

"In Sarawak, the rhinoceros is nearly extinct, and the wild elephant is scarce; but the gibbon, orangoutan, and proboscis monkey still occur. Turtles play a part in the economy of the country, as do the swiftlets, whose nests - made from saliva - constitute the edible delicacy exported for making soup."

-- W.R. Forrester-Wood, M.A., F.R.C.S., F.R.P.S.L.



COSTA
GUANA



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Back to normal? Smaller issues? Never again? Oh, ye purveyors of pukey of bull, it is to laugh! This is COSTAGUANA, in all its shimmering bloat, a journal of postal Diplomacy and Mixolidian mellifluousness, conjugated from the verb "to overdo" by Conrad Friesner 'Uncle Connie' von Metzke, P.O. Box 17602, San Diego, CA 92117-0602. To 'phone me, dial (619) 276-2937. At work, if you must, but please (beg wheedle) only in desperation, try (619) 273-4830 or 273-1208.

Trades: All-for-all, most gladly. Subscriptions: 22c per copy, in units of ten; this will rise to 50c per copy in precisely three weeks, so get your loss-leader cheques in right now. Game fees: None, per se; You must maintain a sub, but if you do, you're as welcome as the next fool to play without additional payment.

COSTAGUANA is a production of Grendel Press International.

NEW ADDRESS: As circulation has climbed, Ronnie has become overburdened. In an effort to relieve his load, I have decided to request that all magazine business be forwarded to my p.o. box rather than to my home. In future, please address your written communications to me at the P.O. Box address listed above.

If you don't, nothing will be affected. Ronnie will still deliver, and no time will be lost. But I would really prefer it if you'd make the change and overburden Leslie instead!

"Ronnie" is, of course, my mail carrier: Romulo de los Reyes, delivery person par excellence. "Leslie" is the spectacularly beautiful and lusciously-endowed clerk who sorts mail for post office boxes - Leslie Diane Lucas, age 25, single, available, and a devout Christian. If interested, please write, she's also lonesome these days (her boyfriend flew the coop) and deserves a shot at the happies.

GAME OPENINGS: Just one game being offered right now. I promised the map and rules this time, but wish to postpone once more. The game is Dick Vedder's Crusades variant, JIHAD, and I swear I will get it published for next time. Three signed so far.

NEXT ISSUE may be a few days late. I am probably going to have to go out of town for three days, from March 30 thru Apr. 1. Deadlines will not be altered, but if the trip does indeed come off, please expect a lateness and an adjustment of the following deadline.

WITH THE INCEPTION of 'anonymous' games ('Gunboat'), it will no longer be possible to publish periodic mailing lists; you never know what might be given away by that happenstance. Instead, I'll now adopt a system used by many other 'zines, and which may prove advantageous to you who don't cotton to storing back issues: Each player's address will be spelled out preceding his/her moves in each game. Takes a little extra space, but it may prove worthwhile.

THE RETURN of a valued member of our publishing 'family' is always a welcome event. In Fred Hyatt's case, it's all the more special, because Fred has become rather well-known for his variant activities, and for the sheer quality of his publishing and designing work. Until five years ago, Fred published THE HOME OFFICE, a journal devoted to high-quality presentation of regular and variant games. Now, he has resumed publication (but Fred, it can't be "Number 1" all over again!), and he has openings in regular Dip., the Youngstown variant (Fred doesn't specify which of the many versions, but I might mention that the Youngstown is the oldest known variant design of any importance, and the only one to predate our own Cline 9-man effort); and the self-described 'final' version of Fred's own massive world-expansion variant, Colonia (sixth edition).

Fred's first revival issue includes the map and rules to Colonia. He will trade with anyone, and sells subs for \$6. for 12 issues. There are no separate game fees (same as I do it); if you sub or trade, you're welcome to play at no additional cost.

During Fred's previous incarnation, I was myself inactive. Thus I do not know the man. What I do know is his reputation, and it is superb. I therefore offer my unqualified endorsement. Fred can be reached at 60 Grandview Place, Montclair, NJ 07043. Write!

TRIVIA TIME: Answers to last issue's questions:

1. The World War I monarch still living? Doug Brown guessed 'the Austrian king'; well, he got the country right, but the 'King' (Emperor Karl I) died in 1924. Gary Coughlan - I thought he'd know! - correctly identified Empress Zita, Karl's widow, who reigned with her husband from 1916 to 1918 and fled with him into exile after the Empire collapsed. To my knowledge she has never returned to Austria. She has lived in retirement for many years now, mainly in the south of France, and at last report was doing rather well in the health and vigor departments. Not bad for a woman of 96....

2. Somehow, those few who try to pronounce 'Sarawak' (there aren't many) inflect it "SARAH-wack." Nope. It is "Suh-RAW-wack." Doug Brown's answer, that he pronounces it "with my mouth completely empty," may be the closest to reality. However, someone actually got this one right; too bad I misfiled the letter and can't identify him....

3. In the United States, at least, feathers are weighed in avoirdupois measure - one pound equals 7000 grains. Gold, on the other hand, is calculated by Troy weight - one pound equals 5760 grains. Feathers are thus heavier. Apparently being a journalist in Petaluma, California ('the chicken capital of the world') gave Doug Brown the edge on this.

4. As was pointed out by three or four people, there is no formal measure known as 'the sandpile.' Thus the question is intentionally defective; there can be no 'fraction' of a sandpile. One pile of sand, of whatever size, is exactly that: One pile of sand.

5. Doug Brown was having a field day! He got nine. Officially (according to Strunk's "Modern English Usage," the standard reference), the fourteen specific punctuation marks are: Period, question mark, comma, semi-colon, colon, quotation mark, apostrophe, dash, exclamation mark, asterisk, braces, hyphen, brackets, parentheses.

For my part, I do not know what 'braces' are. And I would also suggest that the allipsis (... breaking portions of a quote) ought to be recognized. And then there's the so-called (in German) 'Umlaut,' the two dots over a vowel indicating in older usage the lack of a diphthong, as in "coördinate." Strunk may be 'standard,' but I wonder....

6. V O L I X - yes, of course (as three of you most persuasively pointed out), we could treat this as five separate letters, viz. 'Vee Oh Ell Eye Eke.' But had you thought of reading it as "Volume Nine?"

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PRESS POLICY: It really hasn't come up until this issue, but now it seems appropriate to reiterate my policy on submission of press for the games. I honestly don't care what you write; as long as it doesn't get me hauled into court, I'm not going to panic. This lack of limitation means, of course, that sheer filth is quite allowable.

I recognize, however, that some of my readers - I am aware of several who are quite deeply religious - may be offended by what is often classified as pornography. I am therefore adopting the policy, now that it's become relevant, of marking certain press with a 'fair warning' statement. This method allows me to avoid censorship, which I detest, and still protects those to whom alleged "filth" is a bother.

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INASHUCH AS I can no longer print my full mailing list, the least I can do from time to time is let you know how the other publishers are doing. I have actually heard it said that COSTAGUANA is the favorite Diplomacy journal of a few people (which presumes that you will rate it well in the next "Runestone" poll, coming up soon). But there are many others that have great value too; in my best effort to avoid being artificially modest, there are at least a half-dozen that I would rate clearly superior to COSTAGUANA, and another half-dozen that I'd term a tossup.

In the next issue, you will have to suffer a full listing of all other Diplomacy publications which I receive, with latest available data on costs and game openings, and a 'candid review' of each.

- + On your left is a simulated adding machine
- 2 tape. The plus sign equals the asterisk,
- 2 meaning 'clear' or 'total' - this typewriter
- has no asterisk.
- + 5 Send me an adding machine tape which is in
- substance identical to this simulation, and
- I will buy you a ten-issue subscription to
- any Diplomacy magazine you choose. No tricks,
- no fine print, no catches!

I AM THE POWER!

When I was a kid of cartoon-watching age, which by the chronology of my son Eric is thirty-nine years ago, I would have watched (had I had a television) Donald Duck, Andy Panda, Woody Woodpecker, Porky Pig, and all the associates of these critters. And, had I decided to carry my fascination for one of these creatures beyond the screen, I could have started a collection of (e.g.) 'Porky Pig' things. My collection would have consisted in a few comic books and maybe a tee-shirt.

Well, the same critters are still around on morning television, but these days the real cartoon market is in Go-Bots, Tranzor-Z, He-Man, Super Friends, and a whole series of similar rubbish. All are designed to sell toys, because all are linked to a line of products marketed by one of the major toy-makers; He-Man and She-Ra, for example, are Mattel sales lines, Super Friends comes from Kenner, Go-Bots is a Tomy copyright, etc., etc., ad nauseum. Of all these cartoon series, only two strike me as in any way meritorious: Gummi-Bears (from Disney, and thus far without a product line accompanying) is superb, and Smurfs (which does involve trinkets) is uneven but frequently excellent.

My son Eric likes the He-Man thing. I am appalled, but - because it does at least have the merit of being non-destructive (lots of weapons and battles and stuff, but nobody ever gets hurt) - I tolerate his fascination. He-Man ("The Most Powerful Man in the Universe") is little more than a fantasy-world spinoff of Superman; we have the weak Prince Adam who, in moments of crisis, is transformed into the muscle-bound and nearly invincible He-Man. Match, both Adam and He-Man are the ultimate in Aryan purity....

Assisting and/or opposing He-Man in his quest to protect Castle Greyskull from the evil forces of Skeletor (who, as the name implies, is a skeleton figure with magical powers), is a whole host of beings, many truly disgusting, and all available ("each sold separately") as toys. At five bucks a crack, of course. Among others, there are: Beast Man ("Evil Menchman with Animal Powers"), Webster ("Evil Master of Escape"), Man-at-Arms ("Heroic Weapons-Master"), Clawful (it has one arm like a lobster), Two Bad (two-headed purple-and-blue critter), Stinkor ("Evil Master of Odors" - the toy actually smells!), Buzz-Off (the flying human bee) - and on and on; there must be thirty of the things, plus play-sets (Castle Greyskull, Snake Mountain, the Fright Zone - these things cost \$25-\$35) and a batch of other junk. I swear, a parent could go broke catering to a child's wish-list for this stuff.

In an effort to get in on the plastic pot of gold, I offer the following as possible additions to the 'He-Man' line of toys:

ERROR - Evil Master of Mistakes
BAD NEWS - Evil Incompetent Journalist
SHE-MAN - Heroic Transvestite
LOBSTOR - Powerful Purveyor of Top-Quality Dinners
FUCK-IT - Heroic Master of Sexual Entrapment
NIGGOR - Evil Black-Arts Wizard

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Don't you just hate wasted bottoms-of-pages?

COSTAGUANA'S NEW GAMES

Under way again are the two games temporarily adopted from John Walker's THE ALAMO CITY TIMES, which I will manage while he gets himself well. During their tenure here, the regular game will go under the name of 'The Misshapen Meerkat,' and the Gunboat variant will answer to 'Richard M. Johnson.' For those who care:

JOHNSON, Richard Mentor. Born Beargrass, KY, 10-17-1780; died Frankfort, KY, 11-19-1850. He studied law at Transylvania University, and his public career began as a member of the Kentucky legislature in 1804. He was elected to Congress in 1807. During the War of 1812, he raised and commanded a brigade of Kentucky mounted riflemen; at the Battle of the Thames (Oct. 5, 1813) his legion executed a decisive charge, and among other things resulted in the death of the Indian leader Tecumseh. In 1819, Johnson was elected to the Senate, and remained in that body until returning to the House in 1829. In 1837, no candidate in the Presidential election of 1836 having gained a majority vote for Vice-President, Johnson was elected by the Senate to serve in that capacity under Martin Van Buren. An unsuccessful candidate for re-election in 1840, Johnson lived chiefly in retirement thereafter until his death. His 'retirement' did include, however, another term in the Kentucky legislature, during which he authored the law abolishing imprisonment for debt.

In addition to the above two games, the Cline 9-Man variant has begun, and the first moves will be printed next issue. This game has been named for William Rufus DeVane King, and the following data are provided on this largely-forgotten gentleman:

KING, William Rufus De Vane; born Sampson County, NC, 4-6-1786; died Cahaba, AL, 4-18-1853. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1803; studied law; was admitted to the bar in 1806; the same year was elected to the Legislature. In 1810 he was elected to Congress. He resigned his Congressional position in 1816 to join the U.S. Embassy staff in Naples; on his return in 1818, he settled in Alabama, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1819, and was re-elected four times. In 1844 he was appointed Minister to France, and intervened successfully to prevent French opposition to the annexation of Texas. King re-entered the Senate by appointment in 1848, and was elected Speaker in 1850. In 1852, running on a ticket with Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, King was elected Vice-President of the United States; he took the oath of office in Havana (where he had gone for his health) by special Act of Congress. He returned home to recuperate, but died before performing a single official act.

And furthermore - the Regular Dip game announced last issue is now full and will start shortly. It will operate under the name 'The Bisexual Bear.'

Finally - once filled, the 'JIHAD' game - our last opening for quite some time - will be conducted under the banner-name 'Thomas R. Marshall.' We'll discuss this forgotten statesman's credentials at a later date.

THE HOUSE RULES FORUM

Let us make short-shrift of one of these lingering questions: The matter of using neutral moves in case somebody misses a move in 1901.

My thesis was that 1901 is especially critical if a game is to get off to a balanced and effective start for all players. By missing a 1901 move, a country will throw the game completely out of whack right away, and that can have a tendency to spoil it for everyone. (Note that a 1901 miss can be more damaging for some powers than for others. For instance, it practically eliminates England from any possible contention. Italy is almost as bad.)

In the past I have solved this, I thought, by stating that if a player missed a 1901 move, I would immediately replace him/her, no second chances, and meanwhile keep the game going by fashioning 'neutral' moves designed merely to allow the country a chance at basic positioning and the neutral supply centres it normally gets anyway.

Replies to my question were many, varied, and fascinating. And it is particularly interesting to me that not one person endorsed the system out of hand; everybody had some qualifier or other.

Kevin Tighe put it this way: "I don't like neutral moves, they're unfair to the players and to the country they're used for. I do agree that the NMRing player gets tossed out; good riddance. But why not delay the gamestart one more issue for the new player? This ensures that a 7-player game starts with 7 players, not 6 players and a neutral. In Redwood Curtain, I have such a house rule, and have had to use it for both game starts. None of the other players complained about the extra delay."

Kevin's implied point is awfully valid, I'd say. A neutral move gets a few units shuffled around, sure; but it fails to address the real issue, which is - where is the warm-blooded person who is supposedly playing the country? Neutral moves do not negotiate. And a game is going to be almost as unbalanced by a player who doesn't negotiate as by a player who doesn't show up at all.

On the 'phone, Dave Kleiman presented to me his alternative to the 'neutral move' solution. Dave announces his game start and sets a deadline two issues thence. He then requires that all players submit tentative (preliminary, subject to change as needed of course) by the date of the first issue thereafter. For any country whose player does not do so, a standby is announced in the usual manner, and the standby takes over if the original player defaults.

That works for Spring; not so well for Fall or Winter. But that's not really a criticism; after all, we can't guard against everything.

Anyway, I very much like both Kevin's and Dave's ideas, and have decided on what amounts to an expanded version which will attempt to deal with 1901 all the way through builds. See what you think:

For Spring 1901, we use Dave's system. First deadline two issues hence; preliminary orders required by the first of those two dates, or a standby will be announced just in case. For Fall and Winter, we switch to Kevin's system: Anybody misses, he gets tossed, the season is delayed an issue and somebody else takes charge.

Another possibility - a bit more unwieldy, but it would prevent delays - goes like this: Same thing for Spring. In addition, with the final Spring deadline, players are required to include tentative (conditional, if need be) Fall orders; failing those, a standby is

announced. Ditto for tentative builds required with Fall. This kind of fail-safe procedure could get awfully top-heavy in the management department, and we might well have so many potential players announced that nobody could correspond effectively at all. (Scenario: Three players fail to send tentative Spring orders. Three standbys announced. So then I have the thrill of deadling with this: "Italian orders for Spring. If Jones continues as Germany, and Furd continues as Russia, but Sturdley takes over France, then my orders are....but if Gritch takes Germany and Fungus continues as France....on the other hand, if the players are Gritch/Shrdlu/Sturdley....")

A game-master's nightmare? Sure it is. But what's even worse, think of the poor player who has to concoct all that shit. Not to mention the volume of letters of negotiation required to lead up to the final result.

Admittedly, I've purposely concocted an outrageous example, but it really isn't all that far-fetched. I have seen games where three players missed in Spring 1901 - and remember, we aren't even talking about formal dropouts, but only about missing PRELIMINARY business.

I should think it obvious at this point that the preceding discussion represents Conrad thinking as he types. I am not going to risk putting anyone, least of all myself, through a nightmare when an easier way is so readily available. So back to Plan A. Tentative moves required for Spring, or a standby is put forward; a one-issue delay, and a new player, in the event of a Fall or Winter miss.

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QUESTION: Should game countries be assigned by random draw, or by preference lists? If lists are used, how do you assign a country to a player who doesn't send a list? Is it ever permissible to 'stage-manage' a list, or a random draw, to ensure that more people get higher choices than they otherwise might, or that someone doesn't have to play the same country too often?

Michael Pustilnik Preference lists should always be requested. Otherwise, no-one will ever get the country they wanted, and everyone will enjoy the game less. Countries not assigned to those submitting preference lists should be randomly assigned to those who don't submit lists. If preference lists are used, they should be strictly adhered to. In some cases, "stage-managing" random draws is a good idea, but don't let the players know!

John Caruso Nothing wrong with preference lists. If only (say) five people submit them, then the remaining players get what's left, hopefully assigned randomly. I prefer giving each player his highest choice possible even if it means someone is denied his first choice; however, there is nothing wrong with either system as long as it's stated beforehand and the GM implements it consistently.

If you opt for no preference lists, then I'd say random is random. The player gets what the GM draws for him, even if it means playing the same country two games in a row. Once you change one player's country, the draw is no longer random, and therefore every player can request a country change on such grounds as: (A) I've played Italy 10 times in a row now in 10 different 'zines; (B) I hate the color black; (C) I don't want to get killed first again as I've been in my last dozen games so please give Austria to someone else; (D) I've played Turkey

two out of three times now in your new games; (E) You just gave me a standby as England in another game; (F) France is the only country I'm not presently playing and I'd like to be playing each country at least once, somewhere, right now! You get the idea, I'm sure.

Bruce I prefer the preference list to the random draw. They should
Linsey be used if the game's GM wants to use them.

By non-submission of a list, a player has indicated no preference and thus should be given whatever country is left over.

There are several algorithms which might legitimately be used in selecting countries based on preference lists. Any reasonable such algorithm is acceptable. (And I don't even see why you refer to one as 'stage-managing' and not the other in your discussion. Both have sound mathematical justification.) In Voice of Doom, I simply eyeballed the lists and chose what looked to be fair assignments. (Of course, I was usually helped by the fact that I'd open five or six games at a clip, and so could shuffle the lineups to account for such factors as geography, suspected cross-game arrangements - and, non-compatible preference lists.

Stage-managing the random draw is fine, though it is not then totally random. Partially-random draws are often used in multi-round tournaments to keep the players from playing the same country twice.

Stephen I prefer random assignment of countries. I fully understand
Wilcox some people's reasons for wanting preference lists, so I
 also gladly accept the assignment of countries the way Conrad
Minshall did it in 1985A. First he randomized the country assignments for those that wanted random assignment (like me - I got England). After this he used the preference lists to assign the remaining countries to those that submitted preference lists. In other words, if someone had sent in a preference list with England as his first choice, he could not get it because I was randomly assigned it first. Kind of confusing, but I think much better than forcing preference lists upon those who prefer random. Or even worse, assigning the least-liked country (usually Austria) to the one that never sent in a preference list.

Ken I definitely believe that preference lists should be allowed.
Hager The players are investing time and money; why shouldn't they
 be allowed to play the country of their preference if possible? I can see no good reason not to try to accommodate them.

If some people submit preference lists, then I do my best to satisfy them. I then conduct a blind draw to assign remaining countries to the players who had no preference. After all, no preference list is just a way of saying that you'll be perfectly happy with any country.

On stage-managing: This is an area that I feel is best done on a case-by-case basis using common sense. If you assign a numerical value from 1 to 7 based on preference for each player, then the sum of the preference values will be a measure of success. Ideally, this sum would be 7 if everyone received their first choice. The objective is to find the permutation that gives the minimum value. Personally, I have no intention of ever trying to compute all of the values of these permutations during country assignment. I intend to use common sense. However, it does provide a useful quantitative measure that might help decide between a couple of likely candidates.

As to stage-managing a random draw, I think it's acceptable to adjust it. The country really isn't that important unless it has a negative effect on player interest. The ultimate objective is to have a good game in which all players are active. Assigning a player to a country that he doesn't want seems to be asking for trouble. That's why I prefer preference lists. It's hard enough to maintain player interest and keep NMRs to a minimum without adding further negative factors.

W. Elmer Hinton I use stage-managed preference lists. I don't like random assignment for two reasons. If every player played the same number of games, and this was a multiple of 7, then randomization would eventually be completely fair and even in distribution; but the frequency of play is individual and so randomization can result in inequities and problems. I would frown on stage-managed randomization simply because this injects the GM's opinion into the operation. By this I don't mean the GM's overall opinion, which will be inherent in his house rules, but his spontaneous subjective opinion which may or may not be consistent from time to time or from player to player. Also, a point I've argued with one GM who has a limiting rule (one cannot play the same country twice in his 'zine before playing all of them once) is that this takes the view that the player is, for all intents and purposes, dedicated to that 'zine. Unless the GM is familiar with that player's record outside this 'zine, such a policy is quite myopic. Consider this: The player is in each of the seven countries twice except for Austria and England. He signs up and, by whatever system, would have received an Austria. But his other Austria just happens to be in that same 'zine. Now, provided that players in both games are not substantially the same or in substantially the same positions, a system which is presumably designed for his benefit but which results in giving, say, a third Italy simply so that he won't be Austria twice in the same 'zine, is highly short-sighted and actually plays into the inequity that such a system is designed to solve. However, players and positions which would have unfolded into a substantial re-set of a former game should probably be avoided; although where it has happened I have yet to see any inequity because of it.

I also prefer preference lists because they are just that, an expression of player preference. Leaving aside the question of inequity of experience, what if a player willingly desires to play, and become a master of, say, only Germany (or, Conrad, only Austria)? Who has the right to deny him this? On what grounds is he to be forced to play those unwanted six for each time at the only position he desires? An extreme case? I don't think so! Many examples come to mind.

As to stage-managing of either strips, a very large caveat must be appended. I stage-manage my preference lists for a better-than-fourth-place minimum, or best average. Let it be said, though, that upon assignment I publish the full adjudication of the preference lists (witness 1985HU as the only recent example - KAISSA 105). If stage-managing of any sort is used, the full adjudication of the process must be revealed. This allows the players to determine if a fair mechanism has been used, or merely GM whim.

Conrad Well, my first reaction is: Stephen, why do you prefer von Metzke prefer random draw? Not that you're wrong, mind you, but you are obviously in a minority. And yet I know full well you have a rational reason for your position, but for the life of me I cannot guess at it. Could you enlighten me?

I have, for many years, used preference lists. My logic was the same as Elmer's: It's an expression of player preference, and there's no reason in the world (except personal whim) to refuse to use them. (This is, of course, with the understanding that I haven't heard Stephen's side yet. It is also worth mentioning that, while he may be in the minority, Stephen is definitely not alone.)

I gather that there are three schools of thought operating here: (1) Random draw only; (2) Preference lists, but no stage-managing; (3) Preference lists, stage-managed one way or another to get the best overall result.

Ken avers that, aside from personal preference, the specific country assignment really isn't that important. I can't argue with that thesis. Sure, some people prefer the stronger countries (= higher in ratings), but that is just one form of personal preference. And both Ken and Michael point out that game enjoyment is a major concern. It really ought to be; why bother to play if one is bored or dissatisfied? I'd sooner spend my time collecting string.

Elmer goes off on a bit of a tangent, but he comes back to (in my view) the most telling point of all: If a person, for whatever reason, really wants to play certain positions and not others, why not accommodate him to the extent possible? Granted, a person who always lists England (or whatever) first isn't going to get it every single time, and it is perhaps unreasonable to expect that one will enter games only if one gets the country one wants - there are six other people to be accommodated, after all. But if one lists England first always, one will certainly get it most of the time, and if that's what is wanted, why not?

Years ago, in his WILD 'N' WOOLY, Steve Cartier had the perfect system - it only works if the GM has effectively unlimited openings, but since that is what Steve did have, it was a success for him. He maintained waiting lists by country. That gave him seven waiting lists at once, and any time he had at least one name on each of the seven, he'd start a game. At first glance it sounds difficult, inasmuch as he could have wound up with (e.g.) twenty people waiting for France and none - for months on end - for Austria. But in practice it worked quite well, partly because people would inevitably list second choices (and thus wind up on two - or more - waiting lists), and partly because there were always a few people (I was one) who didn't care all that much, and would invariably take a "leftover" country just to get a game under way. As I recall, Steve had several of us on tap who would take any country if he ever got stuck: I particularly recall Roland Trudiker, Bill Schreffler, Phil Castora, and the late Bob Ward.

Back to Elmer. He concludes with a point with which I agree in toto. If one is going to finagle the preference lists, one ought to make one's activities public. In the past I haven't done this, not from any intent to hide anything, but rather from having failed to give the matter any thought at all. But since Elmer brings it up, I must agree that he's right. It can be argued that most players, at least those who have some experience, will only sign up with GMs that they have some faith in. That degree of faith quite probably includes trusting the guy to be reasonable in country assignments. But novices don't always have this discerning capacity; and in any case, why not reveal one's machinations? It cannot hurt (unless one is playing games), and may just help someone feel more comfortable. Bruce makes the point that he frequently started several games at once, and was thus able to juggle players among them to give better positions (per choices submitted) to most of them. The most recent example of the success of this system that I'm aware of is in Alan Stewart's new 'nine, PRAXIS. Alan opened

three games at once, and juggled applicants among them to provide the best possible preference choices. As I recall (I haven't gone back to check, but I know I'm not far off the precise truth), only one person out of the twenty-one had to settle for lower than third choice, and over half got first choices.

Ken's "assignment of value" system (to which Elmer also alludes) is, in my opinion, a superb idea. At the very least, it serves as a good check on one's success in balancing preference lists by the 'eyeball' system. Ken tells us that he isn't about to try to develop a total and comprehensive chart of permutations; he uses common sense and keeps it reasonable. Bruce says essentially the same thing. In my view, that's about all one can ever ask of a GM.

Okay. Wanna have some fun? Recently I started three games in COSTA - one regular, one Gunboat, one Cline-9. Until I got around to putting this Forum together, I hadn't given it any thought, but now I've become intrigued. I have gone back to the preference lists in all three games, and studied them again in light of Ken's "value" system. Then, I've played around with different permutations, and tried to see if I might have improved on the assignments made. In so doing, I've used Elmer's criterion of "better than fourth choice" in preference to the overall total.

Here are the preference lists submitted in each of the three games, with the actual assignment underlined. Take a look; see if you'd have done better in your assignments using both the Hager "common sense" rule and the Hager/Hinton "best average" system. (Note that in Cline-9, the ideal minimum number under Ken's method is eight. Why eight? Well, because one of the players - I am he - purposely didn't submit a list. I opted intentionally to take whatever country was left over.)

Note that after each list is a letter in parentheses. I'll explain that later.

REGULAR

R-G-E-F-I-T-A (E)
 E-R-A-I-x-x-x (T)
 E-F-I-T-G-R-A (I)
 R-I-T-E-F-G-A (R)
E-R-G-I-T-A-x (F)
 I-R-T-A-G-E-F (G)
F-R-E-G-I-A-T (A)

((x = a country not listed at all))

GUNBOAT

F-E-I-G-T-R-A (I)
E-F-R-I-G-A-T (G)
 E-F-I-T-G-R-A (E)
 F-E-R-T-G-A-I (A)
G-T-F-E-R-I-A (R)
 E-A-F-R-T-G-I (T)
R-E-F-G-I-T-A (F)

CLINE-9

G-E-A-I-P-B-x-x-x (I)
 G-I-E-A-B-P-R-F-T (F)
 P-E-G-I-F-A-T-B-R (G)
 P-B-F-E-R-T-G-A-I (T)

P-B-I-F-A-G-R-T-E (A)
 B-P-T-R-G-E-F-I-A (P)
 B-G-I-E-P-A-T-R-F (B)
 P-E-G-R-F-E-I-T-A (E)

Okay. Let's add 'em up using the Hager system, where 7 is the best (8 for Cline) and the higher, the poorer.

REGULAR: 16
GUNBOAT: 13
CLINE: 18

Of the three, Gunboat looks best on the surface; the actual total is less than twice optimum. Regular is the worst, and Cline is somewhere in between.

Using the Hinton criterion ("better-than-fourth"), Regular is still the worst; two people had to settle for fourth choice, versus only one in Gunboat and none at all in Cline. Using this particular criterion, however, Gunboat and Cline switch places: Now, Cline is best, with Gunboat in between.

On the basis of the information we now have, and using Ken's/Elmer's "highest average" in conjunction with Ken's "common sense," I suggest that these preference lists, and the resulting assignments, show that I (as would Bruce have) 'eyeballed' them quite well in the Gunboat and Cline games, and rather poorly in the Regular.

In the Cline game, note that only one first choice was assigned. Based on this fact, the minimum 'optimum number' has to be 15, and the actual number is only 18 - not bad. Moreover, nobody got below third choice; stated another way, everybody got something in the top third of their preferences. This strikes me as a pretty good result.

In Gunboat, the overall total is quite fine, less than twice the optimum. Four first choices were possible, and one second. It is worth mentioning here that only one player listed Germany or Turkey higher than fourth place, and it happens to be the same person for both. On that basis, at least one fourth choice is inevitable.

For the Regular game, I can see quite clearly - now that I've spelled it out - that I might have done better with a little more care. Our total numerical value stands at 16. By merely switching the A and R assignments, I reduce that value to 15, and also reduce the number of fourth-choices from two to one - better both by Ken's and Elmer's standards. But I can do even better by making a three-way switch (good luck following this): The guy who got R instead gets A; I gets R; and A gets I. (It'll be easier if you make a chart.) Now we still meet the Hinton criterion just as well (only one fourth), but our numeric value is down to 13 - quite as good as in Gunboat.

Well, what I came up with in this Regular game was, quite simply, an honest effort that wasn't perfect. So what? At worst, I am guilty of an honest effort showing less than ideal perspective. All three of these lists are the result of my using the Linsey 'eyeball' system without benefit of the Hager/Hinton 'best average' modifier. In two cases I did rather nicely. In the third case, I could have done better. Consequently, I find myself strongly favoring the use of the Hager-Hinton method as a modifier to the Linsey system. But I must also endorse Ken's qualifier; I am not about to spend endless hours figuring out every conceivable permutation and acting on the result. I have better things to do with my life: A wife, two kids, a job, AA meetings, etc. I will do my best - and, now that I'm armed with Hager-Hinton, I can normally do better than I did in the present Regular game. But I will not promise to be perfect.

And now to those letters in parentheses. Just for kicks, before I started typing this article, I conducted a "random draw" for each of the three games in question. My intention was to compare the Hager numeric values for 'stage-managed' preference lists versus Stephen Wilcox's prediction for purely random draws.

Let's look at the results in several different ways:

(1) Adding up the assignments person-by-person, we find that six people get "better" assignments by random draw, while sixteen get "poorer" positions. Of the six improvements, three are in the Regular game, where we've already determined that I did a rotten job. Further, of the six improvements, five out of six improve by only one notch on the preference lists (the sixth goes up two notches).

Of the sixteen who get "poorer" selections, four had their position "decreased" by one notch; three went down two notches; two decreased by three notches; four slipped four notches; one went down five, and one slipped six; and one can't be determined because he didn't list all the countries. Forgetting about the last one, that's an average decrease of 2.87 places, versus an average increase of 1.17 places for those whose positions were improved. (It is interesting to note that, between the symbolic random draws and the actual 'stage-managed' preference lists, not one single person got the same assignment both ways. The only duplication occurs with the one person who didn't submit a list at all - me, in the Cline game. I got Russia both ways.)

(2) Assessing the numeric averages by the Hager/Hinton method, we get the following comparison, where P = preference lists, R = random:

Regular:	P - 16	R - 27 +
Gunboats:	P - 13	R - 28
Cline:	P - 18	R - 35

(The symbol + substitutes for the asterisk that this typewriter lacks. It means that in this game, the exact total cannot be determined because one player didn't list all countries. The total listed is the absolute minimum possible.)

That represents a ratio of 1.96:1.00, random vs. preference.

(3) Using the Hager 'common-sense' method, here is a chart of the number of players getting which of their possible choices, using the actual preference lists as a standard and comparing the random draws to them:

	<u>Pref.</u>	<u>Random</u>
1st choice	7	3
2d	8	2
3d	4	5
4th	3	1
5th	0	5 +
6th	0	4
7th	0	1 +
8th (Cline only)	0	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	22	22 +

(Note that one fifth-place value is assigned at minimum position, based on the player's failure to provide a complete preference list. Likewise, one seventh-place is similarly assigned.)

This gives us comparative Hager/Hinton values of:

PREF.	RANDOM
47	90

(4) Doing a bit of averaging and comparing, here's what we get:

(A) For all three games combined, the Hager-Hinton average is improved by use of preference lists by a factor of 1.91:1.00.

(B) Game-by-game, the Hager-Hinton factorial improvements are:

REG.	: 1.69:1.00
GUN.	: 2.15:1.00
CLINE	: 1.94:1.00

(C) If we factor in the corrections to the regular game assignments mentioned earlier - the ones that reduce the Hager-Hinton total for this game to 13 - we then have:

/1/ Overall Hager-Hinton values of 44 to 90.
/2/ Overall average for the three games of 2.05:1.00.

Having developed these data, I cannot think of a single thing left to say.

Well...yes, in fact, I can too. Please keep in mind that random draws are random draws. The fact that the three mock draws in the present instances give us the results reported, ought not to lead you to an unsupportable conclusion. If I were to select (at random) three other games for comparison, the results might be vastly different.

As proof, I hereby offer the following: I am now going to conduct a second mock random draw in all three games. I won't bother with the country-by-country breakdown this time, but let's see how we do. Excuse me a moment, I have to draw the pieces....

(Long pause)

Okay, here are the results (in Hager-Hinton numbers):

REGULAR:	39
GUNBOAT:	28
CLINE:	41

This time, the ratio - overall, mock-random-draw to preference-list, is 2.30:1.00. Game-by-game, it is: Regular, 2.44:1.00; Regular adjusted, 3.00:1.00; Gunboat, 2.15:1.00; Cline, 2.28:1.00.

Well, that one had some screwy results: Cline and Gunboat seemed ordinary, but the Regular game was unusual in that I seemed to get mainly fifth- through seventh-choices. Highly unusual. You wanna try it just one more time? Okay....

REGULAR:	24
GUNBOAT:	31
CLINE:	32

This time, the Regular game is in normal limits, and the Cline is quite good, but the Gunboat is a wee bit high. The overall ratio for all three games is 1.85:1.00. The game-by-game breakdown is: Regular,

1.50:1.00; Regular adjusted, 1.85:1.00; Gunboat, 2.38:1.00; Cline, 1.78:1.00.

Okay. Enough. I swear to you that I have in fact conducted physical random draws every time I've said that I've done. For those who care about the mechanics, I've taken one army from each country out of the game set, placed these pieces in an opaque Tupperware dish, and made an actual random draw - three different times! For Cline 9-man, I took two extra Turkish pieces and wrote 'P' on one and 'B' on the other. You may believe me or not, as you shall choose, but I assure you I didn't cheat. If you wish, try it yourself. You have the preference lists; first, verify my numbers on those, and then do your own private random draw for comparison. It might just be as instructive to you as it has been to me.

Note: If you really want to prove the point, you can. Throw out everything I've shown you altogether. Take seven preference lists that have been submitted to you, or randomly create your own. Juggle the lists any way you like - or not. Then conduct a pure random draw. Add up and compare the Hager/Hinton totals. See what happens.

JAMES JOYCE, MOVE OVER! Stream of consciousness strikes again! Having typed that very last paragraph above, I suddenly flashed on one more thing I'd like to try. Specifically: How does a random draw compare with un-stage-managed preference lists? That is, if I were to use the lists in a straightforward manner - assign unique choices, toss a coin for first-choice ties, assign unique second choices, toss for ties, etc., how would it stack up to the random?

Okay. Herewith, fresh from the laboratory, are the results of my mock unmanaged preference list assignments for the same three games used as examples four pages ago. The 'assignments' are listed in the same order as the preference lists were, top-to-bottom:

REGULAR	GUNBOAT	CLINE
R (1st)	I (3d)	G (1st)
A (3d)	T (7th)	I (2d)
E (1st)	E (1st)	E (2d)
T (3d)	F (1st)	F (3d)
G (3d)	G (1st)	P (1st)
I (1st)	A (2d)	T (3d)
F (1st)	R (1st)	B (1st)
		R (4th)

For the regular game, the Hager/Hinton total is 13, and nobody got below a third choice, which really goes to show what a poor job I did with this one. For Gunboat, it's 16. For Cline, it's 17.

By managing the lists (and here, let's forget the Regular game, I'm getting more embarrassed by the minute), for Gunboat I increased the H/H score by three points and prevented a seventh choice from being used. For Cline, the H/H score is actually a point higher, but this is perhaps offset by eliminating the fourth choice.

I may just run a few more of these - not now, but some time soon - to see just how 'typical' these admittedly limited results are. For now, my tentative conclusion is that a managed list vs. an unmanaged one is at least a toss-up, and maybe a boon at times.

Let me conclude this section with a late-arriving letter, which treats with the subject in a rather different way:

Randolph Smyth I've always used preference lists (24 games started in Fol Si Pie so far), and have never had a problem...though I also never had a player write to say how glad he was that the system was used. Perhaps players are generally less interested in playing a particular country than in getting down to play the game, which is as it should be. Quite often a player won't submit a list - then he gets whatever is left after the lists are resolved. If two or more fail to submit lists, then I will generally draw their countries; however, I am not above assigning the leftovers on the basis that players who know each other well from previous games will not receive adjacent countries. That minimizes "automatic" alliances or wars, though I suppose some GMs would consider such discretion to be not quite kosher. So, yes, I "stage-manage" the draw at times to increase the chances of a good, unpredictable game.

Your example of preventing a player from getting two games with the same country is a possibility I don't bother with, though. If he doesn't want that country again, I would expect him to submit an appropriate list with that country at the bottom. If he doesn't care, neither do I.

I guess every GM has a slightly different method of resolving the lists. I'm not even sure that I use the same process for every resolution: I just look for whatever gives the most sensible result. Usually, I assign unique first choices, then break ties on the basis of how the choice will affect the remaining parties. Or, if one player submits a list noting that he'd specifically like Italy because he's played all the other countries at least once, while another submits one with Italy first but indicates that any position will do, the former player would get the Italian position.

Looking back over this description, I suppose I manipulate the lists rather shamelessly, with very little randomness; but, as I said, nobody has ever complained.

Conrad von Metake Randolph has, in my view, just given a rather good dissertation on the nature of the so-called "Player's Gamesmaster," and it will come as little surprise to learn that I do more or less the same things he does. I may not always do them well, witness the regular game we've been using for an example, but I do try. And, as Ken Hager said (in other words), there is a limit to the amount of time and agony a given GM is prepared to put into the search for the "perfect" game list.

But I think the crucial point here - Ken touched on it too, and Elmer rather strongly suggested it - is Randolph's mention of a lack of complaints, which he attributes to the players having less of an interest in a specific position than in the mere, and basic, chance to play. I once thought of myself as "God's gift to Gamesmasters," because I had let it be known far and wide that I would always gladly take Austria or Italy, generally the least-desired positions. But I eventually realized - after joining far too many games, of course - that my popularity was more a matter of convenience than of necessity. I was so well-known and well-connected in the hobby, and nearly everyone was writing to me frequently anyway, that I became the "easy way out" to fill a sticky game list. But those who didn't call on me, somehow managed to fill their games anyway.

INTERJECTION OF NO GREAT MERIT: As I typed the word "laboratory" a page and a half ago, I had occasion to reflect on the differing pronunciations that would be given it by my U.S. and British readers. In the U.S., it comes out "LAB-ra-to-ry." In the U.K. it's "la-BOR-a-tree."

Radically different? Ah, but think of it this way: In both cases, what is really a five-syllable word is reduced to four syllables in common speech. And in both cases, this reduction is accomplished by gliding through the letter 'o'. The only difference is, it's a different 'o' here than it is there.

QUESTION: Other than demonstrated cheating, are there any legitimate reasons for a GM to expel a player from a game?

Virtually all the responses mentioned what I guess I thought of as "the obvious": Missing moves too often, and letting a subscription lapse. Because those two points were almost unanimously mentioned, I'm going to treat them as "given" and deal only with other things noted.

Michael Pustilnik ((Expel)) only in exceptional circumstances. One example would be proof that a player has been harrassing the other players in the game.

John Caruso Provable, non-correctible cheating, yes. Other legitimate reasons? Do you mean because (A) player abuses GM in press, (B) player sends death threats, (C) Player makes a pass at GM's wife? What do you mean? I'd say if it's not related to that specific game, no! What else besides NMRing out and cheating warrants consideration for expulsion?

Bruce Linsey (1) Non-demonstrated cheating. The player has lied to the GM over the 'phone. Clearly this puts the GM in a tough spot, but he has justification (it could even be argued, obligation) to expel the player.

Mark Barch I have never seen the logic of expelling for failing to keep up a sub, though it's legit to to that if it's put in the house rules. If the sub runs out, cut off the 'zine, but as long as the player gets his orders in, he should be permitted to stay in the game. I also think that deception of the GM is proper grounds, even if it doesn't involve cheating per se. For example, the GM investigates an incident in which Player X is innocent. But X lies to the GM, saying that A did something when he knows B did it. That player can be expelled. Such a thing occurred in the "Black Hole" affair some time back.

Elmer (1) Cross-gaming.

Ninton (2) Speaking as a Professional Gamesmaster, players who enroll into a game and must pay a per-turn game fee may play only as long as that occurs; players in a game without fee or a one-shot fee but who must maintain a subscription to the magazine to play, play only as long as they receive the 'zine.

Randolph Smyth A player who uses the game as an outlet for a personal extra-game feud with another player, either in the press or in the orders (A Smy goes to Con in an effort to beat up that alcoholic Nazi nigger....") would be appropriately censored in my 'zine. Pushed to the limit, I suppose entire sets of orders could be voided, but I've never heard of such an actual case.

Also, a player who voted against a draw in a classic stalemate position would be asked for a reasonable explanation for holding out; if not forthcoming, I would declare the game over (my house rules detail the procedure, though I've never had to use it). More a matter of expelling the game from the player than vice-versa.

Conrad Lots of yummy ideas here.

von Metzke John Caruso hit on my lack of specificity in my question; I was purposely vague just to see who'd say what. But John also hit on the gist of what was paramount in my mind: In capsule form, are personal (or perhaps we should just use Randolph's term "extra-game") reasons ever grounds to kick a player out?

In a technical sense I would have to agree with John that they are not; in his position as a player, a player is only a player; if he is also a friend/enemy/co-worker/lover/business-partner/whatever, that is all well and good, but it has no bearing on the game. But in practical terms, I think it's fair to generalize that we're all in this hobby to have fun, and who could be having fun if one of his players were sending him death threats, or were getting viciously personal in the press (and I distinguish here very carefully between serious maliciousness and the kind of insulting banter that friends who know they are friends throw around, such as that fool Walkerdine does to me incessantly, the result no doubt of an adolescent diet overly rich in vinegared crottled greaps - or, to quote the late John Koning, "Friends are the only ones worth insulting," which I took to mean in part that only friends can be trusted not to be hurt, with all others the risk is too great)?

Michael extends this, in effect, to suggest the protection of the equivalent rights of all participants, not just the players. I suggest that, not only should the GM not have to put up with death threats and viciousness, neither should the GM become a vehicle for maltreatment of one player by another. I am not aware that I have any personal enemies in the hobby these days, but I have had in the past, and I would be hard-pressed to enjoy a game in which some such person - or an unknown enemy that I will make in the future - started using his press space to lash out at my raw nerves. (I do have a few.) The example Randolph gave specified an "alcoholic Nazi nigger." Two of these three terms, if used viciously against me, would hit nerves just now (one of them probably always will). But why should I be forced to protect myself by giving up my rights, say, by resigning from a game made distasteful by someone overstepping the bounds of decency?

I am inclined to think that we are dealing with extremes here, the mercifully uncommon Unstoppable Boers who pop up from time to time. I do not want such people in my magazine. If they crop up, and I find I cannot control them despite my best efforts, I will refund any money they've paid me and kick them out gleefully, and damn the technical ethics. Ditto if an innocent player is so treated.

Elmer mentions "cross-gaming." I was not aware that this was a forbidden practise. More to the point, I was not aware that proven cross-game activities were used as cause for expulsion. (For anyone

unfamiliar with the term, "cross-gaming" occurs when players Furd and Zilch are playing together in two or more games, and Furd writes Zilch a letter stating, "If you will ally with me and support me to a win in Game A, I will reciprocate in Game B." (I've also heard it held that it is the cross-game threat that is truly objectionable: Furd says, "In Game A, please support my fleet Holland to Belgium; if you don't, I can and will take two of your centers in Game B.") Frankly, cross-gaming doesn't bother me; I don't do it, I don't endorse it, but I also don't see why it needs to be made an Official Anathema. If you have two centers vulnerable in Game B, why in hell did you leave them exposed in the first place? And if you get a cross-gaming offer in the mail, and you want to counter it, why not send copies to all the other players with a plea to squish this turkey before he ruins the game for everybody?

Elmer's comment about non-payment of per-turn fees, for games that require them, is open and shut. That's a condition of play in such games. And if you sign up for such a game, there is no arguing your obligation, nor the GM's right to enforce the same.

But I'll tell you, I find it hard to fault Mark's assertion that, if a player manages to get his moves in, what does it matter to you as GM that he doesn't get the magazine? Scenario: A guy signs up to play. Halfway into the game he loses his job and can't afford to keep up a subscription. But his girlfriend's office has a WATS line which he can use to garner move results, negotiate, and submit orders, all at no cost to him. A bit unusual, perhaps, but - why not?

And finally, Bruce's non-demonstrated cheating. (This translates to mean activities for which no physical evidence exists.) I can see a vast amount of controversy, and a massive grey area, developing around this concept: Expulsion of a player without (gasp) PROOF? It represents precisely the sort of gamesmasterial license that could, improperly handled, result in grievous injustice. But in another sense I view it as a close cousin to the earlier comments about death threats. Michael uses the phrase "exceptional circumstances," and with that I wholly concur. Expulsion of a player is an action to be taken as rarely as possible. But, if in all good conscience and pursuit of comfort I felt I could not avoid it, then the mere lack of physical evidence would be no barrier. As before, a precondition of such an action would be the repayment of any moneys received.

QUESTION: I asked rather broadly about ending a postal Diplomacy game by vote rather than "rulebook" win: Should players be allowed to end games by ballot rather than by 'fighting to the end?' If so, should unanimity be required? A majority? An 'absence of nays'? How should abstentions (or votes not cast) be treated? And to what extent, if any, should the specific of a vote be announced?

Randolph Smyth 'Yes' votes must be unanimous (including 'no votes received' - see later comments). This seems obvious, as otherwise six 3-center powers could vote for a 2-way draw over the objection of a 16-center power. One 'no' vote must kill any proposal.

I hold votes open until the following deadline if I receive only 'yes' (with other players not responding). If the proposal is not vetoed with a specific 'no' the second time around (the original 'yes' voters can change their minds), the no-vote-received is treated as 'yes' and the proposal goes through.

I'd feel funny about ending the game with a concession to a one-center power; I expect the players to take the game a little more seriously than that, and I haven't been disappointed in my 'zine so far. In theory, though, the players are free to concede to, or draw with, any surviving player...or to vote to abandon it, I guess - it's their game....

I normally just announce that a proposal passed or failed. However, any player can request that their vote be made public, and I'll do that for them (with no trickery possible). This has diplomatic consequences, particularly when several players are trying to sniff out a 'holdout' to an 'obvious' draw - all may agree to go public and discover the contrary voter by elimination. Actually, this has never been used to my knowledge in my games, though people frequently make votes public for other reasons.

Michael Pustilnik The unanimous consent of those submitting orders is required to pass a proposal. One 'no' is enough to kill it. An abstention should be considered a 'no' unless it is part of an NMR. And a GM should not list the vote breakdown; just the result.

John Caruso According to the rulebook, the game ends when all players agree. For postal play, adaptations and variations of this procedure can be implemented. Whether the GM used (A) All players must say yes, and one non-voting vetoes the proposal, or (B) There must be at least one 'yes,' and no 'no' votes to pass a proposal, or (C) At least half the players must vote for, with no votes opposed, or (D) Non-votes are counted as 'yes' (or 'no') - it doesn't matter. As long as the policy is stated beforehand and implemented consistently, it is fair, and acceptable. You could have a great debate/discussion over which policy is better, or should be used over the others as normal. Do you wish to have this kind of discussion? ((Sure!)) There was a short discussion on this very topic a few years ago in The Dogs of War, but it ended too soon to hear all of the arguments properly.

A GM could list total votes (3Y, 2N, 1A), or just how many 'no' votes, or just say at least one 'no' vote to every proposal if there's more than one. Whether or not you list the names is up to your listed policy (beforehand, consistent, etc.). Do I sound like I'm repeating myself with beforehand notification and consistency?

Bruce Liney Game-ending proposals should be unanimous. As long as one player feels he can change the outcome, the power of veto should be available to him. (Exception: In the event of a demonstrable stalemate line, there should be provision made for ending a game despite a player's veto, after a reasonable period of time.)

One 'no' vote is sufficient to kill a game-ending proposal.

"No vote received" = "yes" is the translation I prefer. If a player is sloppy enough to allow a game to end thanks to his own non-vote, that is his problem.

All methods of announcing the results, from votes being entirely public down to a simple pass-or-fail announcement, and every shade in between, are legit. The exact method to be used should be house-ruled, of course. My personal preference is a pass-or-fail announcement with the added provision that players may specify that their own votes

be publicized. Obviously if every player but one does this, the remaining vote won't be secret either - that's a risk a player must take if he is counting on his vote being kept confidential.

Ken I am in favor of allowing the players to vote on how to end
Hager their games. After all, it is their game.

I feel that proposals should be passed by the unanimous vote of all players submitting orders. If one player is disinterested in the outcome to the extent that he fails to even submit orders, then his failure to vote should not be allowed to affect the desires of those who do.

Requiring anything less than unanimity can cause severe problems. For example, simply requiring a majority could result in three 2-center powers voting themselves a 3-way draw over two 14-center powers, by a 3-2 vote.

One dissenting vote should be sufficient to kill any proposal.

I feel that the game should not end unless all active players (i.e. those submitting orders) specifically vote 'yes' to the proposal. Thus, I consider a non-vote as a 'no' vote. I feel that the decision to end the game should require the positive gesture rather than the default value.

The specifics of the voting should not be made public, just the fact of whether it passed or failed. Good players use negotiations regarding draw proposals to their advantage, and release of detailed information could undermine the diplomacy. The players can tell each other how they voted if they so desire.

Elmer Let's start with something most GMs fail to consider: the
Hinton quorum. A quorum is that minimum number in any group whose active participation or presence is considered necessary for legitimacy. Quorum is implied in rules like "A majority must vote yes," which is a majority-quorum/majority-vote, or like "A majority must vote yes, but one 'no' vote kills the proposal," which is a majority-quorum/unanimous-vote. The quorum, or minimum number of participants, should be given. Now the majority-quorum/unanimous-vote is also a way of saying, "abstentions count yes," except that technically abstentions do not count, and house rules which state that an abstention counts as something give me the itch; such rules say rather boldly that one's power of choice is taken away - that if I fail to vote, a vote will be recorded anyway - that if I submit a vote of abstention it will be changed according to someone else's wish. Pardon my drum, but that is not what we are all about....A GM has no right to state that a vote will be changed, or that a failure to vote will cause a vote to be imposed. That is, of course, a technicality.

A GM should set a quorum: The minimum number of yes and nay votes which constitute an acceptable minimum for legitimacy. Abstentions and no-vote-received are just that - not counted. The next question is, on what of that number should the vote rest - majority, level of majority (e.g. 2/3), or unanimity.

My own rules are simple: The quorum is the actual number of votes received, with a minimum of one; the vote passes on unanimous assent. (That is, put sloppily: "One 'no' kills, abstentions are effectively the same as 'yes.'")

The identity of a proposer and of the voters by vote should never be revealed because it introduces an outside aspect into the game which does not otherwise have relevance. In short, it adds a rule which will

interfere with the progress of the game. That might be considered a variant in some quarters.

On the other hand, the totals should be revealed so that the players, knowing the board as they do, can gauge whether or not the total seems accurate. In this way an Ombudsman, where necessary, has a published figure to work with that he can use to canvass the players and thus check (in a worst-case scenario). It is a matter of accuracy in reporting.

Conrad Inasmuch as John has referred to it, let us quote that
 von Metzke section of the Rulebook (Rule II) which treats with ending the game: "As soon as one Great Power controls 18 Supply Centers, it is said to have "gained control of Europe," and the player representing that Great Power is the winner. Players may terminate the game by mutual agreement before a winner is determined, in which case all players who still have pieces on the board share equally in a draw."

Using this as a foundation, we have only two possible results (well...actually three, if you count abandonment): A solo win, and the so-called 'DIAS' - 'Draw Including All Survivors.' Anything else, technically speaking, is a variant. Moreover, the draw decision requires "mutual agreement" - i.e. unanimity.

Postal play, however, has for quite some while recognized other possibilities. The postal hobby recognized them, in fact, long before Rule II was changed to read as it now does. (Originally, in the 1961 Rulebook, only the solo 18-center win was mentioned.) This was a natural outgrowth of two things: The recognition that most postal games last a long time (REAL-time, that is); and the discovery of the art and science of stalemate lines. The first principle gave rise to the concession, which at one time was quite popular but which has receded somewhat these days; the second caused the development of the "conclusion-by-ballot-box," i.e. the voted draw.

Though the mechanics vary from place to place, it seems to be standard procedure nowadays that the players can agree to conclude any postal game any way they wish, at any time, by vote. Sometimes unanimous positive assent is required (& la Hager); sometimes just an absence of 'nays.' Randolph expresses discomfort with concession to a one-unit power, but - joke or not - that has been done.

What seems clearest from this discussion is that the players are entitled to end their games by vote if they so desire; it is only the mechanics that are in dispute. Though this procedure may reek of variant to the more technical among us, I am not aware that anyone takes this possibility very seriously. Someone, long ago - I forget who, but it isn't really relevant; it was twenty years ago or so - pointed out quite seriously, and quite rightly, that all postal games are automatic variants by virtue of the essential violation of Rule IV ("...the diplomacy period...lasts 30 minutes before the first move and 15 minutes before each move thereafter.") On that basis, modification for postal play of the mere mechanical rules has long since been taken for granted.

Elmer gets very involved in a dissertation on the meaning of the term 'abstention.' He has a point. It is not a mere technicality. Of course it is of no substantive importance if the proposal passes, but if it fails, then it may matter. Just as the abstention can be a big deal at the United Nations, so it may be a point of significance vis-à-vis the future of a game in which a proposed result is voted down.

I am easily persuaded that any proposal will fail by the casting of a single 'nay.' I am not so easily persuaded that "unanimity among

all players submitting orders" represents a useful criterion. In this connection, Elmer's discussion of the meaning of an abstention, as well as Bruce's observations on non-voting players, make a great deal of sense. This is particularly true when the criterion is that one 'nay' kills the proposal; having no way of knowing for certain how others will vote, a player who wishes the proposition vetoed has no choice but to actively vote 'no.' If he does not, it is only reasonable to assume that he is insufficiently interested in the result to bother.

As to the matter of publicizing the vote totals, etc., I am persuaded (having heard all your arguments) that it is up to each player to decide his own level of individual publicity. Again, it is relevant only if a proposal fails; if it passes, all is done, and who cares who did what? A player always has the option to write a press release setting out his vote (the release can be coded for 'black-press' games).

I'm most intrigued by John Caruso's effective 'challenge' to dissect the available options further. See later on for my proposal to do just that.

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QUESTION: What is your opinion of 'black press'?

Randolph Smyth I usually read the press for the game I'm in, but never take it seriously until I have something to confirm it from the player who (supposedly) wrote it. In my 'sine, anything goes as far as black/grey/white press is concerned. But any rule is okay as long as the players know what it is.

Michael Pustilnik I don't see what is wrong with black press, but if you really want to give your players some protection, you can use the system used in Magus. Black press is permitted, but is put in a separate section at the beginning of the press and is clearly labelled. It would be a shame to forbid black press, because it tends to be funnier and better-written than ordinary press.

John Caruso It's your choice. I've played with normal press, grey press, and black press. As long as it's not vulgar and it's stated in advance and consistent, etc., etc., etc....

Bruce Linsey I'm not especially fond of black press. Just for kicks, I allowed it in Voice of Doom only in the April Fool's issue each year - the first issue published on or after April 1. To date, no GM has been nutty enough to copy me.

I also ran a couple of all-black-press games for players who preferred it that way.

Elmer Hinton I allow players to vote for the type of press they desire, and usually it is Black Press, and I have never had any problem with it. (I point to a similar question recently in Whitestonia/Kathy's Korner, where, after my answer, the editor stated that the reputed abuses of Black Press had never appeared in Kaissa.) However, my Black Press rule is modified. Certain players tend to become identified with a certain nickname or dateline. I hold these inviolate; thus general press might be from anywhere, but press which had an exclusive-use dateline is definitely from that person.

I also edit my press in various ways. I haven't had any complaints, and always get plenty, and - as mentioned - don't seem to have had any

abuses. I don't have, as some do, the fear that if I edit I'll never hear from that writer again. If I cut, I'll get less next time, etc. And I like black press....

Conrad It is truly astonishing, sometimes, how one can go blithely
von Metzke along in a hobby and never even think of something which,
 once presented, makes immense sense. The whole argument
against Black Press is focused on the thesis that someone might be mis-
led, and it probably derives from an orientation to the in-person game,
wherein there can be no such thing as 'black' press. But Randolph
makes a telling point here: If players are truly negotiating, and
discussing possibilities, and making deals, are they really relying on
the press to guide them? Almost certainly not....

Because postal Diplomacy is an outgrowth of the science-fiction
fandom field, press was originally conceived as an outlet for creative
fantasy writing. Only much later did it devolve to a vehicle for negoti-
ations between players, and at that, many people stayed with the
original conception. For instance: I do not write press which pur-
ports to develop alliances or assuage my enemies' fears. For that
purpose, I write other things; they're called 'letters.' Press is for
fun. Never mind the damned color of it; it is the fun part, and any
serious matters will be reserved for letter-writing.

Michael is right that 'black press' is very often funnier and
better written; that is almost certainly because the hobby has evolved
to a level where 'ordinary' press is mere technical communication,
where 'black' press is now the realm of the creative writer. And if
a player develops his game based solely on the press (of whatever
color), then I would be inclined to wonder just how gullible he is....

One thing, though: I cannot see the point in relegating 'black'
press to a separate, identified section of the journal, as Michael
tells us Magus does. By so doing, the publisher practically tells us
that anything in the section is fake. Doesn't that kind of destroy
the charm?

Well, for my part, I stand a changed man. Formerly, in COSTA,
black press was forbidden. From this moment on, it is not. I have
been persuaded that I cannot harm anything, and may stir up some fun.

.. .. .

For next issue's installment of the Forum, I offer the following
points, propounded by Ken Hager, Elmer Hinton, and myself. If anyone
cares to comment, I'd love to hear from you.

IX. Regarding voted concessions/draws: Some GMs use the rulebook abso-
lute (DIAS - Draw Includes All Survivors), and some use Players' Choice
(voted end, any way they like). A few are using a modification of the
latter, limiting the choice before game-start to 'x'-way draws (where
'x' may be 3, 4, or 5 powers). In this latter a form of GM interference
in the outcome?

X. Is any house rule legitimate if stated in advance, or are certain
possible rules inherently wrong? (E.g.: "Players who are eliminated
lose all remaining sub credit," "Starting players must submit name,
age, standby orders for at least one other game in the 'zine, and a
photocopy of their driver's license," "Proof that a player has a felony
conviction on file will be grounds for instant expulsion," etc.)

XI. COSTAGUANA, and other journals, have for some time had a house rule that allows players to put 'sealed orders' on file with the Gamesmaster. This is intended as a hedge against a missed move. Under this system, if a player misses a move, the Gamesmaster will take the player's sealed instructions to an uninvolved person (normally a local friend who knows how to play but is not involved in the particular game) and have them fashion orders from the player's guidelines. ('Sealed orders' are not normally actual moves; rather, they are guidelines to the player's aims in the game - future intentions, names of allies and enemies, etc.) Is such a system a benefit or a harm to the game, and why?

XII. When a unit is dislodged and forced to retreat, should the GM list the various options for retreat, or should he let the player figure things out for himself?

XIII. Would it be acceptable to have no house rules at all - such as COSTAGUANA once had? (At one time, my "house-rules" consisted in the following statement: "In adjudicating games, the Gamesmaster will use (a) the Rulebook, and (b) common sense." And that was it!)

All responses welcomed, and will be printed. And I have more questions for next issue....

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ERIC DEPT.: Recent dialogue between Jean and Eric:

Eric: "Mommy, if you'll always love me, I'll always give you hugs and kisses, and buy you flowers, and give up my job!"

Jean: "Your job?! What's your job?"

Eric: "Buying lots of toys!"

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GALLOWS HUMOR: What do the initials NASA stand for?

-----"Need Another Seven Astronauts"-----

B.C.

Johnny Hart



JKH

IN DEFENSE OF THE POT-BOILER

Elitists among classical-music buffs - I am one, and my budding friend Robin ap Cyman is another - are wont to turn down their noses at any music which reeks of popularity. The thesis seems to be that music which is popular cannot be great, and in any case the occasional great piece which achieves popularity, does so for all the wrong reasons. The present essay is intended to introduce you to a composer who is not ranked as 'great,' either by us elitists or by the public in general. Nevertheless, he is "popular." He is a man best known for his contributions to a genre known as the 'pot-boiler' - pieces which instantly appeal to the public taste without actually having any real merit.

Daniel-Francois-Esprit Auber was born in a carriage on the road to Caen in 1782. His family was by no means un-artistic, but Auber's father decreed a commercial career for his son, and at 16 young Daniel was apprenticed to a London mercantile firm; the boy spent his tenure more as a dilettante than as a businessman, and ingratiated himself with the British musical establishment while he was about it.

In 1802, Daniel was obliged to return to Paris - a city from which he would never again depart - and, after a short commercial career, determined to become a composer. He sought out the austere Director of the Paris Conservatory, the Italian transplant Luigi Cherubini; the latter not only guided Auber's studies, he also ingratiated the younger man into Parisian society. The result was that, after a time, Auber began to achieve acceptance, and by 1820 he was bringing down the house at the Opéra Comique with his series of over fifty stage works, beginning with La Bergère Chatelaine. A series of moderate successes culminated with his first unquestionable masterpiece, La Muette de Portici (The Mute Girl of Portici), in 1828; and from then on it was a non-stop progression. Each successive composition by Auber brought down the house, and he was touted as France's première purveyor of the musical theatre; he succeeded his master, Cherubini, as Director of the Conservatory on the latter's death in 1842, and remained Director until his own death thirty years later. Meanwhile, his stage works were the rage of Paris throughout Auber's long life; and at his death, in 1871 at the advanced age of 89, he was just about everything that a composer of the day could have hoped to be: rich, famous, popular and important. He was French opera.

Since Auber's death, opinion has changed. Auber's operas - in fact they are better dubbed 'operettas' - have lost the stage to the more dramatic outbursts of Bizet and Massenet. Part of the problem is one of language: Dramatic (= tragic) opera is far easier to translate than comic. This is because dramatic theatre relies for its effect on basic human emotions and conflicts, universal to all cultures, where comic theatre may well localize its thrust, even resort to dialect, to elicit its ration of chuckles and guffaws. (There are exceptions: The genius of Mozart, and his most significant librettists, is that his operas could often have gone either way; Don Giovanni is tragic with comic elements, and Le Nozze de Figaro is the reverse, but they could easily have been switched. Puccini's one comic effort, Gianni Schicci, deals with the machinations attendant upon greed, and as such speaks to a universal truth; the language is of secondary importance.) Auber focused on the comic, and as such his operas have a purely French slant that is difficult to bring to life in a non-French culture. In this, he reminds strongly of his German contemporary and counterpart, Albert Lortzing (1801-1851), whose reduction of opera from Grand to

Light led directly into the German/Austrian operetta styles of Johann Strauss, Franz L  har and Robert Stolz.

Auber was taught by Cherubini, the Italian-turned-Frenchman, whose own operatic productions remain to this day probably the least-known major stage efforts in operatic history. Cherubini worked mainly in serious opera, but - despite his reputation as an austere conservative - was perfectly capable of a venture into the comic; his two best efforts in the lighter genre (L'Hotellerie Portugaise and Il Crescendo) are, in spite of stock elements, genuinely funny. Auber was, however, possessed of a far greater sense of light humor than his mentor, and so he learned his technical craft thoroughly and then proceeded to move in his own direction. He attempted serious opera, and injected serious elements into his comedies; but he was, through and through, the first significant master of the French operatic comedy. His successes began rather late, in 1820 (Auber was thirty-eight), but by this time he had been composing for eight years and had achieved occasional localized notice; he was quite prepared to follow up on his first popular 'hit' (La Bergere Chatelaine, 1820) with an incessant sequence of well-received productions. It was not until 1828, however (Auber was now 46), that he finally hit the big time. La Muette de Portici ('The Dumb Girl of Portici') brought down the house on opening night, slotted Auber into the top ranks of French composers, and brought him a rapid succession of honors both public and academic. On the death of his master Cherubini in 1842, Auber became the Director of the Paris Conservatory of Music, and held the position until his own death thirty years later. He lived to see one of his own compositions (Fra Diavolo, 1830) set the record for most consecutive performances at the Opera Comique (over nine hundred; the record was only broken after Auber's death). He lived through no fewer than ten French political regimes. And he lived to see other great composers take up his subjects and create their own immortal masterworks: Donizetti borrowed from Auber's Le Philtre to develop L'Elisir d'Amore. Verdi used Gustave III as a basis for Un Ballo in Maschera, and both Massenet and Puccini latched onto - and made greater monuments of - Manon Lescaut.

Two of the Auber operas - La Muette de Portici and Fra Diavolo - remain to this day in the repertoire in French houses. And one of the ballets - Marco Spada, a rewrite from the opera of the same name - has come into some prominence in recent years, thanks to the good offices of the Royal Ballet of England and conductor Richard Bonynge. Beyond this, however, Auber is a forgotten man...excepting only for half a dozen of his operatic overtures, which very quickly achieved concert-favorite status in their day, and have never lost it. In America, these pieces, with their Parisian froth, bouncy rhythms, hummable melodies, and general rampant good cheer, have become concert staples in the realm of the 'pot-boiler' - a term often used disparagingly to signify a piece of little value, but great 'pop' appeal. The idea is to use such a work to warm up the audience for the greater things to follow. Other composers whose works commonly fall into this category are Offenbach, Supp  , Rossini and Johann Strauss.

Well - if you're going to have 'pot-boilers,' where better to find them than in the myriad works of Daniel-Francois Auber? His overtures meet all the criteria: they are melodic, they are bouncy, they are instantly attractive, and they are suffused with a cheerful glow. They have one other characteristic that is not typical, however; they are also fine music. Thank Luigi Cherubini for that, I suppose.

The overtures to the two operas which remain repertoire-items in France - La Muette and Diavolo - are without question the best-known. But, though their attendant operas have fallen by the wayside, other introductory pieces remain very much alive. The principal names are: Le Cheval de Bronze; Les Diamants de la Couronne; Marco Spada (the one of Royal Ballet fame); Le Domino Noir; and Lestocq. There are a few others that are occasionally brought forth.

Virtually all Auber overtures begin with a long, slow-tempo introduction: Sometimes dramatic and boisterous, sometimes gentle, depending on the stage piece to follow. Regardless of mood, however, all exude an uncommon lyricism. The gliding theme from Les Diamants de la Couronne is typical:



This is, almost inevitably, followed by a quick-section beginning with a dramatic and explosive (often quasi-military) outburst; no example can be quoted because these segments are all too often dependent on instrumental or harmonic effect, and a mere quotation of notes is meaningless. These explosions quickly devolve to ultra-lyric second themes, and the bulk of the overture generally revolves around developments of these contrasting ideas, leading to a climax in which the 'bouncy' theme controls but the 'lyric' theme gives strong color. Slightly atypical because of its comparative conservatism is the relevant theme and counter-theme from the overture to Le Part du Diable (1842/3):



It is ever thus. The dramatic clash of harmonies, and fanfare passages, gives way time after time to the lyric singing of an incomparable lyric melody, and eventually the two march in tandem to a firm coda of noble proportions. And it is in these codas that Auber finally stands apart from his mentor Cherubini: The latter casts his conclusions in a form that often seems endless (the overture to Anacreon has an incredible three-minute coda), but Auber utilizes economy; when his works are finished, they work their way to a stopping point and then - they stop! And in their aftermath, the hearer has been buoyed by the Auber cheer, and edified by the Auber harmonic excursions, and (if one likes opera) left wondering what comes next. (If you really want to know, both La Muette and Fra Diavolo can be had in complete performances on discs, as can the ballet version of Marco Spada.)

Pot-boilers? Throwaway pieces to warm up the audience for the real music yet to come?

Hardly.

Interestingly, the Texaco Opera Quiz for Saturday, Feb. 22 - that's one one of the intermission features for the Met, broadcasts - included a fascinating story about a European performance of Fra Diavolo. It would be interesting to know if Charles Dickens knew this opera when he penned 'Oliver Twist,' because the two plots have some striking similarities. And in the final section of the Auber opera, the title character is on stage, singing alternately with the chorus, while Diavolo's henchmen - who are pickpockets - cavort through the crowd picking every pocket in sight. It is a wonderful, and extremely funny, scene if properly staged. Well, in the performance referred to in the radio discussion, it seems that one of the pickpockets got a little carried away, and decided to have some unscheduled fun. As he wove through the chorus, he came close to the prompter's box - whereupon he leaped in, grabbed the prompting book, and ran off across the stage, while the poor prompter is flailing away trying to snatch the book back. (The audience, of course, can see the flailing hands sticking out of the box.) I say: Bravo! If you're going to have fun, don't be limited by convention....

NEXT ISSUE: Conrad's own most embarrassing moments on stage!

CREDIT SHOULD BE GIVEN where due, and I'd like to correct an omission in last issue. You know all those cute space-fillers about the restaurant, which played on the plurals of various words ending in 'us'? I didn't write them. John C. Walker, humourist par excellence and friend beyond compare, did. When you're good, you're good; and several readers agreed with me that John was certainly good this time! Thanks, guy!

WORLD PEACE is a noble ambition, and I hope we achieve it some day. But I suggest that we do have a ways to go. Without comment, here is a list, off the top of my head, of countries where peace is a fantasy these days. This is probably not a complete list, either.

El Salvador	Lebanon	
Nicaragua	South Yemen	
Peru	Iran	And, of course,
Haiti	Iraq	God only knows how
South Africa	Uganda	many places where
Namibia	Afghanistan	guerrilla movements
Chad	Kampuchea	regularly create
Somalia	Philippines	havoc and misery....
Ethiopia	Sudan	

Why, Lord God, oh why do people hate each other so much?

.....

THE MAILBOX FILLET

Anonymous: "You've already got my moves in 'Schuyler Colfax,' but I must object to the name. 'Schuyler Colfax?' Schuyler Colfax is not found in the San Diego Zoo! How about 'Swarthy Swine?' People will likely abandon a game called 'Schuyler Colfax.' How about 'Rambunctious Rhinoceros?'"

((Disgusting, isn't it, how people can get all riled up over nothing. All I was trying to do was clearly differentiate variant games from the regular variety; and, because I felt that different rules, different maps, and different numbers was not enough, I chose to honor some of the great American statesmen who are probably best forgotten, but then, who am I to ever let well enough alone?)

((Actually, the idea for using obscure Vice-Presidents' names came to me over Christmas, while Jean was indulging in her annual immersion in the film 'Miracle on 34th Street.' There's a line in there in which John Quincy Adams' Vice-President is identified as one Daniel D. Tompkins. Having never heard of the gentleman, I took the liberty of looking him up, only to discover that he was in fact Vice-President under James Monroe; J.Q.'s veep was Henry Clay. And on that basis, it occurred to me that if a man of Mr. Tompkins' stature cannot even be correctly remembered by the research departments of Hollywood, I had better get to work before such people are totally lost to us.))

Jeff Hoffman: "I wholeheartedly agree with child seats and seat belts. I've worn one ever since I got my own car, my wife always wears one, and my 3-year-old daughter has never been in a car without her carseat. Wearing a seat belt became mandatory here in New Jersey last year, and compliance is over 50%. It really is a shame that, even with the law, not everyone wears one."

((Good for you guys! But let's face it; a fair proportion of the population is just plain stupid. No matter how many laws are passed, and no matter how many statistics are plastered over the countryside, some furd, somewhere, is going to refuse to latch a life-saving belt.

It's tragic, to be sure, especially when innocents are involved - like children whose parents won't take the trouble - but it's going to happen, and people are going to suffer because of it.

((There is, however, a simple answer. Simply connect the car's ignition to the seat belt mechanism, such that the car will not start unless the belts are latched, nor run if they're disconnected. There will still be those few ultimate idiots who go to all the trouble of latching all the belts behind them - though a little technology might even get around that one - but there is a finite limit to our ability to save people from themselves. I mourn for the helpless ones, who cannot make their own decisions. But in all honesty, if some fool of an adult really wants to risk going through the front glass, or out the door in a rollover, well...for imbeciles like that, I mourn only for the poor State Policeman who has to clean it up....))

Bill Quinn: "Thank you for bringing to my attention the situation in 1984HI. This represents one of the many problems which can arise when players are placed in the same game, who are local to one another or who are close friends...."

"I find the situation of two players living at the same address objectionable. If I were the opposition, I would complain, particularly since one of the two is a standby - a condition which you had control over when you appointed him. On the other hand, this game is fairly well along, and I would be reluctant to say it is unrateable, particularly if David Pierce doesn't object. However, I would feel that a notation would be in order - something like, 'Note: Rauterberg and Fleming at same address W.07 thru Season XX.' This would allow ratings-keepers to base their decisions on more specific information than a blanket statement.

"My recommendations:

1. Encourage Walker to return; failing that,
2. Encourage Rauterberg to resign and appoint a new player; failing that
3. Remove Rauterberg and replace him, particularly if Pierce objects; rejecting that
4. Allow game to continue."

((Note that Bill, the Boardman Number Custodian, is specifically responding to my request for comments on the situation cited.

((In general, I find Bill's reasoning, and suggestions, excellent. Had I known in advance that Paul and Matt would be rooming together, I'd have pursued a different course. But by the time I found out, it was already done, and so I felt my next course was simply to explain the situation to those involved and let them decide. David Pierce has told me that he has no objection. Paul Rauterberg was the one who brought this up in the first place, and he has offered to bow out - he's not your usual sort of replacement, after all, he's merely standing in while John Walker gets well - if any problems arose.

((Strictly because David has signified to me that he is comfortable, I've let things stand. But I have written back to Bill, and asked if he will accept David's position as sufficient to let the game go on without a 'notation.' If he feels he cannot do this, then I will ask Paul to step aside - I know very well that he will - and go from there. The final word on this will probably appear with the 1984HI game report this issue; look there if you're interested.))

Anonymous: "I wouldn't have guessed you as an alcoholic. My father stayed an alcoholic and hasn't died from it yet, but he's getting there. His brain is starting to turn to mush. He said that if he had to die, he would go out that way; he has a plethora of problems.

"Oh well, at least I'm not seeing it any more. Due to that bottle, he has ruined seven lives - eight if you include his own...."

((Alcoholics come in all shapes and sizes; believe me, in my journey into A.A., I have met some who, by outward appearance, would absolutely astound you. They look, and seem, so happy, and so healthy, and so vital...and yet, in company with all the rest of us in the room, they are drunks. They, too, have caused harm, and have hurt people.

((Relatively few alcoholics set out to harm people; they normally start out meaning well, but losing control, and falling under the domination of liquor. One of the reasons A.A. has such a good track record is that it focuses on the need to regain control of an inherently good, worthwhile life; neither the alcoholic nor the substance is inherently evil, it is simply that they they do not mix successfully in some cases. A.A. is not much more than a process of people helping other people recognize the impossibility of the mix, and of learning to cope and grow without it.

((Without preaching - believe me, I'm the last one to do that - I might suggest that your life hasn't been "ruined" at all; it's been badly damaged, probably, but it is by no means hopeless. It might do you some good, as it did my wife, to look in to your own reactions and feelings about the situation. You may never be able to change your dad - I couldn't change mine - but you can perhaps come to an understanding of his illness, and of your own ability to transcend your background. Invest a little time: Call the local A.A. office and ask about Al-Anon, which is a subordinate group for relatives of alcoholics. You have absolutely nothing to lose....))

Robert Greier: "Okay, what's the big idea? I write in a space filler, for the bottom of a page, and - there it is, opening paragraph! No royalty check in the mail, no drum roll or anything. Only kidding, of course; my lawyer will contact you...."

((Experience will teach you, Bob. Send me something, and I may do almost anything with it. One of the few things I rarely do is whatever it was you expected....

((I am eager to hear from your lawyer; this ought to be fun. Hey, Lu, Jake, Chris, Walt...and me, as a matter of fact; wanna take a case?))

Randolph Smyth: "In general, I've greatly enjoyed the last couple of COSTA issues, thanks. I look forward with some anxiety to your return to 'normal sized' ones, as it prompts the question, 'What's he gonna leave out?'"

((Well, for one thing, I think I'll leave out the rest of your letter....))

Jim Burgess: "I loved COSTAGUANA, especially the Schubert article. I think I'm gaining more understanding of him that will help me to enjoy his music more. He's kind of like Peery...."

((Yup. You got it, baby! Amazing, is it not, how history can repeat itself, usually in the form of short, roly-poly people?))

Bruce Linsey: "Conrad, I want to congratulate you on the finest issue of COSTAGUANA I've seen to date, and one of the finest issues of any 'zine I've seen in the past year or two. The reading material was superb. Several of the articles and letters could save people's lives. The House Rules Forum is fascinating, and useful to less experienced GMs. The 1962A story was very revealing, and even the 'filler'-type stuff was well done. The Diplomacy Digest plug was probably the best description of that 'zine I've ever read. It's easy to see why you are, and have been, held in such high regard in this hobby. Keep up the good work!"

((Whoops - I must have forgotten to tell Bruce that the check I sent him is going to bounce....

((I'm sorry to have used Bruce as a way of tooting my own horn, but he was just so effusive and encouraging that I couldn't resist. Lord knows I try, and it's awfully good to hear that people enjoy....

((As to the 'high regard' in which I'm held, believe me, all is not peaches and cream. Just ask Reinsel or Boardman....))

Bruce Linsey ((yup, same one!)): "Some of your readers might be interested in Mayfair's rail games EMPIRE BUILDER and BRITISH RAILS. I have begun a small-scale publishing venture, called TRAX, dealing strictly with these two games. (No politics, no feuds, no other games, no nothing!) Currently the 'zine is for discussion only, but some friends and I have managed to devise a postal format, so I'll be opening a game of postal EMPIRE BUILDER shortly. If you are interested, I'll trade you for COSTAGUANA. ((Hell, yes!)) Samples are 40c. ((Bruce can be gotten ahold of at: 73 Ashuelot, #3, Dalton, MA 01226-1403.))

((One of the most popular postal games in the U.K. is RAILWAY RIVALS, which I strongly suspect is a close cousin to the thing Bruce refers to. I am currently badgering, hounding, begging and kissing the disgusting feet of Richard J. Walkerdine. - and if he doesn't cough up, I'll go after Piggott, whose breeding farm would surely love to have two more children in exchange - for a copy of RIVALS.

((Yes, sir, I am interested. Keep me posted.))

Jacob Walters: "I can't boast of any particular musical talent (my mom was a dance teacher, so I can dance), but I do represent several members of the Boston Symphony. I also have several clients who fill in for the Pops, or play with various musicals that come to town. Do I get any points for that? ((Depends on what instruments they play. Oboists are worth the most....))

"Sad to say, musicians don't bring much excitement to my office. Usually they just buy homes or write wills. Not a criminal or nasty contract suit in the bunch. I do get some free tickets, and maybe I can get my kids lessons!"

((Just goes to prove: Musicians are almost people too!

((What the hell do you do in your practice - everything? In California at least, a 'general practice' lawyer is becoming as rare a bird as our condors. One guy does probats and trusts; another does contracts; yet a third does crim; etc. Sounds like there may actually be non-specialists still alive back there in Snow Country!))

Kathy Byrne: "New York was the first state to institute a mandatory seat belt policy, and we were followed by New Jersey and now Connecticut. Every passenger in the front seat must wear a seat belt; if you're in the rear seat, it's not mandatory to wear a seat belt unless you are under the age of 12. This law was enacted a few years back, but even prior to that we had the Baby Law. Every child under the age of 4 must be strapped into a car seat.

"Public outcry at these laws was ridiculous. People felt it was a violation of their constitutional rights to force them to wear a seat belt. Forget the fact that the law might save their life....

"The death rate in auto accidents has dropped tremendously since these laws were enacted! I always wear a seat belt; I also make every passenger in my car wear one. I think it is wise to remember what one state trooper said: "I never unbuckled a dead man!"

"A Dip player who is a paramedic in Michigan, Joe Clement, wrote me immediately upon hearing of our seat belt law. He said we were the smartest people in the nation. He has at various times written me about his runs. My sister is an Emergency Medical Tech. in upstate N.Y., and she has also written me about her runs. Both will tell the same story - don't kid yourself, seat belts do make a difference. Seat belts save lives!

"My children, age 16 and (twins) 14, are sick of hearing me say, every time they get in the car, "Put on your seat belts!" As my son Frank said yesterday, "Now, do you have to keep telling us - we know!"

"I didn't write this for a free lifetime subscription...I wrote it because I firmly believe that anyone who doesn't 'buckle up' is flirting with death!"

((I haven't the slightest idea what I could possibly add to Kathy's exposition that would say it any better. Many states now have mandatory seat belt laws, but most are fairly watery: In California, for instance, an officer cannot cite you on the seat belt law unless he is also stopping you for some other violation. That is almost no law at all. Even if it were a more solid statute, however, what's the poor cop to do? - most police forces are woefully undermanned, and if they shift their already crowded priorities to seat belt enforcement, they'll be unable to function at all. The California Highway Patrol is on record as admitting that they cannot possibly enforce the 55-mph speed limit; currently, they do not attempt to stop anyone unless the car is going at least 65.

((If you want to chirp about constitutional rights, go ahead. I agree completely. In my opinion, you have the absolute and unalterable constitutional right to commit suicide in a particularly messy and painful way, and if you want to take the Ultimate Risk - that you will not die, but will merely be maimed, crippled or disfigured - then go right ahead. Our Constitution is a very broad document; it readily gives you the privilege of being stupid....

((Jack Wade, the state trooper to whom Kathy refers ('I never unbuckled a dead man'), was an impressive man. His seemingly casual lectures, on film and in person, had a way of starting out in a slow but somehow enticing manner, and gradually pulling you along until you were hanging on every word. If ever you want to see someone make a point, disarmingly but intensely, look at one of his films! Mr. Wade died of cancer two years ago; considering the influence he was able to have on highway safety practices, this is a true tragedy.))

Ed Wrobel: "He - a coward? Some of your friends may believe I've been far too bold. I came into this game as a stand-by only because I thoroughly enjoyed the 'garbage' that was The Inner Light. I'm sure many people enjoy your 'zine, and would be happy to take over this position.

"Sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, Ed."

((Hey, don't look at me! I miss Keith's rag too. I confess I rarely understood very much of it, but I pride myself on my capacity to enjoy and appreciate quality in an alien environment.

((I must also note that some rock and roll does get played in this house. Mainly by Ross. He likes Roy George, Madonna, Men at Work, Little Richard, the 'Flashdance' score, and Sesame Street Disco.

((Well...actually, that's not quite true. Ross doesn't really like Little Richard; I do. He bought me a Little Richard tape for Christmas, and allows me to play it sometimes. I am also very fond of Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Bobby Day, Larry Williams... the whole "black fifties" trip.

((You know what else I like? Blues. This can range from the extreme rural Southern styles of such as Son House and Blind Lemon Jefferson, to the more urbanized - occasionally commercialized - derivatives like Lightnin' Hopkins, to the Chicago big-band versions of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, to the very distinctive Cajun genre of Clifton Chenier...the list could go on and on.

((Twenty years ago, I owned a folk-music club. During its life, I engaged some rather good performers in this field. Lightnin' was here twice, and he and I continued to exchange Christmas cards and occasional notes up until his death last year. Jesse Fuller was here; Brownie McChee and Sonny Terry came for a week, but Sonny got sick after one day and we had the sheer joy of hearing how good Brownie really is on his own; we had Son House (the only entertainer I ever met whose speech was so heavily accented that I needed an interpreter), the late Big Mama Thornton, John Lee Hooker (you saw him briefly in "The Blues Brothers"), and my own favorite, Mississippi Fred McDowell. You want to hire Fred for a concert? Just call him. He lives in Como, Mississippi. What you do is, you call the operator in Jackson and ask her to ring Ike's Gas Station in Como. When Ike answers, ask him if he'd please go across the street and get Fred. If Fred isn't home, Ike will call someone to take a message; as Ike says it, "I ain't got no writin'.")

Mark Berch: "Permit me a micro-sermon on testicular cancer.

"In some age groups, testicular cancer is the leading or second-leading cause of cancer deaths in non-smoking males. Major forms of testicular cancers are, more so than most cancers, very dependent (in their treatment success rates) on how quickly they are spotted. That is, caught quite early, the prognosis is usually very good. Caught late, you are in big trouble. Unlike something like a brain tumor, this is something that you can usually spot yourself. Men tend to be reluctant to do this, presumably for fear of finding things. I mean, who wants to have his balls cut off? ((Another possible motive of reluctance may well be the social prohibition which demeans masturbation; this isn't the same, of course, but it may seem it to some.))

"The loss of a testicle is not normally a serious blow to sexual functioning. The remaining one can supply all the sperm and hormones needed, in much the same way that you can get by fine with one kidney.

For those worried about cosmetic considerations, a silicone replacement can be put in. In fact, you may be able to talk the doctor into giving you two of them to replace the one taken out. You could potentially make quite a bit of money by shouting in a bar, "I'll bet I've got more balls than anyone else in the house!"

"The best time to check your testicles is when you are in a warm bath. This relaxes the scrotum wall, and may slightly sensitize your fingertips as well. Feel both testicles for any lumps, or anything out of the ordinary, and if you find something, don't delay: check with your doctor."

((Okay, that does it. From now on, all Diplomacy games are dropped, we will run articles on health and safety, and we will rename the thing 'The Journal of the American Medical Association'....

((For all that my mother is an R.N., and my wife a health freak, I have learned something here. I hope a few of you have too. I might suggest that you first schedule a physical exam - you all probably are overdue anyway, as most of us are - and determine if the current characteristics of your own testicles are normal. These self-exam programs are fine once you know what you're looking for; but for those who have never paid any attention, 'ground zero' (normalcy) must be established first, or you'll never know what you're comparing to.

((The concept of women self-examining their breasts is now fairly well established, though it needs to be continuously reinforced. Men need to treat Mark's advice as their equivalent procedure, develop a routine - presumably you all bathe regularly, and if worked into that context it will probably cost you all of one minute a week - and follow through.

((And if it bothers you - think of the alternative!))

NEXT ISSUE

The letter column welcomes your contributions, and I intend no effort to discourage you, but - next time we have, already scheduled, huge and worthy treatises from Chris Greaves and Elmer Hinton. Please stay tuned; both these gentlemen have some intriguing comments.

Other letters received for next issue will supplement the foregoing as possible, or will be held for the issue to follow.

FRANK AND ERNEST

Bob Thaves



RONALD REAGAN, ESQ. - TRIPPING OVER THE FACTS YET AGAIN

The rhetoric of Ronald Reagan soars more grandly than the words of most who preceded him. So much so, indeed, that we might hardly recognize the message. But the thought kept nagging me, as I heard the State of the Union message telling us how great things are, and adjuring us to reach for the stars; call it *deja-vu*, if you will, it's a curse of growing older. I felt I could remember someone else talking this way. And sure enough, I found it. Listen:

"Prosperity is written on fuller wage envelopes, written in factory chimney smoke, written on the walls of new construction, written in savings bank books, written in mercantile balances, and written in the peak value of stocks and bonds. We have achieved the final triumph over poverty."

Herbert Hoover speaking, in an upbeat mood like Reagan's - months before it all came tumbling down on that dark October day in 1929.

Only a confirmed pessimist would profess to see anything like that on the horizon now. But a strange order of priorities, as enunciated by President Reagan and reflected by his top assistants, suggests that this will be a year of bitter impasse.

Watching the 'State of the Union,' we sensed his excitement over a hypersonic plane that may fly to Tokyo in two hours. But accept his budget for 1987, and we won't be able to ride a train to Los Angeles. He'd boost foreign aid by ten percent while arming his definition of 'freedom fighters' in Nicaragua, Angola, or wherever. The money for this must come from a million college students, whose government loans he would lop off.

The Reagan budget envisions full funding of every present military program, plus new outlays for 'Star Wars' weaponry. Also the abandonment of standby federal oil reserves, public power projects that hold down utility rates, Amtrak, and the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Finally, with a steadfastness that would be commendable if exhibited in a worthier cause, the President assures us again and again that he'll tolerate no new taxes.

As budget hearings began in both House and Senate, Republican leaders sounded almost as biting as Democratic. When the budget director, Jim Miller, testified there could be no compromise over taxes or defense spending, Committee chairman Pete Domenici (R - NM) told him, "It's time to stop playing games." At this point, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger poured on a little salt, charging that many in Congress seem unconcerned over their country's security. 'Cap' never has accepted the wisdom of an old Haitian proverb: Do not insult the mother alligator until after you have crossed the river.

The clock is ticking. Exactly 33 weeks remain before the start of fiscal 1987, the deadline for action. If, by that time, Congress and the White House have not come together on this, the fire-breathing monster called Gramm-Rudman (if still alive) will roar into view, taking huge bites out of defense and domestic spending alike. Should that happen, Ronald Reagan never will say never again. Everything would be cut by roughly 20 percent. Weaponry and military personnel. Air traffic controllers. The I.R.S. The border patrol. The FBI. You heard it - everything, possibly including the President's approval rating.

What we may be seeing is one of those historic shifts in initiative and power between the Executive Branch and Congress. The Depression, and then World War II, gave Franklin Roosevelt a stronger hand than any President had wielded since Lincoln, or perhaps Andrew Jackson. Congress

your next moves, please vote on all three. If you want to kill a proposal, you must vote 'no' - a proposal must pass unanimously, but votes not cast count as abstentions. If more than one proposal passes, the one declared will be the one with the fewest participating powers and the greatest total number of supply centers owned. Okay?

Spring 1910 moves, and votes, are due Saturday, March 29, 1986. A check in this space _____ means I have orders on file for you.

MADISON TO MADISON: You have got to be the worst pathological liar I've seen in a long time. Not only has Madladism gotten into you, it has infected every pore of your weaselly little body. So, with my last dying breath...en garde!

JAMUL TO MADISON (The first one): Isn't it nice, what friendships this hobby develops?

ROME TO JANUL: This is actually more fun now that I have no chance to win or probably even to survive.

JAMUL TO ROME: Well, then, for the ultimate thrill in life, wait until you get to one unit!

//////////

GAME 1986Bon05 - WILLIAM RUFUS DEVANE KING (Cline 9-Man) - Game Start

With Guest Gamestyrant Simon Billenness presiding, this game is now under way. Players were notified by flyer, and a deadline for Spring 1901 was set at 28th March 1986. See below for specifics.

The address of the gameowner is: 61-A Park Avenue, Albany, New York 12202. All moves must go to Simon. Inasmuch as I (Conrad) am playing the game, you'd be an idiot to send them to me. On the other hand, press should come to me; write it, fold it up, label it 'Cline Press,' and I promise I won't open until after the moves are in.

Simon's 'phone number is (518) 463-8485. Telephoned moves will be accepted until 10:00 p.m. Eastern time the Thursday before the deadline (in the case of Spring '01, this is March 27). Telephoned moves cannot be accepted on the date of deadline, owing to Simon's need to adjudicate the moves and have them ready for my 'phone call to print them.

One final note. In other COSTA games, I end each season with a line that says, "If this space _____ is checked, I have your next moves on file." In this game, I cannot do this. Therefore, please keep good records, and watch your deadlines.

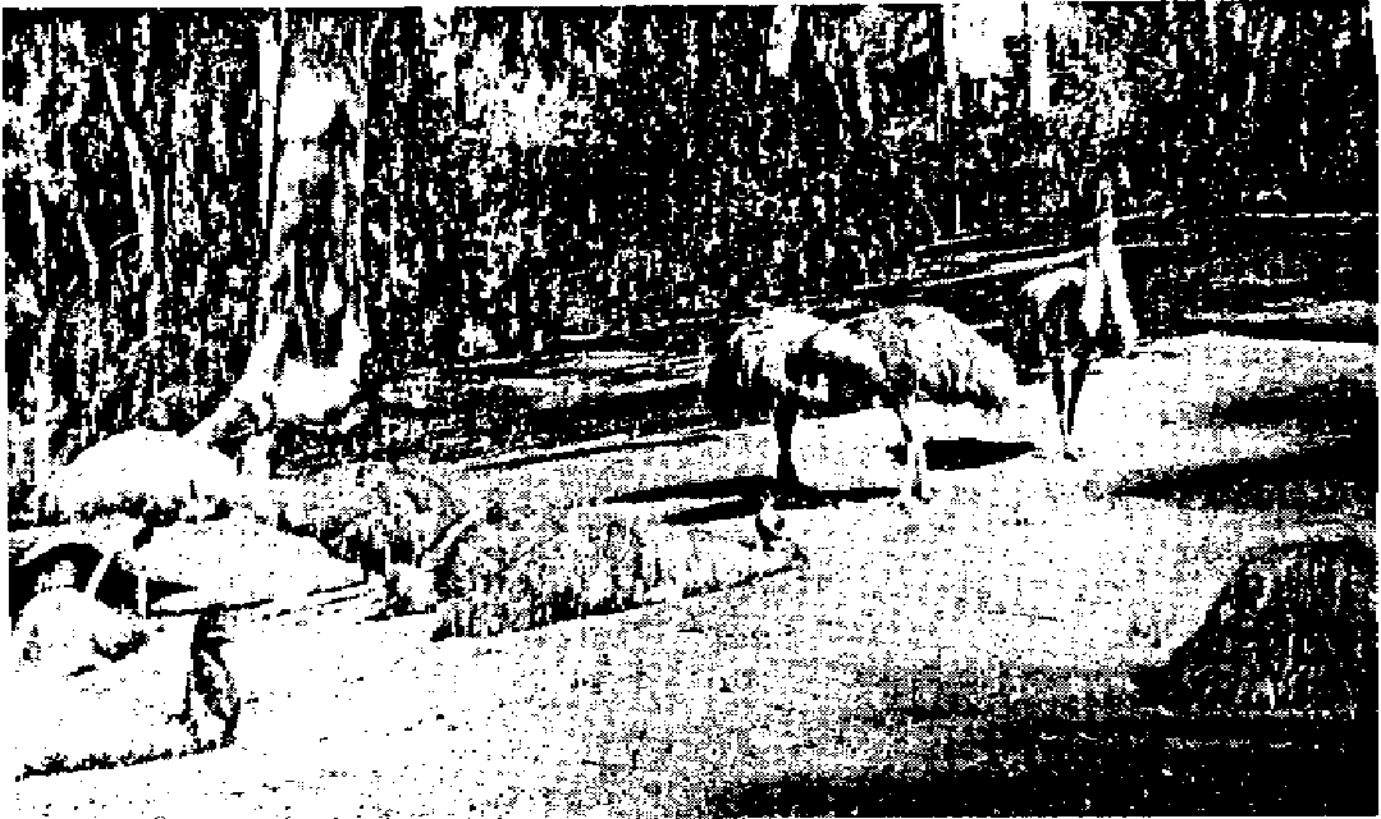
zc zc

GAME 19860 - The Convolutated Cassowary - Game Start

This new regular game was also announced by flyer. Deadline for Spring 1901 was set at Saturday, 29th March 1986.

If this space is checked _____, I have your tentative moves on file.

Note Larry Botimer's address (corrected yet again) is: 13833 11th St., #3, Bellevue, WA 98005. And Larry says we can stick to our deadline.





ABOVE LEFT: Ross (age 6 1/2) smugly touching the kitchen ceiling.
ABOVE RIGHT: Eric (age 4) gleefully copying his brother.
FACING PAGE, TOP: The Extroverted Emu. (Note: The Convolutad Casso-
wary would be very difficult to distinguish.)
FACING PAGE, BOTTOM: The Delirious Dik-Dik.

Photographs: Jean von Metzke, Conrad von Metzke. Printing and
Reproductions: Doug Brown.

Dan Stafford finds himself strapped for time and, apologetically, feels compelled to resign. Sorry to see you go, but thank you very much for your reliable change-over, and for the final build.

England will now be commanded by Robert W. Greier, Jr., 35171 Gromley Rd., Salem, OH 44460-9510.

Retreats: AUS f gre o.t.b.; AUS a ser-bud; ITA a tri o.t.b.; ITA f wes-tyn. After all this, Italy is now entitled to build.

AUSTRIA (Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way North, Rockville, MD 20854-6128):

Has: a's vie, tri, ser (3).

ENGLAND (Bob Greier, see above): Builds f lon. Has: f's lon, edi, stp nc, nwy, nth (5).

FRANCE (Kevin Tighe, 2026 Agate, Eugene, OR 97403-1751): Builds f bre. Has: a's pie, war; f's bre, wes, spa sc (5).

GERMANY (Paul Gardner, Rt. 1 Box 2338, Newfane, VT 05345-9734): Builds f kie. Has: a's bul, mun, ruh, den, war, mos; f's kie, nwg (8).

ITALY (Pat Jensen, 712 Minnesota Ave., Albert Lea, MN 56007-3621):

Builds a ven. Has: a's tyo, ven; f's gre, ion, tyn (5).

RUSSIA (Conrad Hinshall, 3702 Tarragona Lane, Austin, TX 78727-6049):

Removes a swe. Has: f bot (1).

TURKEY (Michael Pustilnik, 140 Cadman Plaza West, Brooklyn, NY 11201-1852):

Builds a con. Has: a's bul, rum, sev, ser, con; f's bla, smy (7).

It has been proposed that this game be declared a four-way draw, Fra-Ger-Ita-Tur. Please vote with your next orders. One 'nay' kills it; abstentions or votes not cast are not counted in determining the result.

Spring 1905 orders are due Saturday, March 29, 1986. If I've made a mark in this space _____ your moves are on file already.

ROME TO PARIS: Up yours.

JAMUL: But what if it goes up the wrong one?

ROME TO G.M.: Don't think I dislike Kevin, I'm just not pleased at the fleets coming to visit. Kevin's a nice guy; who else would let an expansion United team beat a two-year team?

JAMUL TO ROME: Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot to mention; we also don't discuss soccer in these pages. Well, keep trying. Or if it would make it easier on you, I'll gladly send you a copy of my taboo list of SWARE words (SWARE = Subjects which Aren't Rather Elitist). Just mail me an 8x11 manila envelope with six ounces' postage affixed.

GERMANY TO JAMUL: Since rock music is considered to be 'garbage' in this 'zine, I am going on a snit and boycotting the press from now on.

JAMUL TO GERMANY: Oh heck, don't do that! Okay, let's talk rock music. Have you ever heard the xylophone played with obsidian?

OREGON TO JAMUL: No rock music? NO ROCK MUSIC?? One of the reasons I got into this game was because Sherwood encouraged rock music press. I feel like a punk who just got adopted by the Brady Bunch....

JAMUL TO OREGON: Weren't you listening? We just had a question on that!

JAMUL (again) TO OREGON: The Brady Bunch may be corny, but at least they all look like people.

PARIS TO ANKARA: I'll meet you in Naples.

RC - NNY: Well, you outlasted TIL.

JAMUL: Yup, he sure did. He also outlived some good ones....

K.T. TO JAMUL: Okay, but what is a nilgai?

JAMUL TO MR. PATIENCE: "Nilgai (*Ovis montanus*), species of antelope, found in India. It stands between four and five feet high at the withers. The adult male is brownish-grey, with white markings on the face and throat, white rings at the fetlocks, whitish underparts, and short, smooth, nearly straight horns. The females are smaller, brown, and hornless. The animal is remarkable for the comparative shortness of the hind limbs, and the rapid slope of the back line."

Next issue, we'll discuss the aoudad....

TIGHE TO GARDNER: Sounds like you had a fun date. You know, I got a girlfriend who's better than that, but nothing is better than this.

JAMUL: Yeah, but mine's better than both of them combined....

JAMUL TO GARDNER: Hey, did you ever pay your parking ticket?

FRANCE TO AUSTRIA: Think he'll let us continue our discussion on Rap music?

JAMUL TO EVERYONE: Hey, listen; quite seriously, if somebody really does want to go into rock, no problem. I'll be happy to listen and learn. Letters, articles, press...all are welcome. My only restriction is that you cannot start until issue after next. That's because next issue is my special Franz Joseph Haydn Birthday Issue, and any music discussions will have to relate to him and his limitless glory....

SPECIAL NILGAI QUIZ

Just one question; anybody may participate, but NILGAI players are especially welcomed:

1. Of the following Little Richard songs, which has had the strongest influence on Pink Floyd? (Oh, by the way, did I mention that I love Pink Floyd....)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Bama Lama Bama Loo | 6. Heeby-Jeebies |
| 2. Jenny Jenny | 7. Ready Teddy |
| 3. Send Me Some Lovin' | 8. Goin' Back to Birmingham |
| 4. Ooh! My Soul.... | 9. Keep a-Knockin' |
| 5. True Fine Mama | 10. Miss Ann |

LODOISKA ALI BABA IL CRESCENDO L'HOTELLERIE PORTUGAISE FANISKA

As a secondary music quiz (my kind), who wrote all the operas named in the preceding linear separator?

GAME 1983AC - THE WISTFUL WOMBAT - End!

Let me tell it to you like it is - I am going to miss this game. It was this game that started COSTA going again, and it's been the mainstay of the journal ever since - that's a bit more than two years now. So (I hate to be maudlin, but....) with this game's end goes a part of me too. In the course of running this game, I gradually wormed my way back into the hobby, and made some pretty wonderful friends. Four of the finest - Paul, Michael, Jake and Lu (in no particular order) finished up this game with me.

Thank you all - and your predecessors too - very, very much.

MAGAZINE: DnD (to S.02), COSTAGUANA

GAMESMASTER: 7 Marshall (to S.02), Conrad von Metzke

AUSTRIA: Pete Robson (dro F.09), Paul Rauterberg (out F.12)

ENGLAND: Michael Pustilnik (WON F.12)

FRANCE: Stuart Lancaster (dro W.02), Matt Johnston (dro F.09), Lu Henry

GERMANY: Matt Fleming (out F.06)

ITALY: Daniel Scott Palter (res W.02), James Stevens (dro W.07), c.d. (out F.09)

RUSSIA: 7 (res S.02), Rod Walker (res F.04), Steve Cartier (out F.06)

TURKEY: R. Jacob Walters

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
A	5	5	7	8	8	9	8	4	2	2	1	-
E	4	5	6	6	7	9	9	12	13	16	17	18
F	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	5	4	2	2	1
G	3	4	4	4	2	-						
I	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	-			
R	4	3	2	2	2	-						
T	4	6	5	6	6	7	8	12+	15+	14	14	15

Because I had nothing to do with game year 1901, and have never seen anything on it, I cannot vouch for the accuracy of my chart for that year. I have also been unable to determine who first played Russia, or the original Gamesmaster's first name (was it Dave?). From 1902 forward, this chart is straight from my COSTA masters, and I'll stand by it.

You know what I'd like to know? Remember Jim Stevens? I wonder how he and his baby (must be nearly a year old now) are doing?

JAKE WALTERS: This was a game where early alliances A/T and E/F held together early and brought the game into 1907 with Austria the dominant partner in the A/T duet, and France slightly more successful than England in their partnership. In late '07 England and I stabbed our allies and joined forces. At first I thought I'd run away with the game, but England kept pace. Toward the end I opted to try for a win rather than draw with Mike, the only problem being - I didn't get the victory! I offer no excuses, other than England's ability to get French aid. In hindsight, I'm not sorry I tried for it - I suspect England would not have allowed a two-way draw, and this way was more interesting.

For me, the best part of the game was that it was picked up by Conrad, who introduced me to the joys of COSTAGUANA. Thank you for your efforts on our behalf, you've made a difference.

Congratulations to Michael Pustilnik on a solid effort and well-earned victory.

FRANCE: a gas (s) bur. a par-pic. a bur (s) pic-bel. a pic-bel.
f mid-wes.

GERMANY: a hol-bel. a ruh-kie. a sil-ber. a mun-bur.

ITALY: No moves received! a pic, a rom, f tyn (h).

RUSSIA: No moves received! a mos, a ukr, f bal (h).

TURKEY: a rus-sev. a bul-rum. a ank-arm. f bla (s) rum-sev. f grø
(s) aeg-ion. f aeg-ion. f say-aeg.

Hmm...a couple people not present at reveille, eh? Okay, we'll have standbys on hand for next round.

The Italian army Rome is squished. No retreats.

Would somebody - anybody - kindly clarify the position of the Italian fleet for me? I cannot find John's last issue, and my move sheet had the thing listed in Tuscany. I think that's a miswrite for Tyrrhenian, but I'd like to be sure. If nobody corrects me, Tyrrhenian it shall be.

Another intriguing silliness - I know the names of the two players who missed moves, but I do not know which of them is playing which country. Hopefully both of them (or at least one) will be back next time to clarify....

Fall 1903 Moves due Saturday, March 29, 1986.

TURKEY TO AUSTRIA: Who is a clease-bag? Black press, I hope....

ENGLAND TO GERMANY (SWE-MWY): I trust you recognize that F Den-Kie was a purely defensive move on my part (snicker).

ENGLAND TO FRANCE (Den-Kie): I'll support either Hol-Bel of Bur-Bel this fall. I'll flip a coin, unless a foolish Mid-Iri makes my decision for me.

JANUL: Need a quarter?

MR. 'X' SPEAKS: Please disregard any more ramblings by Admiral Antoine 'Puffa-Puffa' de Grasse. And thanks loads for this dominant position and lovely coded name Conrad. I do promise to continue in the same bumbling manner as my predecessor. Go England!

ITALY TO RUSSIA: Methinks the 7-center Turk is a worse problem than the "runaway" (6-center) England - or at least a more immediate problem. What say you?

MR. 'X' TO GERMANY: You can have Belgium - unless I get it first!

MR. 'X' TO ITALY: Swine dog!

MORTIMER TO FRANCE: The loss of Germany's fleet will have dire consequences for you.

MORTIMER TO GERMANY: What can a person say? Nice knowing you....

BIG BEN TO TURKEY (Lvp-Iri): Meet'cha in the middle, good buddy!

MR. 'X' TO ENGLAND: A big ten-four good buddy chap. Support me into Belgium this fall and I'll support you into Holland next fall. Burgundy will be my attack piece, and I can guarantee you no Brest fleet.

MR. 'X' TO STOP TURKEY MOVEMENT: Hello? HELLO?

SAILING, SAILING, DOWN TO THE END OF THE TOWN: It wasn't really a dark and stormy night, but Jean-Pierre loved to pretend that it was. It made things more fun. There was nothing more boring than navigating a fleet over calm, clear, well-lighted waters without conceivable hazard. After all, one might fall asleep at the wheel, and battleships had no seat belts.

And so, whenever the water was placid, Jean-Pierre fantasized a terrific sou'wester. He would spin the wheel wildly, causing the ship to pitch a bit. He would procure buckets of water and throw them over the wheel-house to simulate gale-force spray. He would stand at his helm screaming, "Whoosh! Crash! Screech! Sssssss...." hour after hour; the crewmen considered it the funniest thing aboard, except of course the Admiral's incoherent lascivious panting from behind his locked cabin door.

This night, Jean-Pierre was in rare form. The fleet was steaming close in, and he could actually see the sheer stone cliffs towering to port. Though the water was calm, there was enough overcast to blot the stars and darken the entire vantage; and so Jean-Pierre, shrieking imitations of a hurricane at the top of his lungs, alternately spun the wheel wildly and flung immense tubs of water all over everywhere. In a narrow field of vision, Hollywood could not have done better; in and around the wheel-house, it actually looked like a hurricane. For effect, Jean-Pierre would occasionally toss small figurines of people atop the wheelhouse, to have them washed overboard with his next bucket. In his hip pocket, there portruded a damp copy of Joseph Conrad's TYPHOON. Oh, he was having a field day!

At last!, thought Jean-Pierre as he spun the wheel and sloshed a bucket. At last we are within sight of the enemy, fending off a snarling gale, struggling with every breath (spin, slosh) to conquer a Force Ten blow, striving mightily (splash whirl) to break out of the weather and train our guns on the hideous Boche....

"Jean-Pierre! What in the blazes is going on?"

Jean-Pierre, startled in mid-slosh, whirled to face his Admiral. There in the wheel-house door, doubly erect, resplendent in full regalia came only that his fly remained open, stood Admiral Antoine 'Puffa-Puffa' de Grasse, a frown of stern warning on his face. "Playing 'storm' again?" stormed Puffa-Puffa. "I'll give you 'storm.' Are you aware, Jean-Pierre, that tomorrow our mission is to storm you battlements?" The Admiral gestured to port.

"Oui, Mon Capitaine." Jean-Pierre looked unusually sheepish.

"Are you aware," assailed the Admiral, "that it is very difficult to pass ammunition across a slippery deck?"

"Oui, Mon Capitaine."

"Are you aware where we are, exactly?"

Extreme blush. "Oui, Mon Capitaine."

"Do you have the slightest idea how long it has been since they had a Force Ten gale in the moat around the city of Metz?"

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GAME 1986arb32 - SCHUYLER COLFAX - Spring 1907

AUSTRIA: a vic-tyo. a bud-gal. f tri-alb.
 ENGLAND: a lvp-yor. f edi-nth. f lon-eng.
 FRANCE: a par-bur. a mar-spa. f bre-eng.
 GERMANY: a ber-sil. a mun-ruh. f kie-den.
 ITALY: a ven-tyo. a rom-ven. f nap-ion.
 RUSSIA: a mos-sev. a war-ukr. f sev-rum. f stp sc - bot.
 TURKEY: a con-bul. a smy-arm. f ank-bla.

And de moves for de Fall is due on de 29th. Of de March. Of de 1986.

WARNING: The next four pages contain possibly objectionable press!

BUDAPEST (April 1, 1901): Frederick von Snoot, infamous scientist at the Hungarian Institute for the Investigation of the Paranormal and Other Hokey Stuff, held up a hand-written copy of The World Almanac & Book of Facts 1976 . . . hand-written by Glayva Destinny, a gypsy fortune-teller, who, in a deep hypnotic trance, was induced to "sleep-write" future events and statistics, up to and including 75 years into the future.

"This, this is the evidence we have been searching for," von Snoot snorted. "This proves the validity of the Paranormal and Other Hokey Stuff!"

Field Marshall Eric Vanderkroken rolled his eyes up. Then left. Then right. Then down. Then cross-eyed. "You expect me to believe the word of a gypsy, von Snoot? She probably gipped you 50 billion of our monetary unit, the forint, for that pack of pipsuda."

"NO, NO, sir, it is the real thing," protested von Snoot.

Vanderkroken laughed uproariously, and snatching the manuscript from the scientist's hands he threw open the door of the cast iron stove. "Here's all a gypsy fortune is good for!" he declared, thrusting the sheaf of papers onto the glowing embers. The cover page curled and broke into flame, and then the entire World Almanac & Book of Facts 1976 floated up and out of the stove, suspended by an unseen force in front of the horror-stricken face of Field Marshall Vanderkroken.

"What evil magic is this, von Snoot!?" he cried, backing away.

"Gretchen! Put it down, at once!" von Snoot shouted, gesturing wildly towards the servant girl who now stood in the doorway to his study. "Don't frighten the poor man."

"Those stoves burn better with coke," she pouted, glancing down at the coal scuttle in her hand.

"I know, I know, my dear, but people unfamiliar with the Paranormal and Other Hokey Stuff cannot understand your telekinetic powers."

Vanderkroken was hunched fearfully in a corner, a dozen crucifixes hung about his neck, furiously sharpening stakes with his hands while trying to load a pistol with silver bullets wedged between his toes.

"Here, here, my brave soldier, do not be scared of little Gretchen," said von Snoot, catching the manuscript from where it hung suspended in mid-air. "Look, I shall show you that these papers represent the choices of a future generation. Read this entry for our own nation."

Field Marshall Vanderkroken accepted the leaf of paper, marked page 622, and read outloud, falteringly: "The Hungarian People's Republic, in central Europe, is bounded by Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Romania, Yugoslavia and Austria. It is about . . . the . . . size . . . of . . . Indiana? Indiana? Indiana of the United States of America? Von Snoot, are you trying to tell me that in 1976 Hungary will be no bigger than some pipsqueak state in the American midwest? LIES, ALL LIES! The empire shall claim all Europe, von Snoot, we'll be as big as, as big as . . . ILLINOIS, you traitorous quack!"

Vanderkroken wrapped his large hands around the scientist's neck, wringing the life out of von Snoot's freshly starched collar.

"Gretchen," von Snoot gasped, "Gretchen, get away, save yourself!"

Gretchen stood in the doorway, her eyes closed, her ample bosom heaving with emotion -- and effort. In moments it seemed as if the study was falling apart. Books flew off their shelves. A teapot exploded. Plaster moulding crumbled and fell in chunks from the ceiling. The light from the window was suddenly extinguished. Professor von Snoot, Field Marshall Vanderkroken and even Gretchen were thrown to the floor as a tremendous quaking seemed to lift the Hungarian Institute for the Paranormal and Other Hokey Stuff from its very foundations.

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA (April 1, 1976) -- Lt. Col. David Starbrite stood in the kitchen of his suburban home, the pants of his uniform around his ankles.

Starbrite was tense. At precisely 15:00 hours that afternoon, the U.S. Army's Nuclear Tank Battalion would be engaging in their first-ever exercise, in maneuvers with the 88th Ohio Mounted Calvary. Nuclear-powered tanks were not a proven technology. Only last week a young private was killed in a training exercise; he was a little lead-footed on the gas peddle, and fifteen seconds later was wedged into the vault door of the 1st National Bank of Fort Wayne like a cork in a bottle -- twenty miles away from the base! Geez, it took about two hours just for his dust to settle, and two more to uncork him.

"Suck, honey, suck," Starbrite encouraged. "You know I only got 20 minutes for lunch."

Julie Starbrite was kneeling before her husband on the kitchen floor. A former Miss Teen Indiana and cheerleader for the Fightin' Hoosiers college football club, Julie had declined all the movie offers after the "Girls of the Midwest" pictorial appeared in Playboy. Instead, she had opted for the simple life of the suburban housewife, and was still very much the girl next door. Julie ran her tongue over the rock-hard shaft of David's 8-inch cock, playfully darting across the swollen head before taking it between her silken lips. She knew how important the maneuvers were this afternoon, and that David's promotion to full colonel hinged on the viability of the Nuclear Tank Battalion. She often did this to relax him, help him take the edge of his nervousness; but, as always, once she had started, she forgot everything but the intense pleasure of getting a good-looking man's dick in her mouth. She looked up at him, her azure blue eyes a curious mix of innocence and lust, before attacking his pulsing shaft with renewed vigour, her golden mane of wavy auburn hair bobbing up and down as her lips engulfed him and stroked the full length of his huge penis.

"Oh, honey, that's the way! You're beautiful, baby, keep it up. That's it, do it, do it to me Julie, go, go, go, GO, GO!"

Well, he came so hard that neither one of them noticed when the toaster oven toppled from the counter to the floor, or when the budgie bird died from heart failure in its cage, when the bright sunlight was momentarily extinguished outside. They did not even notice that the floor of their home was now tilted at a five degree angle. Julie sat on her beautiful ass, leaning back on her elbows, the odd strand of hair matted against her forehead with perspiration. Her eyes were closed, but a smile of contentment played across her lips. And Lt. Col. David Starbrite, commander of the U.S. Army's Nuclear Tank Battalion, standing in the kitchen of his suburban Fort Wayne home, the pants of his uniform around his ankles, his limp cock shrinking back to its former unremarkable size, fell flat on his face when the dark, unkempt, Slavic-looking man appeared in the kitchen door armed with a scythe.

VIENNA (February 23, 1986) -- Hi guys. I'm not really in Vienna, but it would be nice, wouldn't it? Conrad says I can't tell you my name, but I can say anything else that won't specifically identify myself. Well, that shouldn't be a problem since I'm a newcomer to this game, so nobody knows me. I guess you can call me Suzanne, which is nicer than "Hey you with the red blocks!" I'm a psychology major at the University of California at La Jolla. I'm 20, in my second year. I was born in the midwest, which gave me the inspiration for my stories up above. Let's see, what do you want to know about me? Indoors: I like watching old movies on the late show (or

David Letterman if there's no Bogart!), good conversation, wine and some nibbles and a big soft couch -- actually, it seems most of my time indoors is taken up by studying right now, but I like to challenge my mind. I like some games, though I wouldn't say I'm really that competitive. But Diplomacy is nice, mainly because of the socializing aspect. I've only played twice, both times at Connie's house. He suggested I join this gunboat thing, and gave me Austria cause it's supposed to be the most fun. He's playing England himself, or was it France . . . one of those blue-block countries on the other side of the board. Hi Connie! Oh, geez, I guess I wasn't supposed to give you away like that. Well, just cross it out with a marker if you're reading this. Where was I? Oh yeah, outdoors: I like windsurfing, and in December I went skiing for the first time at Aspen (whooooosh!). And, uh, picnics au naturel. Okay, so it's out. I guess you might have noticed that I got rather hot in my story. I'm not really kinky or anything. I'm not a virgin either -- I guess you could say I've been selective. Anyway, we had this course at school on Sexual Behavior, and on the recommended reading list was My Secret Garden by Nancy Friday. Usually I can't be bothered with anything supplemental -- hard enough to keep up with what's required -- but a girlfriend told me I shouldn't miss it. So, I read it, and ever since I haven't been able to get these damn sexual fantasies out of my head. Now, some of the stuff in this book was downright disgusting, but a lot of it was a pretty big turn-on. The thing is, I haven't got the time to handle a boyfriend right now, and I'll never get so horny I'll just sleep with anyone. But these fantasies are still a problem. Just to give you an example, once I was in the library, reading a book in this sort of alcove. I'm in this big chair, which I've turned a bit to face away from the stacks. Anyway, the book I'm reading is on the criminal mind (actually, it was pretty boring), but then I get this fantasy that I'm in a line-up at the bank when these robbers come in with masks and guns. Well, after they get the tellers' money one of the robbers stares at me and I see this big bulge in his pants. Like, the bank is full of people and the cops are probably on their way, but this big muscle-bound guy with a gun and a mask decides I'm so sexy that he has to have me then and there. So, in my fantasy, he tells the other robbers to keep everyone covered while he drags me off to a back room and rapes me. Now, understand, there is NO WAY I ever want to get raped. My psychology profs would probably say that the gun represented a powerful penis symbol, etc. etc. All I know is that I got so turned on with this fantasy that popped into my head, that right there in the library I unzipped my jeans and played with my clitoris until I came. Okay, no one could really see me the way I was sitting, but after I had my orgasm I looked over my shoulder and there was this guy! He must have been thirty feet away, but he was looking in my direction, and maybe he saw my elbow moving. I felt like dying, I was so embarrassed. So I just sat there, still as stone, not even reading, just listening. I didn't look again for at least 30 minutes -- but he was gone, thank God! And then you know what happened? I had another damned fantasy! In this fantasy I'm in the library, getting myself off just like I was doing, but the guy comes up behind me without my noticing and is watching me masturbate. Well, he leans over the back of my chair, and like a real gentleman says "Here, let me help you do that," and he reaches down and slips his hand inside my panties, and he's pushing two long fingers in and out of my vagina while diddling my clit with his thumb -- and I have a double-orgasm! And I really did, because before I was too far into this fantasy I had my pants unzipped once again, yes again, and was going to it for all I was worth. Fortunately I kept my elbows to myself this time, and there was nobody about. Now, you might say that if

I'm this horny why don't I find myself a nice regular guy to take care of me? Well, I'll tell you.

Two days after this library episode I got an "F" in my criminology assignment. I know, I just know, that if I get involved with a guy my marks are going to suffer. And this degree is important to me, I just can't afford to flub it. Which is where this gunboat thing comes in. I consider Conrad a very good friend -- he's only about the most sensitive guy I know. But he's married with kids, and he says he doesn't feel right listening to my problems. He also claims to not know very much about the subject, ha, ha. But he suggested that if I joined this game, it could be a sort of harmless way to work off my sexual anxiety. Besides, talking about it (ANONYMOUSLY!) with a group of five guys, (I'm assured you ARE all men) well, you know, it sort of satisfies my curiosity about what it would be like to . . . oh, you know, a picnic for six, au naturel! (Believe me, I AM SO BLUSHING!)

I guess that's all for now. Sorry to take up so much room, Connie. If you're brave enough to print it all, it'll cost you a fortune at the photocopiers!

Bye for now, love, Suzanne.

OH, I ALMOST FORGOT! I'm not exactly sure what I'm supposed to be doing on the board -- do any of you guys want to help me out on my moves?

PARIS: The French government hereby declares war on Switzerland. All those not speaking French will be shot.

SOMEWHERE: Fuck the Ace of Spades, HA, HA, HA, Austria! You die, sucker! That settles it, Conrad - here you have my "obscene press, black press, stupid press, fun press and game press." all condensed.

JAMUL: How about "Bugging nigger moron Disneyland-loving Russian?"

ROME TO BUDAPEST: Had to protect at first, but wish peace. Ganselung backsides. It's the Med. for me; just east or west is in question. Alliance with you is my supreme wish.

AUSTRIA TO RUSSIA: We can team up and get Germany and Turkey simultaneously. Italy and England will take care of France. You can have Rumania, and let's get Munich next year.

FRANCE TO SWITZERLAND: Not impassable!

ITALY TO G.M.: May we have a moment of silent prayer for the poor fool playing this position?

JAMUL TO ITALY: Sure, but let's wait a while. You may be needing all the chaplains you've got.

ENGLAND TO WORLD: I'm in one and 1/2 other GUANA games. I'm a loyal, true-blue, nice chap.

WORLD TO RUSSIA: Leader out! You've got the most centers, quick growth possible north and south...but not for long. We'll cooperate and you'll be first out!

BERLIN TO PARIS: You better join me in London or I'll hunt you down.

ITALY TO FRA/GER/AUS: Okay, guys. What can I expect?

ENGLAND TO FRANCE: I went for E.C. but do not want or intend to attack you. Belgium and Norway are for me. When you get Portugal and Spain, don't build F Bre and I'll stay out of E.C.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

As we rapidly (gasp!) wind this, the longest COSTAGUANA issue ever, down and get it mailed, I am constrained to take up one more subject of some significance.

I'm giving serious consideration to making a major change here. In almost all of COSTAGUANA'S history, I have run things on three-week dead-save only over Christmas. For a couple of reasons, I think it might be better to switch to four-week intervals.

In the first place, it would help me cut back just a bit on this hobby. I don't really have to, but it would be nice to spend a bit more time than I now do with the family.

In the second place, I have come to understand that, if we stay with current three-week schedules, Canadians really cannot play effectively. Mail service between the U.S. and Canada has apparently disintegrated to the point that it may take as much as two weeks to get a first class item to certain Canadian destinations. If this is so, and because I am so extremely fond of Canada, Canadians, and all things Canuck (keep in mind that my grandfather was a Canadian), I do not wish to exclude that significant an element in my hobby enjoyment.

Before I actually make any change, I'm going to do two things:

1. To cover the 'family' base, I'm simply going to stop printing outrageously huge issues. This one (and the one two issues ago) was fun, and I happened to have the time; but usually I don't, and I'm not going to arbitrarily "make" time.

2. As to Canada, over the next few weeks I will be running a test of the mails. This will involve sending selected friends Up There a series of test letters and mock magazines, and asking them to keep track of dates of receipt. The test will also involve trying some 'alternate routings.' For example, Pierre Touchette tells me that mail to him goes first to Montréal, then to Toronto, then back to his city. I'd like to compare what happens if I send a letter to him directly, and if I send it under cover to Alan Stewart in Toronto for re-mailing.

I'll let you know the results, and the result of the results.

And finally, and then I sleep - a letter from Mark Weidmark (one of the Canadians involved) on the Trivia Quiz discussed on Page 3.

To the 'World War I Monarch' question, Mark answers "King Olav of Norway." Nope. Olav V was born in 1903, but didn't reign until 1957.

To Sarawak: Mark got it, though he failed to type an inflection.

On Weights: Mark says 'Equal,' but we all learned (fifty-five pages ago) that this answer is hokey. He got the sandpile bit. On punctuation, the sleaze-ball just typed every symbol on his typewriter; hell, anybody can hit keys, I wanted answers! And as for 'Volume Nine,' well, despite the origins of my grandfather, even Canucks can't hit 'em all!

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And finally again. There is a current threat of a Canadian postal strike. (Canadian publishers: You want Canadian content? Reprint this page.) If it happens, all games containing Canadians will be held until after the strike. Have no fear. I treat you well.

SHALOM!

DEAR COSTAGUANA READER

Enclosed please find the ballot for the 1986 Runestone poll, covering hobby publishing activities in 1985.

This poll, originated by John Leeder and named after his long-time journal, has over the years proven to be one of the most popular and successful 'hobby participation' activities ever devised. While it proves nothing on a scientific basis, it can be fun, and even instructional.

I respectfully urge you to vote this year. Further, I strongly urge you to vote now, while the events and publications of 1985 are fresher in your mind. Other journals will be reproducing this same ballot, or a facsimile; it makes no difference whose ballot you use. But do, please, make your interest and opinion known - if you like a 'zine or a gamesmaster, say so. If you don't, say that too. We publishers, while we don't take the results as gospel, do put some stock in this poll - are we doing a decent job? Can we improve? Are our gamesmastering abilities up to snuff, or do we need to pay more careful?

Again - PLEASE VOTE.

A few notes, strictly by Conrad, and without authority of the pollsters - but they may help, especially some of the newer people:

1. Please understand that, in being asked to assign values from 0 to 10, you are not being asked to vote for your ten favorite 'zines. You may assign a value of 10 (or 0, or any other value) to as many or as few as you wish.

2. There is a technical limitation that you must have seen at least two issues of a 'zine to vote for it, but of course there is no practical way to verify this. But if too many people 'cheat' on this, it skews the results and doesn't help us publishers one bit.

3. Please, if possible, use the actual ballot, not a facsimile (unless a photocopy). It makes the tally much easier. If additional ballot copies are needed by anyone, I'll provide them gladly at no cost. So will Bruce and Nelson.

4. The standards you use to determine what is a 'good' magazine and what is a 'bad' one are entirely your own. As but one example: If you like it, rate it 'good' even if it only has two pages an issue. On the other hand, if you don't like it, even if it has forty pages, does that really make it any better for you?

Thanks,

Conrad

FROM

C F VON METZKE

P O BOX 17602

SAN DIEGO CA

92117-0602

USA

LOVE
USA 22



Rachel Carson



USA 17c

Rachel Carson



USA 17c

↑ CANCELLATION

STAMPS ↑

GAMEFINDER

Got better things to do than read the
drive! - like unclog the plumbing? Not a
problem! The games are thusly located:

BEAR	45	TAPIR	57
CASSOWARY	coming	WOMBAT	48
DIK-DIK	49		
DINGO	44		
EMU	45	COLFAX	52
MEERKAT	50	JOHNSON	50
KILGAI	45	KING	41
SUNI	40	MARSHALL	soon

FIRST CLASS

10

Steve Knight

2732 Grand Ave. So., #302
Minneapolis MN 55408-1416

NOTE - IF YOU DON'T
FIND YOUR GAME HERE,
YOU PROBABLY SCREWED
UP; IT'S UNDOUBTEDLY
IN SOME OTHER JOURNAL.