ 07065 (Gunboat, Middle Eastern Dip, Balkan Wars VI)  
*Perestroika*, Larry Cronin, PO Box 40090, Tucson AZ 85717 (Diplomacy, Perestroika)  
*Dipadeedoodah*, Phil Reynolds, USF #4286, 4202 Fowler Ave, Tampa FL 33620 (Toxic Dip, Fictionary)  
*Carolina Command & Commentary*, Michael Lowrey, 3005 Kenninghall Ct, Charlotte NC 28269 (Dune, Destroyer Cpt, Dip)  
*Gol!*, Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr, Greenbrae CA 94947 (United)  
*Rebel*, Melinda Holley, PO Box 2793, Huntington WV 25727 (Diplomacy, Gunboat)  
*36 Miles of Trouble*, Paul Gardner, 5 Timber Lane, Brattleboro VT 05301 (Diplomacy)  
*Rambling Way*, Andy York, PO Box 2307, Universal City TX 78148 (Dip, International Dip, Gunboat)  
*Heroes of Olympus*, Steve Nicewarner, 1310-11 Ephesus Ch Rd, Chapel Hill NC 27514 (Dip, United, Pax Britannica, 1830)  
*Martha*, John Schultz, PO Box 41-19390 ICH 308, Michigan City IN 46360 (Diplomacy, Solo-Anon Variant)  
*Batyville Gazette*, Ralph Baty, 4551 Pauling Ave, San Diego CA 92122 (Diplomacy, Character Dip)  
*YDG*, Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, York N. Yorkshire, YO3 7JD, England (Dip and Railway Rivals for internationals)

**Reader participation.** Players participate in their games by sending orders in, and sometimes by press. Readers react in a variety of ways. Their feedback, or lack thereof, can make the difference between a good zine and a great one. Currently the hobby is debating the relative merits of zines with lots of games and those with lots of chat. All in all, a good balance seems best for the novice.

**Peer acceptance.** Call it what you like, but it is important in a hobby as small as ours. Is the zine in the hobby's mainstream, or is it part of some lunatic fringe? Is it accepted by the hobby as a whole? Does the publisher cooperate with others in joint projects? Does he or she engage in feuding with other hobbyists?

**Assessment.** Polls, ratings, surveys, reviews, etc. all represent the evaluation of a GM or zine by their peers. There's a lot of this in *Diplomacy*, perhaps too much. A review of past actual vs. promised performance, and a check on the longevity of a zine would likely tell you more.

**Opportunity for Improvement.** You need to look at this from two angles: yours and the zine. *Diplomacy* is not a game for everyone. If it were it would be as popular as Chess or Bridge. But it will be around long after D&D, Trivial Pursuit, and Nintendo are history. As a Diplomat you want something, which can be described as qualitative and quantitative improvement. The hobby often needs the same.

**Something Special** - If you stick around very long you'll be exposed to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of *Diplomacy* publications of all types. With luck you'll find some-

thing special about a few of them, and these early "the bests" become the standards by which you judge later arrivals.

**Style vs. Taste.** Ultimately you will find that it boils down to a matter of his style versus your taste. This should not be a confrontation, though, but a chance to develop mutual tolerance. Remember that your needs and desires will change over time, as will any growing zine.

**Danger Signs.** Every relationship carries an element of risk, including that between reader and publisher. Too many GMs and publishers don't know when to say no. Schedule lags, excessive games, long game opening lists, long turnaround on letters, feuding, etc. are indications of possible burnout or brownout in the future.

**Established vs. New.** History has shown that the average PBM Dip game lasts three years. The average Dipzine lasts two years. There's the rub. One might be tempted to stick only with established zines, but by doing so one is depriving startups of the new blood they will need to survive. It can work both ways, as some established zines shy away from new players because they might drop out.

**Starting your own.** If you can't find a zine that suits your fancy, it's time to start your own. If you've followed the process outlined here, you should have no problem doing so. Who knows, you might become one of those "best zines" that future generations try to emulate.

> Larry Peery (PO Box 620399, San Diego CA 92162) is the current publisher of *World Diplomacy*.

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