

6-7-98

Spring 1992

No. 70

Diplomacy **World**

Forever France



by Stan Johnson

Editor's Desk

This issue is being released first at DixieCon VII, on Memorial Day Weekend. If you are a new reader, welcome. The purpose of this zine is to provide a forum for discussion about Diplomacy and the hobby that surrounds it. If it seems serious, well, some people take Diplomacy pretty seriously. It's hard not to get excited about one of the greatest games ever invented. I hope you enjoy this sample, and decide to subscribe sometime real soon.

For those of you who have been here, I know you were expecting this issue in April. Sorry. No time. I got, got, got, got no time... I would tentatively put the next issue's due date about in late July, so let's have a deadline for new submissions of July 1.

Of course, there is still some great material left over for publication in issue 71. Of particular interest will be the remaining entries in the writing contest announced last issue and talked about later in this issue. Those articles which did not win the top three prizes will be printed next issue in a readers' choice contest to see the best of the rest. Also ready for next issue is a new variant from Roland Isaksson called Balcan Battle, a discussion of the Viking Diplomacy variant by James Nelson, a piece on alliances by Mark Nelson, and an article by Jack McHugh on the role of subzines in the hobby. More material would be welcomed with open arms, so please contact me with any story ideas or proposed articles.

I hope everyone is enjoying the greater number of

contests we have been having lately. These lead to greater reader participation in the zine; a definite plus. There have been serious discussions about making the writing contest an annual event, perhaps to be funded through PDORA. If you have not yet tried any of the contests, I encourage you to do so immediately to join in on the fun. Take a look at the intriguing little logic problem submitted by Phil Reynolds, or the variant contest by Fritz Juhnke.

The positive comments received from many of you lately about the zine's progress are helpful and very much appreciated. Now, you critics out there get to work and send some constructive criticism. We at *DW* need to know what we're doing wrong even more than what we're doing right, so we can try to fix it. If you have a peeve of any kind, please feel free to write, and let me have it with both barrels.

I'm still interested in hearing from all interested parties about a successor to me at the reins of *Diplomacy World*. This is a tough, time-demanding job, but also a very rewarding one. I'm a big believer in the notion that no one should do a hobby job for too long, both for his own sake and for that of the hobby, so please let me hear from you if you are at all interested. While the job is not yet open, this whole successor thing is something to be explored "with all deliberate speed", in the words of the U.S. Supreme Court; which means let's all take our time and make sure we get this thing right the first time.

DipWorld

Editor and Publisher	David Hood 2905 20th St NE, Hickory NC 28601
Assistant Editor	Michael Lowrey 3005 Kenninghall Court, Charlotte NC 28269
Senior Writer	Jack McHugh 280 Sanford Rd, Upper Darby PA 19082
Strategy and Tactics Editor	Mark Fassio CAD-B, Unit 26708 Box 5265, APO AE 09235
Variant Editor	James Nelson 112 Huntley Ave, Spondon, DERBY, DE2 7DU U.K.
Interview Editor	Phil Reynolds, USF #4286, 4202 Fowler Ave, Tampa FL 33620
International Editor	Mark Nelson 21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds, W. Riding. LS12 2AP U.K.
Electronic Mail Editor	Eric Klien 8124 Brdillepath Way, Las Vegas NV 89128
Club and Tournament Editor	Buz Eddy, 7500 212nd St SW Suite 205, Edmonds WA 98020
Contributors	Gary Behnen, Eric Brosius, Jim Burgess, Davide Cleopadre, Larry Cronin, Fred Davis, Randy Davis, Shaun Derrick, Buz Eddy, Mark Fassio, Paul Glenn, Don Del Grande, Jake Halverstadt, Melinda Holley, Michael Hopcroft, Stan Johnson, Fritz Juhnke, Doug Kent, Joel Klein, Bruce Linsey, Andy Lischett, John McCausland, Bruce McIntyre, Jim Meinel, Ron Newmaster, Steve Nicewarner, Larry Peery, Phil Reynolds, Robert Sacks, Garret Schenck, David Smith, Fred Townsend, Conrad von Metzke, Jim Yerkey,
Subscriptions	Four issues for \$10 in USA, \$15 Canada or overseas surface mail, \$20 overseas air mail. The last issue of one's subscription will appear on the mailing label.
Contributors	Submissions are encouraged, with published articles paid for by subscription credit to <i>Diplomacy World</i> , as well as being recognized above as a Contributor.

Contents

2	Editor's Desk	Greetings and Comments	
3	Hobby News	Tournaments, Zines, and Projects	David Hood
5		Avalon Hill Advert	
6	Strategy/Tactics	Just Passin Through	Mark Fassio
7		Forever France	Stan Johnson
9		PeeriCon Advert	
10	Contest	The Adventure of the Crimean Opening	David Smith
12		On Matters of True and Everlasting Depth	Conrad von Metzke
13		Forgeries	Andy Lischett
14		Stalemate Contest Results	Fred Townsend
15		Diplowinn Contest	Fritz Juhnke
16	Novices	Let's Talk Novice Recruitment	David Hood
		North American Hobby Services	
17		Runestone Poll Ballot	Eric Brosius
18	Variant	Atlantis Time's Diplomacy	Davide Cleopadre
19		Italy/Austria: Dip's Weak Sisters?	James Nelson
21		AvalonCon Advert	
22	Lettercol	The Colossal DW Letter Column	
24	Demo Game	Report on the Demonstration Game	David Hood
26	Face-to-Face	How to Have Your Own DipCon	Jack McHugh
28		Aspects of Club Diplomacy	Buz Eddy
30	Postal Play	The Postal Gambit	Conrad von Metzke
31		New Blood / Game Openings	

Hobby News

There have been some changes lately in the custodianship of several hobby services. The Boardman Number Custodian, the person who catalogues and reports game openings and finishes for regular Dip, is now Vince Lutterbie, 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall MO 65340. Vince has served in the past as Director of the U.S. Orphan Service and as DipCon Committee member for the 1992 DipCon in Kansas City. If you are running or playing in a game without an official designation number from the BNC, please contact Vince immediately. It's certainly not required, but it does help us all keep track of where Dip is being played, and in what quantity games are being opened and finished. Buz Eddy also needs the service to be as complete as possible in order to keep his Maelstrom ratings current.

The Zine Register is a listing of all North American Diplomacy-related zines, as well as a few foreign ones. The meat and potatoes of the zine consists of reviews of the zine by both the editor and guest reviewers. The reins of ZR have recently passed to Pete Gaughan from Garret Schenck. Pete has been hard at work producing his first issue of ZR, which should be out soon. Contact him at 1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947 to make sure you don't miss an issue.

There are two novice packets out there to help the newcomer adjust to postal Diplomacy. One of these has been redone in the past year, *Masters of Deceit*. This excellent

publication is available from Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown PA 19401. The other, *Supernova*, is now available from Fred Davis at 3210K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City MD 21043. There is also the first contact publication called *DIP*, being distributed by the five regional Contacts on the new Avalon Hill Diplomacy flyer. If you have not seen this pub and wish to, contact John Caruso at 626 Astor St, Norristown PA 19401.

Discussion continues about the best way to set up the World DipCon rotation system after its trial run is completed in England in 1994. Several lettercolumns have focused upon the subject, with some consensus having been reached on having yearly WDC's, but serious disagreements still exist as to how the regions will become eligible and other related issues. One proposal that has been put in writing is a proposed World DipCon Charter by Iain Bowen, along similar lines to the current North American DipCon Charter. The most salient feature is the proposed set of regions, which include: The British Isles, Europe, North America, Australasia, and a Floating Region. To get in on this discussion, write to Iain Bowen at 5 Wigginton Terrace, York, N Yorkshire, U.K., YO3 7JD for a copy of his proposed Charter.

It would also be a good idea to keep up with *Globetrotter*, the zine being published by Shaun Derrick at 313 Woodway Lane, Walsgrave, Coventry, U.K., CV2 2AP. The last two

issues of *Globetrotter* have discussed whom should be allowed to vote on the proposed Charter, a review of the British tournament MidCon, and a list of international Diplomacy events for 1993. Much of the serious debate about WDC goes on here, so contact Shaun if you are interested.

The tournament scene in the French hobby has really begun to take off. A publication written in French, *La Lettre du Diplomatie*, is available from Xavier Blanchot at 11 rue Moliere, 75001 Paris to keep you abreast of all the goings on. The latest issue contained the full results for the eighth Championnat de France, attended by some 193 Diplomacy players. The top three finishers were Clement Merville, Thierry Seguin, and Antonio Ribeiro Da Silva. WDC people should watch for these names in the future! If you plan to be in France at all this year, contact Xavier for details on the remaining events on the 1993 schedule, of which there should be many. Xavier reports that international players generally have no trouble competing in English as most players can speak that language.

The North American Team Tournament will begin this year at, hopefully, all North American Diplomacy events. The basic intent here is to promote tournament and convention play by encouraging zines and local clubs to recruit players to represent them at all events of 21 participants or more. Each "team" can field three players at a given Diplomacy tournament. The team score will consist of the points earned by each player at each game he plays in. The team need not have the same members at each event, but a person may only play in one team per year. The overall team result will be a total of points awarded to its players during the 1993 year. Each game will be scored at 2 points per center, plus bonus points for the following finishes: win 63, 2way 31, 3way 15, 4way 7, 5way 3, 6way 1. I hope that all Dip event organizers will cooperate in this venture by sending game results to me after the event. Team participants may want to

assure inclusion of their results by sending me the information as well. Team names and rosters should be submitted either to me or the tournament organizer before the event.

The newest issue of the hobby's discussion zine *Foolhardy* just came out. This zine, the successor to *House of Lords*, is published by Doug Kent, 54 W Cherry St #211, Rahway NJ 07065. It is essentially a topic-oriented lettercolumn devoted exclusively to Diplomacy and the Diplomacy hobby. The latest issue, #7, contains discussions by hobby illuminati on such subjects as Custodians, DipCon, New Zines, Polls and Awards, Orphan Games, and a proposed North American Diplomacy Federation. If you are interested at all in the future of the Diplomacy hobby, or if you just like to hear yourself talk, so to speak, then I'd encourage you to send a dollar off to Doug for a sample.

The Con season is, of course, upon on here in North America. By the time your read this, DixieCon in Chapel Hill, NC will be over, but there are still a number of events to go to in various parts of North America. Here is a list of those remaining about which I have details:

- AtlantiCon June 18-20 Baltimore, Maryland
Robert Sacks, 4861 Broadway 5-V, New York NY 10034
- PoolCon June 18-22 Marshall, Missouri
Vince Lutterbie, 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall MO 65340
- Origins July 1-4 Ft Worth, Texas
Andy York, PO Box 2307, Universal City TX 78148
- AvalonCon Aug 5-8 Hunt Valley, MD
Jim Yerkey, 4 Dutton Ave, Catonsville MD 21228
- CanCon Aug 6-8 Toronto, Ontario
Cal White, 1 Turnberry Ave, Toronto Ont M6N 1P6
- DipCon 26 Sept 3-6 San Mateo, California
Pete Gaughan, 1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947
- Vertigo Games Sept 3-6 Paoli, Pennsylvania
Brad Wilson, PO Box 126, Wayne PA 19087

Maelstrom FTF Ratings (Through April 24, 1993)

1st Division (1700 +)

Boyle, Albert	2042
Burk, Phillip	2126
Kobrin, Tom	1985
Kozlowski, Kevin	1703
Roberts, Bruce	2032
Stegeman, Mark	2267
Weiss, Richard	1810

2nd Division (1300 - 1699)

Bennett, Shawn	1512
Brown, Kevin	1597
Easton, Frank	1312
Falkiner, Jerry	1318
Franceschini, Mark	1491
Gonsalves, Mike	1352
Houts, Ean	1471
Lischett, Andy	1322
Louie, Shelley	1477
Mathias, Dan	1569
Nichols, Jason	1379
Reynolds, Phil	1519
Sasse, Phil	1549
White, Cal	1550

3rd Division (1001-1299)

Acheson, Bob	1109
Acheson, Doug	1079
Calkins, Matt	1209
Carlberg, Steven	1256
Cerrato, Chris	1083
Copeland, Vance	1042
Craig, Todd	1129
Dragoo, Marshall	1021
Curley, Morgan	1236
Bymas, Andrew	1110
Johnson, Martin	1005
Joseph, Clement	1202
Koehler, Steve	1020
Kremer, Chris	1198
Lutterbie, Vince	1273
Mathias, Ken	1076
Odear, Bob	1226
Paulson, Gerry	1228
Phillips, Martin	1227
Stewart, Alan	1004
Whiskeyman, Earl	1089



UPDATE

Three month Preview for '93



The first in the new "Folio" series, *Storm Over Arnhem*, is the WWII game that re-creates the opening days of Operation Market Garden. Gloriously illustrated, the articles contained in the 48 page booklet touch upon many facets of the battle, the combatants and their weaponry.

To further enlighten the reader, the innovative two player game re-creates the four days of the British First Airborne Division's struggle for the Arnhem bridgehead. Includes full-color maps, counters, rules and historical booklet in a heavy stock folder.

#8361 *Storm over Arnhem* For 2 players March '93
(Approx. \$15.95) Suggested Retail



IDF "Israeli Defense Force" takes our proven MBT game system to the shifting sands of the Middle East for scenarios from both the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars. The game is loaded with information on the military hardware — Centurions, T-62s, M-48s, M-60s, M3 halftracks, BMP

infantry fighting vehicles, etc.; the organizational data for Israeli, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Jordanian combat units; and the soldier's training, doctrine and morale — these wars provided classic confrontations between quality and quantity. Loaded with dash and flavor!

#891 *IDF* For 2 to 6 players April 1993 (\$35.00)

For the Smithsonian Institution American History Series



Mustangs re-creates an era (1944-1945) when propeller-driven fighter planes fought for control of the air above both Europe and the Pacific.

The game includes, among others, the legendary P-51 "Mustangs", the rugged P-47 "Thunderbolts", the versatile F4U "Corsair", the deadly F6F "Hellcat", the agile Japanese "Zero", the heavily-armed FW-190, and the futuristic German Jet, the Me-262. Easy to learn, but a challenge to master.

#736 *Mustangs* For 2 to 4 players May 1993 (\$25.00)



"Gold in the Yukon!!" How those words fired the imagination of a generation in 1897. Now, with *Claim Jumper*, the gamer can recapture that fever. This newest offering from Avalon Hill is a deceptively simple family game for two to four players. Using a unique play system, the players stake claims on a

map showing the territory around infamous Dawson City in an effort to amass the largest amount of gold at the end of the game. But, as one might expect with fortunes to be made, claim-jumping, speculation, bluff and greed just might take center stage. *Claim Jumper* will be the second offering in Avalon Hill's folio line, and will include a 48-page booklet richly detailing the history of North America's last gold rush, which lured ambitious young men like Jack London north, a full-color map, and counters for the likes of "Cannibal Ike" and the "Lucky Swede". For the discriminating reader seeking something "a little different", this one just might be the "Mother Lode". *Claim Jumper* For Multi players

May 1993
(Approx. \$15.95) Suggested Retail



Wack slacks, sin hound, raincoat, heavy cream, road pizza, the show, an Amy... just a few of a thousand slang Expressions that make up the Game of Slang. Based on the "Random House Thesaurus of Slang", the game includes key words— each with up to 10 common slang expressions. The object is to match a slang expression to the proper

key word. For example, wack slacks is slang for old ripped jeans. These, and thousands more like the one's above, are included in the Game of Slang, a great social party game for any number age 10 years old and up. Can you guess the word for this card?

#6445 *The Game of Slang* April 1993
(Approx. \$11.95) Suggested Retail

Just Passin' Through

by Mark Fassio

I was coming up with a case of writer's block for this article (probably because I am a blockhead), when I thought about covering the topic of fake wars in the early game years. The title refers to the enemy provinces you "seize" during your smokescreening of the board during such wars. And while the topic has been covered in the past, none can cover it with as much long-winded drivel as me. So sit down, turn off the MTV or WWF Championship, and read on.

First off, faking a war is a Dip tactic that's as old as the hills. While most folks can "read" a fake war after a turn or two, such wars are nonetheless good for a quick jump on the opposition, especially when your ally is as free-wheeling and/or as loyal as you are. Using my oft-repeated philosophy (recently expounded in "The Six P's" in issue 67), you should, by Winter 1900, try to secure an ally in your neck of the woods. The two of you should pick out one enemy for mutual operations, and then "go ugly early" by hitting the poor unfortunate as soon as possible. Fake wars are a neat torpedo way to accomplish these tactics, as you keep the rest of the board guessing while you set up your operations. And you can sometimes manage to secure some good info from other neighbors, who may write you with info (true or otherwise) about your "foe" while you fight. Armed with knowledge from them, you can possibly plan some out-years tactics to boot.

Having said all this, what are some good examples of opening moves for fake wars? Well, some of the nicer ones are below:

I. Venice Goes East (AI vs. T):

Spr 1901: Ven-Tri, Rom-Ven/Apu, Nap-Ion
Tri-Alb, Bud-Rum, Vie-Bud

Fall 1901: Tri-Ser, Ven-Tyl, Ion-Tun (or Apu-Tun)
Bud-Gal, Rum S Tri-Ser, Alb-Gre

This one is basically a Lepanto opening, done to stifle the Turk and, secondarily, the Russian. Austria's opening makes it seem he is the victim of a nasty Italian stab (all the better if Rom-Ven also happens). In Fall 1901, the AI ensures Serbia while holding Rumania, thus providing themselves all the Balkans save Bulgaria. Their fleets are also in position to face the Aegean in 1902.

The biggest danger for this move is actually caused by its opening appearances of Austrian weakness: the Turk, seeing the positioning and getting letters from the "stabbed" Austria, may reason that the Archduke now has his hands full with counterattacking the Italian and/or trying to guard Rum. As such, one must take care to prevent Turkey from trying to go for Greece in Fall 1901. It's not critical, especially with the

overall AI positionings, but no normal Austrian likes to build only one in 1901.

(Another danger is a Russian move F Sev-Rum in the spring, although you should be able to spread the usual fearmongering over the Black Sea, sending letters to both R and T about the other's malevolence.)

II. Venice Goes West (GI vs. F):

Spr 1901: Ven-Tyl, Rom-Ven/Apu, Nap-Ion
Mun-Ruh, Kie-Hol, Ber-Kie

So far, so good. Both sides do fairly standard openings. It looks like the Italian is poised for war with Austria, while Germany is anti-West and pro-Russian (handing the Tsar Sweden for free.) In Fall 1901 comes the "shocker."

Fall 1901: Tyl-Mun, Ven-Tyl, Ion/Apu-Tun
Ruh-Bel (Hol S), Kie-Den

With this move, it seems like the Italians have done the Germans dirty. But in 1902 the truth is unveiled, as we see:

Spring 1902: Mun-Bur, Tyl-Pie, other moves vary
Bel/Ruh S Mun-Bur, others vary but Mun must be retaken

I heard about a variant of this move being created and/or executed by Kathy Caruso as the Italian (how did I somehow suspect this?) It is a nice little ditty, wouldn't you say? In one gameyear, we pity the poor German, beset upon by (gasp!) the upstart Italians. In the next year, Monsieur le Francaise is under assault. (Notice I only included the existing units in my example. Depending upon who's doing things to GI from other directions, the GI may want to go 100% against France, in which case Italy could build another fleet and head from W.Med while Germany makes an extra army for retaking Mun and heading west.)

This move requires no-kidding peace treaties between Italy and Austria. The German should be able to wrangle a nice DMZ with the Tsar because of his generous offer of a free Sweden in 1901, and he can probably get either England or France to lay off him (or at least be neutral). Neither German nor Italian requirement is that extraordinary and should grant both operatives the one and one-half gameyears needed to try and get the drop on France.

Note also that a reverse-engineered job is possible vs. Italy (France goes to Bur in Spr 01, Mun in Fall 01, then to Tyl and Pie in Spr 02, as well as sending a fleet into Wes or Lyo).

III. The CON Job (RT against AI or A)

Spring 1901: Sev-Bla, War-Ukr
Ank-Con, Con-Bul, Smy-Arm

This opening move gives the appearance of possible mistrust/war between the RT (Turkey seems to trust the

Russian by not bouncing in Black Sea, but still could cover his centers and simultaneously threaten Sev by moving to Arm.) In the fall we see the smoke clear, albeit confusingly:

Fall 1901: Ukr-Rum, Bla-Con

Bul S Ukr-Rum, Con-Aeg, Arm-Sev

Winter 1901: F Smy, Russian build as needed

The beauty of this move is that RT have two fleets ready for southern expansion (Con/Aeg) as well as a third on the way (F Smy). If there is an AI, then you guarantee no further eastward expansion because AI fleets in Gre/Tun/Nap will all be stymied in Ion by RT moves Con-Aeg (Smy S) and Aeg-EMed (combined with a supported attack on Ser or at least Bul-Gre.) This combination of moves and threats make RT a megathreat early on in the Balkans. And if you can swing the Italian into an anti-Austrian deal in 1900 (personalities and opportunities will decide this) then all the better for your Machiavellian intrigues!

There are, naturally, two disadvantages to this option. One minus is that you each occupy a home center of the other, necessitating a retake in the future (and concomitant waste of time and units in housekeeping duties.) This is not to mention the fact that Turkey can retake his center more easily - with less threat of Russian perfidy. The Tsar has to have a set of cast-iron kahunas and hope that Turkey doesn't go north into the soft underbelly instead of sending A Sev westward. The other disadvantage to this option is that it's readily telegraphed. Old heads notice it right away, and even the blindest

of Dippers will see the obvious through their 20/600 lenses by Spring 1902. Again, though, the move could be considered when the conditions are favorable (weak or fractious AI, fighting between themselves, or when R and/or T are faced by a known hostile alliance.)

As you can see, fake wars that involve "transitting" units tend to best be undertaken by countries that have a lot of neutral centers nearby. This allows the stabber to press on through the territory of the stabbee and get both a free center and good tactical positioning for the sake of the alliance. You'll have to weigh the advantages of such moves (surprise, shock value, early momentum) against the disadvantages (showing your hand early, possible galvanized resistance, the need for retaking home centers, and possible long-term worries about your ally.)

These types of cutesy moves aren't for everyone, naturally. However, to misquote the NRA, "it's better to have this option and not need it than to need it and not have it." Every move can find a use somewhere down the line, and "passing through" your ally's territory for a few milliseconds (or longer) can sometimes get you both out of the gate that much faster against the competition. And that's what being greedy land-grubbers is all about, si?

➤ Marc Fassio (CAD-B, Unit 26708 Box 5265, APO AE 09235) is, among other things, Strategy and Tactics Editor for *Diplomacy World*.

Forever France

by Stan Johnson

France is one of the strongest starting positions on the board. Actually, I believe it is the strongest opening position, but I'm leaving some leeway for differences of opinion. While the corner positions of England and Turkey may have slightly better defensive prospects, they do not have France's easy accessibility to neutral centers. France has two of only three exclusive neutral centers on the board in Spain and Portugal (the other being Tunis). These "exclusive" centers can only be reached by one country in 1901.

I believe France is the best position for a novice player to take. France is more forgiving of errors than the other positions, in which one error can sometimes be fatal. France can be attacked by England, Germany and Italy, hold them all off, and still possibly gain a build.

France has the best chance of any country to pick up three builds the first year. He can do so without attacking or alienating any of his neighbors. This is a big advantage.

Additionally, France has the option of going for a pile of centers or trying to knock out one of his neighbors. With his private preserve of centers he can still attack and be assured

of a center unless a third party attacks. France can grab those Iberian centers immediately or bank them for a future need.

Let's now outline French relationships with the other powers. The three immediate neighbors are the most important.

England is usually France's first concern. France must either arrange to DMZ the Channel or decide to move there himself (sometimes both.) There are advantages to both peace and war with England. On the peace side of the ledger, many say the EF alliance is the most powerful on the board. With their secure corner behind them, EF can put all their units on the line and sweep forward. Germany is the first victim of choice for EF. If peace can be maintained with Russia and Italy, while Germany is attacked, short work can be made of the Hun. The tricky part is to divide the spoils in a manner that allows them both to proceed against their next foe without stepping on each other's toes.

One sticking point can be if England wants to land an army in Belgium. On the plus side, it can be a big help in the attack by aiding the invasion of Ruhr. On the negative side,

it could be easily used against France. You must decide your own comfort zone with such a move. I would prefer to see England go for Holland or Denmark instead, but you don't want to ruin any chance for the EF alliance by being intransigent about such a landing.

If possible, Russian and/or Italian help should be secured versus Germany. At the very least you've got to keep them from helping Germany, either by direct diplomacy or getting their enemies to attack them. You might be able to win a protracted struggle without RI help, but it might not be worth the cost. Of course, once Germany is gone, the EF would continue by England going versus Russia while France assaults Italy. If possible, you get the Powers bordering RI to attack them from the east while you hit them from the west.

An alternative is to attack England once Germany is finished. You can decide this based upon position, relationships with other Powers, and how comfortable you would feel continuing to work with him. If possible, you ought to get Russian aid against England if he is your target. Conversely, he may try to take you out with Italian aid. Since your fate is tied to these other countries, you must attempt to steer their fates in your chosen direction through constant diplomatic efforts.

Sometimes during an EF the idea comes up of having England sail a fleet through the Mid Atlantic into the Med to help you out. Personally, I would not feel comfortable with this. I feel the best way to go is clearly delineated areas of control and avenues of advance with the smallest common border necessary. This gives peace of mind to both parties and minimizes the number of units necessary to maintain security while it maximizes those available for service at the front.

The opposite of the EF is opening with an attack on England. To have any chance of success, an early attack on England requires allies. You have two options: Russia and Germany. The best option is to have both, of course, but it's not often possible. Russia can be the most help in an early attack by hitting Norway. He may be able to bounce England there, or at least force England to use both fleets to gain Norway and thus limit England to one build. While Germany may not be of immediate help, his acquiescence is necessary. If he's not involved in some way, he's unlikely to stay out while you and Russia rip England apart between you. If you have a German ally, you must agree to both build at least one fleet (or more).

Since England starts with a fleet size equal to yours and Germany's, you may have a long hard fight to overwhelm him. The more fleets you both have the better. It's also very important that you and Germany use all your diplomatic power and ability to keep Russia and Italy from aiding England, either directly or indirectly. Since Russia can only attack Germany (actually providing you some insurance

against German treachery), Italy should be your primary concern. Once again, it is essential that you maintain good relations with Austria and Turkey as well.

France has a big advantage when it comes to dealing with Germany. That is the ability to control Burgundy. Whatever you do, you must not allow Germany to enter Burgundy, because if he does almost your entire nation is at risk. If you enter into a DMZ agreement with the German and honor it, you take a chance on the unfortunate happening. A foreign unit in Burgundy hurts you more than one in the Channel or Piedmont. Your options are to support yourself in, arrange a bounce with Germany, or just send one army there whether Germany bounces it or not. If you do arrange a bounce, I suggest using A Mar. This leaves it ready if you need to defend Mar from the Italians or, if not, to take Spain. If you support to Burgundy, use A Par-Bur (A Mar S).

If you decide to attack Germany, you have a host of potential allies. England has already been covered, but you can also get Russia, Austria and Italy to help. These are the same countries whose aid you would seek if England and Germany attacked you. France's strong defensive position and ability to gain early builds makes it very hard for EG to succeed against you. If they send all their units to overwhelm you by force of numbers, they leave their rear exposed to the aforementioned Powers. In order to succeed quickly against you, EG needs Italy's help. So, in order to have a decent chance of at least survival as France, all you have to do is to avoid pissing off three out of three people. (If you can't do this, Diplomacy really isn't the game for you anyway. Try Gunboat.)

In my opinion, Germany as an ally puts certain restrictions on France. The German can be a big help against England. He can even cross the Alps and give you a hand versus Italy in Venice. However, after that he's mainly just in the way. He can head in one direction, while you go in another; but you must always maintain a watch on the Rhine to protect against sudden treachery. If you agree to DMZ Burgundy (which is part of your country, after all), you should receive some concession in return.

The third neighbor is Italy. As an ally he can usually only help you versus Munich. If he advances into Munich, or even further north, he at best blocks your avenue of advance and at worst you may have substituted one threat for another.

Viewing Italy as an enemy is often referred to as The Southern Strategy. It's often tried by players on a third or fourth go-around as France, who want to try something new. Personally, I think it's crazy to send a substantial portion of your forces against Italy while the English and German questions remain unresolved. Another scenario has you doing this as part of an EFG triple alliance. I have always found such alliances with three players from the same side of the board to be too constricting. You'll also find that Italy is

a very bony bird, with four centers worth of meat at best. And you have to travel a long way to get even that. It's very hard to find one reliable ally in a Dip game, and doubly hard to find two.

In addition, the removal of Italy does not give you a secure flank as the removal of England would, but instead brings you smack dab up against the Austrian and Turkish Empires. They would no doubt look askance at your acquisition of all the Italian centers. My preference is to attack Italy after the EG threat is removed or greatly reduced, and Italy is fully engaged in the east. You can play the role of gallant France Hussar arriving to pull Austrian or Turkish fat out of the fire.

Your initial correspondence to Italy should contain an offer to DMZ Piedmont, Gulf of Lyon, and Western Med. This is a good deal for both of you. You might also suggest to Italy that he and Germany arrange a bounce in Tyrolia. This protects them both from Austria and keeps German A Mun out of your hair.

Russia is the most important of the non-bordering countries. You and he ought to start out discussing mutual defense pacts in regards to England and/or Germany, and progress to Mutual Offense if the southern situation allows it. Since a tied-up or destroyed Russia is not in your interests, you should use your diplomatic talents in Russia's behalf with Austria, Turkey and Italy. Remember, though, not to create your own Frankenstein. If Russia gets too powerful, the best you'll be able to do is a two-way draw. Of course, if you're willing to settle for a two-way, you and Russia have the potential to crush everyone else between you. But if you want to win you must prepare ahead for the time when you must take Russia on.

Austria can aid France versus Italy or perhaps even Germany, if circumstances allow. One idea is a mutual defense pact directed at Italy. This is a big plus if Italy attacks you. The downside is if Italy attacks Austria and you must either not honor the agreement, or risk the perils of a southern campaign I outlined previously. Another way to handle this is to let Italy know you and Austria have a mutual defense pact and encourage him to move against Turkey. If Italy can overcome his resentment at being gang-tackled by you two, he may go along with the plan. A third option is to try to get Italy to move against Turkey diplomatically without being heavy-handed about it.

If it comes down to you and Austria at the end, Austria has the advantage of being easy to attack relative to Russia or Turkey, so you ought to try to ensure that Austria outlives his eastern rivals. You will usually have a naval advantage in the Med, and can also attack him via Germany.

You and Austria can help each other diplomatically early in the game through the use of disinformation. A warning about German or Russian treachery may sound more reliable

to England coming from Austria than you, or it can serve to confirm what you already told England yourself. Turkey may give information from you more credibility than that from a neighbor.

Turkish and French cooperation is usually limited to sharing info or coordinating disinformation until the Midgame. This is true even though Turkey can greatly influence your game plan by whom he attacks. So you must maintain a flow of correspondence with him from the start. You can try to get him to work with your plan or you can devise your plans around his projected operations. Your friendship can be very strong since you present no military threat to each other.

The problem with Turkish success is that he can develop a position that is so strong that you can't break it later. So a long-term FT alliance will usually result in a two-way draw. As with Russia, you and Turkey can crush everyone else between you. If you are playing for a win, you might encourage Turkey's elimination by Austria and/or Italy at some point.

In conclusion, France gives you a strong opening spot and several interesting options. However, to be successful you must write everyone, and frequently.

>Stan Johnson (10 Pine St, Edison NJ 08817) is a frequent contributor to *Diplomacy World*.

Come Smell the Dots! PEERICON XIII



07/30/93 - 08/01/93
Sandy Ego, CA

Writing Contest Results Announced

We at *Diplomacy World* were pleasantly surprised by both the quantity and quality of articles entered in what will become an Annual *DW* Writing Contest. David Smith won the \$50/two free issues first prize with his "The Adventure of the Crimean Opening." Second place went to Conrad von Metzke for his piece entitled "On Matters of True and Everlasting Depth", so Conrad will pocket \$10 and a free

issue of *DW*. Third place was taken by Andy Lischett for his article "Forgeries."

All three articles are reprinted below. The other entries in the contest will likely see print next issue, in what we intend to make a reader-participation contest. More about that next issue. For now, on with the winners, and bravo to Mark Fassio for coming up with this idea.

The Adventure of the Crimean Opening

by David Smith

It was the end of a bleak, blustery March day in our digs at Baker Street. Grey skies without, as within we huddled from the cold drops of rain that peppered our bay window. I sat by the fire, trying to take the chill off my bones, while Holmes, in his mouse-colored dressing gown, perused the *Times* "agony column", as smoke from the shag of his long-stemmed pipe circled his head. Outside, the wind sobbed and cried like a child in the chimney, while I, with newspaper in hand, stared vacantly across the room, my mind drifting like the smoke from Holmes' pipe.

"No, Watson," Holmes suddenly broke the silence, "to abandon the Black Sea in Spring of 1901 is fraught with danger. Turkey *must* move there - or forfeit its best chance to win."

"I think not, Holmes, I... Holmes! What is this? You astound me! Am I so transparent that now you can read with thoughts?"

Please do not be so moved, Watson. It was a small thing, and none of your thoughts were read - only inferred by observation."

"Surely you jest. I have been but sitting here in contemplation. True, I have been pondering the Diplomacy game I am about to engage in at my club, but I gave no such indication... nor have I even told you I was scheduled to play! This is going too far, Holmes. If you have been prying into my affairs behind my..."

Holmes laughed softly at my discomfiture.

"No, old friend. You know my methods. The science of deduction is but based on the observation of trifles. Now consider the train of events which I followed. You flung down the paper, which I noticed contained a reprint of a poem by Lord Tennyson. You looked away, until your eyes fixed on the photograph of Czar Nicholas II in the corner of the room, and you face softened, as you thought, no doubt, of the unfortunate demise of he and his beloved family at the hand of the Bolsheviks. I recall that you recently read a biography of Suleiman the Magnificent, then, as your face glanced back to the photograph and hardened, I perceived that your mind

turned to the awful assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at the hand of a Serbian-inspired terrorist organization."

"Wonderful, Holmes. You have caught my every thought, but how did you tie it to a Diplomacy opening?"

"Elementary. I've seen you poring over dog-eared copies of something called *Diplomacy World* for several days now. My brother, Mycroft, has told me of the inexplicable fascination for the game by members of his own Diogenes Club, where, by the way, since no one is allowed to speak within the confines of the club, everyone is limited to something called a 'Gunboat' variation. Since the poem you just read was 'Charge of the Light Brigade,' your sympathy for the Czar and his family, your recent reading habits and your visible antipathy for things Balkan, led me to perceive that you are about to begin a game as Turkey, that you have amicable feelings toward Russia, and that, consequently, you desire to open A Con-Bul, F Ank-Con, and either A Smy-Ank or A Smy holds."

I chuckled. "Of course, Holmes, when you explain it like that, it becomes quite simple. Why, a child could do it."

"Not your child, Watson."

"Child? I don't have a child, but I very nearly..."

"And that's why, Watson, I corrected you by stating that you *must* move your fleet to the Black Sea, preferably accompanied by moving your army from Ankara to Armenia."

"Rubbish, Holmes. Don't you see what would happen if the Russian and I *both* moved to the Black Sea? I would be stuck in Armenia, unable to hurt Russia, and with quite a bit of explaining to do. I really should only move to the Black Sea if I am *sure* the Russian is not going there, that is, if we both agree to leave it neutral, and I, well, um, do not stick to the letter of my agreement. A stab, I believe it's called, or better still, a defensive move against a Russian stab that I was warned about."

"Consider this, Watson. It is logical to assume that a Russian intensely interested in the south may well move A War-Gal, A Mos-Ukr, and F Sev-Bla, a solid and standard opening, but thoroughly bad play in my view as it simply abandons the north, causing England to covet a St. Petersburg

almost within his grasp. Also, any German of above-average intelligence will open to Denmark and then stand off the Russian in Sweden if it appears that the Russian has Rumania sewn up for a build. If the Austrian has opened properly and stood off the Russian in Galicia, either by guile or by arrangement, then Russia goes into Fall 1901 with an army in the Ukraine and a fleet in Sevastopol, after the standoff in the Black Sea."

"True, but what has it gotten me, Holmes, but a Russian enemy, an Italian no doubt being barraged by the Russian with pleas for help, and an Austrian who knows we can never work together for the long term?"

"Calm yourself, Watson. You know my maxim: It is of the highest importance in the art of detection to be able to recognize, out of a number of facts, which are incidental and which are vital."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning that to speak of the 'long term' in regard to Austria in 1901 is a phantom, a chimera. Has the Austrian ever lived who has not dreamed of smashing Russia with Turkish help, while confident that he can follow up with an Austrian-Italian alliance against a vulnerable Turkey? Turn the Austrian to your will now, Watson, while planning to deal with AI in the future."

"But that army in Armenia is stuck there, meaning A Bul has no support!" I was becoming flustered by now.

"What support is needed, Watson? If his fleet is in Sevastopol, there can be no AR cooperation against Bulgaria. If he opened as above, then if he moves A Ukr-Rum supported by F Sev, your A Arm cuts his support and your A Bul stands him off in Rumania. If he moves F Sev-Rum supported by A Ukr, then your A Arm slips into Sevastopol. And suppose Russia opens A Mos-Ukr (or A War-Ukr) and F Sev-Rum - then he holds on to Rumania only by losing Sevastopol."

"What ineffable twaddle, Holmes! Do you assume Austria is just going to plunge right in to help me? Don't you think he might support Russia into Rumania?"

"Certainly, why else would I be communicating to Germany precisely that fact? I do so to ensure that Russia receives one build at best. But if Russia has taken Galicia, Austria should not be that hard to turn. And if Russia and Austria both are hostile after Spring 1901, you will probably be able to count on Italy's help. Many may talk of a three-way assault upon Turkey, but almost always one power slips the leash to throw in with the beleaguered Turk... for balance of power considerations."

"All right, Holmes. Here is an eventuality you have not covered. Consider this: Russia moves A War-Ukr, F Sev-Rum and A Mos-Sev! Solve that little difficulty!"

Holmes said nothing. He merely went deep into thought for several minutes, fingertips pressed against each other,

then spoke, as ever, with confidence.

"It is hardly a three-pipe problem, Watson. To solve this dilemma, just remember 'eliminate the impossible, and whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.' Russia cannot keep Sevastopol unless he supports it, certainly in this case with A Ukr because of the Turkish threat from both the Black Sea and Armenia. Turkey now has two options. First there will most likely be an Austrian army in either Galicia or Budapest. If in Galicia, it is likely not there at Russian request. Therefore, it can probably be induced to move to Rumania, supported by your A Bul. If in Budapest, we have a thornier problem, for it is there by collusion with the Russian, no doubt, to demilitarize Galicia. Here is where human nature and greed take over. Firmly offer to move A Bul S Austrian A Bud-Rum. You thus have an Austrian with an opportunity for three builds in 1901: for Rumania, Serbia and Greece, for nothing but a dubious Italian move could keep him out of Greece. You would then work out details by which one of them, Rumania or Greece, would transfer to you in 1902 as the attack on Russia continued."

"But Holmes..."

"One moment Watson, please, you forget there is a second option."

"Yes, Holmes, please continue."

"Knowing that Russia must support Sevastopol by A Ukr to ensure its survival, you convoy A Arm-Rum, supported by A Bul and aided, if you wish, by the Austrian, or if the Austrian is in Galicia, then along with his A Gal-War!"

"Holmes, you startle me! I simply refuse to believe that a God-fearing Englishman, playing Russia, could allow such a bizarre thing to happen."

"You recall the affair you wrote of, Watson, in 'The Adventure of the Red-Headed League?' You quoted me as saying: 'As a rule, the more bizarre a thing is the less mysterious it proves to be.' There is no mystery to any Turkish move to the Black Sea, Watson, for it must absolutely be done, if for defense than for no other reason. You may wish to modify the opening by substituting A Smy-Con, which is the second best opening for Turkey, but it has none of the singular flair, or prospects for great gain, as the Crimean opening, a term I much prefer to Mycroft's label, 'The Russian Attack'"

"Now, do hand me my violin, please Watson, for the only problem we have yet to solve is how to while away these wet and dismal evenings as we await out next case."

>David Smith (5038 Boca Raton, Garland TX 75043) is a self-described "Old Dipper" who emerged from the woodwork after playing in several postal games in 1978-82. He just published his first book in 1992, entitled *Frontier Defense in the Civil War: Texas' Rangers and Rebels* from the Texas A&M University Press.

On Matters of True and Everlasting Depth, and Why I've Nicknamed my Diplomacy set "Sigmund"

by Conrad von Metzke

The following article has been written for entry in a contest involving a cash prize. On that basis, it would be to my distinct advantage to focus on the predilections of the judges. Regrettably, the chief judge has revealed to us that, while he will accept submissions in any relevant genre, he "naturally lean(s) towards S&T articles..." This makes a meaningful contribution difficult, inasmuch as strategy and tactics are at best peripheral issues in the play of Diplomacy.

This is not to dismiss those components outright. Save for "parlour" games of pure luck, e.g. Snakes and Ladders or Uncle Wiggly, there isn't a game in existence that doesn't require some elements of strategy and tactics. But some games require those elements in plentitude, and others merely in passing. Being understood primarily as military terms, particularly when taken as a single phrase, "strategy" and "tactics" obviously connote games derived from military foundations, be they the direct replications (D-Day, Gettysburg), the more generalized canvasses (chess), the abstracted derivations (go, draughts) or the fantasised embellishments (Dungeons and Dragons).

Diplomacy is none of these things. It is, foremost and overwhelmingly, a game of human psychology. Never mind that it uses a map and, ostensibly, armies and fleets; that it vaguely emulates the First World War; and involves "attacks" and "convoys" and all manner of other militaristic terms. It is NOT a war game! It is a game of interpersonal relationships, garbed in warrior's clothing.

On its face, this appears to be a preposterous statement. The rules of the game, almost five pages (1992) excluding the sample game, devote exactly two paragraphs to the "psychology" aspect of the game. The printed literature derived from hobbyists is similarly overwhelming; by contrast with the stack of tactical articles, one would need a magnifier to see the pile of human relations items.

But on further reflection, there's a good and obvious reason for this: People who write articles tend to focus on the finite, on the quantifiable, on matters about which fabulous charts and tables can be prepared. This allows the writer to come across as a richly gifted mentor, and permits the reader to bask in the misapprehension that he is actually learning something significant. What is really happening is that the mechanical aspects of the game are being raised to undeserved levels of importance, merely because the REAL fundamentals - deceit, manipulation, inscrutability, lying, cheating and stealing - cannot be taught at all. Manuals on

poker can teach you how to count cards and predict odds, but they cannot teach you to bluff. Equivalently, manuals on Diplomacy can teach you how to form a stalemate line, but they cannot teach you how to twist the opposition around your little finger.

Consider for a moment the summary course of a game. Seven persons are cast together as opponents. Of these, only one can win. (A draw is not truly a finished game, but is instead an agreement to stop playing. Remember that there is no such thing as a true stalemate which renders a win truly impossible.) For a winner to emerge, combinations of opponents - enemies, if you will - begin by assisting one another in gaining strength, which will ultimately be turned against one another. In other words, to defeat the opposition you must first help it achieve greater power to defeat you.

There are very few games in which one is constrained by the rules to operate this way, and it is this Janus-like feature which in my opinion gives Diplomacy its popularity and seemingly endless variety. The thrill is not in planning the orders, or formulating the Grand Design; rather it is in the constant mental see-saw with the other players, individually and severally. It is not in the pushing around of wooden blocks, but in the scheming and negotiating to push them around (hopefully) in such a way that you gain more than the opponent-cum-ally who is nevertheless lulled into thinking that he got enough. And ultimately, the thrill - and by extension the durability - of this game and its outgrowth hobby are in the personal relationships that devolve from the interactive nature of the play. I have a strong sense that few other gaming groups, at least those that operate by post or on-line, achieve anything resembling the level of familiarity and bonding which Diplomacy's adherents attain. The game itself makes it so: it is simple cause and effect. As a "wargame", a test of one's tactical skills, Diplomacy is of no great moment. As an exploration of involvement with the vagaries and complexities of other human beings, it is a wondrous game indeed.

The above is not, you understand, to belittle strategy and tactics overmuch. They are very useful little skills, well worth the trouble of analysis and understanding. But they do not make Diplomacy the game that it is. That honour is reserved to people who play it. And the testament to the brilliance of Mr. Calhamer's invention, and Dr. Boardman's application of it, will never be in the ratings lists and opening gambits charts and exhaustive dissections of stalemate lines, but rather in the friendships and warm feelings that survive long after the charts have been filed and the game box returned to the shelf.

>Conrad von Metzke (4374 Donald Avenue, San Diego CA 92117) is a past editor and publisher of *Diplomacy World*, and currently publishes *Costaguana*.

Forgeries

by Andy Lischett

In *Diplomacy World* 65, an article by Mark Fassio on letter-passing ended with a tongue-in-cheek reference to a future article on forgeries. Despite Mark's implication that forgeries don't exist, they do; or at least they *did*...

In my first postal *Diplomacy* game, I was Russia and unable to bust up an England/Germany alliance with normal *Diplomacy* (threats, pleas, truth, lies). So, being an enthusiastic novice not yet familiar with the old-timer strategy of taking a six-way draw and joining a new game, I tried some abnormal *Diplomacy*.

I had received several letters from England. Copying their appearance and style, I wrote a fake letter from England to myself, asking me to join him in stabbing Germany. Then I had a friend in England's hometown mail the letter to *Germany*, as if by mistake. This complication was necessary because I didn't know what England and Germany had been discussing. A fake letter from England to Germany saying "I am going to stab you" would not have worked because Germany would ask "why?", prompting England to respond "why what?" and so forth.

But even with the apparent mis-mailing, it didn't work. Instead of taking advantage of beans spilled right in his lap (ersatz beans, but beans nonetheless) by preempting the English stab, the German unexpectedly asked the Englishman about the letter ("Why?" Why What?", etc.) and they figured out it was fake.

England went berserk. In long hate-filled press denouncing the impersonation, he said he knew who the forger was, and would get even, but would not name names until he had proof. My response was to forge an unsigned letter from *France* to England, admitting the original forgery but daring England to do anything about it, since I (France) would deny everything.

The end result? Not much. I believe England was so confused that he dropped the whole thing, and the game continued exactly as before. My hours of sneaky planning and work accomplished nothing except to make England and Germany even more inseparable.

Not having learned my lesson, ten years later I tried again.

In a game in the Wisconsin zine *Give Me A Weapon*, my Russia was at 14 but bogged down against Germany's 12, Italy's 3 and Turkey's 5. I could not outguess my opponents, and figured that if only I had advance knowledge of their moves, life - and victory - would be much easier.

The GM, Konrad Baumeister, was known to take frequent vacations to Europe. Paul Rauterberg is a friend of Konrad's and - more importantly - as devious as I. Upon receiving the Spring 1916 adjudications I phoned Paul to ask

a favor and he agreed. Then, using a *Give Me A Weapon*-ish typewriter, I (Andy) composed a flyer saying that I (Konrad) was unexpectedly off to Europe for a month and temporarily entrusting my GMing duties to Paul. "If", said I (Konrad), "you've already send orders, send another copy to Paul." I mailed the flyers to Paul in Milwaukee and he mailed them to the other players. Then I sat back and waited for Paul to give me Germany's and Italy's and Turkey's Fall orders before I phoned Konrad with mine.

Neat eh? I thought so.

The other players didn't think so.

After receiving the Fall report from Konrad and figuring out what happened ("Whattaya mean NMR? I sent orders to Rauterberg, just like you said. And why aren't you in Stuttgart, anyway?") non-Russian Europe was not amused. Turkey wanted me thrown out of the game and the zine, and made to live with Bernie Oaklyn; Italy wanted me beheaded; Germany got confused and wanted Bernie Oaklyn beheaded. Konrad, however, rightly ignored the hysteria and noted that I had not deceived *him* and thus had broken no rules.

First Place

David Smith

Second Place

Conrad von Metzke

Third Place

Andy Lischett

Alas, again a neat idea got me nowhere. The positions and moves were such that even knowing them hardly helped, and although the other players were already enemies, I *for sure* didn't make any friends.

The lesson in these examples is not that forgeries cause bad feelings and don't work. The lesson is that *complicated* forgeries don't work. My first attempt assumed specific reactions by people I did not know. My second tried to hoodwink the entire board and went out-of-bounds (even for a forger) by unintentionally causing an NMR.

Were I to try forgery again, I'd keep it simple and use it only against people who would not go nuts. For example, many players "negotiate" with one-line notes such as "I'm going to Ber. Support me." Now, if I owned Berlin and suspected this guy of wanting it, I just might borrow his handwriting and send his ally a last-minute note saying, "You take Ber. I'll support you." Might work. Might not. Some day I might find out.

Disclaimer: Forgery and other "tricks" in *Diplomacy* (and in *Life*, but that's not out topic) are dangerous and often backfire. They can earn you a reputation as scum, making it harder to find allies in future games. They can also get you thrown out of games, since many GMs are not as liberal as Konrad Baumeister.

➤ Andy Lischett (2402 S Ridgeland Ave, Berwyn IL 60402) publishes the zine *Cheesecake*.

Stalemate Contest Results

by Fred Townsend

Now, to announce the results of the Stalemate Contest, after many submissions from all over the country and all over the world (no less than two from Sweden!), the winner comes all the way from Swaziland, in Africa: Fritz Juhnke. Congratulations, Fritz! Second place is shared by Frank Cunliffe and Bill Stapel.

Now, on to the stalemates. You may remember that the contest was to find the least number of pieces and centers that can hold a stalemate line. Let us start with Bill's 3-piece, 3-center, no one eliminated offering. England is the stalemating power and owns Edi, Yor, Por with fleets in Portugal and English Channel supporting a fleet in the Mid-Atlantic. Germany owns only London but his fleet is in the Gulf of Lyon. Russia owns only Sweden, and France owns only Holland; neither have any pieces. No enemy fleets are in the north and no country owns more than 17 centers. There we have it - a stalemate line.

This was the best of the "realistic" submissions - those which have a good chance of actually occurring in a real game. Of course, there was no such requirement in the contest rules announced last issue.

Which brings us to the winner's submission - 1-piece, 1-center, no countries eliminated. Fritz's stalemate begins as follows: all the countries, cooperating among themselves, take each other's home supply centers (so no one can build) and then eliminate each other's pieces down to the last two. Fritz went into detail about how this could be accomplished, ending in an English fleet in Spain and a German army in Portugal. England, the stalemating power, owns only Spain while no other country owns more than 17 centers and Germany owns specifically Por, Bre, Mar, Par, Lon, Lpl, and Edi.

Fritz had the best submission, but I had two minor quibbles with it. First, is it a true stalemate? A stalemate implies that *neither* side can win. Germany is trapped in Por, but can England win if he moves from Spain (and thus allow the German army out? After playtesting this game several times and assuming optimum play by both sides, Germany always won. (For example, he has the option of staying in Spain after one move, forcing England into Brest or losing the game outright.)

So, I conclude that it is a true stalemate - but is it the smallest possible stalemate? No.

The smallest possible stalemate is no pieces owned by the stalemating power, one center, no countries eliminated. Frank Cunliffe actually submitted this result but explained it could be achieved by having the powers exchange supply centers and then "disband all their units." The rules do not

permit that, but since he got the numbers right and only missed slightly on the execution I awarded him a share of second.

Now, how do we get to the crazy result? There are two ways, one an improvement on Fritz's submission, and the other... well, keep reading. First, though I should point out that the contest asked for the fewest number of pieces *by the stalemating power*. The number of pieces by the other powers was not a criterion. Now to the improved Fritz version:

All the powers exchange home supply centers, but England, the stalemating power, owns only Por. Two Austrian armies have rampaged around the board eliminating all the other pieces and then are convoyed to England by the last English fleet. The English fleet moves to Wales, the Austrian armies attacking from Lpl and Lon dislodge it, and it retreats OTB. Presto, a stalemate with no units, one center and no countries eliminated.

Now on to my favorite:

Austria in this game was the most feared and hated player in the Diplomacy hobby. (No, the next contest is not to name that player.) When the game began, all the other six players agreed that they would not win the game until Austria was eliminated (or, as the contest rules specified, none of the six will take the 18th center from an ally). Furthermore, since England was a veteran who would never stab an ally and who, as a result, has never won a game, the allies agreed to let him be the winner as long as Austria was eliminated first.

But Austria was hated and feared for a reason - he was a master manipulator. So, as the game began he called each player long distance and gave them each the same message: "Look, I can't win, because you guys will stick together, but here are some great moves so that you can guarantee England wins." Listening to Austria's suggestions, France grabs Germany's home centers while Germany takes Warsaw; Turkey takes Sevastopol, Serbia and the Italian home centers; and Italy takes the Turkish and Austrian home centers. Just as Vienna falls, however, the last Austrian army slides into Moscow and takes it as a Russian fleet takes Denmark. England, meanwhile, has taken all the French home centers but had his only army dislodged and eliminated after taking Paris. Under Austria's subtle guidance England has built only fleets.

Austria then persuades the other powers that to guarantee the English win, they should move all their pieces one by one to Portugal and let England eliminate them. As a demonstration of his sincerity, Austria moves his army there first where it is eliminated by English fleets. Like the rats in the Pied Piper of Hamelin story, all the other pieces follow the

same fate. England is left with the only pieces on the board (all fleets) and grabs St. Pete and all the unoccupied neutral centers. As England takes his 17th center and builds his seventeenth fleet, he is brought up short by the sudden realization that he doesn't have any armies to take Moscow, and can't take a center from his allies because that would be 18 and he would win. His frustrated allies have no pieces and no home centers, so they cannot build an army.

Since England refuses to take the 18th center from an ally, the GM declares a stalemate and a seven-way draw. Austria almost chokes laughing and decides to play only Gunboat from now on.

So that's it folks, and thanks to all who entered.

➤ Fred Townsend (65 Wimbledon Rd, Lake Bluff IL 60044) is one of the commentators in the current Demo Game.

Two More Contests

by Fritz Juhnke

This contest requires knowledge of the rules for the variant *Diplowinn*, which was published in *Diplomacy World* 68. In defiance of the designer's intention to produce a quicker game, the conflict in this case has dragged on long past 1909. Indeed, the war is about to enter its third decade.

The only surviving combatants are England and Turkey, and have been since 1908, when each secured one side of a stalemate line. The perfidious Turks overran the Balkans, Italy, Austria, Tunis and all of Russia except St. Petersburg. The remorseless Brits subjugated the rest of Europe.

As was expected, nay, as was inevitable, mutual exhaustion of resources has eroded both stalemate lines to insignificance. The ensuing guessing game, however, has as yet brought no change in supply centers, as if the gods had decreed that each campaign of one power should be parried by the other's shrewd calculation. The "fluid deadlock" has in fact been so astounding that many observers consider the game destined to be a draw.

It is now the Winter of 1920. England's once-proud military machine has been reduced to just F Spa(sc) and A Ber, while Turkey controls only F Lyo and A Sil. Next year, according to the rules, each side must play sixteen short, with but a single unit to show for control of half the board. If no one triumphs in 1921, peace will reign by default. Yet, the Sultan obstinately continues to veto the draw proposal.

Thus the contest question: Does Turkey gain by declining the draw? More specifically, describe the optimal strategy for each power, and calculate the probability of a Turkish win, an English win, and a draw. Please send your answers to me at Peace Corps, PO Box 362, Mbabane, Swaziland by July 15. The best answer will receive two free issues of *Diplomacy World* as a prize.

by Phil Reynolds

Seven friends get together one evening to play *Diplomacy*. Using the information below, can you determine who played which country, and how many centers each player owned at the game's end?

1. Germany finished with twice as many centers as Leon did.
2. Sara did better than Italy, but she did worse than France.
3. Each surviving player finished with a unique number of centers.
4. Doug did not play Russia.
5. Mike finished with two centers less than Germany.
6. Only Neil and Austria finished with an odd number of centers.
7. England was not eliminated.
8. Burt finished with half as many centers as Turkey did.
9. The winner did not finish with more than 21 centers.
10. Paul finished with more centers than three other players.

Please send your answers to me at USF #4081, 4202 Fowler Ave, Tampa FL 33620 by July 1. All those who answer the puzzle correctly will receive a free issue of *Diplomacy World*. The solution to the contest will appear in DW 71.

Let's Talk Novice Recruitment

by David Hood

The big news item in the Diplomacy press lately has been the perceived lack of hobby growth over the past few months and years. Zine editors lament games on offer that do not fill, prospective readers lament the dearth of new zines to subscribe to, and the latest *Everything*, which reports on postal game openings and finishes, reports a large drop in the number of new games began in 1992 versus the numbers from previous years.

Is the hobby in a slump, or even serious decline? I don't think so. Opportunities exist to bring new people into the fold, if hobbyists would be willing to stop blasting everyone in sight and agree to do some work instead. The first priority might should be to bring the EMail players into the mainstream of the hobby. Diplomacy over the networks is likely to be the growth area of the 1990's, as many letter writers have been saying now for years. The problem has been how to keep in touch with these people, and how to get them interested in all the things the greater hobby has to offer, like tournaments, ratings, publications, how-to articles, lettercolumns, etc.

Jim Burgess has been working on this issue now for some time in his zine *The Abyssinian Prince*. This zine, which is sent by "snail mail" to people like me as well as over the network to PBEM players, includes a lettercolumn that discusses, among other things, happenings on the PBEM front. Of particular interest has been the discussion over house rules and general setup of games, with the PBEM community revisiting some of the same issues the postal folks began to explore twenty or more years ago.

More needs to be done with respect to PBEM. Somehow those with access to the Dippers on Compuserve, Internet, Genie, Prodigy, etc. need to get the word out about hobby services that exist in the PBM world. In addition, there are zines in the postal world that include material of interest to PBEM players that would not be available by recourse only to Email, such as the articles in *Diplomacy World*. Perhaps most importantly, those playing isolated games of Dip over the networks need to be told that they do not exist in a vacuum; that other Diplomacy affecianados are out there waiting to welcome new members into the fold. This needs to be the responsibility of anyone and everyone who can contact the PBEM players.

Other sources of new players that must be explored are the various Diplomacy tournaments already in existence out there. With the advent of the new novice intake system through the five regional contacts on the Avalon Hill flyer, we need to make that flyer available to be picked up at all Dip events. Avalon Hill has graciously agreed to send color copies of the flyer to interested Con hosts, so please contact them. Also, the DIP packet currently being given to new

players by the five regional contacts needs to be jazzed up a little so it can be distributed directly at cons as well.

Of course, as has been said in these pages several times, another growth impetus should come from the establishment of more Diplomacy events around the country. Having cons closer to home makes it easier for current hobbyists to bring their friends to a Con, particularly those who know about Dip but cannot play much on a regular basis because of lack of people. Once we get these folks hooked on the sheer fun of the game at a Con, we may be able to get them into postal and PBEM Diplomacy.

Buz Eddy's article in this issue points to another growth area: clubs. Efforts should be made to establish local clubs to increase face-to-face play apart from cons, with the hope that more opportunities for play on a regular basis would bring in more new players as well. This takes a great deal of work for present hobbyists, but there is no real way around this if this hobby is to grow and expand. Particular attention needs to be paid to current gaming groups on university campuses - those people need to be turned on to Dip as soon as possible.

Some have asked why the hobby needs new players. What is so good about a growing hobby? Well, it makes everything more fun, I believe, to constantly have new players added to the mix of both postal and tournament players. Also, we have a great game here in Diplomacy - it should be shared with as many people as possible.

North American Hobby Services

Boardman Number Custodian (BNC): Records Dip gamestarts and finishes. Vince Lutterbie, 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall MO 65340

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. Pete Gaughan, 1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947

Novice Packet: Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown PA 19401, or F. Davis, 3210K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City MD 21043.

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, 4022 Fowler Ave, Tampa FL 33620

SUBZINE POLL

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

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| And the Horse... | I Still Live | Sorcerers and Strategats |
| Asterion | It's Good to be Right | Standard Deviation |
| The Blind Wars | It's Me Again | Subwithnoname |
| Blasterdom | Metropolis | The Trial |
| CDO News | No Face Number | The Urzine Voice |
| DIDOES | Notes from the Bunker | You're the One |
| The Eccentric Diplomat | The Popular Front | |
| Extremism... | Reginald Mauding... | |
| Fred's Column | Seriously Folks | |
| I Guess You Could... | Sleepy's Sports Section | |

You may rate a GM under whom you played any postal or e-mail game since July 1, 1992, for long enough to judge him or her fairly. Only North American GMs are eligible, but anyone may vote. List GMs alphabetically by name (not title). Rate each GM from 0 (the worst) to 10 (the best)—no fractions, please. GMs may not rate themselves. Do not vote for me.

- [illegible]

Your ballot must arrive by June 30, 1993. Please vote early if you can.

Signature _____
 Print your name neatly _____

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

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

To enter, print your address neatly:

The zine you think will win:

For the main lists (zines, subzines, and GMs) send 50 cents, two 29 cent U.S. stamps, or an issue of your zine in which you publish a ballot. Check here for lists in order of finish or here for lists in alphabetical order. For the Poll publication, send \$5.00 or more and check here. Last year's publication was 90 pages long. It contained main lists, articles, statistical analysis, and lots more! Thanks for your donations; they really help.

Atlantis Time's Diplomacy

by Davide Cleopadre

In this Dip variant, the original rules are to be followed except for the below:

1. The starting year is 3010 B.C.
2. There are only five great powers.
3. The starting positions are:
Atlantis (Blue): Army A3, Army or Fleet in A1 and A2
Mu (Red): Armies in M1 and M2, Army or Fleet in M3
Iota (Black): Army I2, Army or Fleet in I1 and I3
Olympia (Green): Army or Fleet in O1, O2 and O3
Selinunte (White): Army S2, Army or Fleet in S1 and S3
4. The regions with a circle are free supply centers, and always have a "T" before the number. These are neutrals as in regular Dip.
5. The regions beginning with "X" are sea zones.
6. Every unit has to maintain a supply line with the homeland that is a line of non-enemy controlled sea and/or land spaces to a home center. If a unit has no supply line at the beginning of a season, it cannot attack but can only support. If a unit has no supply line in a Winter turn, it is disbanded.
7. The Special Weapon: The GM rolls a die each winter turn for each surviving Power. If the roll is "1", that Power has no special weapon that year. For other rolls, the Power enjoys the following special weapon beginning with the following game year:

season in which it wins what would otherwise be a standoff. The unit using the general must be selected with that Power's orders.

(3) - Blanking. One unit of the Power can vanish from the map in the Spring turn and move cloaked in that turn and the Fall. The unit's position is revealed after the Fall turn is adjudicated. The cloaked unit becomes visible if it is stood off in any province.

(4) - Fear. The Power can order one enemy unit to move to a particular non-supply center province. If that province is occupied, the unit holds and cannot be supported in place.

(5) - Cut Supply. The Power can choose one enemy unit to deem its supply line cut for the entire year, with the consequences noted in paragraph 6, except that it does not need to be disbanded after the Winter turn.

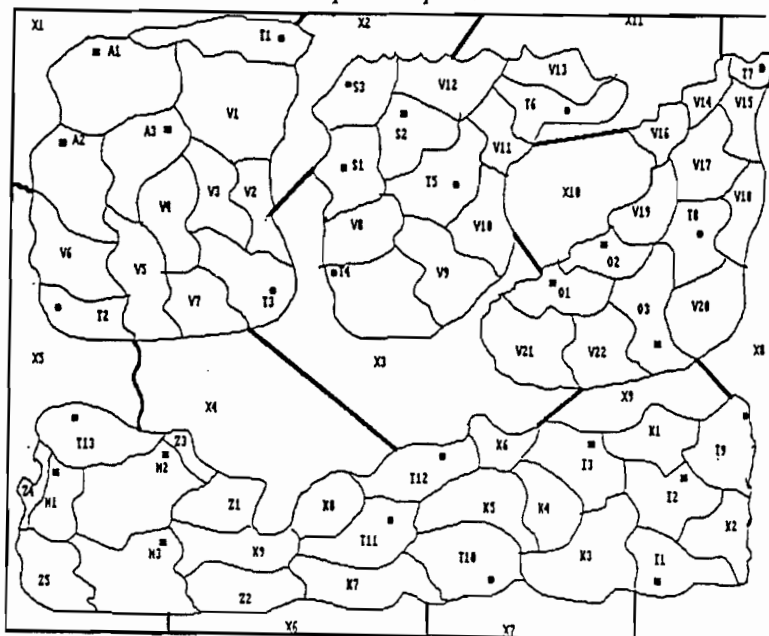
(6) - Free Supplies. The Power can disregard the need for supply lines for its units during one season.

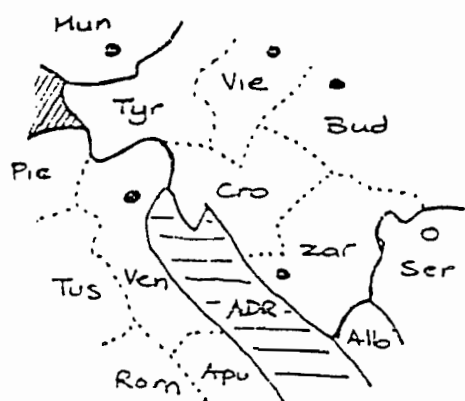
Note: If a Power does not use a Special Weapon during that year, it can be used later in the game. The assignment is secret, so that only the Power and the GM will know.

8. Victory is achieved through the capture of 15 centers.

>Davide Cleopadre (Via Emilio Cuzzocrea 17, 89128, Reggio Calabria, Italy) publishes the zine *Compendio Ars Diplomatica*.

- (2) - General. This allows the Power to select one move per





Yet another minor map change variant is *Trieste Split Diplomacy*, sometimes known as *Croatia Diplomacy*. This quite simply places a non-supply center province, Croatia, between the two adjacent centers. Whilst this reduces immediate tension between the two Powers, this province remains a key one to Austrian defense as it is adjacent to all three home centers! Italy can still mount a fairly effective attack, although a supported attack on an Austrian center is no longer possible. This variant has the advantage that attacking France is not made any more attractive, so the Austro-Italian relationship still needs to be resolved by diplomacy rather than the province layout.

A small variation of Trieste Split Diplomacy was played in America under the name *Peerijavo Diplomacy*. This game had a province between Venice and Trieste which did not border Vienna or Budapest. The province name is a takeoff on Sarajevo (where World War I began), and was a neutral supply center. Understandably, this center resulted in a great deal more tension between Italy and Austria! Fighting over control of Peerijavo was the initial problem, and then the Powers were almost back to Square One: adjacent centers. Whilst I do not recommend that this variant be played, the province structure may be attractive to those who think that in Trieste Split Diplomacy the province of Croatia, bordering all three Austrian home centers, is far too important. By using the idea of Peerijavo, minus making it a center, a province can be inserted splitting Venice and Budapest but without being

adjacent to Vienna and Budapest.

Some people may not want to go to the hassle of making changes to the regular board. Although F Rome is still possible, there are two other suggestions for people who do not like that variant. The first is moving the Italian home supply centers of Venice to Tuscany and Naples to Apulia. Although there are no longer adjacent Austrian and Italian centers it is still relatively easy for Italy to attack, particularly in the Midgame when a build of F Apulia can move into the Adriatic rather than the Ionian. But Italy can still attack France; a F Tuscany build being adjacent to the Gulf of Lyon. Italy's attacking chances are radically improved, and the Mediterranean theater should be both fluid and interesting.

To those who wish to do the least possible to the Diplomacy board and strategy, but who wish to see less paranoia from the weak sisters, *A Trieste* is yet another possibility. The tactics of both powers change very little in 1901 as Italy can still stab Austria, Austria can still prevent this (A Tri-Ven) and Austria can still make a supported attack on Greece. However, the Lepanto alliance between the two nations is damaged as there is no Austrian fleet in Greece to support Italian fleet movement in the Aegean and Austria can now make a strong attack against Italy. By ordering A Tri S A Vie-Tyl, Austria can put Italy under real pressure. If Austria and Russia are allied, Italy is in dire trouble as in Fall Austria orders A Tyl-Pie and A Tri-Tyl and builds a unit in Tri. Of course, Italy can block this by moving A Ven to either of the three provinces mentioned, but when Austria can make a supported attack on Ven, what Italian player will have the guts to order A Ven to move?

These are just a few ideas on how Diplomacy can be made a more varied and exciting game. Variants provide the scope and potential to play any scenario of your setting, be it historical, fantasy, or whatever, using rules which expand those of regular Diplomacy. Examples of variant ideas include the stacking of units to form multiple armies and fleets, hidden movement of units and the introduction of aircraft and submarine units. Feel free to write me for more information about variants in general.

>James Nelson (112 Hundley Avenue, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7DU, England) is the Variant Editor for DW.

Marco Poll (North America)

year	#	winner	runner-up	
1981	32	Brutus Bulletin	Voice of Doom	
1982	61	Europa Express	Just Among Friends	Best GM: Gary Coughlan
1983	73	Europa Express	Voice of Doom	Best GM: Gary Coughlan best Freshman Zine: Magus
Freshman Zine Poll (award for best zine begun in the previous year): 1984 House of Lords; 1985 Flick of the Wrist				
1989	41	Fiat Bellum! / House of Lords (tie)		
1990	31	Northern Flame	Been There, Done That	Best GM: Andy Lischett
1991	48	Upstart	Moiré	Best Player: Gary Behnen
1992	38	Maniac's Paradise	Upstart	Best Player: Gary Behnen
1993				Best Player: best Freshman Zine:

1993 DIPLOMACY HOBBY AWARDS BALLOT

Deadline: 31 July 1993. Vote for no more than one in each category.

Don Miller Memorial Award for Hobby Service

- ___ Cal White for his work on the PBM gamebox flyer; for helping to edit *The New Gamer's Guide of Diplomacy*; publishing *Northern Flame*; for expanding the Diplomacy hobby throughout Canada and the world
- ___ Eric Ozog for his support and dedication to rehouse orphan games
- ___ Jim Mienel for researching and publishing *The Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines*
- ___ Doug Kent for operating PDORA; publishing the PDO Census; publication of *Foolhardy* and *Maniac's Paradise*
- ___ Pete Gaughan for publishing *Perelandra*; restarting and running the Marco Poll; rescuing and continuing the International Subscription Exchange

Rod Walker Award for Literary Excellence (Copies available from Dave McCrumb for a stamp.)

- ___ Conrad von Metzke Counterfeit Publishing: Dips Underworld in Diplomacy World #67
- ___ Jim Meinel Who Really Ran the First Postal Game? in Diplomacy World #65
- ___ Andy Lischett My First Diplomacy Game in Cheesecake #142
- ___ Mara Kent Doug-isms in Maniac's Paradise #43
- ___ Don Hanson Introduction to William Shakespeare as a Baseball Announcer in Orphan Son

John Koning Memorial Award for Excellence in Play

- ___ Marc Peters 1992 DipCon Champion
- ___ Frank Jones 1992 AtlantiCon Champion; great ftf play
- ___ Mark Franceschini 1992 DixieCon Champion
- ___ Jim Diehl for outstanding play of Diplomacy
- ___ Lawrence Cronin for 3 wins, 2 draws, and 2 survivals in a 7x7 Gunboat Tournament; plus a solo Gunboat win

Melinda Holley Award for Hobby Participation

- ___ Andrew York always publishes *Rambling Way* on time; always ready to be a standby player; a good player
- ___ Don Williams for being around in the hobby for so long; a former publisher, gamer, and BNC
- ___ John Schultz for publication of *Well*, *Martha...*, and for wide participation in many other zines
- ___ Doug Kent for operating PDORA; publishing the PDO Census; publication of *Foolhardy* and *Maniac's Paradise*
- ___ Pete Gaughan for publishing *Perelandra*; restarting and running the Marco Poll; rescuing and continuing the International Subscription Exchange

Return ballots to: David McCrumb, 3636 Oldtown Road, Shawsville, VA 24162

I would like to thank Bob Acheson, Ron Cameron, Gary Behnen, Fred Davis, Melinda Holley, Garret Schenck, Brad Wilson, and Andrew York for their help, not only for narrow the above ballots down to five finalists in each category but for their input and recommendations on the future of these awards. Their help has been tremendous. If you are so inclined, a donation with your ballot would not be unappreciated. This is not expected nor required. In fact, the vast majority do not send a donation. And if this request prohibits you from voting, I am sorry. It is not intended to do so.

Good luck to each finalist. The results will be announced at the 1993 DipCon meeting in California by Ron Cameron, the previous chairman.

Name! _____

The Colossal DW Letter Column

This is the tenth 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.

Review of Deluxe Diplomacy

Chris Warren (1200 S. Walker Ave #4, San Pedro CA 90731): Just a quick note regarding the Deluxe Diplomacy map. Although the "Burgandy" fiasco is reasonably well-known, has anyone noted a little extra R-rolling in the "Eastern Mediterranean?"

Editor: Nope, not until I read your letter! Rex, are you reading this?

Roland Isaksson (Ejdervagen 38 2tr, S-123 49 Farsta, Sweden): To give you some support, I could tell you that most of the Swedish Dipfans like the plastic stars and anchors considerably more than the new Deluxe wooden pieces. Another change on the board: "Sevastapol" to "Sevastopol" (but my old conference map says "o").

Fassio's One-Dot Grab

Roland Isaksson: I completely agree with Mark Fassio about the One-Dot Grab. Sometimes it could be very useful to stab with no or small gain. You break an alliance because it is no longer in your interest to keep it. Maybe you're saving a more useful ally. Maybe you're stopping your former ally from getting to a good position before it's too late. Or maybe he was going to attack you soon.

England's Sweden Strategy

Roland Isaksson: One more thing about England's Sweden Strategy: If you choose to attack Russia after grabbing Sweden, it does not exclude a campaign in Germany. In my experience it is very easy to make peace with a Russian after he has lost St Petersburg, because he could not get it back. And if you as England put a fleet in Stp, then he wouldn't expect any more trouble from the Brits. So after Swe and Stp it's normally easy to start an attack on Germany (or France).

The Zine in General

Conrad von Metzke (4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117): OK, I'll bite on your comment last issue on David Smith's letter. This is where I'm supposed to say that the old *DW* was the best *DW*, right? Well, I'm real sorry to disappoint

you, but I disagree that the old *DW* was better. I'd rather have yours. It took me a while to get to this point, but I've gradually put away my old prejudices and possessiveness and decided that *DW/Hood* is clearly the best of the bunch. (Keep in mind I have not seen any of the Jerry Jones issues, though I'm told they would not change my mind.)

The reasons are consistency and smoothness of presentation. Graphics are better too, of course, but that's an unfair comparison given the level of technology back in my day. But the consistent, steady flow of material - there's never a sense that something has been "fit in" to round out an issue, even if that is in fact what you're doing - far surpasses what has gone before.

If you go back and reread some older issues, even Rod Walker's, there is always a sense somewhere that the size requirement dictated the content, or in other words, that material would be expanded to fit the available space. Very often this resulted in the inclusion of articles, or the padding of editorial commentary, that would not have been done if something better had been available. That should not have been done at all because such things drag down the whole zine. Now, I have no doubt that you've been faced with similar problems in your time, but for whatever reason it never seems to show. Of course, some articles are better than others; but none is ever really BAD, and certainly none have been unworthy of the company it keeps. I cannot say as much for Walt's or my issues; he and I discussed this problem many times. We thought we had lots of answers, but we sure never had YOUR answers, whatever they may be.

So consider yourself praised to the rafters by a jealous predecessor - and, I might add, an admiring one. When you find a successor, I sincerely hope you find someone who is capable of a similar steady hand.

Editor: Gosh, I sure am glad you wrote such a long letter. Otherwise I would have had to include something unworthy or pad my editorial comments to fill the space... Sorry, couldn't resist that. I agree that the *DW* editor position requires a steady hand - I do consider that to be one of my strengths. Unfortunately, of late I am beginning to slip some on my turnaround time. This is partly due to work and partly to little Wilson. Hopefully everyone can just stick with me here as I work through this. Thanks for the praise. You critics out there send me some negative feedback. That's really what I need in order to improve.

Roland Isaksson: Hey, why not send me one of those promotional flyers? I could try to spread some interest for *DW* here in Sweden. By the way, how many readers do you have? Which countries are represented, and to what degree? Your zine is a great zine, and has only gotten better since I started

to read it (with issue 60). But it's no longer the greatest! Here in Sweden we now have a zine called *Mu* (after the ancient continent that sank). *Mu* is very much like *DW*, but it comes out more often, runs games, and it's local (Swedish). Also, the lettercolumn in more lively. I think you should leave more room for the readers in your lettercolumn.

Editor: A flyer is enclosed. I still haven't sent many of these flyers out, largely because I still have not received the copy of the Zine Register I ordered in December! Does anyone know if Garret Schenck is still in the hobby? At any rate, your other questions: the current *DW* readership is about 100 or a little more. This has been a larger number in issues past, but I believe the overall hobby retraction is

hitting me as well. I have 5-6 Canadian readers, about the same from the UK, about 1-2 each from Australia, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Japan, Hong Kong, South Africa, Swaziland, Italy and Switzerland. My international readership has grown even as the domestic numbers dropped. Interesting.

James Nelson (149 Gledwood Ave, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 0AW, England): I'll just restate what everyone else seems to be doing, but you really have done a very good job with *Diplomacy World*. The zine is far more interesting, and more importantly, more readable than previously. The contents are also more diverse, which all adds up to a far more enjoyable read. Keep up the good work!



AUGUST 5th-8th, 1993

DIPLOMACY

The Avalon Hill Game Company presents
AVALONCON '93

The 1993
NATIONAL BOARDGAMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

August 5th-8th, 1993

*At The Marriott Hunt Valley Inn,
Hunt Valley, MD*

Play *Diplomacy* against some of the best players in
North America at the number one boardgame event in
the world.

Featuring:

- Three 7 Hour Rounds of *Diplomacy*.
- A Best Two Rounds Out Of Three Scoring System.
- Champion's Plaque As Well As Best Of Country "Fleets".
- Merchandise Credits For Top Finishers.
- Five Star Accommodations.
- 25,000 sq ft of meeting space full of boardgame tournaments and open gaming. Everything from *Acquire*, to *1820*, to *Wingspan*!

For Registration Information on *Diplomacy* at AVALONCON, send a SASE to:

Jim Yerkey
4 Dutton Ave.
Catonsville MD. 21228

Russia/Germany Make Waves in 1906

Just as the moves really needed commentary from the peanut gallery, one of our commentators has apparently abandoned ship. Hopefully, Garret Schenck will be back soon from his hobby hiatus. In the meantime, we'll just have to put up with Fred Townsend's opinions all by himself. As always, you are free to send in your comments about this year in the Demonstation Game.

Winter 1905/Spring 1906 91AH

Ankara Liberated by Russian Invaders

Austria (Bill Quinn): A Ser r Alb, Remove A Vie. A Bud-Ser, A Alb S A Bud-Ser, A Tri S A Bud-Ser

England (Mike Ward): F Eng C A Wal-Bre, A Wal-Bre, F Mid S A Wal-Bre, F Iri S F Mid

France (Mark Berch): F Mid r Por, Remove F Bre. F Por S A Spa, A Spa S A Gas-Mar, A Gas-Mar, A Par-Bre(d,ann)

Germany (Mike Gonsalves): A Ruh-Kie, A Mun-Tyl, A Bur-Par, A Pic S A Bur-Par, A Tyl-Vie

Italy (Randolph Smyth): A Smy r Ank, Build A Ven. F Lyo S A Mar, A Ven-Tri, A Ank S F Aeg-Con(d,ann), F Aeg-Con, A Mar S English F Mid-Spa(sc), F Wes-Mid

Russia (Kevin Kozlowski): A Arm-Ank, F Bla S A Arm-Ank, A Gal-Bud, A Rum S A Gal-Bud, A Ukr-Gal, A Nwy H, F Sev S A Rum

Turkey (Dave McCrumb): A Boh S German A Tyl-Vie, A Ser-Tri(d, bul, otb), F Con-Aeg, F Smy-Aeg, A Bul-Gre

Press:

Silent One to Germany: You are correct... My diplomatic play and negotiations have been non-existent. I have allowed an excellent position to deteriorate into a near-hopeless situation through neglect. I have brought my Italian ally to ruin in our Turkish campaign. I deserve what will happen to

me.

GM to Silent Austria: The first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem...

Commentary:

Fred Townsend: The four-way alliance rolls south as England and Germany move to finish off France and GTR close in on Austria. Italy futilely retreats to Ankara only to have his army immediately eliminated. Italy must focus on breaking up the four-way alliance. He should take a defensive stance, or even better support Germany into Trieste and England into Spain, and let Turkey order F Aegean. Italy must convince Germany and particularly Turkey that they can safely attack Russia.

Russia is becoming the dominant power in the game. The Bear should be at 9 or 10 this fall and has almost run out of non-alliance centers to attack. Germany, England and Turkey all must be worried about this. Assurances from Italy that he would cooperate could turn the tide in his favor.

These worries may explain the Mystery Move of the North - A Ruh-Kie. Germany may have seen the possibility of Turk A Boh-Sil threatening Berlin, but I think Germany once again is showing the foresight and imagination that has made him the spark plug of the game. He's setting up for the attack on Russia. But Germany and England should have builds this fall, and unless I miss my guess, A Kie and the new pieces will all be moving east along with Turkey no later than Spring 1907.

Of course, on rare occasions I have missed a few bets on this game, but unless the attack comes soon, Russia may be in too strong a position to be stopped. And Mr. Free-For-All in Germany is not likely to have changed his stripes this late in the game.

91AH

Fall 1906

Austria is Finally Eliminated

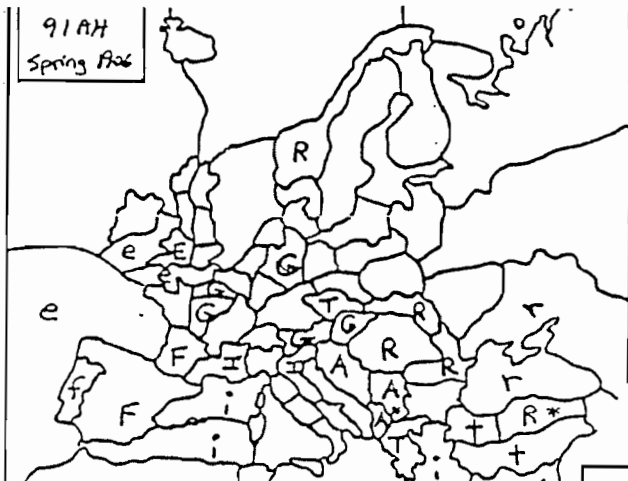
Austria (Quinn): A Ser-Gre(d,ann), A Tri-Ser(d,ann), A Alb S A Ser-Gre

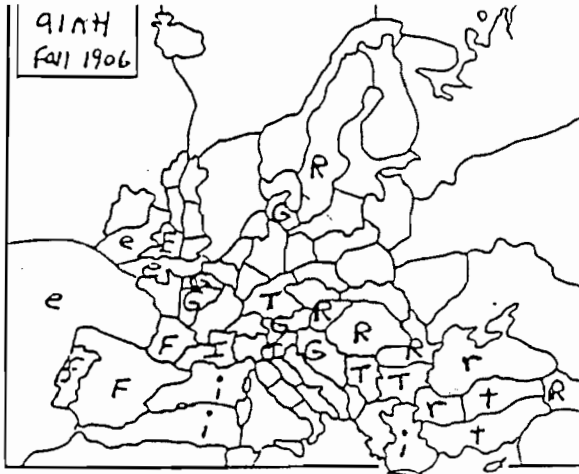
England (Ward): F Eng S A Wal-Bre, A Wal-Bre, F Iri C A Wal-Bre, F Mid C A Wal-Bre

France (Berch): F Por S A Spa, A Gas S A Spa, A Spa H

Germany (Gonsalves): A Kie-Den, A Pic S A Par-Bre, A Par-Bre, A Vie-Tri, A Tyl S A Vie-Tri

Italy (Smyth): F Wes S English F Mid-Spa(sc), A Mar S German A Par-Gas(NSQ), F Aeg S Russian A Ank-





Italy to World: Hm, missed supporting Turkey and France. Don't despair, guys, your turns will probably come.

Commentary:

Fred Townsend: Germany stabs England. Why? Why? Why? For one center, Germany creates a three-center opponent who will almost surely ally with Russia against him and may well join with France in an anti-German coalition. Add the Turkish capture of Munich and one wonders who Germany thinks he is going to ally with. Italy? That will do wonders against an RFET attack.

Russia must be chuckling quietly. Germany's stab will take the spotlight off of Russia's three builds, ten centers, and commanding position. With England's help against Germany, his north is secure, and Turkey shows no signs of giving trouble in the south. Look for Turkey to support the Russian fleet Con-Aeg and keep an eye on the Russian A Arm. A move to Sevastopol should be demanded by the Turks.

In other news, Austria bites the big one because he didn't both to write anyone. In a *Dip World* Demonstration Game? Italy wakes up and smells the coffee, supporting everyone, seeking a new ally. Hope springs eternal for France as England would be wise to bury the sword given the German treachery.

Which brings us back to Germany. Why the stab? There must be something about England in this game that tempts unsustainable stabs. Remember the French convoy to Wales?

Can Russia be stopped? Not with Germany attacking England, preventing a stop-the-leader alliance against Russia. But this game has been unpredictable in a lot of ways, so stay tuned.

>Fred Townsend (65 Wimbledon Rd, Lake Bluff IL 60044) discloses the answers to his stalemate contest elsewhere in this issue.

Con(NSO), F Lyo S A Mar, A Ven S Austrian A Tri
Russia (Kozlowski): A Gal-Vie, A Ank-Arm, F Bla-Con, F Sev-Bla, A Rum S Turk A Gre-Ser, A Nwy-Swe, A Bud S German A Vie-Tri

Turkey (McCrumb): A Ser r Bul, A Gre-Ser, A Bul S A Gre-Ser, A Boh-Mun, F Con-Ank, F Smy-Aeg

Press:

Germany to England/Russia: God, what a choice this turn. Two excellent plans. Both have good points and bad points. To waffle would be the worst, so into the valley of death I will ride.

Germany to Turkey: You, sir, are a snake. I salute you. Boy, did you sell them a bill of goods!

GM to Germany Oh, come on. You've been to DixieCon before. Don't tell me you're just finding out now that Dave is a snake!

Austria to Europe: Barring some major tactical blunders, this is farewell. Randolph, forgive me for blowing a good position and causing your downfall. Hail to the victor!

GM to Austria: Sorry you had to go. Thanks for playing.

Runestone Poll (North America)

year	#	winner	runner-up	third place	GM winner	subzine winner
1977	19	Runestone	Brouhaha	Dimon		
1978	56	Brutus Bulletin	Lies, Deceits & Nef. Schemes	Diplomacy Digest	Steve McLendon	
1979	72	Graustark	The Dragon & The Lamb	Why Me?	John Michalski	
1980	93	Fol Si Fie	Volkerwanderung	The National	Don Ditter / Eric Verheiden (tie)	
1981	126	Black Frog	Dot Happy	Brutus Bulletin	John Daly	
1982	99	Europa Express	Paranoiacs Monthly	Just Among Friends	Doug Beyerlein	Diplomatic Immunity
1983	76	Europa Express	Diplomacy by Moonlight	Snafu!	Doug Beyerlein	Mos Eisely Spaceport
1984	119	Europa Express	Envoy	Politesse	John Daly	Sex Appeal
1985	265	Voice of Doom	No Fixed Address	Europa Express	Mark Larzelere	MeANNderings
1986	211	Costaguana	Europa Express	It's A Trap	Gary Coughlan	D-Day!
1987	441	Costaguana	Blunt Instruments	Praxis	Andy Lischett	High Inertia
1988	508	Praxis	The Zine Register	Penguin Dip	Andy Lischett	Shadowplay
1989	174	Fiat Bellum!	Perelandra	Carolina Cmd&Cmtry	Russ Rusnak	High Inertia
1990	236	Northern Flame	Upstart	The Zine Register	Russ Blau	High Inertia
1991	155	Northern Flame	Perelandra	fast trax	Eric Brosius	DIDOES
1992	130	Perelandra	Maniac's Paradise	Northern Flame	Bruce Linsey	The Hounds of Hell

How to Have Your Own Dip Con

by Jack McHugh

You've just left DipCon and you feel exhausted, spent, completely done in... but wonderful. Three days of socializing, playing Dip and enjoying the company of fellow hobbyists. On your way home, you have a great idea. How about recreating that much fun closer to home? You decide to stage your own local con. You're excited and happy until it dawns on you that you don't have a clue where to begin. Crestfallen, you decide to give up the idea.

If that sounds like you, read on. You can still have that con.

How? Just what are the requirements of such a con? Can anyone do it? Can you do it?

First of all, anyone can have a con if you want to. I say go for it. There are no requirements to have a con. The most important thing is for you to decide what kind of event you want to run.

Will the con be longer than a day? Will it be just for local players, or will you try to attract people from outside your immediate area? How many people do you want? How many do you expect?

The only way to answer the above questions is to sit down and decide what you want beforehand. If you don't want many people, for example, that will effect the size of the room you will need for playing Diplomacy, how many rooms you will need for overnight guests, etc.

If you want a lot of people it will have to be an overnight con because you will almost certainly need to draw people from further than an hour or two drive away. Players won't want to drive further than an hour or two unless the con will go more than a day.

Now that you've decided how large, and how many boards you are expecting, you need to find a place to hold the con. You'll need a comfortable, well-lit place that will be available at least 12 hours a day for every day of the con.

The gaming area itself should be large enough to accommodate several large tables so that you can have one table for each game of Diplomacy. You also should have a separate GM table for yourself and your assistants to work on as well. The gaming area should be large enough to allow players to move away from the tables for negotiations.

Gamers are also quite a noisy group, so you want the gaming area to be in an area where the loud buzz of gaming won't be a problem. The last thing you want to do is have to spend the entire con moving from group to group saying, "Be quiet! You're too noisy!" It also won't do much for the con's reputation, or make the gamers very happy.

The gaming area should also be near the necessities of

life; food, drink and restrooms. The longer the con the more important these questions become. Other issues you might want to decide upon include: Can you bring food or drink into the gaming area? What is the alcohol policy? Is it sold in the area or nearby? Can players bring their own bottle and consume it while playing? Given the length of a game of Diplomacy, it is important that these issues be resolved beforehand.

Other services that are nice to have around, but not nearly as critical, include: A copy machine (you never know when you'll need more maps), access to paper and pens, and a clock (for limiting moves and negotiations.)

Now that you've got an area to play in, you've got to decide how to handle overnight attendees. The length of the average Diplomacy game is 6-8 hours, so you're probably going to go longer than one day if you want more than one round. The question is how to handle the people spending the night.

Will you make your rooms available as part-and-parcel of the con, via AtlantiCon or PacifiCon? That's one of the main reasons it makes sense to hook up with a larger Con that includes non-Dip stuff. You get to piggyback on their arrangements. Or perhaps you will simply attempt to locate area motels and make them aware of your con's possible business? Of course, you can always just leave this issue up to each individual con goer. Most people probably would reject the latter option out of hand, but if rooms cannot be made available for some reason, have the con anyway and see what happens.

Consider the less ambitious approach if you don't have easy access to cheap dorm or hotel space. Don't assume that just because you don't want to make overnight arrangements you can't have a con. As an alternative, why not just scout out nearby hotels and make a deal with them? Something like: Everyone who's registered for your con gets 10% off their room rate, perhaps by way of a coupon inside the con booklet. The hotel gets publicity and you get rooms.

Transportation is another issue that you will have to face. Most cons usually provide local transportation. Some type of a shuttle between the con and the various bus, train or airport terminals would also be a good idea. Don't forget to provide good directions to people who are driving.

Try to find out the schedules at the airport, bus depot and train station the day before and the day after the con. If you can't provide continuous service, leave a number where a ride can be reached. Little extras like this will be remembered long after everyone forgets who won the tournament.

If you can't provide this service, don't offer it! Just take the time to find out who provides this service and offer that information with your con material. Remember that someone, either you or a local taxi/bus/shuttle service, should be available.

Don't forget about parking. Most of the people who come to cons drive and they need a place to park. Even if you don't offer a room you must be sure parking near the playing site is available. Parking is as basic a service as providing the playing area and, outside of the gamesmastering, the most important service you'll provide. Treat it as such and you won't go wrong.

Once the con begins, there is the GMing of the games themselves. This is easily the most overrated part of the con. How many articles do you see on scoring systems versus parking at a con?

First of all, don't let anyone bull you into thinking that there is a "right" system for scoring Diplomacy. Unlike bridge or chess, this hobby has no generally accepted scoring system. Any system will have some distortions in it since Diplomacy really isn't designed for multiple games to be competitively scored against one another.

Second, don't forget that you will be stuck scoring all the boards played at the convention and you'll have to do it before the end of the con. So don't go out and pick a system that requires a Cray computer or you'll be spending most of the con trying, most likely unsuccessfully, to keep up with the games.

Your best bet is to pick a scoring system assuming you'll have only a few minutes per board after each round. If you guess wrong and have more than a few minutes per board then you can always make it more complex next year. I recommend, if you will allow people to register at the door, that you delay picking the scoring system until you see the size of the con. The more people that come the easier the system needs to be for scoring purposes.

Don't worry about people complaining that your system is bad. Someone always does, no matter what system you use. Just remember that when it comes to opinions on scoring systems, every Dip player has one. So, don't worry about trying to please everyone. Just pick the system that works best for you.

Another frequently-overlooked GM question for cons is how you plan on placing players on each board. Will you simply ask the players to stay off boards with their friends? Will you try and place them as in the PBM world; i.e. no one from the same household or area code, etc. Will you give them an elaborate census to fill out?

Whatever you decide, you should be able to do it quickly as players, rightly, expect to be playing near the start of each round of Diplomacy. Don't lose sight of the fact the players come to the con to play.

year	#	winner	runner-up
1974	14	Ethil the Frog	Mad Policy
1974	34	Dolchstoß	Mad Policy
1975	54	Dolchstoß	Mad Policy
1976	69	Chimaera	1901 & All That
1977	111	Chimaera	1901 & All That
1978	151	Dolchstoß	Ethil the Frog
1979	133	Greatest Hits	Puppet Theatre News
1980	69	Greatest Hits	Fall of Eagles
1981	101	Greatest Hits	Puppet Theatre News
1982	101	Ode	Greatest Hits
1983	224	Greatest Hits	Mad Policy
1984	258	Hopscotch	NMR!
1985	248	Mad Policy	Dolchstoß
1986	192	Home of the Brave	Dolchstoß
1987	339	War and Peace	Zine to Be Believed
1988	235	Realpolitik	Zine to Be Believed
1989	197	NERTZ	Electric Monk
1990	145	Electric Monk	Y Ddraig Goch
1991	142	Y Ddraig Goch	Electric Monk
1992	?	results forthcoming, deadline was 1/2/93	

Again, I would recommend a simple test that would allow you to quickly divide up the players into boards and be every round. As I stressed earlier, allowing players to walk-in and play complicates this as you won't simply be able to use the pre-registration listing to do boards. What is the con's attitude towards extra players left over? What if you get six players left over after you make the first boards, or 41 players show up for a round?

Publicity is key to a con's success. You must make arrangements well in advance of the con so that you can get the word out through the hobby press. The longer you have the more publicity you can do. You especially want people to preregister, so you will have at least a preliminary count.

If you can afford it, ads in publications like Avalon Hill's *The General* or *Games* magazine are always sure to get some attention. Even if money is tight, a well-done flyer is more likely to get published around the hobby than a few words on a postcard. Try to find someone to do you a nice flyer, or go down to the local copy shop and do it yourself.

Above all, be persistent. Remember that most publications in this hobby are amateur, so if a person can't publish your announcement, it was probably an oversight. Send them another and ask them to publish it again. Be polite, but also be insistent. Publicity usually makes the difference between a poor turnout and a good one. The newer the con, the more true this will be. However, don't be afraid to purposely skimp on the publicity the first time you do a con. A small con can be an excellent dry run for trying a larger one later.

You may also want to follow-up a con with a nice flyer or booklet of how people finished. This can be useful because some people will leave early and it will provide a record of each con that you can measure against upcoming years. It also keeps your con in peoples' minds and shows that you are likely to hold it again the next year.

>Jack McHugh (280 Sanford Rd, Upper Darby PA 19082) is the Senior Writer for *Diplomacy World*.

Aspects of Club Diplomacy

by Buz Eddy

A majority of people reading this have no doubt been a participant in a regular Diplomacy FTF group at one time or another. Local groups or clubs have always been the introductory point for learning Diplomacy. A vast majority of Diplomacy players play a few games in the group, then move on to other interests. A few of us find that we enjoy the game so thoroughly that we become devotees.

As we look around at other gaming hobbies that have achieved structured success like chess, bridge, checkers, and so forth, we note that the local club remains the underlying strength of the supporting structure. There are frills like local, regional, and national tournaments. There are ratings and titles. There are national and international championships. But all these center around "Friday night down at the club."

If you are reading these words there is an excellent chance that you believe, or believed at one time, that Diplomacy is the best game of all time. I have held this opinion for more than thirty years, since I was first introduced to the game on a truly ugly brightly-colored board published in England in about 1959. Since that very first game I have believed that Diplomacy could take its place beside chess and bridge as a major gaming activity in the world.

Given that Diplomacy is intrinsically as appealing as any other gaming activity there remain two fundamental problems that the game of Diplomacy must surmount in order to achieve the popularity of chess or bridge. These are the need to assemble seven players, and the length of an average game. It is the intent of this feature to research and report techniques that have been used by club organizers to overcome these twin problems.

As a point of departure, I will describe my own group experiences with a particular focus on the problems.

In 1959 I was a freshman in college. I was active in organizing chess and this resulted in a group of 18-25 year olds convening in various northwest cities at chess tournaments. The Saturday nights were all-night beer, BS and gaming parties. One night in Portland, Diplomacy was introduced and it made the circuit from Portland to Spokane to Seattle. The seven player problem didn't exist as we always had more than that assembled. The time didn't matter, really, as we were serious gamers. The real game for the weekend was chess, though, with Diplomacy as more of a distraction than main event. To my knowledge none of the other nine or ten of that group did anything more with Diplomacy.

In retrospect I believe that at least two of those players would have developed a more-serious attitude toward the game if a support system had been in place. They were intense gamers with keen winning desires. Both eventually become nationally-rated masters in chess.

It was five years later that a friend who played in some of the Seattle chess tournaments introduced me to a Diplomacy group coordinated by Doug Beyerlein. Doug went on to become one of the pioneers of postal Diplomacy, Boardman Number Custodian, and had involvement in the postal hobby from 1965 to 1985.

Doug was methodical in his group organization. He would locate a place for a game. We played at his house, at the University of Washington, at the Seattle Chess Club, at my house, in someone's backyard, and lots of other places I do not remember. Doug then started down his list of players until seven said "yes". This group took the game seriously. Last year when I rated the entire history of postal results, I found six players from our group that had gotten into postal play.

The assembling of seven players was a tedious piece of work. But the organizer was willing to devote the necessary time. We were all single young men and the prospect of devoting six or seven hours to a game which we enjoyed with a fierce intensity was not the least bit daunting.

It would not surprise me to learn that ninety percent or more of the groups that come into existence could be typified by one of the two groups cited above. I suggest, however, that neither of these provides a model which could serve to popularize the game to its potential.

When Doug Beyerlein left the northwest for California, the same friend who had introduced us told me of a bookstore that ran a gaming night every other Saturday. I started promoting pick-up play, but very soon there developed a group that assembled to play Diplomacy. We had a regular time and place to meet. Each player could become a recruiter. For more than two years we had either two or three boards in play. In a club flyer, I published the results of the games and I rated the results with the beginnings of what would become the Maelstrom (American Diplomacy Register) Ratings. In addition, we elected a year-limit convention. Prior to commencing play, the players had to elect an eight, ten, or twelve-year limit. This changed strategy slightly from having open time limits, but it brought the game to a predictable time span, which helped retain players. In the two years, more than 200 players participated in these games.

The bookstore group dwindled after I had to leave to devote time to my new family. A splinter Diplomacy group of

many of the same players convened weekly on campus at the University of Washington. This club had a strong run for ten years or more.

It might be noted that although six of the sixteen or so that Beyerlein recruited appeared in postal play, I found but three of the 250 from the bookshop/University play that made it to the postal hobby. Even though it might suggest that popularization gimmicks like ratings and year limits might attract a less seriously-committed gamer, I continue to hold that, once introduced to the player, the game has the capacity to sell itself.

I would like to hear from you about your experiences in FTF groups. What made it enjoyable, what did not, etc. From such input I envision several things. There will be discussion of ideas in Maelstrom. This will be edited down to a future offering in these pages. If there is enough quality work done quickly, I will try to edit it into a "How to Run a Diplomacy Club" section for either the pending Avalon Hill Gamer's Guide or independent publication.

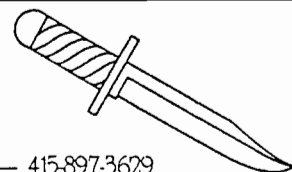
➤Buz Eddy (7500 212nd St SW, Suite 205, Edmonds WA 98020) is Club and Tournament Editor for DW.



DIPCONVERSATION #3

News from Dipcon XXVI in San Mateo, California

1993 Dipcon Committee: Chairman Pete Gaughan, 1521 S. Novato Blvd., Apt. 46, Novato CA 94947 — 415-897-3629
Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr., Greenbrae CA 94904; Marc Peters, 370 North Drive, Sun Prairie WI 53590



Pacificon Offers

Your selection of games at Pacificon is not limited to Diplomacy. Last year's schedule (available from Pete for \$1) included all the following events.

Boardgames: Axis & Allies, Civilization, Monopoly, Nuclear War, Third Reich, Wooden Ships & Iron Men, Midway, Victory in the Pacific, Turning Point Stalingrad, Manassas First Blood (demo), Rail Baron, Kingmaker, World in Flames, Advanced Squad Leader, Britannia, Outpost, Up Front, Battle Tech, Risk, Shogun, Panzer Leader, Merchant of Venus, Privateer, Titan, Fast Food Franchise, Blackbeard, Red Storm Rising, Kremlin, Storm over Arnhem, Car Wars, Empire Builder, Battle of the Bulge, Junta, Illuminati, Acquire, Kings and Things, Cosmic Encounters, and Second Fleet.

The key boardgame tournament, every year, is B-17 Queen of the Skies, which is Pacificon's Premier Event (the scenario is "Raid over Dunfey"). This is played in a single round on Saturday night. The biggest boardgame event is Diplomacy, with Star Fleet Battles, Titan, and Battletech right behind in terms of number of players.

Certain of the boardgame events specify "top players only" (for instance, Third Reich, or World in Flames) or require a prep package in advance (Car Wars). Last year's Fast Food tourney took on a life of its own!

Role-Playing (sample list only!): AD&D, Torg, Call of Cthulhu, Global Conspiracy, Aliens, Toon, Champions, Chaosium, Stormbringer, Ravenloft, MechWarrior, Traveller, Star Trek and Warhammer. There were 122 sections of frp games, including more than 30 AD&D scenarios; frp has its own entire wing of the hotel.

Painting Contest: prizes were awarded in nine categories, including Historical and Display sections.

[[the list continues on page 2]]

Letters on Dipcon

Brian Cannon

What sort of game schedule is used for Dip? Also, what selection of other games does Pacificon offer?

[[I think your second question is answered in the list at the left. As for the schedule, Don plans four rounds of Dip, with start times at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday. It hasn't yet been decided whether to have four open rounds, or three open rounds and a fourth seeded so as to get a Top Board.]]

Doug Brown

I'm looking forward to playing in the tournament. As for Friday—socializing and low-stakes poker sounds nice to me. But tournament Dip sounds great. Good timing, too! I'm a teacher and it'll take my mind off of back to school Tuesday!

[[In the search for a Friday-night event to bring the Dip players together, we have two camps: light-hearted socializing (Snowball Fighting, anyone?) and die-hard variant fans. More input...]]

Chris Warren

I was talking to Vince Leamons and he mentioned that the call for GMs has not yet gone out, but go ahead and put me on the tentative or preliminary list if such a thing does exist. I've been GMing face-to-face and pbem games locally and on CompuServe for a couple years.

I've finished work on a revamp of the Youngstown variant (XIV now) and am having it tested in an ongoing ftf game. ... It was designed with DipCon XXVI in mind, as it's a 21-player variant (and the last two StrategicCons in L.A. have only had 26 to 28 players in the Dip tourney). Let me know if there could be any sort of sanction for this at the con.

[[letter column continues on page 2]]

Scoring System Comments

Brian Cannon

With regard to the point system, I tend to agree that a Solo and an Elimination should beat two 2-Way Draws. If SCs are used for draws, perhaps a solo win could be given 18 SC points regardless of number of centers.

[[I think there is a near consensus that a win+elim should beat two 2-ways, but it's not unanimous.]]

Richard Weiss

I'm not sure why anyone gets to "drop" a game and have it not count. Doesn't this allow "playing the rules" to some extent? I say make either three or four game be mandatory and score each.

I'm strongly on the side of one win is better than two draws. However, three draws would be better than a win and two losses.

[[Remember, this is tournament Dip. People are playing to win the tournament, not each individual game. It's okay if they take long-range scoring into consideration when deciding on the outcome of one game.]]

PROSPECTIVE BIDS FOR DIPCON XXVII

If you are part of a Diplomacy con, or tournament within a larger con, and would like to host DipCon in 1994 (Dipcon XXVII), notify me as soon as possible. I'd like to have specific, express intent from the bidders before our Labor Day meeting. Areas which will have an advantage in site voting are: the South (excl. KY), Mid-Atlantic, New England, Ontario and Québec.

[more on what Pacificon has in store...]

Computer Games: Last year there were ten timed-start events and about a dozen weekend-long tournaments. You could show up for a two-hour match of M.U.L.E., or TeleWar, or Firepower by Microillusions, as stated times; or you could drop in any time to try your hand at SimCity, Empire, F-16 Falcon "Top Gun" or Reach for the Stars, with prizes awarded on Monday once the scores were all recorded.

Miniatures: There were 38 miniatures tournaments last year, including De Bellis Antiquitatis, Warhammer, McPherson's Ridge, Kursk 4001 A.D., Middle Earth, Sopwith, Shiloh, Mecha and Johnny Reb.

In addition to games, several special events are held. The Society for Creative Anachronism puts on a Demonstration of Arts, Sciences, Armor and Medieval Combat; there are, of course, a dealers' room, a flea market and an auction; and the seminar schedule includes talks with game designers and manufacturers, a painting class, role-playing gamemastering and collecting games and game magazines.

Dipcon plans on offering a seminar on the play of Diplomacy, and possibly an introductory talk on the postal hobby. Your suggestions on seminar topics and speakers are very welcome!



[more Letters on Dipcon]

[[Don Del Grande will get in touch with you if we need to expand our GM staff, but for Dip I think we're taken care of. Whatever game we choose to offer on Friday can probably run under DipCon auspices (I'll have to ask David Palmerlee if this is the case); if you want your journey to run more than one round or some other time, you'll probably have to sign up with Pacificon directly. I'll make sure you get their GM mailing.]]

Shane Hedegard

I've given it serious thought to run a "World Diplomacy" game of my own at Pacificon: The Landwehr Society "World Diplomacy" game I have played before. Should I decide to do it, it will be along the lines of Youngstown 13. As a player or referee I'm interested in being involved. With Dipcon I don't doubt that we can find the 14 players necessary for a good Youngstown 13 game.

[[See Chris' idea above! I think I'd prefer a 14-player game, just because I don't want to be overly optimistic—but maybe we can have both on hand and fit the game to the number of participants?]]

Richard Weiss

How about a housing co-op for Dipcon? See who would be willing to share house space for people who don't know someone out here, don't want/can't afford to stay in a hotel, or prefer friendlier environs but more distant to Dipcon itself.

If it's a worthwhile idea I'd certainly have some space. I'm about 30 minutes to the con, 15-20 from the airport, 10 from the port and 8 from the bus/train line.

[[Obviously my first preference is for folks to stay at the Dunfey, but if someone just can't afford to attend then I hope they'll write to me; I'll try to match them up with local players willing to donate crash space.

[[Next newsletter should be longer—write today!]]

DIPCON PUBLICITY

If you're reading this in a zine, rather than getting a copy directly, and wish to be included on the Dipcon XXVI mailing list, send your name and address to

Pete Gaughan
1521 South Novato Blvd. #46
Novato, California 94947

Postal Play

The Postal Gambit

by Conrad von Metzke

I recently received the following note from a player in an orphan game I've taken over:

"...this game is ridiculous. I have not received a letter from anyone since you took over. I have written everyone, but I have received no response. I don't play for my health, and unless I start receiving some mail, I am going to have to drop out because of boredom... I don't know if there is anything you can do, but I thought you should know."

Taking the man at face value, my first reaction was that somebody in this game was missing the point. Several somebodies, in fact. There is a variant of Diplomacy specifically designed for people who can't, or won't, write letters: it's called Gunboat. This orphan is not that game. This is (supposedly) a regular section of Diplomacy - you know, that interactive game of international intrigue for seven players who make and break deals, plot strategy, and generally have

a grand old time getting acquainted? It's worth mentioning that I've heard other complaints about the same thing from other players in the same game, leading me to wonder what exactly these people think they're supposed to do. Is this a controlled experiment in ESP? Are 29-cent stamps currently out of print?

Every couple of years since the inception of the hobby, there has been an article printed somewhere in which the virtues of COMMUNICATION are extolled at great length. I've even been the author of a couple of these articles. But in the back of my mind I always wondered: Why would I, or anybody else, need to write an essay about something so bloody obvious? And no sooner do I start thinking that, than a letter such as the above comes to my attention. And so I try yet again...

It seems to be the common belief that this game is one of

strategy and tactics, much like so many of the other wargames in existence. I think this attitude is derived as a composite from several sources: (1) The rules deal mostly with "war" things, like conflicts and convoys and retreats, and suchlike; (2) The Diplomacy press is peppered with articles on tactics from every conceivable vantage point; (3) The game looks and feels like it ought to be a wargame; and (4) the whole point of the game is that *your* armies and fleets wipe out *their* armies and fleets. Heck, armed with all that, how could you possibly think it was anything but a "war" game?

Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, but... this ain't no wargame, folks. Gunboat Diplomacy is a wargame. Regular Diplomacy is a game of psychology, of intrigue, of persuasion, of dissimulation, of intuition, of one-upmanship, of... a hundred levels of interpersonal relations, and your job is to operate as effectively as you can on as many of those levels as possible, usually all at once. Moving the blocks around is just the grunt work.

Two of the finest and most successful players in the history of the hobby are Randolph Smyth and Doug Beyerlein. Both of them certainly understood their tactics, but they also understood communications. It was this latter element that brought them to the top of the field. Randolph told me several times - and wrote in the same vein - that his standard procedure when starting a new game was to take the game list and write a letter immediately to every single one of the

players, without fail, no matter whether he planned to ally with them or attack them or ignore them. When he got the replies, he would answer quickly and with specific reference to whatever points were made. In some cases he was lying through his teeth, but he was never, ever, merely silent. After the first turn, Randolph would then, without fail, write to everybody again, firming and encouraging apparent alliances, stating appreciation for some move or some posture, or if necessary, discussing the logic of an attack. Eventually, of course, he would cease writing to certain players - usually because he had eliminated them - but with those remaining consequential in the game he would continue writing throughout.

Doug's method was equivalent, and he too has spoken and written about it extensively. These two masters (and there were many other examples I could have chosen) came to realize very early in their playing careers that the reason tactics and strategy seemed to loom so large in the game was because they were the elements that had to be codified, and thus lent themselves to explanation, example and analysis. But the "people" part was something one could only deal with by trial and error, or by experience. There were no books, except maybe Dale Carnegie's, to use as manuals. Besides, a large part of the fun was exploring new trials and seeking to reduce the errors. One of the major trials was finding out who would write back reliably and who wouldn't. Those who

NewBlood

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!

Chris Warren, 1200 S Walker Ave #4, San Pedro CA 90731
Benoit Lauzon, PO Box 331, Great Whale Quebec, J0M 1G0
Leo Gawroniak, PO Box 248, Glen Gardner NJ 08826
Robert Ozerov, 9056-8th Ave NW, Seattle WA 98117
Jim Falling, 7129 Sandringham Dr, Raleigh NC 27613
Steve Carter, 435 McCarron Ave, Rifle CO 81650
Ronald Severson, 58 Selkirk Rd #16, Brookline MA 02146
Mike Post, 801 S Harrison #435, Olathe KS 66061
David Baxter, 905 Parker, Toutle WA 98649
Michael Johnson, 5742A Allison Ave, Ft Knox KY 40121
Bob Beach, 40 Wychwood Heights, Littleton MA 01460
David Partridge, 15 Elmer Dr, Nashua NH 03062
Van Zander, 1004 E 38th St, Spokane WA 99203
Glen Allen, PSC Box 2776, GF AFB, ND, 58207
M. Kabelitz, Tongrubenweg 3, 8530 Neustadt/Aisch, Germany
Rolf Gehardt, 116 Creekside Dr #9, Clemson SC 29637
Nicholas Fitzpatrick, 10 Dunbar Rd N, Waterloo Ont. N2L 2C7

Game Openings

Maniac's Paradise, Doug Kent, 54 W Cherry St #211, Rahway NJ 07065 (Diplomacy, Balkan Wars VI)
Off the Shelf, Tom Howell, PO Box 1450, Port Townsend WA 98368 (Nuclear Destruction, Diplomacy, Hardbop Downfall)
Costaguana, Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117 (Diplomacy)
Carolina Command & Commentary, Michael Lowrey, 3005 Kenninghall Ct, Charlotte NC 28269 (Dip, Destroyer Captain)
Ramblings by Moonlight, Eric Ozog, 9509 209th Ave E, Bonney Lake WA 98390 (Diplomacy)
Lemon Curry, Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr, Greenbrae CA 94904 (Trivial Pursuit, Diplomacy standbys)
Cogniscenti, Randy Cox, PO Box 144, Clemson SC 29633 (Listings on multiple games, from Acquire to Yellowstone)
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 (United, Empires of the Middle Ages)
Crimson Sky, Michael Gonsavles, 530 Treasure Lake, Dubois PA 15801 (Diplomacy)
The Tactful Assassin, Eric Young, 4784 Stepney Rd RR2, Armstrong B.C. V0E 1B0 (Diplomacy, Asian Dip, Gunboat)
Perelandra, Pete Gaughan, 1521 S Novato Blvd #46, Novato CA 94947 (Diplomacy, Youngstown Dip)

would quickly become preferred allies, and in many cases their success rates soared too.

The whole point is that you're playing with human beings, and human beings very much want to be treated as such. They - we - need to be acknowledged, stroked, challenged, brought into confidence, asked for opinions, offered opinions, and addressed by their real names instead of their (fleeting) country designations. Many hobby authors have treated with the differences between a good letter and a bad letter, but one thing that they always tell us is that you have got to have SOME letter, or the whole thing is a joke.

Think on it for a moment. You need an ally, and two players look to fit the bill. Do you prefer the one who answers your letters, analyzes your ideas, offers suggestions, and generally gives an air of eagerness, or would you rather have the guy who has yet to bother even with a postcard? Certainly you're in this to win if you can, but even more, you're in it to do well. And that aim can take many forms; one of the most prominent being the ability to make and maintain a strong, mutually respectful alliance - even if you eventually lose, the skill of partnership will be the most useful tool you will ever have in other games and with other people.

Go back for a moment to that letter I quoted in the beginning. This guy may end up resigning from my game, but he's not going to drop out of the hobby. And in his next

game, for all he knows he'll find one or more of the players who weren't replying to him this time. Do you honestly think he's going to give those people a second thought as potential strong allies? Would you?

This final point may be the most telling of all if you plan to stay in the hobby for a while. You're not just writing letters for the one game, you're writing them for future games too, building a reputation. Doug Beyerlein and Randolph Smyth were unknowns just as all the rest of us were in their first few games, but they got over that hurdle in a real hurry, because the word spreads. I've often been asked over the years what I know about such and such a hobbyist, and the first thing I always mention is whether they're known for keeping in touch and actively communicating. A weak tactician who writes letters can be worked with, by strong and steady guidance; but with a poor communicator, there's no hope. And players do remember who has which skills, and mold their play accordingly.

Now, as I said, you can ignore all this and go blithely on your way, and maybe even win the odd game in the process. But the odds are not in your favor. Of course it takes effort, time and thought; but that's what good players, Doug and Randolph and all the rest, put into their games. And that's why they win.

>Conrad von Metzke (4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117) publishes the dipzine *Costaguana*.

Diplomacy World

2905 20th St NE, Hickory NC 28601

Spring 1992

No. 70

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED