

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #114  
June 1988  
Personalities

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Subs: 10 for \$5  
Europe: 5 for E2  
Circulation: 82

If you haven't voted yet in the Runestone Poll, there's still time. Bruce Linsey has extended the deadline for a few weeks, as the poll was late in getting started. However, you may be running out of room to stake your own claim as to the proper label for this. Bruce, ever the traditionalist, calls it a Poll. Alan Stewart, however, in HOL, call it a "contest". Not to be outdone, Francois Guerrier argues in a recent Passchendaele that its really a "survey". Altho "canvass" and "tally" are still available for those who want to stake out their own position, the best choices are being snapped up quickly, and if you don't move fast, you may be forced to hit the thesaurus to find something obscure. In fairness to others, I'm not going to take up any of these, but will most likely coin a word, and I may even try to pretend its a real word if it picks up some support but no challenges.

**THE ZINE COLUMN # 105**

## DIPLOMACY WORLD AT 50

DW #50 has come out, and as usual, it covers a lot of territory. Doug Beyerlein has some suggestions on what the hobby needs. Rex Martin (editor of The General) tells how he came to the game, and some on Diplomacy's role at Avalon Hill. There's items on minorities, women and gays in the hobby. I have an essay with a detailed view of the RAG alliance, purely from the perspective of how it can work for Germany. Larry then hustled a companion essay from Dave Hood with a completely different slant on the alliance, and Eric Verheiden sets forth a effective opposing alliance ---- this is the kind of thing that Larry has the space, and time (and inclination) to do. Rod Walker checks in with some "golden age" press, there's a variant and an update on E-mail dippy, Linsey's analysis past Runestone Polls to assemble a view of the greatest zines, subzines and GMs of all time, there are several pieces on Cons, there's an index for the first 49 issues, and a good deal more.

I know for a fact that some of my readers who would find the zine interesting have not come back for another look. Larry Peery took over the zine when it was bankrupt, and irritated some people by actually calling the zine bankrupt, and restarting the zine on a more sound basis.

(Turn to Page 8 middle)

((We'll start by going way back to April 1970 and Serendip #37, The editor was John McCallum, and this is from the letter column))

Jerry White: I think your suggestion of a list ((of games played)), such as Edi Birsan's, is of much more benefit to the establishment of alliances.

John McCallum: What you mean, Jerry, I think is something like this. A relative newcomer ... opens up his favorite zine, Neutrialia, and finds he is entered in a game. One of the other players is Charles Wells. He wonders if that is a gamesmaster's typical typo for Charles Welsh whom he vaguely remembers hearing about. Or is it someone else. In any event, what is known about him as a Diplomacy player? So he writes to the Recorder of the Records and gets, by return of mail, the following entry:

CHARLES WELLS. Married, 2 sons. Professor of Mathematics, Case Wern Reserve U., specialty, algebraic number theory (for information on that see Bell: Men of Mathematics, chapter on Kronecker). Long time fantasy and SF fan and amateur publisher. Entered postal Diplomacy XMas-New Year's 1964-5. Games Complete: 1965A Graustark. Turkey. WINNER ((etc for 11 completed games, 6 of them with 1965 BNs. Also listed were 5 continuing games)) Since Fall 1965, editor and GM of Lonely Mountain. Inventor of game Parlement. Originator of idea of naming rule disputes, e.g. Koning's Rule ((in those days, the Rulebook had a lot of loose ends)). First player to have won first 4 games rated.

Faced with this information, our newcomer either (1) resigns, or (2) sets about getting some of the zines where Charles has played in an attempt to find a few clues on his mode of play. Similar information would of course be available for any other player. It would certainly be possible to do such a thing. Whether it would serve any useful purpose is something else.

((Its 18 years later, and no such thing ever has existed, altho I recall Larry Peery did make a shot at it. The sheer size of the hobby would make such a thing very difficult. But doable. In order to accomplish this with the minimum amount of work, the "Recorder of the Records" would ask people in the hobby to submit to him their bios and game records in camera-ready form. When a request came in, He'd check in his file to see if the information were available on that person, and if so send out a copy of that page. The information is available, insofar as game records is concerned, from the publications of the BNC and MNC, but that would be a staggering amount of work and would entail a lot of data about people no longer in the hobby. People would have to be on their honor to be honest. One could print the whole thing, but if the Recorder got the kind of turnout he or she needs to make this viable, that would be too unwealily. The Zine Register has worked fine with zines, but people would be a much more ambitious undertaking.))



((The question of Women in Diplomacy has been adressed from time to time in the hobby, and Europa Express once had a theme issue on that subject. This is the earliest discussion I've run across on the subject. It was written by Harry Drews for Paroxysm #15, 9-7-75. It is part of a much longer essay entitled "War Games in the Abstract", much of it in response to an essay on wargamers in the zine Europa))

....Why are there so few women involved in wargaming? Jack Greene says that women are appalled by the ulterior motives involved in wargaming -- the love of blood, gore, and the glorification of killing. I say baloney, that's not what wargaming symbolizes to me. Very few wargamers fantasize when they play; even in monopoly I hope no-one believes that they are a rich banker or a calculating real estate manipulator. Yes, there may be a mental linking to the historical knowledge the gamer has and he may be interested in a certain game partly because it simulates a certain, specific time period. But you'd have to be devoid of rationality to identify with the counters to the extent that you actually feel yourself bayonetting the hated opponent. Come on, folks, this is just a game. I should hope that the mental challenge and the lust for competition pervades most games. This is a healthy, human lust. Not just a male urge. Competition is the lifeblood of society ((our society, I assume he means. Many societies have been organized to minimize competition)). True, it must be tempered with cooperation but, still, competition must be stimulated and rewarded for society to advance or even merely survive. Wargames can provide a useful outlet for competitive urges and are recreational, stimulative, and sometimes appropriate outlets for feelings of tension, frustration and aggression. In these respects, they are identical to bridge, chess, sports or even debating clubs. Playing a wargame is much saner ... than taking your car out on the road and tearing up the highway.

Jack says boys are expected to play soldiers and girls are expected to play with dolls. Thank goodness, society is slowly moving to correct such terrible social norms. Men and women are people first, and surely our society is now advanced enough to unshackle people and allow them the freedom to move beyond historical limitations...

An unnamed woman writes in the same article that the urge to engage in wargaming should be equated to the territorial instincts of all animals as put forward by Robert Ardrey. She goes on to remind us that man is the only animal to kill for pleasure and to kill females for no reason whatsoever. ((Nowadays, such a statement would not be made. Studies of chimpanzees have showed killings taking place for no reason that we can discern. And we have no ideas whether animals kill "for pleasure" or not.)) Her reaction to living with a wargamer is that this action is an unpleasant (to observe) sublimation of the territorial imperative ... she postulates that wargames are inferior to chess because they are not "pure strategy" and thereby by inference must have this territorial imperative.....

((Well, chess has always had our problem too that the game is so heavily male. However, chess has never had a woman at the very top rank of the of the game, and we have (Kathy Byrne). Women in our society are socialized to avoid extremely competitive environments. This doesn't work on everyone, of course, but it does mean we have far fewer women to draw from. The other factor, which I believe gets far less attention is that Diplomacy is an extremely deceptive game. Moreover, it is a very brutal form of deception --- lying to people's face. I believe that women are socialized to avoid that far more than men are. Oh, sure, there's deception in bridge (falsecarding, psychic bids, etc), but it's done in a very abstract sort of way, and it's not at the core of the game. The only highly competitive game I've played that involves anywhere near as much deception as dippy is poker ---- and there, too, the game is almost entirely male. It seems a shame, tho, that we have so few women. Unlike

some highly competitive arenas (trial layers for example), we don't have a heavy institutional bias against women. Indeed, the privacy of postal dippy means that a person could obscure his or her gender ---- or even act as the opposite gender (both have been done). The 80s have seen some improvement in the number of women postal players, but we have a long way to go.)



((Our next item is by Pete Birks, and appeared in Greatest Hits #24,7-76))

# LES PIMLEY

## OBITUARY

It's a bit hard to be serious in a magazine, and a hobby, which is intended to be mainly light-hearted. As many of you will know, however, Les Pimley died, age thirty, in the last days of May. I only learnt of the news this morning from 1901 a.a.t. and Mad Policy, and it is impossible to place on paper my feelings at learning this sad news.

For those of you who did not know Les, he was one of the real old-timers in the hobby, being one of the earliest members of the NGC. I first met him in December 1972 at the FTF meetings in the Bedford Corner Hotel; I remember seeing this funny-looking chap attempting to teach Richard Sharp how to play Stalingrad. They gave up after half-an-hour, and a game of Diplomacy started, where I was France, Richard was Russia, and Les was England. I remember I stabbed Les fairly early, and he had a solitary A (Den) by the end of 1904, and looked in imminent danger of being the first player out. Seven years later, with Sharp and me fighting at 17-16, Les was still there, with his solitary A (Den). He didn't move for about five years in a row, but he wouldn't get knocked out. Somebody always supported him at the last moment!

Eventually he started a zine (Black Spot) and the Black Spot award started in Ethil The Frog is said to be the inspiration for the name of the zine, with John Piggott awarding the Spot to Les more than anyone else. Then came an orphan zine, The Ultimate Chaotic Act, and an NGC zine, Shelob's Lair, in which I played in BDC 55. GH is at this moment running BDC 53, an orphan from Shelob.

I must confess I had no idea that Les's illness was so serious - I had thought it was no more than a bad eye complaint. Apparently whatever was causing the pressure on the eye also caused his death. Mick Bullock suggests that rather than inundate Pat with letters of condolence, a fund should be opened, to which contributions can be made. Mick seems willing to run this fund, so if you wish to send a token (for that is all it can be) of your appreciation and enjoyment at having a character like Les in the hobby, please send it to Mick Bullock, 14 Nursery Ave, Halifax, West Yorks.

And I don't think that there's any more that I can say, except that I'm sure Les would have wanted the hobby to 'go on' as before, and not to be unduly morose.

Goodbye Les.



((I suspect that fewer than half of my readers have even heard of Ron Kelly, but in an earlier day, almost all players had heard of him. If you played more than one or two games, chances were at least even that he'd land up in one of your games. He might even be in all of them. In a sense, he was the Melinda Holley of his time, except that he did it

with replacement positions. The two items below deal with one aspect of his personality/play. The first is some German press written by Howard Mahler (Germany) shorted after he had been eliminated from 1970BJ, and its from Impassable #72, Nov 1976))

...Finally, in the ultimate stop-Italy coalition, Kelly(R) co-operated up to a point/ Then he came out with the following unbelievable statement, "Unless you (Beyerlein(A) and myself got the same message) help (Kelly) win I'll give the game to Phillips" I assume Mr. Ron Kelly meant this as a threat. However, I personally told him that in fact since, as I'd repeatedly stated, my only goal was a draw I saw no reason why Mr. Kelly should think I had any desire to get involved in helping anyone win. Well, Mr. Kelly went thru with his threat and Mr. Phillips will win...

The basic problem with the successful completion of a draw strategy like mine is that all 3 of the major powers must be interested in not letting any other win. Unfortunately, Mr Kelly doesn't seem to play the same game as the rest of us. He plays something which could be best described as Macro-Diplomacy. Each individual game of Diplomacy is merely a small segment of this game of interlocking cross-game understandings and revenge. I'm sure I'm already on Mr. Kelly's enemies list, and thus if I have the misfortune to be in a game that he standbys for I can expect him to attack regardless of the situation...

((Next up is the Beyerlein endgame statement from Impassable #74))

...In all my years of playing Diplomacy, this had to be the best balance of power game I have ever played in. The fact that it lasted until 1923 shows that it was hard fought by all the contestants. In theory the game should never have ended; but in fact, it was Ron Kelly's cross-game attacks that finally forced me to let Phillips walk into my homeland for the win.

From this game (and others with Ron Kelly) I got a pretty good picture of his game strategy of cross-game alliances and attacks. Ally with him in all of your games and you have a good ally. Attack him in just one game, and watch his immediate counter-attack in all your other games. This happened to me when I made the mistake to attack him in 1973BP. Immediately he countered by breaking our alliances in 70BJ and 73IT. I was being taught the lesson that if you ever attack Ron Kelly you will pay and pay again. But as events worked out in both 70BJ and 73IT he was forced to slow his attacks because of a larger power coming close to victory. In this game, that power was Phillips' Italy. Howard Mahler ( a great ally even with a small country) and I thought that we had balanced off the threat of both Phillips and Kelly as we held a very delicate middle ground. Andy understood the situation and was agreeable to a 4-way draw, but apparently Kelly had other thoughts as he voted against the draw. As the three of us (G,R,A) were holding off Italy I wondered just what Kelly had planned for Russia. At that point, I had had enough of Kelly and helped Phillips into Russian held Constantinople and victory. As soon as Kelly saw the season's results he promptly attacked me again in 73IT and let Russia win that game instead of a stalemated draw ((So--- Beyerlein let Phillips win this game, and Kelly let Russia win in 73IT. Kelly seems to have done much the same thing Beyerlein did, at least on the surface))

I strongly suspect that it is this style of play by Ron Kelly

Dolchstoss (which I believe), but he must sort out his personal affairs first. He is unwilling to produce one issue until he is sure that he can do another, which sounds reasonable.

On the subject of subscription refunds, as far as I can see Richard is (I must say, understandably) deliberately withholding James O'Fee's money just to annoy him. It is a dispute that goes back to Eurocon 78 when James (quite wrongly) felt he had been cheated out of some money - whereas if anyone was, it was Tony Crouch. I don't condone Richard's behaviour in this respect, but I can quite see why he's doing it!

That is Richard's side of the story, presented mainly to balance the comments and speculation that appear elsewhere. I shall make no comment, mainly because I can add nothing to either of the opposing arguments - both of which I agree with, at least in part. End of subject.

- ((This was one of the most extraordinary events in hobby history: The folding of Dolchstoss. It was done with no warning, no direct explanation to the hobby, and no refunds. With, apparently, very few exceptions, the hobby just waited. And waited. After 5 years, the zine resumed publication, and people seemed generally pleased. Such a thing has never happened in the American hobby, and I suspect that it never could. Perhaps people are much less tolerant here, or perhaps this reflects the great personal affection Richard was held in.



((Next we turn to Bushwacker, Vol 1, #4 June 1972))

## WILL THE REAL FRED DAVIS STAND UP?

Once again, some people seem to be confusing me with some other Fred Davis. This is nothing new when you have a name like Davis, of course. When I was in the Army, the MP's were looking for another man in my outfit named Frank Davis, who was wanted for kidnapping his son from his estranged wife. Guess who got called to the Orderly Room? Later, in Germany, the Captain's jeep driver was named Davidson. I was always getting paged during off-duty hours to report to the Old Man. When I went to work for Social Security in Baltimore, there were three F. Davises working in my division. Currently, I'm handling West Virginia disability cases. The head of Workman's Compensation in West Virginia is the Hon. Fred L. Davis, Jr. So, all the cases in which he's involved somehow get routed to me!

Just so there won't be any confusion over which Fred Davis edits BUSHWACKER, here is a thumbnail sketch. I was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. too many years ago. I grew up in Chicago, Ill., where I attended Sullivan High School and the Chicago Division of the U. of Illinois at Navy Pier (2 years). I then spent one year as a Journalism major at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. Then came the Army; the First Armored Division at Ft. Hood, Texas; followed by 17 glorious months in Europe with the 28th Infantry Div. near Stuttgart, Germany. I then returned to the U. of Illinois at Urbana for my Senior year, switching majors to Political Science. I decided to reform the Govt. by becoming a civil servant. Started with Social Security in the Chicago "Loop" office. I don't seem to have accomplished much reforming, but, boy, am I good at coffee breaking.

I married my beautiful wife, Inge, in Chicago. No children. Moved to Baltimore in 1961, to work at S.S.A. Hqs. I read medical reports 8 hours a day and pretend to understand them. I soon found that the only way to keep from going nuts was to get interested in something besides the job. I joined the Mensa Club in 1964, and this is now my chief avocation. Through Mensa, I discovered Diplomacy in 1968, and have

been hooked ever since. Other hobbies and interests at one time or another have included astronomy, science fiction, warships, railroads, rapid transit, old street-cars, photography, winetasting, politics, city planning, ecology, and zero population growth. I also spend an inordinate amount of time sitting in front of my typewriter banging out literary gems. Anyone out there with similar interests is invited to mention same. I'd be especially interested in knowing if any of you belong to Mensa, ZPG, or any national railfan clubs.

((Since that was written, Fred and Inge had a boy, who is now in Junior High School. Fred recently retired from S.S.A. Bushwacker is by far the oldest variant zine, and indeed is one of only a handful of zines that have survived from the early seventies. It is a steady and extremely reliable zine, and Bushwacker's variant openings will be plugged in DD as long as we are both around. Fred has stuck to that old but dependable rule: write what you like to write about. While Fred has occasionally gotten on his soapbox to criticize things he feels are harmful to the hobby, most of the time his writing is suffused with a gentle humor. Fred has brought a lot of people into the postal hobby via MMNSA, has designed a heap of variants which people have enjoyed playing, and was a big help to me in running DipCon 1982.)



(From Page 1)

Cancelling the old subs, doing away with trades, getting the zine priced on a basis related to costs, trying to get a bigger staff, and trying to elbow DW onto the hobby's center stage, and actually, horror-of-horrors, actually making some mistakes have offended people, or some of them, no end. But it was either that or ruin for DW, for I firmly believe that no one else in the hobby had the energy and the ability to put DW back on track.

But the result goes beyond mere survival. Larry took over with the publication of #40, and now #50 has appeared. Those issues have come out on time, and NO OTHER DW pubber except Walt Buchanan has been able to accomplish such a feat with DW. Walker, Jones, and von Metzke despite their best efforts weren't even close. The issues are far bigger than they have ever been, and DW has a larger group of regular writers than its ever had. And the results have been duly noted in its Runestone Poll ratings. Larry's two years checked in a 92-percentile and 94-percentile. No other pubber for DW has had such a result (i.e. two years at 90+).

I personally believe that DW can be legitimately considered as the flagship zine for the Diplomacy hobby, altho it will never meet professional standards. Then again, this isn't a professional hobby. I also believe that if you like DD, the odds are very good that you'll like DW (no guarantee, tho). Larry has also imaginatively repackaged a great deal of DW's past to make it more accesable to people who haven't see much of it, and would like to zero in on certain areas (such as variants and Demogames, as well as my own writing). Subs for this quarterly, which tends to run at least 70 pages per issue, are 4/\$15 (Larry Peery Box 8416 San Diego CA 92102)

## THE MAIL

Bruce McIntyre Commenting on the fascinating Wells-Michalski exchange in #112, I think the days of superquick frequency zines have fallen mostly as a result of the Post Office. Its more expensive to mail things now ((Canada to US is now 43¢; US to Canada is 30¢)), and they take more time

in many games that has rocketed him up to high positions on the ratings lists. Nonetheless, I find this style of play reprehensible. Each game of diplomacy should be played as an individual game based on its own merits. A player should not threaten retaliation in 100 games if you should make the mistake to attack him in one. But with Ron Kelly showing up in just about every game as a standby player, every player is threatened by his cross-game style of play. I don't stand for it and I hope other players take the same stance when and if Kelly tries to hold it over their heads in other games.

((I don't know if Kelly was a cross gamer, but these two excerpts don't establish that he was. While Mahler talks about "cross-game understandings and revenge", he certainly doesn't demonstrate that here. Kelly demanded help-me-win, or I'll throw the game to Phillips. When the help didn't come, he just carried thru on his threat. Maybe he felt that such an epic game shouldn't end in a draw, and if the winner couldn't be him, then he'd be kingmaker. Perhaps he carried out his threat just to maintain his credibility. In the broadest sense, one's credibility or reputation is a cross-game (or more exactly, a trans-game consideration), but it's hard to see that as objectionable.))

((Beyerlein's comments are more problematic. He says that "A player should not threaten retaliation in 100 games..." and "...if Kelly tries to hold it over their heads in other games." But Beyerlein's account doesn't really say that Ron Kelly actually did these things. Nowhere does he have Kelly actually making the cross-game threat. He just says that after Beyerlein attacked in 73BP, Kelly attacked (for a while) in 70BJ. But that's not quite the same thing. Maybe Beyerlein's 73BP attack branded him, in Kelly's eyes, as unreliable --- and therefore, not to be trusted in the other two games. Maybe Kelly figured that since Beyerlein had attacked in one game that he would surely attack in the others, so Kelly just got in the first punch. Yes, maybe it was retaliation, but this account doesn't establish that as the only reasonable explanation for Kelly's style of play, and thus, I think his "reprehensible" description is, on the basis of what's written here, unwarranted. (Yes, I know that was a run-on sentence!) ))



((Next up is Chris Tringham, writing in Meglomania #27, May 1980 ))

If you read your Diplomacy zines, you will have noticed that a certain Richard Sharp has come in for a little criticism of late. It is now over a year since the last issue of Dolchstoss, and the games have continued only because others (notably John Marsden) made an effort. In spite of an offer to return subscriptions, the only person to request this has not received his money back. It is now being suggested (with good reason) that Dolchstoss has folded. I therefore asked Richard for a reply to these points/allegations. He promised (well, talked about) a letter, but in its (not totally unexpected) absence, I shall summarise what he said.

The position, briefly, is that Richard was divorced (from Jill) and married (to Bronwyn) in 1979. To follow that, this year he is selling a house in Windsor, buying back his own house in Amersham, paying off a large overdraft, buying a car, and trying to stay alive as well. His financial position makes it impossible to get an issue of the zine printed, and anyway he needs all his "spare time" to earn money in order to remain/become solvent. He says that both he and Bronwyn are anxious to re-start



to get to where they are going. I've just put XL back on monthly deadlines as it was originally (altho the game deadlines are still 6 weeks apart) and I find it a bit easier doing 11 a year (I've decided to do only one issue for Dec-Jan -- again the postal service at fault) than I did doing 8 or 9 a year. Also, I think the current crop of new publishers, most of whom joined the hobby during the Great Feud, is afraid of being controversial, having seen how thick a zine can become as a result. And the problem with this attitude is that it doesn't elicit much for the letter column other than theme and variations on "Wow, what a great looking zine" But we're changing slowly. I look at my last few issues and feel I've been somewhat less blindly positive. I look elsewhere and see that editors are trying to recapture the spirit of the Feud era in their ramblings, without actually coming down real hard on anyone. Perhaps the "bad Boys" have had a subler effect on the hobby's publishers than we realize. Reliability, good fair GMing, and reasonable prices (how do current sub rates, what with fotocopying rates and rising postal costs. compare wit those in the BB era?) are timeless desireables in a DipZine, but I think theres been a shift towards exciting zines to the current trend towards zines that look good.

((Your letter, postmarked Thurs from Brnaby, BC, arrived Tues. FSF, from Winnipeg, Postmarked Sun arrived Thurs. My impression is that crossing the border is costing 1-2 days, but I can recall in the early 80s that it was costing about 3 days to cross the border. My guess is that since the days of BB, that mail hasn't gotten any slower, but the most it could conceivably have chaned is one day, and you can't pin a trend on that. I agree that controversy is slowly creeping back to its more normal levels in the hobby, but, at least most of the time, it appears more issue-centered than personality centered. The really high-voltage letter column zines of the Feud Era (Feudesse, Not For Hire, No Fixed Address especially) are either gone or not operating that way any more, but brisk exchanges of views can be seen in House of Lords and Praxis. The tone is more civil, with ocassional exceptions.))

What constitutes Deception of the GM is for the GM to decide. Defining deception is impossible, as anything can happen. I don't know if my HRs are unusual or not in this respect, but I prohibit any attempt to do so, even (tho this is unstated) if unsuccessful. However, I should perhaps consider making the penalty not simply expulsion, but anything up to any including expulsion, depending on the nature of the deception. The Maltz episode makes it clear that deception of the GM is not a binary thing. It can be very serious, or only slightly serious.

((I think deception of the GM includes unsuccessful attempts. Otherwise, a player could always purge himself of the deception by confessing. The point of the rule --- and the penalty --- is to dissuade these attempts. Otherwise, the player says its a no lose situation: "If unsuccessful, I'm not covered by the rule, and if sucessful, he wont know he was deceived, let alone who did it." A definition? "Deception of the GM is telling the GM, in his role as a GM, a material fact which the player knows not to be true." By that definition, Maltz did not deceive the GM, but a lie ought to disqualify the player from further participation in the game. I don't want to play a postal game with cheats, even if their cheating is caught immediately. If I believe that a GM has some tolerance for cheats, then I won't play there. This is because the GM's willingness to expell those who even try to deceive the GM is my only protection. So I really don't agree with you. I beleive that deception of the GM is a binary matter, and it should be considered as grounds for automatic removal))

Tom Butcher ....Why dont you institute a regular letters-to-the-editor column? I always find your ideas on the game interesting and provoking, but often they get submerged in all the material from elsewhere. ((A zine which normally runs only 11 or 12 pages obviously has limitations on its letter column's size. Moreover, unlike many if not most hobby zines which do have a letter column, this is not an "open" letter-col. Thats a column that will run letters on just about any subject. Those zines are a lot of fun, but I can't do that here. Letters must be in response to what has appeared in the zine e.g. disagreements or commentary on essays or editorials which have appeared here. There's no time limit on this --- since back issues are kept in stock, you could, if ypu wanted, comment on something that appeared 10 years ago. I encourage letters of response, tho material I can use doesn't come in very often. I much prefer (but don't require) material I can use without retyping. I will make space for it, and on rare ocassions, an entire issue may be devoted to reaction to what has appeared in DD. Moreover, if I adjudge that the letter was of such a nature that it could have been structured as a stand-alone essay, I will give sub-credit extensions for it.))

## THE ZINE COLUMN # 105

# CAUTIONS

Every so often you'll pick up a dipzine and see that A has criticized something done or said by B, in circumstances where A does not like B, and where specifics and substantiation are absent. Be very very cautious about accepting something like, because there are people in the hobby who, alas, simply make things up. For example, Brad Wilson, writing in his Vertigo said that when Terry Tallman tried to do an alternative poll (to The Runestone), that I "shredded" him". Brad simply made this up. I never said or did anything whatsoever with regard to his poll; I was only dimly aware that it even existed. Robert Sacks, writing in Diplomacy World, says, "Everytime some hobby officer attempts to impose a fee or tax, the Roman faction leads a hobby revolt; which unfortunately dies down when the officer is driven from office" Sounds dramatic, but no such event has ever occurred --- no one has been driven from office for attempting a fee or tax. People who have imposed fees have either done them (e.g. me) or withdrawn the idea in face of opposition and then carried on with their job (Beyerlein as BNC). Julie Martin in House of Lords wrote that Bruce Linsey was "rejected as an applicant for the BNC Because he was too controversial." But Bruce never was an applicant for the job. Indeed, I've never known Bruce to express any serious interest in the job.

A publication that I'd like to be able to plug but can't is Known Game Openings, by Robert Sacks. The problem is that Sacks has for many years used this zine as a vehicle for his relentless personal attacks on people. For example, in the June 1988, he advances the "advisory proposition" that Fred Hyatt is guilty of "gross misconduct". Absolutely no specifics are given, and he then goes on to say that the issue can't be discussed in KGO (the guy couldnt even deny it), but must be done elsewhere. Two other people are also accused of gross misconduct, and loads of

other people are criticized, etc. The zine has also published a plethora of misinformation (I see some retractions in this issue), information is given without any source ("I have just received word.... I began to receive complaints..." --- that kind of stuff), he changes people's titles to one's he prefers (e.g. he won't list Fred Hyatt as the MNC), and on and on. Its pretty disgraceful.

A closely related publication is Known Games Openings' Zine Directory, now edited by Bruce Geryk, and this one is dreadful too. Some of the reviews of zines are unnecessarily nasty. Many of the others (such as for HH, Bushwacker, Dippy, and Rebel) are by and large useless for a person wondering if she should have a look at the zine. Sacks' role in this zine is unclear. He distributed the issue in May, and he's got his name on the copywrite notice, but in the June issue of KGO, he says the issue is not a hoax "as far as I can tell". I must say, however, that these two characters were just made for each other, but as for the rest of us, the Zine Register by Ken Peel will do splendidly.

## THE ZINE COLUMN # 106

I wonder if Americans are aware of the staggering workloads that British GMs sometimes undertake. I'm looking at a recent issue of Dolchstoss (#116) and I see that Richard Sharp is GMing 27 games of dippy or its variants, involving 111 players! He has players in South Africa, Qatar, Japan, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Libya, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Australia and France. Curiously enough, only one out of those 27 games was later than 1911. As the current edition of Dolchstoss has been going for about 4 years, this isn't a startup phenomenon. Games are shorter in Britain than here, in large measure because of the British practice of not replacing players after S01, which drives games to an unnaturally early conclusion. A quick look in 3 recent Everythings shows that 21 out of 71 games, or 30%, ended at 1912 or later. I wonder what the British percentage is --- I'd bet its somewhere around 15%.

Mark Lilleleht (P.O. Box 3166 Charlottesville VA 22903) has started his zine, THE Scribblerist, and its gimmick seems to be a peculiar publication schedule: alternating 5- and 6-weeks. Winter builds will be due separately on a 2-week deadline, going out on a separate zine, so that the issue appearing after 6 weeks will have the previous winter reprinted, plus spring moves. We'll have to see how it works. Several topics are thrown up for discussion, and he says a bit about himself, altho there is no explanation as to why he has crammed so many Ls into his name (Subs 10/\$4.50, tho: the game fee of \$5 gives you the zine as long as the game goes on)

Ratings oriented people might want to check out The Dragon's Lair which prints results of the Dragon's Tooth Rating system. When applied to the countries, it shows the rather odd result that Russia languishes in 4th place, even behind Turkey. And at the bottom, Austria finishes well behind Italy. This reflects the fact that DTRS (invented by Steve McLendon, who is no longer in the hobby) somewhat downplays the importance of wins (Russia by far has the most wins, and Austria has many more than Italy) and has a pretty substantial penalty for eliminations. And I see that Berch is on the top of the Best Country Standings for Italy. The most impressive guy there, tho, is actually LeeKendler Sr who is top T and top G, #3 for F, and #5 for E


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