



Black Frog

60

.....

I have had quite a bit of static since the last issue of Black Frog (although I did get relatively pleasant letters from John Michalski and Larry Peery). I wonder if anybody in the hobby who really ever wants to receive another issue of BF. But what the hell, here comes one anyway.

.....

Civil Disorder (1981CD) ended in a four-way draw. Mary Beck, Joe Gallagher, Steve Langley and Keith Sherwood all getting a part. The adjudications for Pestilence (1980HU) and V.I.P. (1980KJ) have gone out seperately from the zine.

.....

A year ago, I had a lot of drive and inspiration to put effort into publishing this rag, I no longer do. Thus, I am taking a lazy approach by republication of older material. In this case the five parts of the Diplomacy Anonymous series that I wrote back in 1979. These are possibly some of the better writing (relative to the hobby) that has come from my hand and many current subbers were not in the hobby back in 1979 and have probably not seen them. Even those of you that read them four years ago, may enjoy re-reading them.

I first learned about the postal hobby, and became a part of it, in the early months of 1979. I signed up for six games in short order and one of those games was 1979CV (in Claw & Fang) which was also one of Bruce Linsey's first games. Thus I became one of Linsey's early correspondants in the hobby. When Bruce started publication of Voice of Doom he begged me to write some material for publication in his zine. The Diplomacy Anonymous series was part of that commitment (I also wrote a half-a-dozen other contributions for him.)

These (following) five articles were then published in Voice of Doom in late 1979 and early 1980.

(Continued inside back page)

PROFILE OF A DIPLOMACY PLAYER

Preface: At the Los Angeles DA (Diplomacy Anonymous) office, we have, over the years, encountered nearly every type of Diplomatiophile. Over 36 different types have been catalogued by our staff. To make some of this information available to the general public (and Diplomacy hobby), profiles, of some of the more extreme types are hereby presented.

Profile I. Arthur Ghymel.

In order for the reader to appreciate the character of Arthur Ghymel, we look into a typical evening at the Ghymel home. The Scenario: Arthur is up late typing (what else) Diplomacy Letters:

Arthur pensively studied the page in front of him, scratched his head, nibbled at a few peanuts in the dish beside him, and then, once again attacked the keyboard of his typewriter--adding a couple of sentences to the letter in progress.

"Art what time is it?" The voice coming from the bed in the next room was soft, feminine and had velvet overtones that would have thrilled any other man except Arthur Ghymel.

"Three o'clock, dear; now go back to sleep."

"How can I sleep with you continually pecking away at that typewriter. How many more letters are you going to write, Art."

"Only about twenty, dear."

"God, but your a slow typer. An hour ago you said twenty-five."

"I know dear, but each letter takes a lot of thought and concentration. Have you ever tried to convince France that supporting you into Brest will be to his own good in the long run?"

Mrs. Arthur Ghymel (nearly all American men knew her as Farrah Delight, her stage name by which ABC (which owned her contract) displayed her every Thursday night on nationwide TV) was lying nude on the top of a satin bedspread. The blond hair, which had made her famous, seemed to flow around her and glistened in the moonlight coming through the window. "Art", she said, "I don't care that you play Diplomacy by mail, but couldn't you at least pay some attention to me? Make believe we still aren't married."

"I know dear, but this is a very good game. I have a good chance of winning if only I can convince England that it would be very foolish for him to build any fleets. You ought to be asleep by now."

"Sure, I ought to be asleep, but how can I? All day long I make pictures which drive half of the men in the world to distraction, and all night long you keep me awake typing and convoying armies to North Africa." Her eyes had narrowed and were throwing sparks. "All right, act as if I am not even here, and stop eating those damn peanuts when I am talking to you."

"Sorry dear, but you know how it is. I sell real estate all day and at night I need a little adventure--romance--like only a good postal diplomacy game can provide. Maybe these peanuts aren't too good for me, but they are the only thing that seems to keep me awake and writing."

Eventually, Art grew tired. The sporadic flurries of typing grew further apart. Art slumped over the typewriter with only an occasional twitch in his left ear.

Sunlight started to come through the bedroom window. The most famous figure in the world squirmed on a mattress of down. Langourous eyes opened and blinked. Marble shoulders rose and turned toward the typewriter in the next room. "Art honey, it's morning."

In the next room, Arthur stirred to life once again. His mind, once again awake, was quickly back to scenes of alliances, treacheries, supports and stabs. Scenes of annihilations and otherwise displaced armies and fleets brought him awake. He waded once again into a sea deceit and treachery and grew exultant.

In the next room, a goddess grew petulant. "Art, how many more letters do you have to write."

"Only about fifteen."

For the record: Arthur Ghymel is 34 years old, childless. He is currently playing in 34 diplomacy games (two of them as a standby). He has yet to win his first game, but participated in a five-way draw as a five supply center Germany. In twelve years activity as a real estate salesman; he has sold five pieces of property (one of them as a standby).

PROFILE OF A DIPLOMACY PLAYER II

Preface: Last month we dug into the files of the Los Angeles DA (Diplomacy Anonymous) Office and brought you the profile of Arthur Ghymel. This month we have dug back into those same files for another hardened case history--that of Marina Javernick. Members of the fairer (more deadly sex) are not often found playing Diplomacy. This is a fact, which this profile will attest to, for which we can all be thankful.

Profile II. Marina Javernick.

Let's look back a few years and pick up the life of Marina Javernick. Our story starts when her family moved out of the city into a country cottage in Mendocino County, California:

Marina was ecstatic with joy when her family first arrived at the new cottage in the country. They were far away from San Francisco and all of its smog, noises and problems. Here they would live forever and ever in peaceful bliss.

The first days were a glorious dream. Marina learned to climb the oak tree in the front yard, roll around in the tall green grass, wade in the bubbling brook and other delights that she had never enjoyed while living in the city.

It was such fun ... for the first few weeks ... but it was soon different.

Marina still waded in the brook, scaled the oak tree, etc., but she no longer had any real enthusiasm. For she was lonely. She missed her friends, school, parties and the hustle and bustle of San Francisco. Except for Mommy and Daddy, there were no people to talk to. Marina was getting quite depressed.

This did not escape the notice of Mr. Javernick. "Our child is very sad", he told his wife, "I must do something about it." That evening when Mr. Javernick came home from work, his automobile was loaded with packages. He had bought every imaginable toy or game for Marina.

Alas, all of these presents didn't cheer up Marina. A toy isn't a friend. You can't talk to it, cuddle it, or . . . or eat it.

Marina continued to grow worse. She refused to go outside to play. She seldom ate and was losing weight. That is until one day when she stumbled over a blue box, among those presents her father had brought home to her months ago. It was from Avalon Hill and emblazoned on the top was a single word, *DIPLOMACY*.

Yes, Marina was immediately enthralled by *Diplomacy* and in short order was playing in over 40 postal games. Her favorite country was Russia, and she soon had gained a considerable reputation for vicious stabs on the way to convincing Russian victories. Memories of San Francisco were now far in her past. Deployment of armies and fleets had become her occupation. Albeit and occupation that obsessed her.

There was a brief interlude in Marina's diplomacy play when her cousin visited her one weekend. David was from Oakland, a cute plump little boy, one year younger than Marina. David arrived early on Saturday morning and right after breakfast, Marina took him to her room and showed him her game of *Diplomacy*. After quickly briefing David on the rules and play; a game was started. Marina played Russia, Turkey and Austria; David played England, France and Germany; and Italy was put in civil disorder.

The game did not go as well as Marina had hoped for. In the south Russian armies and fleets were expediently displacing Turkish and Austrian units. But, in the north, several things had happened. A German fleet in Denmark stood off the Russian fleet in Sweden in F'01. Even worse, in F'02, an English fleet took St. Petersburg.

Marina did not like losing a home center.

Along about noon Marina was getting hungry. The pit in her stomach ached and ached. It was time for a break.

"Let's stop for a while and have a picnic," she told David. After David agreed, Marina went into the kitchen. She soon returned with knives and forks, cups and plates, and a blanket. "Let's go down by the brook" she said. They were going to have a jolly time.

"Are you hungry?" she asked her cousin. "I certainly am."

She cuddled her soft, warm, cousin to her bosom. Then setting a plate before her and daintily holding a knife between her fingers. She ate him.

For the record: Marina Javernick has just turned 19. She now resides in a state institution which is in the northern California town of (ironically?) Sevastopol. In the institution, she is no longer allowed to play Diplomacy. (Weaning her of Diplomacy was a gradual process; at first she was still allowed to play--but only if she played Italy; next she was allowed to play Risk; and in her present phase she is only allowed to play Canasta. In her brief three year career at Diplomacy, she completed fourteen of 53 games started. She had twelve wins, nine of them as Russia. She never ever participated in a drawn game. Both Marina and her cousin David are missed by the hobby.

PROFILE OF A DIPLOMACY PLAYER III

Preface: Once again we dig into the files of the Los Angeles DA (Diplomacy Anonymous) Office to present the profile of another hardened Diplomaciophile. Luther "X" is one of the saddest cases that we have encountered.

Profile III. Luther "X".

Luther (who has asked us not to use his real last name) has asked us to publish his story with the hope of saving others from such a ghastly ordeal as his own. It is Luther's story, as he tells it in his own words.

Call me Luther "X", but heed my words. I guess it all began on a cold winter afternoon, when I was still in high school in Bakersfield. We were out of school at 2:00 and a bunch of us were sitting on a curbstone in the old neighborhood--waiting to snipe cigarette butts flicked out of passing cars.

Kevin suggested that we go over to Patty Hoshaws and ask her to wrestle with us, but that was old stuff--besides Patty always won.

Then Mr. Dzuro, the neighborhood postman, came by finishing his route. "Hey guys," Mr. Dzuro said. "Ya want to try something exciting and really different?"

We said sure. We'd try anything for a little excitement. He took us over to his place and then down in the basement. It was somewhat dark there, but Mr. Dzuro said it was better that way. He went upstairs and when he came back he had it--a Diplomacy set.

Mr. Dzuro briefed us quickly on the rules and we started a game. It was great, I could lie, deceive, plot and cheat--in short, all of the things that I had never been able to do and get away with before. Most of all I could get even with Big Bruce, who had been picking on me ever since we were in third grade together. I drew Russia in the game and Bruce had drawn Turkey. I opened with a fleet to the Black Sea and by Fall 1903, with the help of Kevin playing Austria, had wiped out the Turkish position. This was the first time in eight years that I had ever bested Big Bruce at anything.

Later that night I felt bad about the whole thing. All of that lying and deceiving, just to win a game, was not right. My conscience was bothering me.

Several weeks passed without event, and then one evening the phone rang. It was Mr. Dzuro. "Where have you been Luther" he said. "I haven't seen you lately." "I have been real busy working on school projects" I lied. Actually I had been hiding from Big Bruce who was still determined to get even with me. "How about some more Diplomacy" Mr. Dzuro asked. "No, no, never again" I replied. "O.K." he said. "But, I have something to show you, can I stop by tomorrow when I finish my route?"

As much as I hate to admit it, I was really looking forward to Mr. Dzuro coming by the next evening. It was getting late and I thought he had forgotten. It was just before dinner when he strolled up the sidewalk with some folded yellow papers in his hand. "Here Luther" he said. "I want you to have this."

Mr. Dzuro handed me several sheets of paper which were folded and stapled at the top. "Claw and Fang" was emblazoned on the front. I soon discovered that this was a Diplomacy Zine--a vehicle to play Diplomacy by mail. Shortly afterwards, when it dawned upon me what this meant, I was jubilant. In a postal game, I could route some jerk in New York out of Turkey and have no fear of retaliation. I could play and enjoy the game without having to sneak home from school by the back alleys to avoid Big Bruce.

Before long, I was subscribing to seven or eight zines and playing in 18 postal games. After school, I would sit on the porch and wait for Mr. Dzuro to bring the mail. One days mail would often amount to over a dozen Diplomacy letters. At night, after my parents had gone to bed and were asleep, I would pull my Diplomacy board out of its hiding place and plot my strategies. I would often stay up until the early hours writing letters.

The months went by and my games progressed. I was doing well in many games, albeit failing in school. My playing strategy was to ally with anybody who lived within 500 miles of Bakersfield and to save my vilest stabs for those persons who lived furthest away.

Then one day, this period of melancholy came to an abrupt end. Mr. Dzuro came by that day, but his hands were empty. "Sorry Luther, no mail today" he shrugged and then sat down beside me. "But I usually get a dozen letters." Mr. Dzuro was quite for a long time; there was a pensive look on his face. I waited.

Finally he spoke. "Luther, there is a big brown Labrador in the next block." "Do you know the one I mean?"

He was talking about Gruffy, a big dog that played with all of the kids. Everybody loved Gruffy, but he always barked at Mr. Dzuro when he was delivering the mail and there was talk that he bit Mr. Dzuro once after he had thrown a rock at him.

"Yes" I said, "you mean Gruffy."

"Right" he replied, "If I see Gruffy tomorrow, I am afraid that I won't have any mail for you."

I sat in stunned silence for a moment. "But my deadlines ... but ... but everybody loves Gruffy" I stuttered. Mr. Dzuro didn't hear me, he had gotten up and left and was already out of ear shot. I was in near panic. I did not want to harm Gruffy, but I simply had to have that mail; my games were uppermost. Mr. Dzuro is joking I thought.

It was no joke. Several days passed and I got no mail. I was getting desperate. I would have to get rid of Gruffy. The next day I didn't go to school. I called Gruffy to follow me and we went for a walk together. Eventually we sat down on an embankment overlooking the freeway. Gruffy playfully nuzzled me while I rubbed his neck and head. I planned on pushing the dog over the embankment in front of an oncoming truck, but it seemed like an eternity passed before I got up the nerve to do it. Finally I pretended the dog was Big Bruce and pushed him over. I couldn't look. I heard brakes squeal, the dog yelp and then ... silence. I had done what was necessary.

I avoided Mr. Dzuro the next day, but he left my letter in the mail box. Forty-seven letters kept my mind occupied and dulled the pangs of my conscience. That night I had a dream of four Italian fleets (under my command) dislodging Gruffy from Tunis and pushing him off of the Diplomacy board, which was the edge of the world. Gruffy fell and fell through endless space.

The next week passed without further incident. I didn't speak to Mr. Dzuro, but he always smiled at me when he handed me the mail. But then one day, when he handed me the mail, there was a note attached. On it he had written the name and address of a dog, and below that had noted: "If I see this dog tomorrow, I won't be able to deliver your mail."

Days grew into weeks, weeks into months and the months into years. It was always one more dog to do in, in order to get my mail. The dogs didn't even have to be on Mr. Dzuro's route--just anywhere in Bakersfield. Dogs were actually becoming very scarce in Bakersfield. Somehow I had managed to graduate from high school and worked as a stock boy in a local supermarket. On day I heard the store manager talking to a customer. He was discussing the fact that he didn't sell very much dogfood anymore and wondering why.

Dispatching dogs no longer bothered my conscience. It seemed no worse than taking Munich from Germany in the fall of 1901. My life was very routine; it was eight hours a day working, evenings keeping up with my games, and and, the dogs.

But, there was one dog too many; a collie named King. King had gained considerable renown by diving into the Kern River to pull out a small boy. The boy had fallen in while fishing and would have otherwise drowned, if not for King's heroics. Even though King lived clear out in Arvin, he turned up on my "hit list". Mr. Dzuro didn't like dogs and he especially didn't like dogs that had become famous.

The death of King created quite an uproar. The Los Angeles times called it murder and put the story on the front page. Among other things, it seems as if Gov. Jerry Brown had planned a trip to town to honor the dog. The SPCA, the PTA, the local newspaper and others had posted a reward; \$2500 for information leading to the apprehension of the person who had killed King.

They were waiting for me when I got off work the next day. Mr. Dzuro had turned me in for the reward money. I had to be taken into protective custody by the police after my arraignment. An angry crowd had gathered and threatened to lynch me. The mob was composed not only of dog lovers, but of angry workers (laid off when the dog food company closed down) and Big Bruce (whose father used to be Kern County dog catcher).

I am lucky to still be alive.

For the record: Luther "X" is 23 years old. He is now out on parole and living in Los Angeles under the supervision of Diplomacy Anonymous. He played in over 70 postal Diplomacy games, but has kept his record a secret.

Mr. Dzuro left Bakersfield leaving no forwarding address. We recently noted in the Sacramento Bee that Sacramento has recently experienced decreased numbers of dogs. We suspect that Mr. Dzuro is delivering mail in Sacramento.

Big Bruce has moved to Arizona where he is reportedly the Pima County dog catcher.

PROFILE OF A DIPLOMACY PLAYER IV

Preface: Previously this series has dealt with postal Diplomacy players. However, face-to-face players can also develop serious problems which bring them to DA (Diplomacy Anonymous). Conrad Shortley is a good example of this. While Berch, Rocamora and Linsey may argue about their various tournament scoring systems; it is Conrad Shortley who developed and perfected the ultimate system and technique of scoring after a Diplomacy game.

Profile IV. Conrad Shortley.

Conrad Shortley was a successful lawyer in Santa Monica; until, that is, he got overly involved in Diplomacy. His story, which follows, is in his own words; from tapes on file at LADA (Los Angeles office of Diplomacy Anonymous).

It was three years ago when I first played Diplomacy. My wife and I, along with two other couples, were at Bob's for a cookout and we planned on going to a Dodger's game afterwards. The game was rained out, however, and Bob suggested a Diplomacy game. Nobody but Bob had played before, but it seemed as good an idea as anything else and we decided to give it a try.

Bob explained the rules to us and then, since only seven could play at a time, agreed to act as gamemaster. It was raining outside and we had plenty of wine to pass around, so the game and afternoon passed by fairly well. Even though I miscued several of my orders and only had the vaguest idea of what I was doing, the country I was playing (I believe it was France) remained viable after several seasons of play. Steve, an old college frat brother, had more or less allied with me and was keeping me in the game. My wife, Bette, had lost all of her supply centers and retired to the living room to watch Love Boat on TV.

Before long Steve, and his wife Gloria, had obtained the dominant positions in the game and they were both very determined to beat each other. The interfamilial rivalry was fierce. My units were sandwiched right inbetween theirs.

Gloria called me into a back room for a conference. She wanted my support to take over several of her husbands supply centers and was putting considerable pressure on me to do so.

"Gloria," I protested. "I have known Steve since college, he has helped me in this game and is counting on my alliance. I can't let him down. If it wasn't for his help, I would have been out of the game a long time ago."

Gloria was not easy to convince, nor did she give up easily. She pulled me over real close and whispered in my ear. "O.K. Connie," she said. "Steve is going out of town on Wednesday for a business trip." All of a sudden I was listening real close to what she was saying. "If you support my units and I get the favorable position in this game; I will give you a very favorable position in return, if you come by my place Wednesday afternoon."

Although I was quite excited over the possibility, I really didn't believe that Gloria would actually go through with it. Yet, it was certainly the best offer than anything else that I had gotten. I gave her the needed support from my units and shortly later, Gloria won the game.

In my office Wednesday morning, I was going over the *Daily Racing Form*--trying to pick a few winners at Hollywood Park--when the phone rang. I was suprised to hear Gloria's voice, as I had all but forgotten about Saturday's Diplomacy game.

"Connie," she said. "I have an appointment with my hairdresser at 4:00. Could you come over early enough that we have plenty of time without my missing my appointment?"

"For gosh sakes Gloria, that was just a game; I don't really expect you ..."

"Nonsense, Connie," Gloria broke in before I could finish my sentence. "You kept your end of the bargain and I most certainly will keep mine. Now what time can I expect you?"

I looked at my watch--it was 11:00 A.M. "Give me twenty minutes," I said and hung up the phone. I picked up my briefcase and left. As I went by I told my secretary that I would be in the library the rest of the day doing research. She smiled, thinking that I was going to the track.

All in all, it was a rather nice afternoon. Gloria had even prepared a champagne lunch. We got so involved that she missed her appointment with the hairdresser and I was quite late myself in getting home.

It was not too long after this encounter with Gloria that the possibilities of Diplomacy dawned on me. If I could do it with Gloria, why not with others? I bought a set and by playing solitaire games I gradually became quite adept at strategy. It was not too much longer before I was ready and I started hosting Diplomacy parties in my home once a month. Bette hated the game, but since it seemed to please me, she went along with it. She would act as gamemaster and during Diplomacy periods would prepare drinks and snacks for the players.

I would always invite three other couples over for the game. The draw for countries was usually rigged so that I got Germany. It was an advantage to play Germany because of the central position from which I could best control the destiny of others. I would also see to it that there was always plenty of wine available for everybody during the game.

In the early play, I would endeavor to keep Germany strong, but in position to determine the ultimate winner--by an alliance and support at the proper time. When that right time came, I would make my pitch (proposition?) to the female player of my choice. *My units would support hers into the winning position in the game in return for special favors to be collected later.* It was very suprising how easy this was and how often it worked.

Oh, there were a few setbacks to be sure. Once I got turned down cold and my face was slapped. One other instance was when my proposition was accepted but the game winner refused to keep her end of the bargain later on. On the other extreme there was Debbie, who said: "You don't have to play games with me Connie. If you want to take me to bed, just say so. I am ready any time you are."

My set up seemed perfect. One night a month in a Diplomacy game to be followed by one afternoon a month in a nice spot of infidelity. The fact that I never won a single game of Diplomacy during this entire time didn't matter at all.

Everything was fine....that is.... up until that final game.

I was gone the morning of the game and when I got home Bette announced that one of the couples that I had invited had cancelled and that she had invited Steve and Gloria to fill in. This worried me, although I didn't know why. Since that first game, nearly two years ago, I had not played again with Gloria. As a matter of fact I had deliberately avoided both Steve and Gloria..

For this game I had invited Stella, the new office steno, and her husband. Stella was a delectable little brunette and although she had little in her head, she had a whole lot out in front. From the first time I saw Stella, I could hardly wait for the opportunity to get her into one of my Diplomacy games. The idea of having Gloria in this game made me uneasy.

The game itself was quite difficult. Stella drew France and Gloria drew Russia, while of course I had Germany. Stella had an almost impossible time understanding the game and it was an exceedingly difficult job for me to keep her in the game--much less in contention for winning. Gloria played well and was heading for the same sort of victory conditions of our previous game together. With my constant help and advice, Stella's France finally took out England and emerged as the dominant power in the west. Gloria's Russia controlled the east. Victory would be between these two.

All evening my conferences with Stella had been building up to the point where I could proposition her with the conditions of the game winning alliance. As far as possible, I had avoided conferences with Gloria.

When Gloria finally cornered me, she was blunt. She wanted to win and needed my help. She was once again offering her bod in return and making it hard to turn her down. She knew I was after Stella and didn't like the idea I my "choosing" Stella over her. In previous efforts, I had always pitted man against wife; but this time it was woman against woman and a far different situation.

Stella understood virtually none of the mechanics of the game, but she certainly knew what was happening in regard to the rivalry with Gloria and wanted to win the game. If Stella won--she was mine. It was woman against woman, and I was placed in the position of choosing between them. I was torn between the two, but decided to go for Stella.

After my Spring 1909 moves supported those of Stella, Gloria was adamant. She let me have it straight: "Either I win this game, Connie" she said, "or I'll tell Bette exactly what these Diplomacy games of yours are all about." Gloria was bluffing I told myself and I called her bluff. In the fall 1909 moves, the combined French and German forces took away four Russian supply centers and France won the game.

Of course I had made the usual agreement with Stella, but I never collected my return favors.

When I came home from work on Monday night, I found I couldn't get in the house. Bette had changed the locks on the door. Through a window, Bette asked me to leave. She told me that my clothing and personal belongings had been sent to my sisters in Santa Ana. Gloria had been by in the morning and had a little chat with her. Even worse, as I found out later, Gloria had talked to Stella's husband--the agreement with Stella was off.

For the record: Conrad Shortley appeared briefly at Diplomacy Anonymous, asked our help and told his story. He has not returned. Divorced from Bette, he has left California, changed his name and perhaps his appearance. We have every reason to believe that he is still playing Diplomacy. All face-to-face Diplomacy players are urged to beware. How well do you know that new player in your game? Is he playing Germany? Is he negotiating with your wife? Is he Conrad Shortley?

PROFILE OF A DIPLOMACY PLAYER V

Preface: The files of the Los Angeles DA (Diplomacy Anonymous) Office are once again examined and we bring you one more pathetic and disgusting case history--that of Peter Sweet. Very few have found ways to actually profit from Diplomacy by mail, Pete Sweet is one of the exceptions.

Profile V. Peter Sweet.

Peter (Pete) Sweet was a Diplomacy player with a gimmick. He used the game for his personal advancement as a salesman. For a number of years Pete was successful and thrived on his gimmick, but eventually it all backfired on him--and he showed up in our office in Los Angeles. Pete told us his story and turned all of his correspondence files over to us for documentation, and then he vanished. We have drawn a couple of letters out of his files, that tell his story perhaps better than anything else. The first letter is quite typical of hundreds that Pete sent to fellow players in a score of games.

Austria to Russia 1980PU

Dear Friend and Ally:

You are probably wondering why my armies are in Rumania and Galicia in S'01 after the strong assurances that I gave you that I would be moving elsewhere.

The truth is, I play diplomacy--but I also sell encyclopedias--and sometimes the two activities interfere with each other. As far as selling encyclopedias goes, I have found it to be a very seasonal occupation. Thus, S'01 seems to be the best to sell in Turkey while S'02 is better in Russia.

You will notice that I have attached an order form for a set of Encyclopedia Cornucopaea to this letter. There are very many excellent articles in the encyclopedia about World War I, and I am sure that owning a set would improve your chances of success in 1980PU.

When you sign and return the order form, you will notice a small square at the bottom on the back side. If you write the orders for the moves that you would like to see Austria make in F'01 in this square--I will be very obliging.

Your ally,

PETE SWEET

P.S. Cornucopaeas are damn good encyclopedias.

*
This letter was not unlike hundreds which were written by Pete, it did however stimulate an entirely different response. A response that eventually brought Pete into LADA. To wit:

Russia to Austria 1980PU

Dear Pete:

You may be suprised, if you look at your last commission check, to find that the signature on it is identical to the signature at the bottom of this letter. I am comptroller for Sellemfast Inc., the distributor of Encyclopedia Cornucopaea.

I really liked your idea about seasonal sales of encyclopedias. Liked it so well in fact, that I have decided to use it in distributing our sales commissions. You will find, therefor, that your commissions have been assigned to the W'01 season. Since your last commission check had already been mailed--it became necessary to send the bank a stop payment order. Payment will be made following the W'01 season (per our new policy), but you could probably expedite it by using the following orders for Austria:

A Rumania to Budapest; A Galicia (S) RUSSIAN A Ukraine to Rumania and F Albania to Trieste.

Our western sales manager, who also happens to be my brother-in-law, will be announcing shortly that a sales force cut back will be necessary in California. He must cut back to 937 salesmen. Since he has only 938 at present only one will have to be laid off. In the discussion concerning whom that might be, your name was brought up repeatedly. I just thought you might like a little advance warning of this.

Cordially,

TED BITTER

P.S. Yes, Pete, Cornucopaeas are a damn good encyclopedia.

After losing his job, Pete was very despondant. He was almost suicidal when he came to his first LADA meeting. We would like to think that we helped him. However, after attending a few meetings and crying his heart out to us, he left town and we have never heard from him again.

For the record: Peter Sweet is 57. Formerly resided in Anaheim, but we now see his name showing up in Diplomacy zines with a Barstow address. We understand that he now has a new job and is selling retirement lots in the Mojave Desert. We know of 74 games that Pete started, but his record is very poor, as he didn't finish any. At the present time, he seems to be taking standby positions in just about every zine imaginable.

-- John Masters

(Continued from first page)

The first story, that of Arthur Ghymel, follows pretty closey a story that I had written years before for a publication called Frass. It was entitled Lepidopterists' Anonymous and about another hobby.

The other four stories were all completely original although some of the characters in them were loosely based on persons that I had known in the past. The characterization of Conrad Shortley, for instance, was based upon Mike Hartman. (Mike has long since left the hobby, but those of you in Pestilence should remember him.)

After these articles were published, any friendship that I ever had for Linsey deteriorated rapidly. For several early game years, Bruce and I had a very effective alliance in 1979CV. But Bruce stabbed me. After the stab I had a decidedly inferior position but turned it around and won the game (for my first Diplomacy victory ever). The fact that he lost to me was a very bitter pill for Brux to swallow.

About this same time open war broke out between the two of us on all fronts. Bob Olsen had questioned me on Bruce's style of play (knowing that I had been involved in a game with him). I told Bob what I thought--that Bruce was very interested in winning and in ratings. Bruce don't like for people to think he is interested in ratings or winning because he thinks it will decrease his chances of winning and doing well in the ratings. Of course I still have a letter that Bruce wrote to me in May of 1979 in which he claims that his ambition is to become the number one ranked player in the Dragon's Tooth Ratings.

Among Linsey's actions to seek revenge for whatever was to gain hobby wide censure of me for adapting stories from James Thurber and other sources for publication in BF. He cancelled my sub credit to his zine for the Diplomacy Anonymous articles.

Linsey is a crook! The Diplomacy Anonymous Series are all original and written by me and they are the best damn material that ever appeared in Voice of Doom. Sure I adapted some material for Black Frog from other sources, but so what.