



BUSHWACKER

VOL. XVI, No. 11

(Merry Christmas)

DECEMBER 1987

This is the 192nd consecutive issue of BUSHWACKER, a Postal Diplomacy* zine dedicated to the play and reporting of Variant games, hobby news, information about the Variant Bank, and whatever else I feel like writing about. I don't have a letter column due to space limitations, but I have been known to print letters and other contributions from time to time when they were pertinent or tickled my funnybone. Your Editor is: Fred C. Davis, Jr., 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, Md. 21043. Phone: (301) 461-1885. Phone calls accepted between 12 Noon and 9:30 p.m. daily, Eastern Time, except during the dinner hour from 6 to 7 p.m. Since there is no guarantee that I'll be home, please submit your orders by mail, except in emergencies.

*Diplomacy is a registered trademark for a game invented by Allan B. Calhamer, and Copyright in the U.S. by The Avalon Hill Game Co of Baltimore, Md. The zine is named for my comic strip character, "Bushwacker," whose picture appears on the masthead. "Bush" is so old that his adventures were all presented in black and white, but we understand that colorized versions are now available from your local VCR rental outlet.

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GAME FEES: \$9.00 Flat Fee for newcomers; \$8.00 for current readers. STANDBY FEES: \$5.00 for newcomers; \$4.00 for the rest of you. For your Fee, you receive copies of the rules/maps for your game(s), plus receipt of BUSH for the duration of your games, providing you don't drop out (cheap!). Mensa Diplomacy SIG members receive an additional \$1.00 discount on these fees.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for non-players are 12 issues for \$6.00. OVERSEAS Subscriptions are \$8.00 for 12 issues, by sea mail. Sample copies are 50¢. We also Trade on an all-for-all basis with many other publishers.

No Game Openings right now, but we can use Standbys for Character Dip and Turnabout.

This issue contains reports on VACATION DIP III (1985R rm39), TURNABOUT (1986G ca02), BALKAN WARS III (1987A pub06) and CHARACTER DIP (1987AF rm49).

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THE 1987-88 NORTH AMERICAN VARIANT BANK CATALOG IS READY!

At last, I can tell you that on Tuesday, November 24th, my printer was able to deliver the completed copies of the Catalog to me. My thanks to Bruce Geryk for putting this on disc, and arranging for the layout and printing of the master copy. There are 36 regular laser-printed 8½ x 11 pages, plus cardboard covers. There are about 800 games listed in both alphabetical order and by sundry classifications, based on geography, time, number of players and types of rule changes. Introductory material explains how to use the Catalog, and how to order copies of these games from the NAVB.

For a limited time only, the Catalog will be available at the pre-publication price of \$3.00. After December 21, 1987, the price will have to go up to \$4.00 for orders in North America, and \$4.50 for Overseas orders. (more)

I've sent Complimentary copies of the CATALOG to the various Variant Bank Custodians and MNC's around the world, as well as to the Archives. I would appreciate it if other publishers here and abroad would inform their readers that the Catalog is now available. I regret the necessity to increase the price, but printing and postage costs have both gone up. By itself, the Catalog weighs in at just under 4 ounces, but in a mailing envelope it comes to about 4½ oz., putting it into a more expensive postage category. I will gladly sell copies "over-the-counter" at Cons for \$3.25. Anyone who would like to have some copies to sell at DipCon or any other gathering of Diplomats may contact me about this. I plan to sell copies in person at the 1988 MaryCon in Fredericksburg, Va.

There is no increase in the cost of individual games. This is 10¢ per sheet, with the Catalog showing how many pages there are for each game. There is a surcharge for postage and handling, which will be 50¢ for up to 15 sheets, \$1.00 for 16-49 sheets, and \$2.00 for 50 or more pages. For the sake of preserving the Custodian's sanity, you are requested not to order rules for more than 15 games at any one time. The shorter your order, the sooner it can be filled, so if you have anything that you want urgently, I suggest that you order it separately.

There is no rating for each game. In the first place, since one man's meat may be another man's poison, this is truly impossible. Secondly, there is enough work already in just getting the games classified that I cannot provide a rating service. I can tell you which games I like, or which are the most popular, but the rest is up to you.

Everyone is reminded that if you have a completed variant design, I would like to have a copy for the NAVB files. If it's published, please arrange to have a copy of the zine sent to me. If it's unpublished, I'd still like to have a copy if you feel that it's a good concept. I cannot promise anything, but I may be able to pass it on to someone for publication.

As with Rod Walker's original NAVB Catalogue, and with my "1986 Draft Copy," there will be UPDATES added to the Catalog from time to time to include new arrivals. As I now have the Catalog material on a hard disc, future editions of the full Catalog will be easier to produce at about two-year intervals.

→ Your envelope must be postmarked not later than 21 December 1987 for me to honor the \$3.00 price. ←

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PLUGS

THE YORKSHIRE GALLANT is a British zine now seeking new subscribers in North America and Australia. It is edited by: Mark Nelson, 11 Lancaster Grove, Kirkstall, Leeds, West Riding LS5 3DY, ENGLAND. His brother, James, runs a sub-zine therein. There are articles on Diplomacy variants, with perhaps the rules for a game, in each issue, as well as general hobby news, and reports and letters on their international contacts. While some pages in the zine are not too well printed, it is refreshing to see some people in Britain interested in increasing their international trades. Some British zines have been accused of being very insular. That's certainly not the case here. The rate for North America is 8 issues for U.S. \$6.00. You must have a minimum balance of \$5.00 to play in a game.

REBEL, edited by Melinda Ann Holley, P.O. Box 2793, Huntington, W. Va. 25727. The games are run in REBEL in a semi-warehouse fashion, while the "chat" is located in excellent subzine, HIGH INERTIA, written by Linda and Steve Courtemanche. This is the

only zine for which I send two trade copies, one to Melinda Ann and one to the Courtemanches. Subs are 50¢ per issue, sent to Huntington. (Suggest you send at least \$5.00). Game Fees for both Regular and Gunboat Dip are \$5.00, in addition to your sub. There is also a Round Robin Gunboat affair, where I think you play every position in 7 different games, which costs \$15.00.

Melinda is working on a rating system for Gunboat games, since they've become so common. She requests that everyone running Gunboat games please send her your final reports, including the players' names, just as you'd send one to the BNC, with emphasis on who won, drew, survived, or was eliminated.

SHRODINGER'S CAT. At long last, after several months, this zine has reappeared with the first report on the variant game, "Econopolicy." There is no sub or game fee rate shown, and I don't know whether he plans to run any other games. For information, or if you'd like to be a standby, contact: Mike Dominskyj, P.O. Box 702, Ignace, Ont., CANADA POT 1T0.

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FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING, you may wish to buy a Canadian Diplomacy set, with real WOODEN BLOCKS. Games By Mail reports that the "Old-Fashioned Diplomacy Set" by Waddington's has finally returned, after an absence of several months. The box is now smaller, which apparently means that the board is folded twice instead of once (I'd made the identical suggestion to Games Research back in 1974), but it's still the original Hammond map. You can order a set from: Games By Mail, P.O. Box 98, Sta. "D", Toronto, Ont., CANADA M6P 3J5. The price in U.S. dollars is \$23.40 (\$26. Canadian), and they will accept personal checks.

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DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE FINDING SEVEN PLAYERS FOR A DIPLOMACY GAME?

Then you should be reading DIPLOMACY WORLD. DW, the hobby's flagship magazine, brings you news of all kinds of game openings for FTF, convention/tournament, computer, play by electronic mail, and even more bizarre types of Diplomacy.

When you read DW you'll never have to worry about lacking for a game opening because DW reports on all the hobby's news, as well as bringing you features, strategy and tactics articles, hints on improving your diplomacy, the latest news on cons, tournaments, magazine reviews, rating system results, lists of game winners, demonstration games, cartoons, interviews, polls, awards, contests, and more. If there is one magazine in the hobby that's a "must read" it is DW.

IF YOU CANTFIND A VIRGIN - MAYBE
WE COULD START A GAME OF
DIPLOMACY IN THE STABLE!



And now is an especially good time to read DW because we are about to publish our 50th anniversary issue and that is going to be a very special one. There will be lots of contests and prizes for DW readers, and special articles and features on the hobby's past, present, and future. Every issue of DW is a collector's item, but #50 is going to be...Well, you'll just have to sub yourself and see.

A sample issue is US\$4.00, a one year sub with a bonus issue is \$15.00, a two year sub with a free copy of the next BLACK AND BLUE BOOK hobby directory is \$30.00, or a three year sub with a free Anthology volume of your choice is \$45.00. Prices include first class mail in North America.

Overseas prices are \$20, \$40,

and \$60 for surface mail, double that for airmail. This offer expires 1 April 1988 so you'd best act now.

There is no other Diplomacy publication like DW, which is probably why it's survived 6 publishers & editors in the last thirteen years. But if you want to keep up with what's going on in the hobby and learn even more about this most fascinating game, you should be reading DW. After all, if you don't, you won't know what your missing and that just might cost you a black dot or two.

TURNABOUT DIP - 1986C ca02WINTER 1907

THE RICH GET RICHER.

		Current Strength
BALKANS (Dousette):	Build F Athens, A Belgrade	11 (+3), playing 1 unit short
BENELUX (R. Brown):	Build A Amsterdam. Pass on second build. (was 1 short)	10 (+1), playing 1 unit short
IRELAND (Reges):	Build F Belfast, A Cork	11 (+1), was 1 unit short
MID-EAST (Stewart):	Remove A Siberia, F Alex.	1 (-2)
SCANDINAVIA (Cheek):	No change	1 (-)
SLAVS (Cruickshank):	Remove A Minsk	5 (-1)
SPAIN (Rice):	Remove F Central Med., F G of Lyon	0 (-2), OUT

A QUESTION has been raised on how to designate units in boxes, such as High Ocean Box, when a player may have more than one unit in them. In accordance with the precedent set in other BUSHWACKER games involving the use of boxes, such units will be numbered #1, 2, 3, etc.

I have tentative orders on hand for Spring 1908 from Benelux and Ireland.

DEADLINE for SPRING 1908 will be TUESDAY, January 5, 1988. Telephone deadline will be Monday, January 4th, at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

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CHARACTER DIP - 1987AF rml9WINTER 1901

AUSTRIA BUILDS ARMIES; GERMANY AND FRANCE BUILD FLEETS. ROYAL NAVY RESPONDS TO CHALLENGE. TURKS & ITALIANS ALSO INTERESTED IN CRUISING, WHILE NEW TSAR BUYS ARMY.

NOTES: David Rice, 23259 NW Evergreen Rd., Hillsboro, Oregon 97124, has taken over Russia, since Zarse NMR'd twice in succession.

I erroneously showed Italy as playing "Card 7" last season. He actually played Card #17, permitting A Naples to walk on water. I must also apologize for reversing the provinces in the Italian move 1F Ionian-Aegean.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Doug Williams^{Acheson} (FRANCE) asks me to remind everyone that his new address is: 95 Dundonald St., Barrie, Ont., CANADA L4M 3T4. Apparently, some mail is still going to his old address.

		Current Strength
ENGLAND (Baty):	Build ³ F London	4 (+1)
FRANCE (Williams):	Build ² F Brest, ³ F Marseilles	5 (+2)
GERMANY (McHugh):	Build ² F Berlin, ³ F Kiel	5 (+2)
ITALY (B. Wilson):	Build ² F Naples	4 (+1)
AUSTRIA (Suchard):	Build ³ A Vienna, ⁴ A Bud, ⁵ A Trieste	6 (+3)
RUSSIA (Rice):	Build ² A Warsaw	5 (+1)
TURKEY (Cheek):	Build ² F Smyrna	4 (+1)

All players will be given the Characteristics of their new units with their reports. Rice will be given the full dossier for Russia.

Our new #1 Standby player is: Bob Gossage, 9201 S. Central Park, Evergreen Park, Ill. 60642. We can use more standbys.

PRESS:

FRANCE to Germany: If you only wrote as much in a letter as you spout off in the press. BURGUNDY: The glorious French 2nd Army wishes to report that the English seem to be the only ones in their area. Not wishing a confrontation with the "kilty" ones, they withdrew.

MOSCOW: Greetings and salutations to all. If elected, I will serve well (I hope!).
((See birth announcement under Vacation Dip. - FCD))

TEMPORARY C/A: From December 14th to January 14th, Jeff Suchard (AUSTRIA) will be at:
9912 Star Dr., Huntington Beach, CA. 92646.

Additional questions have been raised about the game:

1. Can the Hypnotist, Gasser or Annihilator use its powers against units in Heaven?
A. No. I was originally going to say Yes, until I realized that there could be several different units in Heaven at once, which would make the powers of an attacking Hypno, Gasser or Annihilator too powerful. This will have to be spelled out in the Rules.
2. What happens when two Hynotists use their powers on the same unit?
A. This would be a standoff, and the unit would stand unaffected.
3. What happens if two units try to jump over the same unit, or Switzerland, at the same time?
A. The moves would succeed.
4. How can A's exist in the Caspian Sea, using Card #7?
A. Well, the Caspian is a special space, sort of like Heaven, so strange things can happen there if you own Card #7. Perhaps the increased salinity keeps the A afloat, as happens in the Great Salt Lake.

A suggestion was made that no more than one unit be allowed to occupy Heaven at any one time, in order to permit dislodgements and cuttings of support, as in a regular space. It was further suggested that a second such space, "Hell," be added, as in "Black Angels."

- A. But Heaven was designed to be a Box, not a space, and in most variant rules any number of units may occupy a Box. I did limit the total no. of "Heavenly" units to six, with no one Power allowed to own more than two. In retrospect, I've now decided to limit the ownership to just one Card #8 unit per Power at a time. (Please amend your rules to show this change). As for adding "Hell," well, we Unitarians don't believe in Hell. Seriously, I'd only add such a space if the rule was changed to permit only one unit to occupy Heaven or Hell. And I don't plan to add such a rule.

→ The support problem is worthy of further discussion. I was basically thinking of the use of Heaven in terms of movement rather than support, in any case. If a unit in Heaven could only move, and not support, this would solve the problem of a Heavenly unit being immune to attack. It had been my opinion that you have to use diplomacy to get a Heavenly unit not to attack you, by hinting that you have some way to retaliate ("M.A.D."). I'd like to have everyone VOTE with their next orders on whether a Heavenly unit should have the ability to support elsewhere on the board. For the moment, I'm not going to put this ban into effect, but if there's a clear consensus that this gives a Heavenly unit too much power, I will amend the rule.

Combining a number of questions, you're reminded that you can be blown up by your own mines if you fail to remove them. This includes putting a mine in one of your own Home SC's, and later building a new unit there. It will automatically blow up. Only a Mine-sweeper/Engineer unit can remove mines, including your own.

Suggestions for new types of units have also been received. There could be an infinite number of such units, of course. We might reach a point where the players would select which types of units to use in a particular game, as is done in "Cosmic Dip II." In any case, we're glad to add your concepts to the rules, and some may be incorporated into them.

DEADLINE for SPRING 1902 orders is TUESDAY, January 5, 1988. Phone deadline will be Monday, January 4th, at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

BALKAN WARS III - 1987A

FALL 1914

ITALIANS LAND MARINES IN SMYRNA AND MONTENEGRO. BULGARS RECAPTURE CAPITAL.
ALBANIANS GET SQUASHED THANKS TO NMR.

ALBANIA (Hess): NMR. A Constantza (H). A Skopje (H) /d/, (R) Macedonia (only
(2) space open).
BULGARIA (Dousette): A Macedonia-Sofia. A Varna (S) A Mac-Sofia. F South Black Sea-
(5) Scutari. F Con (S) F S. Black Sea-Scutari. A Plovidv (S) F Con.
GREECE (Cheek): A Salonika-Skopje. A Valona (S) A Salonika-Skopje. F Athens (H).
(4) A Smyrna (H) /d/, (R) Cilicia (only space open).
SERBIA (Kenny): A Bucharest-Oltenia. A Galati-Bucharest. A Bessarabia-Galati.
(4) A Nish (S) ALBANIAN A Skopje.
ITALY (Baty): F Aegean Sea-Smyrna. F Med. Sea (S) F Aegean-Smyrna. A Apulia-
(6) Montenegro. F South Adriatic (C) A Apulia-Montenegro. F Ionian-
Corinthian Sea. A Tirana (S) GREEK A Salonika-Skopje.

PRESS:

SERBIA to Bulgaria: It would have looked pretty silly to go for Sofia without support and not take it.

SERBIA to Italy: Did I ever tell you about the latest Albanian tank. It has 5 speeds reverse, and one forward, in case the enemy gets behind it.

SUPPLY CENTER COUNT, BALKAN WARS III, WINTER 1914: GAINS, ~~LOSSES~~

ALBANIA:	CONSTANTZA, SKOPJE , SOFIA	1 (-1), Remove 1
BULGARIA:	Plovidv, Varna, Con, Scutari, SOFIA , CONSTANTZA	5 (-), No change
GREECE:	Athens, Sal, Valona, SKOPJE, SMYRNA	4 (-), No change
ITALY:	3 Home, Crete, Monte., Tirana, SMYRNA	7 (+1), Build 1
SERBIA:	Belg., Nish, Bucharest, Galati	4 (--), No change

Robert Cheek points out that if I add seven neutral SC's to this game, it would end "the current instant hostility which is one of the charms of the game." He suggests that any added SC's be so placed so as to increase hostilities, by making them plums dangling before two or more Powers.

Accordingly, I am working on a further modification, which does away with the Cyprus space completely, and merges the two northern neutral Centers into a single SC lying between three Powers. Bosnia, rather than Hercegovina, would be a neutral Center, but Bosnia would not touch Italy, Albania or Serbia, but, rather, would lie between all of them. Dubruja would remain as a neutral SC between Bulgaria and Rumania. There would be a total of 26 Centers, with the Victory Criterion at 14. This would enable the Powers to control a few more units than they ever can in the current game, but would retain the sudden death to anyone who NMR'd or hesitated. If you'd like to see a copy, please send me a SASE.

DEADLINE for WINTER 1914 and SPRING 1915 orders is TUESDAY, January 5, 1988. Phone deadline will be Monday, January 4th, at 9:00 p.m. If Steve Smith, 1964 Kenilworth Cir., E., Hoffman Estates, Ill. 60195 would like to submit orders for Albania, it would be appreciated. If I don't receive orders from either Lane Hess or Steve, I'll let the one-Center Albanian position lapse into Civil Disorder.

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BUSHWACKER, DECEMBER 1987, Page 7

VACATION DIP III - 1985R rm39WINTER 1910

GERMANS AND TURKS CLASH FOR CONTROL OF EASTERN EUROPE. AUSTRO-ENGLISH COOPERATION YIELDS ANOTHER SC FOR HAPSBURGS AND A NEW UNIT FOR BRITS. ITALY MISSES THE BOAT.

TEMPORARY C/A for Bill Young (GERMANY): From now until January 10, 1988, Bill will be living at: 11 Churchfield Rd., Upton St. Leonards, Gloucester GL4 8AT, ENGLAND. He'll then return to Pottstown, Pa. All communications should be by Air Mail (44¢ per half oz., or 36¢ for an Aerogram).

NOTE: There appears to be some confusion on the use of the new list of Event Cards. I received two sets of orders this season for the play of cards which no longer exist under the revised numbering system. Please use only the new list of the 102 types of cards. Because some of the cards now exist in duplicate, there are a total of 140 physical cards. If you've misplaced the new list, please advise me at once, and I'll send you a new one. I'll advise the two players who sent in incorrect orders what their numbers actually stand for. Fortunately, they will both get a chance to use their cards in the Fall.

		Current SC's	Strength Vac Units
AUSTRIA (Rice):	No room for a build, so will play one Regular unit short. Plays Card #56 to build a VF for England in Sicily	1 (+1)	2
ENGLAND (Chang):	No change. (VF Built in Sicily)	7 (--)	1 (+1)
FRANCE (Wilson):	No change	0 (--)	2
GERMANY (Young):	Build A Berlin, A Kiel	11 (+2)	0
ITALY (Hoffman):	No room to build. Will play 2 Regular units short.	4 (--)	2
RUSSIA (Cheek):	No room to build. Will play 1 Regular unit short.	2 (-3)	1 (-1)
TURKEY (Kenny):	No change	13 (—)	0

SPRING 1911 TO RUSSIA, A "LOVE"

AUSTRIA (Rice): VF Portugal-Spain(sc). VF NAO (S) ENGLISH F MAO-America. (1)(2 units)

ENGLAND (Chang): F MAO-America. F Irish Sea-MAO. F Brest (S) F Irish Sea-MAO. (7)(8 units)
F Gascony (S) AUSTRIAN VF Portugal-Spain(sc). A Burgundy-Picardy. F North Sea-Eng. Channel. A Siberia-Persia (Persia has not yet been made passable). VF Sicily (U) (H). Sicily is still owned by Turkey. This build is like a Spring raid.

FRANCE (Wilson): VA Tuscany-Piedmont. VA Syria-Armenia. (0)(2 units)

GERMANY (Young): A Berlin-Prussia. A Kiel-Ruhr. A Munich-Tyrol. A Ukraine-Rumania. (11)(11 units)
A Sev (S) A Ukraine-Rumania. A Moscow (S) A Sev. A Bohemia-Galicia. A Vienna & A Silesia (S) A Bohemia-Galicia. F Norwegian Sea-Hebrides. F Barents Sea-Norwegian Sea.

ITALY (Hoffman): NMR! F Marseille (H). VF Iceland (H). VA Paris (H). A Piedmont (4)(4 units) (H).

RUSSIA (Cheek): A Venice-Piedmont /d/, (Annihilated). F G of Lyon (S) A Venice- (2)(2 units) Piedmont /d/, (Annihilated). (Sardinia is not open).

TURKEY (Kenny): F Western Med-G of Lyon. F Tyrr (S) F Western Med-G of Lyon. F (13)(13 units)
Ionian-Apulia. F Tunis-Western Med. F N. Africa (S) F Tunis-Western Med. A Tyrol-Venice. A Rome & A Trieste (S) A Tyrol-Venice. F Eastern Med-Smyrna. A Armenia (S) F E.Med-Smyrna. F Black Sea (S) A Armenia. A Rumania (S) A Budapest. A Bud (S) A Rumania.

(more)

PRESS:

TURKEY to GM: Well, now everybody playing has stabbed me at least once. I am definitely the big gullible one here. I propose a vote to nominate myself as the real TURKEY in this game. I doubt you'll get any "No" votes on this one.

BUSHWACKER: Nevertheless, you do have 13 units, which does not exactly make you the part that goes over the fence last!

GOTLAND to World: My vacation in Gotland has been fruitful. I am happy to announce that my wife, Meg, and I are the proud parents of Stephen MacBeth Rice, born November 9, 1987, weighing in at 9 lbs., 3/4 oz. ((Congratulations!))

TURKEY to Gotland (or is it Portugal now?): You must be picking mine, too, because I've been getting some real winners.

ANKARA to Florence: Your protests could have come before ((when)) something could have ((been)) done about them.

CONSTANTINOPLE COURIER: Sultan Suleyman died while eating a poisoned Chinese fortune cookie. Crowds have taken to the streets and all Chinese fortune cookie factories were burned. The new Sultan, the magnificent Sultan Peigh Pur, has outlawed all Chinese fortune cookies forever. ((I just print 'em, folks; you figure 'em out - F.C.D.))

GOTLAND: Stephen, what do you say about going home? It's been a hard two years.

RULES: We need to add a Rule 14 to the VACATION DIP III Rules, to clarify the movement of Armies at sea without Convoy. This refers to Event Cards #4, 5 and 6).

"14. Where a player draws a card allowing him to move two or three sea spaces without Convoy, all of the spaces except the one nearest his Army's starting point must be vacant at the start of the turn the card is played. The space adjacent to the Army may contain one of his own Fleets. In a one-space convoy by card, the sea space used for the move must be empty.

The subsequent move of any Fleet into a sea space through which the Army has moved will be deemed to have occurred after the Army passed through, so it will not block the Army's passage."

→ PROPOSALS: We now have two identical proposals. Both propose an English-German-Turkish Three-way Draw. Votes on this proposal should be submitted with your FALL 1911 orders. Failure to vote will be counted as voting "Yes" at this stage. Under our House Rules, we will count the results of the Fall move even if the Draw passes, so be sure to include your orders.

Note that Russia has no Vacation units or Regular units left, but still owns Spain and Venice, at least until Winter 1911. Even if he loses these, he would still be in the game in the same fashion as France was, providing he sends me an order every season, and he will still receive a card to play every year.

Would Craig Reges, 16 W 761 White Pines Rd., Bensenville, Ill. 60106, please send in back-up orders for ITALY. Jeff, please let me hear from you ASAP.

DEADLINE for FALL 1911 orders and your Vote on the 3-Way Draw is TUESDAY, January 5, 1988. Phone deadline will be Monday, January 4th, at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

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THE DINOSAUR DIEBACK REVISITED

Dr. Luis Alvarez has listed 15 events or items which seem to confirm his theory that the mass extinction of dinosaurs and other species at the end of the Cretaceous period, some 65 million years ago, was due to the Earth being struck by a comet or asteroid. This appeared in an article in Physics Today in July 1987. I've received a review of that article in AD ASTRA, the bimonthly newsletter of the Mensa Astronomy/Space Science SIG, which lists these 15 items. This review also reports that the evidence seems to be falling into place that similar mass extinctions occur every 26 million years. However, astronomers can find no evidence of "Nemesis," the so-called "Death Star," which has been attributed by some people to cause the regularity of these disasters as it swings closer to our Sun on its 26-megayear orbit.

There could be many other reasons for an increase in "incoming mail" from the Oort Cloud every 26 million years, one of them being the Planet "X" hypothesis. In any case, from a human point of view, they may not have been "disasters," for it is unlikely that our species would be here if it had not been for the previous diebacks. It would be a good idea, it seems to me, to solve this mystery soon, since we may have "only" 13 million years left until the next air raid.

If other planets suffer similar events, it's no wonder we haven't found any other intelligent life in the Galaxy! The wonder may be that we exist.

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SPACE NEWS

In the 30 years since Sputnik I was orbited on Oct. 4, 1957, 3600 payloads have been placed in orbit, of which 1702 remain as either useful or dead satellites. Counting all of the booster rockets and other space junk, there are 5,130 large pieces orbiting the Earth, any of which could severely damage or destroy future spaceflights. Looks like there's going to be a great need for a space garbage-collector soon.

While the U.S. space program twiddles and diddles, the USSR is offering commercial room on its Proton rockets, with launch insurance at standard Western rates. (The Glavcosmos organization will orbit material at \$15,000 per kilo). General Electric has already asked the Administration to lift its ban on the launching of U.S. technology on Soviet boosters. Question: Who are the bureaucratic dunderheads, and who are the smart businessmen here?

The Mars Soil Return Mission (Soviet) has slipped from a 1992 to 1994 departure.

PARADE Magazine had an excellent article by Carl Sagan on space exploration, in their November 22nd issue. The most shocking line was that the U.S. has not launched a single deep space probe since 1978! The cutbacks began under Carter, but the starvation has been so severe for everything except the Shuttle since 1981 that it may take years to rebuild NASA. Carter, at least, has come out in favor of a joint US/Soviet effort to explore Mars. Sagan suggests that these missions be made fully international.

- gleaned from AD ASTRA and the Baltimore Sun

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HEALTH TIP: I was suffering from an annoying skin itch in September and October. After much trial and error, my dermatitis turned out to be caused by "Bounce," an anti-static material used in the clothes dryer. My doctor told me that in 90% of the cases where no obvious source, such as a chemical or poison ivy, can be located, such (over)

skin conditions are caused by the use of such commercial anti-static materials. So, if you've experienced similar irritations, stop using the anti-static product in your laundry, and see if it clears up. You'll have to rewash everything, of course, including out-of-season clothes, to cure it. It worked for me within two weeks. Wouldn't you think there'd be some sort of warning on the package?

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THIS ISSUE MAY BE A LITTLE LATE ARRIVING. To begin with, I was busy getting copies of the North American Variant Bank Catalog in the mail, as well as all of our Overseas Christmas cards and letters. Then, we were out of town over the Thanksgiving Day weekend. Usually, I have at least four pages of text written before the deadline, but I did not even start working on this month's issue until Nov. 30th.

However, this will not cause any difficulties for the players, since I am giving all of you a Deadline of January 5, 1988. By holding off the next deadline to the fifth, we avoid getting caught in the Christmas mail rush. This also gives me a chance to have my eyes checked before the next deadline, to see whether I'm going to have that long-postponed cataract surgery in February. If it's necessary, it will be done on some date in mid-February, and subsequent deadlines will be adjusted according to how quickly I recover. Further details next month.

THAT WRAPS UP THIS ISSUE. I wish to send Holiday Greetings to all of you. With some, we will be exchanging Christmas cards, as we have done in the past. To the rest of you, may 1988 be a good year for you both in and out of the hobby.

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