

Black Frog



BLACK FROG is a Diplomacy Zine that emphasizes that Postal Diplomacy is fun to play! The publisher is John H. ('Jack') Masters, 25711 North Vista Fairways Drive, Valencia, CA 91355. Telephone (805) 259-2811.
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Subscriptions to BF are 50¢ per issue with a minimum sub for ten issues (= \$5.00).

Diplomacy is a multi player war game invented by Allan B. Calhamer and owned by Avalon Hill Company.

1981K, the sixth game of regular Diplomacy in Black Frog (otherwise known as "GREED") has started. Participants have received a special game start packet.

There will be two other games of regular Diplomacy starting in Black Frog in 1981. One will be an invitation-al game and the other the 1981 "trophy" game.

There will be another trophy game in 1982! Entrance into the 1982 trophy game will be by best performance in the last four BF games. This includes V.I.P. (80KJ), GREED (81K) and the two to be started later this year.
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COSMIC ENCOUNTER. I am developing a system to play Cosmic Encounter by mail and will open two or three games to test play it. I need some volunteers. There will be no game fee to any subscriber who wants to try one of these games. I require six players for each game. More details of how this will be played will be published later. In order to play this, you will not have to own the game, but must be familiar with it.

Other publishers: Please publicize this game opening for me.
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FLAK. My editorial in issue #30 ("The chip on Konrad's shoulder") has caught a bit of flak. Baumeister himself has written a letter in reply (which I will print in a later issue) and Bruce Linsey printed a rebuttal in Voice of Doom, which condemns my position. It seems that Brux is unable to sustain enough controversy of his own making lately and has to adopt a few from elsewhere.
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BRAD WILSON heard from: Brad Wilson also picked up on issue #30, which prompted him to write an idiotic letter in issue #22 of Retaliation. If you haven't already received a copy, there should be an insert here (masquerading as a small issue of Retaliation ("Grub Dots")) containing my reply.

THE FIRST ANNUAL
BLACK JACK AWARDS
for 1980

These are my personal hobby awards for 1980, the first installment in what will become an annual event.

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Section 1: GAMES

My favorite game: As Germany in 1979HK (Dragon and the Lamb). This game has been hard work. At the start of 1980, I was hanging on in a precarious position. Now, one year later, fortunes have reversed and the German position is both respectable and promising.

My least favorite game: As France in 1980AN (Why Me?). This game was supposed to be a "no holds barred" invitational game, pitting seven experienced and accomplished players against each other. What it actually was, was a set-up for a Steve McLendon/Bob Sergeant alliance game. I have been game long without an ally, but have held fast to a five-center position for six long game years. "No holds barred," apparently means don't write letters to the French player. In a years time, I have received nine letters from the other players--five of them from Glenn Ledder. A very boring game and going nowhere for me.

My best game: As England in 1979AI (Murd'ring Ministers). My first postal game start and my first completed game. Result: a two-way draw with Bob Arnett (Russia)--finishing strong with 14 supply centers in 1906.

My worst game: As Turkey in 1979AN (Murd'ring Ministers). Eliminated in 1908 while Gary Carson (Austria) gained a strong win.

Notable standby game: Coming in as Austria in "R3", 1979KG in Retaliation.

Fiasco game: As England in the "Black Hole", 1979IC (Voice of Doom).

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Section 2: OPPONENTS

My best ally: Tom Mainardi as Germany in "Basitque", 1979IR (Volkerwanderung). The game long alliance of Mainardi with my French position has been exceptionally powerful.

Honorable mention: Bill Hart as England in "Excaliber", 1979CE (Dragon and the Lamb) and Bob Arnett as Russia in 1979AI (Murd'ring Ministers).

My worst ally: Bruce Linsey as England in 1979CV (Claw and Fang). My French alliance with Linsey had a powerful start--the game should have been over six months ago in a two-way draw. Linsey, however, engineered a poorly timed stab in 1904. His stab has ultimately backfired for him, however, as after a three game-year struggle, I have finally turned the tide on him and have started to route him. The real benefactor of the Linsey stab has turned out to be Mark Rowell, whose Turkey has been slowly gaining the dominant game position.

Honorable mention: Bill Shelton as Italy and Mike Hartman as France in 1979HN (Murd'ring Ministers).

My best enemy: Dave Carter as Italy in "Basitque", 1979IR (Volkerwanderung). Dave and I were never quite able to work together in this game, although I never really wanted to attack him. Hopefully, I will encounter him in another game sometime where we can have a more favorable relationship.

Honorable mention: Dan Kuszynski as the German standby in 1979AI (Murd'ring Ministers); Thom Burnett as the Russian who never quit in 1979HN (Murd'ring Ministers); Gary Silver as the German who never quit in 1979CV (Claw and Fang); and Peter Ashley as Turkey in 1979IR (Volkerwanderung).

My least favorite enemy: Bill Thompson as Russia in "Emden", 1979HK (Dragon and the Lamb). Thompson is the worst postal Diplomacy player that I have ever encountered. In an 18 month period I wrote him 26 letters in an effort to communicate--without a single reply. A year ago, both of us had inferior positions in the game and should have cooperated to stay alive. Thompson is now eliminated, while my Germany made a comeback to respectability--primarily by hard work. I have written every player in the game every single season.

Honorable mention: Dan Palter as England in 1979IR (Volkerwanderung) and as France in 1979AN (Murd'ring Ministers); and Paul Smyth as Italy in 1979AN (Murd'ring Ministers) and as Turkey in 1979AI (Murd'ring Ministers).

My most interesting opponent: A tie between Gary Coughlan as Turkey in "R3", 1979KG (Retaliation) and Bob Olsen as Germany in the same game.

My least interesting opponent: A tie between John Vielmann as Austria in "Emden", 1979HK (Dragon and the Lamb) and Tina Vielmann as Austria in "Basitque", 1979IR (Volkerwanderung).

My most notable standby opponent: Keith Mercer who came into "Emden", 1979HK for Chris Ward to take over the English position.

Honorable mentions: Bernie Oaklyn as Russia (for Russell Blau) in 1979CE (Dragon and the Lamb); Kathy Byrne as Italy (for David Perlmutter) in 1980L (Volkerwanderung); and Bill Quinn as Austria (for Bob Coan) in 1979CV (Claw and Fang).

Other notable players that I have encountered:

Kevin Mooney (Italy) 1979AI (Murd'ring Ministers)
Gary Carson (Austria) 1979AN (Murd'ring Ministers)
Tim Haffey (England) 1979AN (Murd'ring Ministers)
Dennis Sulsberger (Germany) 1979AN (Murd'ring Ministers)
Fred Hyatt (Turkey) 1979HK (Dragon and the Lamb)
Lee Kendter, Jr. (France) 1979HK (Dragon and the Lamb)
Mark Rowell (Turkey) 1979CV (Claw and Fang)
Al Rodriguez (Austria) 1979CE (Dragon and the Lamb)
Barry Hichey (Germany) 1980L (Volkerwanderung)
Bill Schiwautz (Austria) 1980L (Volkerwanderung)
Mike Carroll (Russia) 1980L (Volkerwanderung) and (Turkey) 1978IY (Emhain Macha)
Vern Schaller (Italy) 1978IY (Emhain Macha)
Glenn Ledder (Italy) 1980AN (Why Me?)
Bobby Stephens (Germany) 1980KZ (Murd'ring Ministers)

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Section 3: GAMEMASTERS

My favorite Gamemaster: Ron Brown (Murd'ring Ministers)
1979AI, 1979AN, 1979HN and 1980KZ.

Honorable mention: Bob Arnett (Volkerwanderung),
Don Horton (Claw and Fang), Steve McLendon (Dragon
& the Lamb), Vic Carpenter (Dragon & the Lamb), Lee
Kendter, Sr. (Why Me?)

My least favorite Gamemaster: Richard Kovalcik, Jr.
(Tetracuspid) 1979KR.

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Section 4: FACE-TO-FACE DIPLOMACY

Best West-coast Con: Pacificon at San Mateo; Diplomacy
tournament conducted by Jim Bumpas.

Most enjoyable face-to-face opponent: Al Rodriguez.
After many many games together, Al and I have learn-
ed to respect each others style of play and we
know what to expect from each other--something
different every time. We are usually enemies, but
we have had at least one game long alliance
in the particular game that I am thinking of, Ron
Brown won--as Austria--in spite of our alliance.

Honorable mention: (Very very many, listed
below in, more-or-less, alphabetical order.

Kevin Buckalew (Masterscon & Birthdaycon)
Ron Brown (Kuszynskicon, Browncon, Masterscon,
Glascon, & Birthdaycon)
Bob Coan (Hortoncon)
Mike Daniels (Orecon)
Jim Eskilon (Glascon)
Lee Ferrier (Hortoncon)
Danny Gonzales (Orecon)
Dave Grabar (Kuszynskicon)
Tony Hart (Glascon)
Mike Hartman (Dinkiecon, Masterson, ConradShortly-
con)
Don Horton (Hortoncon)
Tom Heflin (Browncon)
Jennifer King (Glascon & ConradShortleycon)
Richard Kovalcik, Jr, (Hortoncon)
Dan Kuszynski (Browncon, Masterscon, Glascon, Kus-
zynskicon & Birthdaycon)
Tony Lucero (Glascon)

David Manuel (Orcon)
 Eric Masters (Birthdaycon & Orcon)
 Dave Munson (Glascon)
 AL RODRIGUEZ (Pacificon, Browncon, Masterson, Glascon,
 ConradShortleycon, Kuszynskicon & Birthdaycon)
 Hector Roybal (Masterscon, ConradShortleycon)
 Jerry St. Germain (Kuszynskicon)
 Bruce Schlickbernd (Dinkiecon, Orcon)
 Shawn Scott (Orcon)
 Rick Shatto (Kuszynskicon)
 Bill Schiwantz (Masterscon, ConradShortleycon &
 Birthdaycon)
 Jay Shufeldt (Glascon)
 Mark Spector (ConradShortleycon)
 Eric Verheiden (Dinkiecon)
 Allen Wells (Pacificon)
 Larry York (Orcon)
 (Some mention might also be made of Don Del Grande,
 Dave Claman, Tim Haffey and Jim Bumpas all of whom
 I met at Pacificon--but did not get to play against.)

The least enjoyable face-to-face opponents: A tie be-
 tween Scott Marley (Dinkiecon) and Tom Graessle
 (Pacificon). Will Rodgers once said, "I've never
 played Diplomacy with a man I didn't like." I am
 completely convinced, however, that Rodgers never
 played against Mr. Marley or Mr. Graessle.

Most enjoyable face-to-face game (other than Diplomacy)
played at Cons: COSMIC ENCOUNTER.

Least enjoyable face-to-face game played at Cons:
 KINGMAKER. Certainly some of those hex-square games
 you see people playing at the Cons must be worse
 than Kingmaker--but I didn't play any of them.

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Thus we have the winners of my personal hobby awards
 (The First Annual Black Jack Awards) for 1980. All
 recipients are entitled to receive a "Golden Blackjack".
 This is a handsome 9" by 3½ lb., lead/antimony alloy
 blackjack. All are gold plated and enscribed with the
 recipients name. Everybody mentioned in the above sect-
 ion (whether a category winner or an honorable mention)
 is entitled to one. Postal regulations, however, pro-
 hibit sending them through the mail. Thus to get your
 "blackjack", you will have to be present for the awards
 ceremony. This will be at my home (25711 N. Vista Fair-
 ways Drive, Valencia, CA) at @ 2:00 P.M. PST (Don't be
 late) on Sunday February 30th, 1981.

THE FIRST ANNUAL
GOLDEN FROG AWARDS
for 1980

Unlike the "Black Jack Awards" which are personal hobby awards--the GOLDEN FROG AWARDS are hobby wide awards, rewarding outstanding achievements in the hobby-at-large. Like the "Black Jack awards", I hope to make them an annual event.

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Section 1: ZINES

Zine of the Year: MURD'RING MINISTERS.

Murd'ring Ministers is now in its third year and 29th issue--a time when most zines are becoming warehouse or phasing out (that is if they haven't already gone defunct). Not so with MM! Publisher Ron Brown has invested heavily in a Gestetner mimeograph machine which has greatly improved the appearance and legibility of MM. It also certainly demonstrates his determination to carry on the publication. MM does not have as lively of reading material as many other zines, but is well organized and always worth reading; always in good taste. Hobby controversies, etc. are treated like news items. Ron seldom gets personally involved and usually manages to stay on good terms with both parties in the major hobby disputes. The best thing about MM, however, is the very well run games. A detraction, if we must find one, is that the turnaround on games (the time elapsed between deadline and the mailing of the zine) is often longer than I would like.

New Zine of the Year: LONE STAR DIPLOMAT

The Texas zine by Mike Conner. Everybody agrees that the graphics are the best in the hobby, but graphics are only a thin layer of ink deep and that is not why LSD is new zine of the year. The primary reason is the level of confidence that Mike, even if he doesn't publish the zine forever, will carry every game he starts to a conclusion. The zine is thoroughly readable, although it is sometimes hard to specifically remember a particular article that you read and enjoyed in any given issue. The Texas theme is present, but certainly does not dominate the zine the way some would have you believe.

Sophomore Zine of the Year: EMHAIN MACHA

A year ago Volkerwanderung and Voice of Doom dominated the class of '79. However, in its second year of publication, EM has come of age. The content is well organized and, for the most part, interesting. A good mix of hobby news, statistical info, humor, historical articles, and even a few strategy articles are to be found. The Irish theme that dominated the early issues of EM is all but gone. Publisher Mike Mills has introduced several interesting variant games and has been responsible for the "Zine Directory." Flaws? There are a few. Mike is often careless in his GMing and makes errors a little bit too often. Also the quality of the paper he uses to print the thing on has to be the poorest in the hobby. This is a turn off to me.

Older Zine of the Year: MURD'RING MINISTERS

(See write up under zine of the year.)

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Section 2: PEOPLE

Hobbiest of the Year: BRUCE LINSEY

Love him or hate him Brux became known to everybody in the hobby last year. Mr. Controversy jumped in with both feet in every hobby controversy he could find--and when he couldn't find enough, he created some of his own. Brux published Voice of Doom (unquestionably one of the best in the hobby) and "Supernova" (the hobby novice packet) which was an excellent effort. But, true to form, he managed to stir up a bit of controversy over both.

Female Hobbiest of the Year: KATHY BYRNE

The hobby sweetheart and a darn good player that more than holds her own in a hobby dominated by the opposite sex.

New Hobbiest of the Year: ALLEN WELLS

Allen has been in the hobby a scant five or six months, but I expect a lot from him. He won 1st place a Pacificon, without ever having actually played a game of Diplomacy before. In 1981 he will start pubbing his own zine--to be called Dot Happy.

A Very Special Citation to: LEE KENDTER, SR.

I regard Lee Sr. as the single most important person in the hobby today. His zine (Why Me?) has been noted primarily for well run games with exceptionally fast turnaround, but it is not an extraordinary zine by any means. Lee Sr. has also brought the single most important statistical publication in the hobby up to date as part of his function as 'Boardman' Numbers Custodian. I am referring to Everything of course. But, neither of these is the reason for his getting this award. The reasons are more in a very intangible sense of maturity that he imparts. Something about his manner of expressing himself that commands respect. He seems to be able to handle every situation with aplomb and everybody (except maybe Bernie Oaklyn) believes in him. I only wish he could find it in his heart to find some enjoyment out of fake zines.

Other Notable Hobby Persons: MARK BERCH & JOHN MICHALSKI

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Section 3: EVENTS

Event of the Year: PROLIFERATION OF FAKE ZINES

Fake zines have certainly been around for a long, long time--but never before like in 1980. A few new twists did show up, such as a fake of a non-existent zine (Barker was the first of these, although they are now common place).

Fake Zine of the Year: The one that started it all, the "Christmas" or "Van Nuys" Volkerwanderung published by well it was not Dave Barker or Andy Harris.

Con of the Year: \$25,000 NATIONAL DIPLOMACY CHAMPIONSHIP. This was a real Con (pun intended!), too bad it wasn't real.

Controversy of the Year: CARUSO vs. LINSEY

Nobody really new what it was really about. I say was because I hope it has ended. Could all of this fury have really been over house rules? I consider John and Bruce both to be a couple of my closer friends in the hobby and hope we have heard the last of their controversy.

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Section 4: SPECIAL HOBBY CONTRIBUTIONS

- (1.) To Bruce Linsey for the novice packet "Supernova".
 - (2.) To Mike Mills for the Zine Directory.
 - (3.) To Mark Berch for the Lexicon.
 - (4.) To Lee Kendter, Sr. for "Everything".
 - (5.) To John Leeder for the "Leeder" poll.
 - (6.) To John Caruso for the "Caruso" players poll.
 - (7.) To Glenn Overby for the "Freshman Class" poll.
 - (8.) To Mike Conner for the "hobby mascot" poll.
 - (9.) To Gary Coughlan for "Mellow Yellow" and "Banzai for Bonzo!!!"
 - (10.) To Bruce Linsey for Brutus Bulletin #69, "Bob's Cat" Whitestonia and Diplomacy Digest #42 (not #41).
 - (11.) To Andy Lischett--if it is really him that was responsible for the "Polish" Egg Nog.
 - (12.) To any other perpetrators of fake zines--the identity of whom is unknown to me.
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Section 5: MISCELLANEOUS CITATIONS

- (1.) To my wife Ardyce, for putting up with my hobby throughout the year.
- (2.) To Conrad Shortley for staying away from Ardyce.
- (3.) To Kevin and David Buckalew for general notoriety!
- (4.) To Kevin's dog Brux, not only for being the leading candidate for the hobby mascot, but for not attempting to bite me in the last two weeks. REMEMBER: VOTE FOR BRUX!
- (5.) To the Silver Shamrock Casino for serving as my mail drop.
- (6.) To Bob Olsen for Tyrolia.
- (7.) To Allen Wells, Mary Beck, Joe Gallagher, Jeff Albrecht and James Townsend--for being on the Black Frog honor roll.

- (8.) To Jane Proskin for a great time in Las Vegas!
- (9.) To Kathy Byrne for having a nice smile and for posing for Leonrado.
- (10.) To Phyllis Byrne who is going to like seeing her name in print.
- (11.) To Sue Martin for various notes on the front of Retaliation.
- (12.) To Steve Colombo for valiant play in Famine against overwhelming odds and without an alliance.
- (13.) To Mike Hartman for being the only original player to still be in the "Black Hole" (1979IC Voice of Doom)
- (14.) To Al Giddings, who is still unable to use his "Nuke Silo" in Vienna.
- (15.) To Ron Brown for "Hey Triesto."
- (16.) To George Brett for taking the Royals to the World Series.
- (17.) To the cooperative postmasters of Moscow, Idaho; Warsaw, Missouri and Sevastopol, California.
- (18.) To Mary Tyler Moore.
- (19.) To Gail Bird and Mary Louise Myers for special publication help.
- (20.) To Michael Mills for getting a game of "Jimnu" started.
- (21.) To Don Del Grande for getting any game started.
- (22.) To Mark Berch, John Michalski and David ^Arnott for promotional efforts on behalf of Black Frog.
- (23.) To Woody Allen, Max Shulman, James Thurber, Leonardo Da Vinci and Mel Ramos for helping to make Black Frog successful.
- (24.) To Mark Spector for trying to pick-up Jenny King at Glascon.
- (25.) To the two persons who gave Black Frog a "10" in the Jihad "Freshman Class" poll.
- (26.) To everybody who voted for me in the Whitestonia "players" poll.
- (27.) To Dan Kuszynski for Vacation Diplomacy.

(28.) To Ferdinand of Aragon, Frederick the Great, Kaiser Wilhelm, Sir Winston Churchill and Dan Kuszynski--all of whom taught something to Gary Coughlan.

(29.) To Dan Kuszynski and Dave Pilant for the highest phone bills in the hobby.

(30.) To Bernie Oaklyn for determination.

(31.) To:

Arturo Guajardo
George Leritte
Stephen Lee
Mark Berch
John Caruso

Kerry Blant
Bruce Schneier
Dave Arnott
Andy Lischett
Fred Townsend

John Kador
Clark Reynolds
Bill Quinn
Dick Martin
Bernie Oaklyn

Bobby Stephens
R.L. Morton
Don Del Grande
Thomas Mainardi
Mark Larzelere

Doug Landon
Lisa Lauver
Kathy Byrne
Gary Coughlan
Bob Sergeant

Bob Olsen
Dan Stafford
Bob Arnett
Allen Wells
Jay Shufeldt

Al Rodriguez
Al Giddings
Joe Gallagher
Norm Schwartz
Roberto Guajardo

Bernard Sampson
James Townsend
Mike Conner
Mike Hartman
Keith Mercer

Eric Ozog
Fred Davis
Mary Beck
Dave Pilant
Dave Grabar

Bill Schiwautz
Dan Kuszynski
Jeff Albrecht
Wietz A. de Vries
Dave Perlmutter

Kevin Mooney
Glenn Overby
Jennifer King
Gary Carson
Vern Schaller

Mark Lew
Steve Colombo
Bill Hart
Dave Carter
Kelly Tilley

Scott Hanson
Lee Kendter, Sr.
John Michalski
Marion Bates
Jean Corfeld

Kelly Tilley
Thom Burnett
Michael Mills
James Rawlins
Blair Cusack

Bruce Linsey
Ron Brown
Al Pearson
John Leeder
Eric Masters

--all for subscribing or trading for Black Frog!!

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(The above two spaces are blank so that the reader may write in his own citations as he may feel appropriate.)

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Section 6: FICKLE FINGER-OF-FATE CITATIONS

- (1.) To John Kelley, Jack Brawner and Bill Lafosse for ceasing the publication of their zines and leaving the games in them unfinished.
- (2.) To Dave Barker for committing a record number of NMR's, in a record number of games, in a record number of zines, in one year.
- (3.) To Brad Wilson--who still does not know where the Mason-Dixon line is.
- (4.) To Bob Sergeant for keeping all his agreements in 1980AN (Why Me?).
- (5.) To Konrad Baumeister for the chip on his shoulder.
- (6.) To Charles Letcher!
- (7.) To Tina Vielmann for absolutely nothing.
- (8.) To Blair Cusack for being the only player to NMR out of a game in Black Frog.
- (9.) To Gary Coughlan, Bruce Linsey, Ron Brown, Mike Mills, Bob Arnett and Dick Martin for a conspiracy to falsely credit the fake #27 issue to Al Rodriguez.
- (10.) To Konrad Baumeister for not sending me the issue of Vanilla Fudge that I paid for.
- (11.) To Matt McKibbin and Dave Barker for making 1979IC (the "Black Hole" game) in Voice of Doom such a pleasant game.
- (12.) To Bob Arnett for pirating materials for publication from others, without extending sub credits.
- (13.) To Dan Palter, Dick Martin and John Vielmann for their support in 1979KR (Against the Odds and Tetracuspoid).
- (14.) To John Daly for publicizing game openings in every single hobby zine except for those in Black Frog.
- (15.) To Jerry Jones for keeping Diplomacy World timely.
- (16.)
- (17.)

(The above two spaces are blank so that the reader may write in those citations that he may feel pertinent, but otherwise left out.)

John H. Masters
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Valencia, CA 91355

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- () Please plug
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FIRST CLASS MAIL