



COSTLY GUANO

Volume IX, Number 7



27 July 1984

This is COSTAGUANA, a journal of postal Diplomacy and Herculean half-wittedness, dispensed without prescription by Conrad von Metzke, P.O. Box 27273, San Diego, CA 92128. Telephones: Home, (619) 276-2937; Work, (619) 487-6384. No game openings, therefore no fees. Subs, which are not actively solicited but will be tolerated up to a point, 10/\$2. Trades: All-for-all.

TELEPHONES: For the next deadlines, my work 'phone will be useless to you because I'll be on vacation. As to the home number, good luck; my wife is starting up a Tupperware business and spends half her waking hours blabbing to someone. Either that or it's Mike Pustilnik....

POST OFFICE STRIKE: It is unlikely, but theoretically possible, that there will be a postal strike in the next few weeks. If there is, all deadlines are automatically extended to the third Friday after the settlement. If, in lieu of a formal strike, we have a serious work slowdown or major wild-cattng, the same will apply.

ROSTER OF RECIPIENTS: It seems about time to print a list of player/subber/trader addresses, just to keep the records updated. Players are always welcome to supply me with their phone #s for publication.

- BAUMEISTER, Konrad H. - 11416 Parkview Lane, Hales Corners, WI 53130
- CARTIER, Steve - P.O. Box 1653, Riverside, CA 92502
- CONNER, R. Michael - 8008 Gault St., Austin, TX 78758
- DAVIS, Fred C., Jr. - 1427 Clairidge Lane, Baltimore, MD 21207
- FLEMING, Matthew - 4290 Chateau de Ville, St. Louis, MO 63129
- HENRY, Lu - 6056 Waverly, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127
- JOHNSTON, Matt - 2286 Lancashire Cove, Germantown, TN 38138 - (901) 754-2584
- MORTON, Ralph - R.R. 2, Greely, Ontario, Canada KOA 1Z0
- PIERCE, David L. - 13521 Pleasant Lane, Burnsville, MN 55337
- PUSTILNIK, Michael - 140 Cadman Plaza West, Brooklyn, NY 11201
- PEEL, Kenneth - 8708 First Ave., #T-2, Silver Spring, MD 20910 - Home (301) 495-2799; office (202) 225-6306
- ROBSON, Pete - 9011 Cheval Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
- STEVENS, James H. - 6021 Sleepy Hollow Rd., #2, Rome, NY 13440
- WALTERS, R. Jacob - P.O. Box 1064, Brookline, MA 02146 - Home (617) 734-1427.
- WALKER, John - 4819 Corian Oak, San Antonio, TX 78219
- WALKER, Rodney C. - 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024 - (619) 753-7657

Note the magnificent alphabetization? I suppose I could fix it easily enough, but unfortunately my son drank the white-out....

WATCHTHISPACENEXTISSUEFORTHEEXCITINGRECIPEFORDELICIOUSCROTTLEDGREEPSYUMMY....

Old Ralph Morton had a farm,
 Ee-eye-ee-eye-oh.
 And on this farm he had a cow,
 Ee-eye-ee-eye-oh.
 With a "woof woof" here, and a

(After all, he is Canuck....)

POLICY ON PRESS RELEASES: You write it, I print it. Actually, if it's worth reading, I encourage it! If you send too much for one issue, I may carry over to the next, but I will print it all. There are two limitations:

1. I won't print anything that might get me sued.
2. The following words may not appear in print in this magazine: Hell, damn, shit, crap, bugger, Ronald Reagan, tits, fuck or tungsten.

PLAYLIST FOR THIS ISSUE: "Richard III," Shakespeare; "Death of a Salesman," Miller; "The Visit," Dürrenmatt; "The Bald Soprano," Ionesco.

LAST ISSUE'S SILLY brought the best level of response yet. To the extent that our coöperative effort allows, here are the answers:

1. Split second timing.
2. Home stretch.
3. Ping pong.
4. Six of one, half a dozen of the other.
5. It's a small world after all.
6. Unfinished symphony.
7. Blood is thicker than water.
8. Seven up.
9. Condescending.
10. Scrambled eggs.
11. No two ways about it.
12. Change in the line-up.
13. Gross injustice.
14. Overwhelming odds.
15. He's on the verge of making money.
16. Astronaut.
17. (unknown)
18. Wolf in sheep's clothing.
19. (unknown)
20. Assassinate.
21. (unknown)
22. Understanding between friends.
23. Bad weather.
24. Far away (or far gone, or far out).

First off, I cannot seem to find Jim Stevens' answers. As I recall he had at least two of the unknowns. Second, a couple of the answers as shown are a bit "iffy" - e.g. 12 and 15. Third, with Number 19, everyone got the key elements (salt water over seven c's) but nobody came up with the kind of answer that rings true, namely a cliché or famous phrase.

Steve Cartier's answer to 18 is classic: "Reduction gear with ratio of angular velocities 2/50."

Steve also says that 17 is "unanimous," but I don't see it. Do you?

The winner (and remember, there was no prize) is ME - I had more than anyone else! So I will now award myself a free game....

THIS ISSUE'S SILLY is a composite of a few add-ons to all the previous sillies, provided by various readers and by yr. hmbl. srvnt. And I think maybe this will wind up this rash of sillies with a last burst of fun, and then COSTAGUANA can get onto something else even sillier.

STEREO EQUIPMENT, ANYONE? To those who know my interest in good music, it will come as no surprise that I finally realized a great ambition three years ago and bought a very fine (and very expensive) stereo system. It is made by Bang and Olufsen of Denmark, and includes a Model 1700 turntable, a Model 2400 receiver, and a pair of their best 10" speakers. (The tape deck, a separate thing altogether, is a Tandberg TD20A.) These components, as will all the Bang and Olufsen products, come glowingly reviewed and exceedingly well thought of by the experts. Price of my system \$1600; today it's about \$2100. (Without the tape deck.)

Sound good? Baloney! The sonics and responses are great when the stuff works, but the system breaks down frequently and repair costs (now that the warranty is over) are getting idiotic. I have never been so thoroughly disappointed with a major purchase in my life, and I strongly advise anyone contemplating such a purchase to avoid this manufacturer

like the plague. Stick with the more established names whose reputations and service records are better documented: Dual, TDK, Garrard, MacIntosh, and people like that.

The Tandberg is a magnificent machine and I have no qualms about endorsing it. However, without a decent system to run it through it is worthless to me, and so I've just sold it (at a \$1000 loss) and plan to unload the Bang & Olufsen as a trade-in on better merchandise as quickly as budget allows. That may be a while. And so for now, I listen to what I have and try to enjoy my record collection.

And once in a while I even succeed.

ALINEARSEPARATORTOBEGINTHEGAMEREPORTSISATRADITIONWITHWHICHICANNOTDISPENSE

GAME TWO

As far as I know, all personnel are still with us. I have moves on file thus far from France, Germany, Italy and Russia.

I've been asked about my policy on revising moves once submitted. Moves may be revised at any time, and as often as you wish, until the deadline. Latest postmark (or 'phone call) is what gets used. Under no circumstances will I ever print results prior to the published deadline, so feel free to send in early tentative moves without fear of being stuck with them if your plans change.

I've also decided that the next issue of this rag will be published three weeks from now, and so the deadline for Spring 1901 moves is pushed forward to

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 1984.

And finally, I've been asked if I have in fact even bothered to apply for an official Boardman Number for this game. No. I don't even know to whom to write, and I really don't care. Fear not, this game will get into the records eventually, and I'm sure someone will give it a number one day. If one of you is concerned, why don't you get us the number?

BEONTHELOOKOUTFORTHELONGAWAITEDRETURNOFADMIRALANTOINE"PUFFAPUFFA"DEGRASSE

GAME ONE

You know, that's the one that does have a number....1983AC.

Last issue a typo was made; Eng f nwg-nth failed.

Retreats: Ita a tyo-boh; Ger f hol-hel; Fre a mun-ruh.

AUSTRIA (Robson): a war-ukr. a rom (s) ion-nap. a ser-rum. a bud (s) ser-rum. a tri-ven. a tyo-vie. f ion-nap.

ENGLAND (Pustilnik): a lvn-stp. f wal-lon. f nwy (s) nwg-nth. f nwg-nth. f iri (h). f nat (s) iri.

FRANCE (Johnston): a bur-mar. a bel-bur. a hol (h). a ruh (s) hol. f bre-mid. f eng-bel. f mid-wes.

GERMANY (Fleming): a mun (s) ber-kie. a ber-kie. a kie-hol. f hel (s) kie-hol.

ITALY (Stevens): a tun (h). a boh-vie. f nap-ion.

RUSSIA (Walker/Cartier): a ukr-war. a mos (s) ukr-war.

TURKEY (Walters): a gre (s) bul. a bul (s) gre. a sev (s) ENG lvn-mos. f bla (s) sev. f aeg-ion.

Retreats: Aus a war - lvn, prn, sil, gal, o.t.b. Ita f nap - apu, tyn, o.t.b.

SUPPLY CENTERS:

- A: vie, bud, tri, ser, rum, tri, rom, nap (8). Build one.
- E: lon, lvp, edi, nwy, swe, stp (6). Even.
- F: bre, par, mar, spa, por, bel, hol (7). Even.
- G: mun, ber, kie, den (4). Even.
- I: tun (1). Remove two.
- R: mos, war (2). Even.
- T: smy, ank, con, bul, gre, sev (6). Build one.

Rod Walker has resigned as Russia (and thanks, guy!) and is replaced by Steve Cartier, address on front page.

Now here's where I get to pull one of my fast ones and keep this game rolling. I ask that Austria and Italy determine their retreats right now and send them in immediately; I will then notify players by postcard in about a week. Given that information, I will set a deadline for builds/removals and Spring 1905 moves all at once; moves may be conditional on adjustments (and on retreats if for some reason the postcards don't make it. I mean, heck, except for the central Mediterranean it isn't very complicated at all!

Winter 1904 and Spring 1905 are due by FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 1984.

////////////////////(////////

A wire service "filler story" in the paper recently tells of a letter received this week by the Library of Congress. It was from the Embassy of Japan, and requested that the Library send a messenger to pick up some books which had been borrowed.

The letter was written on December 12, 1941, and presumably was a typically Japanese attempt to clean up loose ends before the Embassy staff was interned.

The Postal Service speculates (probably rightly) that the letter was never actually posted at the time; instead it presumably got mixed in with various papers in the office and only came to light when those papers were looked through (in this case, 43 years later). Apparently such things are not at all uncommon; someone finds such a thing and (either thinking it's current or for a lark) goes ahead and mails it. I had a case myself a few weeks ago; a woman received a church social announcement which had been mailed in 1975! The then-secretary of the church recently died and the executor found the unmailed letter and dropped it in the mailbox.

The worst case I've ever handled personally involved the holder of a post office box who died, and the box was closed on orders from the estate. The woman (who got almost no mail at all) hadn't collected her letters in over five years, and there were perhaps fifty items stacked up. Among them was an envelope of checks totalling \$42,000 intended for deposit to a bank. Seems the adjacent box to the deceased lady's was rented to a bank, and someone had mis-sorted the letter four and a half years earlier, and....

AND THUS ENDS ANOTHER SLEAZY ISSUE. With best regards to all, and hoping you and yours are in good health and spirits, I remain

Yours sincerely,

THE LAST OF THE SILLIES

Remember the first of these sillies? They worked this way:

PROBLEM: 1001 - AN

ANSWER: 1001 Arabian Nights. You are given a number and some letters; figure out what the letters stand for to make a common phrase.

Try these from Matt Johnston and me:


- 3 - C in a F
- 9 - L of a C
- 76 - T in the BP
- 20,000 - LU the S
- 8 - F in a M
- 2 - E on the HB
- 9 - BS
- 0 - M
- 1 - H, TD, TSG, FLO,.....

(I defy anyone to get the last two!)

And now's a good place to interject that, in the big silly of last issue, the best total was achieved by Lu Henry - who achieves the honor of having his name printed in this paragraph. Some bloody prize, eh?

BUYSTOCKINWHITEOUT?WITHMEAROUNDYOU'LLMAKETWICEASMUCHASIFYOUBOUGHTXEROX

And now, let's close out this plane of existence with a few more box-like pictographs from Jim Stevens. (Does anyone remember Doodles? I actively solicit contributions to COSTAGUANA'S impending Revival of the Doodle.) And the very last, and largest, pictograph is from me.

1. SOUP	2. HORSE C C	3. P P O P D	4. PAR 1	5. EZ III	6. P P O, K G E
7. LO HEAD VE HEELS HEELS	8. PRESTO ASSAI 				

A SHORT HISTORY OF COSTAGUANA:

I used to publish. Now I'm doing it again.

ANOTHER SHORT HISTORY OF COSTAGUANA:

Ken Peel called me the other night (and by the way, sir, I most thoroughly enjoyed the conversation, and I'm very sorry I had to be so abrupt; we had a dinner date and were just about to be late) and asked a few questions about the history of this publication, and about my Diplomacy career in general. COSTAGUANA is supposedly to be the subject of an article in an upcoming DIPLOMACY WORLD, so if you subscribe to that you'll sense a bit of redundancy here. But in case you don't....

COSTAGUANA was first published in mid-1965. I had first learned of the game itself in a classified ad in "Saturday Review" in 1961 (I was 17 and a college freshman), and showed the ad to my newest friend at school - Rodney C. "Gopher" Walker. Rod immediately sent away for the game, and when it arrived we collectively put together a play group and had regular games going for some months. Then Rod left school, entered the Air Force, and left me to hold the banner.

I tried. First, I attempted to start a postal game so that Rod and I (and several of our other players who were dispersing) could keep in touch. The game flopped because, frankly, nobody had time; but we did get started just enough that we have thought of ourselves ever since as the first-in-history postal players. And I was, in a rudimentary sense, the first-ever Gamesmaster. (A year later, unknown to me at the time, Dr. John Boardman began the first successful postal game. That makes me the Leif Eriksson, and him the Cristóbal Colón, of postal Diplomacy; I was there first, but he made it work.)

Postal play having failed, I continued locally with face-to-face play with my circle of friends. (Three of them - Hal Naus, Bob Cline and the late Bob Ward - eventually became postal publishers of renown.) I lost touch with Rod entirely, and forgot all about playing in the mails.

Then in early 1965, unsolicited, came a copy of a new postal Diplomacy magazine - WILD 'N' WOOLY, published in Los Angeles by a man I'd never heard of, Steve Cartier. To this day there is dispute as to where and how he got my address; I claim it was from Games Research Corp., the original maker of game sets, to whom I had once written for rulebook clarification and who had presumably sent Steve a list of names on his request. However, Steve denies ever having written to them. I honestly don't know, but I insist that I have to be right simply because there are no other possible points of conjunction between us.

Well, I fell for it; I joined my first postal game. (I got Russia, and eventually won the game; I still think I won because others got so sick of reading my endless press releases in which I introduced my first continuing press character, a Pole named Andrzej Sawiczewski who had taken over the Russian government. A couple of the press releases were actually in Polish, and one of those wasn't a press release at all; it was the wedding announcement sent to me by the real Andrzej Sawiczewski, who has not now and has never had any connection with Diplomacy. He is an architect in Sopot, Poland, with whom I've been corresponding as a pen-pal for twenty-six years.)

Through WILD 'N' WOOLY I got acquainted with the fledgling postal hobby, and joined more games. A few months later I started my own magazine - this one. In those days it was traditional to name postal magazines after fictitious countries (another Dr. Boardman invention), so I took COSTAGUANA from Joseph Conrad's novel "Nostromo" - a fictitious Central American "banana republic" - and started publishing. My first few issues were printed by a friend on a shabby old mimeo, and half of what I typed wound up illegible. Disturbed by this, I soon bought my own printing system: a hectograph! To my knowledge, COSTAGUANA remains to this day the only Diplomacy journal ever printed by this incredibly primitive process. (Does anyone out there even know what hectograph is? It has a relationship to carbon ditto printing, but much cruder. You have a flat wooden tray about the size of a sheet of paper and 1" deep; in the tray you put a thick gelatine-like substance. Then you type your master, which is simply a regular ditto master typed upside-down. You place the master on top of the gelatine and rub gently; the mirror-image carbon is absorbed into the goop. Then you place your paper on top and rub it, and the words transfer and print. Each master is good for about twenty copies; then you have to wash the ink residue out of the gelatine, let the latter harden again, and start over.)

After four or five such issues I found a friend who had access to a real ditto machine (and free paper) at his office. So he printed the next few issues. When that source ran out, I used the ditto machine at the local Democratic Party Headquarters. Rod Walker once printed an issue on his machine for me, which was particularly interesting since he lived in Nebraska at the time. And there were others....

Which reminds me - I had mentioned that after the failure of the 1962 postal attempt, I had lost touch with Rod Walker? Well, he stayed lost - for four years. Then one day I was strolling across the campus of the 15,000-student university campus where I had originally met him, and - bam! There he was, ambling into the library. Seems he was in town doing some post-grad work, and I just happened to be in that part of the college that day....

I asked him how he was, and he replied. I asked him if he still played Diplomacy, and he said "occasionally." I reminded him of our first postal game; he nodded politely and said yes, he remembered, and wasn't it nice that we'd tried, but such stuff was hopeless, obviously. I then told him about WILD 'N' WOOLY and GRAUSTARK and BROBDINGNAG and COSTAGUANA, and I have never seen eyes brighten to quite that extent at any other time in my life. Before I knew it we were exchanging 'phone numbers and addresses; soon after came EREHWON, and we have been friends ever since.

COSTAGUANA came and went a few times. It went in 1968 when I was briefly working three jobs (clerk at the library, taxi driver and owner of a coffee house); it came back when I landed a job with the post office. It flickered a bit when I got married in 1971, then roared back full-bore when I separated from her in 1972. During the years of separation, reconciliation, re-separation and eventual divorce from Kathy, my Diplomacy output was at its peak. It served a need; it kept my mind active and my relationships with friends alive at a time when I was emotionally very unhappy. It allowed closeness by mail, at a time when I found it difficult to achieve closeness in person. Night after night I would sit at my typewriter or my ditto machine, all alone, and churn out Diplomacy magazines. As I gradually healed from Kathy, I expressed myself in ditto

pages by the ream. I published COSTAGUANA, which then had ten or so games going; SAGUENAY, with six games; K.35, with just one game but twenty pages of press per issue; RENAME, with four variant games; EVERYTHING, the magazine of game statistics issued by the Boardman Number Custodian (which I was); and two or three other things as well. At one time I was, simultaneously, a gamesmaster of at least 30 games; the Boardman Number Custodian; the Miller Number Custodian; the director of the Orphan Games Project; and in almost every respect the guiding light and mainstaying force of the entire hobby. Even Rod Walker has never been stupid enough, or emotionally depressed enough, to take on that much!

Well, it was great therapy, but all things come to an end. By the summer of 1974 I realized that, no matter how much I loved and wanted Kathy, it was a lost cause; and so we divorced, I got involved in a local divorce-therapy group called "We Care," came to terms with my loss, met a new lady - and then another, and another - and by March of 1975, a week after my divorce was finalized, I became engaged to Jean.

Diplomacy lingered for a while after that - though I had long since transferred all my other responsibilities, I briefly took on the editorship and (for one issue) the publishing of DIPLOMACY WORLD - but I gradually came to realize that the depressions and the traumas were over. Now I had a different sort of wife; Jean is not the sort of woman whom one simultaneously loves and yet wants to escape from. And so my gaming days petered out, and finally ended.

They're back now in limited fashion mainly because I have passed through other life-stages - solidifying a marriage, having the children I wanted, gaining a meaningful career - and have devolved onto a level where I need a pleasant, but limited, hobby. I already have a big hobby, philately, but found that I honestly missed Diplomacy and some of the people associated with it. While out of the hobby, I nearly lost touch with Rod again; that would be a tragedy, because I love the man dearly as the greatest friend I have ever had in my life - other than Jean, of course, but that's a little different. I missed Fred Davis, the brightest intellect I've ever encountered. I missed John Leeder. I missed Ralph Morton (yes, Ralph, I did!); I missed Dick Vedder; I missed the Beyerleins; I missed...well, this could go on all night. In short, I wanted my friends back - and, in the process, I wanted a little contact with the hobby that had given me so many hours of pleasure and so much support during my days of upheaval.

That's why I'm back. But I'm also a realist (and a lot older) now; I no longer need the therapeutic or escapist aspects of the hobby. So I'm keeping it to rational limits, and having the fun I want, with the friends I treasure (old and new), without the strain of overcommitment.

There are two things I don't have back yet that I want; one I won't get, and one I may:

1. To re-contact my favorite player of all time - Anita Beth Hughes (I won't get that one);
2. To revive, for one game only, my old magazine SAGUENAY, which among all my publications remains my favorite. (It was for Canadians only, and there was a warmth in those pages that I would give my left arm to recapture.) (I may get this one, some day; but not just now, okay?)

And for the future? Just one more good intention: Let's get those games played and not orphan the goddamned things this time, eh?