

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Gming

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'S' Been awhile, eh? As often happens in the Fall, things get a little too busy around here, so DD gets put off a bit (other excuses available on request). However, there aren't any games, and I don't promise a fixed publication schedule, so the zine can never really be late (Copies of my new book, "The Utter Blamelessness of Mark Berch" go on sale soon). A few of you were apparently a bit alarmed, but there's no need to worry. Believe me, if the zine folds, I'll tell you, and not just slip away. There are a few people I suspect who would be glad to see DD fold, so I don't want to give them the honor of being the first to announce it. And all that is a long way off.

The real reason for the delay was that I was waiting for the following book:

## BOOK REVIEW

" Long time readers of this zine know that book reviews have never appeared here. The reason is simply that no book good enough has ever appeared. But my diligent policy of perusing every book published each month has finally paid off: "Radical by Design The life and Style of Elizabeth Hawes". She was a fashion designer, best-selling author, and union organizer, probably the first person ever to hit that particular combo with success in all three. She was also the first person in history to discuss for mass consumption (as she mused in Pageant Magazine on) whether bleached blondes were completely thoro about it. Hawes asked people to rethink their relationships with clothes, including not only different choices (she pushed for lighter weight clothes for men) but the notion that clothes could be an accessible form of art. She also pushed, both in her writings and the causes she supported, the notion that politics and art were linked, and more particularly, that "left" didn't have to mean dreary and styleless. The book also includes a droll --- and disturbing --- chapter on how the FBI created a file on her which was a composite of both her and another Elizabeth Hawes. It wasn't until late in their operation that they sorted it out. And despite the fact that she is deceased, as are most of her informers, the authors FOIA request yielded a highly censored file. The book is a delight to read. The author has an engaging writing style, and switches easily from the particulars of Hawes' life to issues of broad concern. Anyone who enjoys biography will be entranced by this book. And those of you whose views of what the life of a fashion designer is like have been shaped by TV (glamor, jet-setting, megabucks) will get a clearer view of how it's all done. The book is physically handsome as well. In an obvious ploy to gain sales from the Diplomacy community, the background color for the dust cover is the same as the Russian pieces on the British Diplomacy sets (Turn to page 17)

((Let's start with a broad view by Rod Walker, from Voice of Doom #76 April 5, 1983))

### So What's This About Strict GMing, Then?

I don't see how anyone can say "nitpicker" with BRUX Linsey in the same room. It must be supposed that BRUX is probably the strictest GM in the hobby, with Houserules to match. And very pushy he is about it, too.

There are many things which can be said about BRUX's position. And what you say will depend a lot on where you are coming from. A good many GMs (most of them, I suppose) get along on very brief HRs, which serve in most circumstances in normal games. These HRs contain the statement or the implied intent that the GM will resolve problems as they come up. In fact, there are GMs who have no HRs at all, apparently assuming that players will know they are handling their games more or less as such things are normally handled in the hobby ((Since the time this was written, the proportion of GMs operating with no written HRs has gotten even smaller. Virtually all new GMs now begin with something in writing))

There are a few GMs, however, who have more extensive HRs, trying to take into account most possible circumstances in advance. It can be argued that so many of the potential problems remain potentials only, so such extensive rules are not necessary. It can be argued that the players won't read them anyway (or will tend to forget them over time). It can be argued that the extensive HRs will themselves lead to new problems, since players will try to find ways around them or attempt (sadistically) to find internal flaws and contradictions. It can be argued that you can't take every potentially into account, so why try?

True, all true.

And yet...

None of these arguments seems to have much real force when it comes down to it. I have long since weighed them myself and found them wanting. In my heyday as a postal GM, my HRs ran to 8 closely typed (elite!) pages. A new version is in progress for the DW Demonstration game, and may actually run longer. So the reader should be aware that where I'm coming from ((on the issue of size of HRs)) is to a large extent where BRUX is coming from.

Why long rules? They seem essential to me. Postal Diplomacy has been going on for 20 years now, and we have an extensive fund of experience to draw on, and from which we can know what sorts of problems arise in Diplomacy games. Furthermore, there are still many questions, both on the rules and the starting procedure, where answers and basic philosophies differ. Most GMs know how they will resolve many of these questions, even if they do not so state in a set of HRs. (And some of them are so basic to the game, and arise so frequently, that the GM ought to know his position on them or he has no business being a GM).

The purpose of long HRs is not to establish the GM's power over the game. That is assumed at the outset. In fact, GMs with no HRs, or very short ones, actually have more power over the game. Their decisions when problems arise will necessarily be ad hoc and may be governed by the mood of the moment. It is entirely possible (entirely probable in some cases) that given the same problem arising on two different occasions, they may give two contradictory decisions. And who's to know? Or what recourse is there if somebody notices? Even the GM himself could have forgotten, between one occasion and the next, what he did the first time.

Too much is left to chance, whim and mood where the GM has not put contingencies into a set of HRs. ((The popular notion that long HRs extend the GMs power is an illusion. The opposite is true: written HRs create power for the players. If a particular circumstance could possibly be handled as either A or B, a player cannot really object to either. But the written HR which specifies A will constrain the GM from doing B, thus creating the right of a player to object if A is done)).

It seems to me that the players in a game have the right to know, in advance, how the GM will act under certain circumstances. He therefore has an obligation to tell them. And he has an obligation then to behave consistently with his declared intention. If the envisioned problems never arise, then, at least we were prepared. If the players do not take account of the HRs in playing the game, well, whose fault is that? If new problems arise, the GM will take care of them; that's his job. If players try to find loopholes and inconsistencies, one must ask whether they are playing "Diplomacy" or Barracks Lawyer" Such players have lost sight of the fact that the HRs are there to help the players, not restrict them, and the game does not create a state of war between the players and the GM. (My own HRs take into account this problem by stating, in effect, that my HRs mean what I intend them to mean, and that the GM alone is responsible for resolving any apparent difficulties which seem to arise from them.). ((I don't agree. As someone who has indeed combed thru HRs looking for inconsistencies and loopholes, I see nothing wrong with that. Indeed, I have done this sometimes at the request of the GM. If there's an inconsistency in the HRs, I should think the GM might want to know about it, so that he could take steps to repair it. As for loopholes, they might be deliberate --- the GM might have wanted a rule to be limited in scope. But they might also be an oversight, something the GM hadn't considered. These loopholes/inconsistencies often arise when the HRs say, "If A occurs, I'll do #1, but if B occurs, I'll do #2" A player then points out that in a certain circumstance A and B could occur. Or maybe Mr. GM you forgot that neither A, nor B, but C could occur. "Then what? If a player has spotted one of these, I should think a GM would be glad to have it pointed out to him.))

((Before going on to the next topic in Rod's essay, there's two other points I want to make on HRs. Players benefit from these written HRs because they give insight into the GM has considered the entire process. A little while ago, I saw a HR which said, approximately, "the GM will report the result of any vote taken." But How? As Pass/fail? As 4-2? As who-voted-how? Given that wording, its likely that the GM hasn't even considered that issue. And others as well.))

((One of the most common criticisms of written HRs, especially long ones, is that they are cluttered with rules to deal with circumstances which are extremely rare, so why bother? But what if it does come up? Suppose you have in front of you the F10 results, showing a win --- and the votes on the draw, showing the vote succeeding. But which came first? Extremely rare? Sure, but it did happen --- and the GM (John Boyer) had no HR to cover it. There's no point to looking to "hobby tradition" --- there isn't one. Sensible arguments can be made on either side of the question. You will have to make an ad hoc decision which will determine the game's outcome --- something the players are suppose to determine. Hard feelings may result from either choice --- but if you've got a HR, there's nothing to decide. Suppose the only "no" vote that season of F10 had come from a player eliminated that season. Does his no vote block the draw, or was

he eliminated first? Suppose a player WMRed in S10. A replacement was called to submit for F10. The original player Votes, but submits no orders. The replacement player submits orders, but votes the other way. Whose vote is used? All of these questions turn on the exact same issue: Does the vote come just after or just before the season? A single sentence in your HRs will completely settle the issue --- if you include it. Believe me when I say that a single such incident can ruin a game if it comes at a critical juncture. That's particularly true for unusual circumstances (no precedent to rely on) and "balanced" issues (somebody will see it the other way). I consider a thoro set of HRs the best evidence that a GM has given his job a lot of thought, and the best protection a player can have against ad hoc decisions.))

However, at this point my philosophy departs somewhat from BRUX's. I do not believe that the rules, or the HRs, ought to stand in the way of a player ordering his units as he wishes. In other words, miswritten orders and badly written orders do occur --- we're all human --- and therefore the GM ought to give effect to the intent of the player wherever that is clear. The Rulebook in fact says that a miswritten order must be followed and that badly written orders, which nevertheless can have only one meaning, must be followed. I agree that these requirements of the Rulebook should not be interpreted in such a way as to allow wanton sloppiness. Nor should they force the GM to choose between two equally possible alternatives where orders are ambiguous. However, under the Rulebook, if a GM receives an order which appears not to be clear, he is obligated to determine whether there is even some clearly evident intent which can be followed. ((Not in my Rulebook. There is not one word about determining intent. It says that if a badly written order has only one meaning, then that's what you do. Meaning and intent are not the same thing. If a player writes "F Bel SFKie-Hol, F Nth S F Kie-Hol, A Ruh S F Kie-Hol, F Kie-HB" its pretty clear what his intent was. But HB, tho badly written, can have only one meaning: Helgoland Bight. That's where the piece should be considered ordered to. If a player orders "Build F Paris", I think we can assume his intent was A Par. But "F Par" has only one meaning, and (unless the GM is willing to let him have a F Par, a whole different issue) thus he's lost his build.))

As an example, say a player has F Bel and orders "A Bel-Hol" BRUX... would show F Bel as unordered. I would show the order as "F Bel-Hol", since the player has clearly miswritten his order (showing the wrong type of unit) but it was otherwise quite clear. This is what I mean when I say that the GM should not erect unreasonable barriers against a player getting orders to his units. ((Here I agree with Rod, tho not quite for his reasons. The Rulebook in general does not require superfluous information. It does not require that the label of A or F be attached to a unit, let alone that it be done correctly, in cases where a unit is ordered to move. I do not think that GMs ought to add requirements to the Rulebook unless there is some compelling reason to do so. The letters "F Bel" stand for the unit that is in Bel. If he writes A Bel, its badly written, but there's only one meaning for this, viz, the unit in Bel.))

The recent flap over Ed Wrobel's orders is a good case in Point. ((Wrobel ordered a unit twice. Once to Hold, the other time to Support)). My own opinion is that the support should have been allowed. Ed was, if anything, trying to be precise, ordering two units to hold and also sup-

port each other --- perhaps overcompensating for BRUX's known strictness. However, this is not to say that these were double orders at all. A unit which is supporting is also holding: Rule IX.6: "A unit not ordered to move (i.e. one ... ordered to support) may receive support in holding." It is of course not necessary to hold and support, but in fact a good many players (particularly novices) believe that it is. This is a well known quirk in the game, and experienced GMs know that there is a tendency by newer players ((which Wrobel was not)) to issue this sort of "double order" until the redundancy of it is called to their attention. ((This is not my observation. Mine is that such double ordering is extremely rare)) That isn't to say that Ed Wrobel is a novice ... but .. to say that the redundant H and S orders do occur and that they are redundant orders, not double orders. ((There was quite a lively controversy over this ruling at the time, and some day I'll reprint excerpts from that debate. The issues were: 1. Were the pieces double ordered? 2. Was it legitimate for the GM not to apply the "badly written order" rule to this type of error? I was called on as Ombudsman, and my ruling was "Yes" to both questions. Ed Wrobel resigned anyhow, the only time in my entire Ombudsmaning career that a party in a dispute has refused to go along with my ruling)).

However, at the same time, as BRUX says, he has never made a secret of his being strict. It seems to me that a point can be reached where detailed HRs and the strict observance of them can interfere with the progress of the game, as appears to be so in this case. ((Not to me. This question wasn't even taken up in the HRs. And the dispute/arbitration did delay the game briefly, but disputes can arise just as well when a player thinks the GM has been too lenient)) But even if you agree with my opinion, please do not think that Bruce has set any sort of record in this regard.

No, indeed. There is always Charles Norbert Reinsel.

Was Norb strict? My dears, he was possibly the only GM in the hobby who ran his games as if they were concentration camps. Norb had very few HRs, as a matter of fact --- after all, being God, he needed but 10. But consider what some of them were.

Norb operated on 2-week deadlines. That means each issue of Big Brother was mailed out exactly two weeks after the last one. Since orders were due the day before mailing date, the deadline was reduced from 14 days to 13! ((And of of his games, "the Game of the Wolves" ran on a 10 day deadline, as did a couple of the games in Brutus Bulletin)). There were no such thing as late orders with Norb. Period. No excuses.

Secondly, if Norb had orders from all the players at any time before the deadline, he would adjudicate them and send them out. He did not wait until the deadline to see if players might change their orders. ((Players knew about this policy in advance)) That meant that players were strongly discouraged from sending in tentative orders or anything of the sort, and had to wait until the last minute to send anything in. This ultimately meant a lot of NMRs if mails were accidentally a day slow or the deadline fell on a holiday (it didn't make any difference to Norb whether there was mail delivery that day). No general orders, no telephone.

Third, Norb required that if a player NMRed 3 times during the course of a game, any three times, he was out. Period. No replacements, just civil Disorder. And Ultimately, all Reinsel games would wind up with 3 to 5 powers going into CD at one time or another ((I think the "all" in that sentence is a bit of an exaggeration))

The last result is logical, considering how these rules, strictly observed as they were, acted together. Players were given virtually no time to negotiate. They could not send in tentative orders for fear they might be used before they could be changed as a result of negotiations. So orders were mailed at the last possible moment and all too often failed to reach Norb on the deadline. The resulting NMRs severely affected the game and in the end led to the removal of several players without replacement. This was the only possible result of all these rules, and any fool could see what would happen. Unfortunately, Norb was not just any fool, but an absolute fascist by temperament, and apparently conceived that he was teaching people a lesson about being on time and such.

One might think that Norb's GMing style was not only not for everyone, but not for anyone. The truth is, however, that he ran dozens of games (and may still be running them for all I know). ((He was as of early 1981 still running a game. By then he was keeping an exceptionally low profile, and went to some effort to keep his games from coming to the attention of the BNC)). Most of them were by Carbon Copy only, never published in any zines, and long since lost to record keepers. The amazing thing is the players he got. There were many repeaters, including Allan Calhamer ((the inventor of Diplomacy)), who had long since ceased to play games elsewhere by mail, and played in some of Reinsel's now-lost carbon copy games. Some excellent players of the 60s including John Koning, John Smythe, and Charles Wells also seemed to enjoy the fast pace and somewhat sadistic demands of Norb's postal games. Later on, Norb retired and took up travelling about, and did a lot of arm twisting to get people to join his games. Conrad von Metzke, who had great difficulty saying "no" in person, would agree to join and then NMR out in 1901. Norb apparently never caught on.

So for what its worth, no matter how awful ((that's the way BRUX typed it, and who am I to correct another man's typos?)) you think BRUX is, as a strict GM, he is not (yet) quite as bad as some... ((Bux never had any trouble filling his games either. Indeed, one time he announced that opening were available, and immediately filled 5 games, a feat which has never been topped --- its possible its never even been equalled. Of course, VOD was a very popular zine, and people may simply have wanted to pay in a zine they were already getting. Plus VoD was extremely punctual. But it went beyond that. Strict GMing's appeal comes partly from its predictability. Leaving aside an exotic case like Reinsel, a strict GM has relatively little judgemental freedom. There's very little variation he'll accept. A lenient GM is almost openended in how lenient he can be --- how bad can those orders really get before the GM figures he just cannot apply that badly-written-order rule? Particularly if a GM is not well known, a lenient style means that you can't be too sure of exactly what you will be getting)) ((Keep in mind also that most GMs fall into the category of strict in some areas and not so strict in others. For example, a GM may be very strict in the mechanics of writing orders. He may void an international support because the nationality of the unit being supported was left off (a requirement that does not exist in the Rulebook). But he may be quite generous about the format of the orders, permitting joint orders, proxy orders, standing orders, general orders, etc.))

# MORE CAUTIONS

My, my, things can take an unexpected turn now and then. Back in DD #114, my editorial entitled "Cautions" dealt with some criticisms I had read where "specifics and substantiation are absent" Be cautious I said. Several examples were given, including Julie Martin saying that Bruce Linsey was "rejected as an applicant for the BNC because he was too controversial" The specifics (who he had applied to) weren't given, nor was there any substantiation. And Bruce never was an applicant for the job. In DD, those criticized are entitled to respond, so in #115, I quoted her request for a "retraction", and I quoted her specifics, viz, that a) Bruce had applied to both Ditter and Kendter, and b) she had heard this directly from Ditter and Kendter. I then printed letters from Linsey, Ditter and Kendter all saying that Bruce hadn't applied. And I said that I couldn't imagine Ditter and Kendter saying that Bruce had applied when he actually hadn't (Julie said essentially the same thing earlier).

I thought that this would basically resolve matters and that Julie would explicitly retract her false statement about Linsey. But just the opposite has happened. Not only has she not retracted this, but she's gone even further and expressed the opinion that I know that Bruce did apply --- and even suggested that I might have proof!!!

Writing in "OPERABLE" a subzine to HOL #17, she says, "Will you retract our statement that I lied and admit on Page 1 of DD that I might have made an honest mistake and misinferred what was said about Linsey?" It really irritates me to see something like that in print, because I did not say that she had lied (or call her a liar or use some other form of the verb). Was it possibly an honest mistake? First, that would be two mistakes, because she refers to separate conversations with Ditter and Kendter. But I'm not going to answer that until she actually states that her original statement was mistaken. She certainly hasn't done that. Just the opposite. She aims a flurry of questions at the Kendter and Ditter letters. For example, of the Kendter letter she says, "How come you had it, and Bruce didn't?" Another one of her false assumptions about Linsey --- I got the letter from Bruce. She questions why Ditter misspelled Lindsey's name. Who cares? But the most telling evidence that she doesn't consider her statement to be a mistake is this gem:

"If you will be gracious enough to admit that I may have been mistaken (even though you'll probably continue to believe otherwise), I will give you the benefit of the doubt that you really DON'T ((Julie's italics)) know of have proof that Linsey did, in fact, apply to be BNC (even though I think you know and maybe even have proof that he did)" ((underscoring mine)). Of course, if I, as she says, know that he did apply, that would make statements by Berch, Ditter, Kendter and Linsey all false.

Unfortunately, this is not the only example of Julie Martin's Revisionist view of Hobby History. In HOL #16 she told her readers that Conrad von Metzke had been driven out of his office as BNC for proclaiming a mandatory fee, an event which never occurred. Then in #17, she has this whopper: "And lest we forget, "elitism" was the charge Berch and Linsey used to shut down HOL the first time around, when Dick ((Martin)) only allowed pubbers and GMs in his zeen for pubbers and GMs." This is preposterous. Linsey and I did indeed criticize HOL for such a policy. But it was Dick, the editor, who shut down HOL. I could no more shut down HOL than Dick could shut down DD. If that's Dick's view, then he ought to learn to take responsibility for his own actions. Moreover, such a description is completely inconsistent with what actually appeared in HOL.

Perhaps Julie has forgotten, but with HoL #5, the policy was reversed. That issue announced that non-GM/subbers could sub after all. Thus, Dick's reaction was just the opposite of shutting down --- he kept going. Then #6 came out, with this bland statement: "Mark Berch and I just disagree as to how I am to run the zine and that does not look likely to change. Both these discussions are formally closed here." In short, the issue was dead by HoL #5 because the policy was gone. #7 did not appear for more than 2 years, but I find it very difficult to understand what that shutdown had to do with a dispute that was moot with the publication of #5. Dick can give any reasons he likes for why he shut it down. But it was he, and not a criticism (which never got much support, I might add. Most of those who wrote in to HoL on this were supportive) who shut down the zine.

Also in DD #114 was cited this example of inaccuracy from Robert Sacks: "Every time 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" No substantiation and no specifics --- and no basis in reality. Sacks wrote me back the following: "A number of BNCs have been driven out of office over fees - von Metzke was the first I remember" This is one of Sacks' many delusions. No such event occurred. von Metzke resigned in Sept 1974, but there was no issue of fees --- Conrad had just plain stopped doing the job for the previous 6 months. There was a controversy concerning the supposed reasons for picking Beyerlein rather than Heuer (see DD #84), that's all, and he certainly wasn't driven out. Sacks' letter then continued: "You claim to be a hobby officer - what hobby office do you pretend to?" Another delusion. I've never made such a claim. I had noted that the June KGO had accused Fred Hyatt of "gross misconduct" with absolutely no specifics. To this he replies, "The details of the gross misconduct have been given over the years, and were reprinted in detail in July." Actually, what little there is on Hyatt doesn't make much sense. At one point, he says that Hyatt "declined to disavow Davis", there's an unsubstantiated assertion that he made "false claims" and there's a totally false statement that Hyatt "hasn't published his service zine in almost a year" (this was retracted in a later issue of KGO)

I stand by my original assertion, and warning. When these two characters say things about people they don't like, and there are no specifics or no substantiation, be very, very, cautious.



Chris Carrier 1215 P Street 12, Sacramento CA 95814 Has switched his The MegaDiplomat from subzine to Zine status, 50¢ or 12/95. Chris has infuriated a lot of people by his rah-rah attitude toward hobby conflicts. His view, as best I understand it, is that feuding is a perfectly normal part of the hobby. Some like it, some don't, much like variants. So unlike others, who want to view feuds as some sort of aberrant behavior, he wants us to consider it as part of the ongoing process of the hobby, at one point going so far as to give "Pseud Numbers" to anything he viewed as a feud, incipient or otherwise. He's also done parodies of the feuds, pointed commentaries on them, and, it would appear to me, tried to encourage a few. This greatly annoys people, who feels that his boosterism goes contrary to the hobby's best interests. Carrier's responses to things have also become a bit stereotyped, but with #8, it seems his interests are broadening some, including national politics and general hobby commentary. While I often disagree with Chris' approach, people who have taken unorthodox approaches to the hobby have sometimes landed up enriching it



# TRANSFER

((In the fall of 1979, Hohn Leeder, the pubber of Runestone announced that time pressures would cause a severe cutback, and listed a number of games that would be transferred to new GMs. That precipitated this letter in R #272, Nov 12, 1979))

Bob Albrecht: I realize that you are having problems with your time and commitments to the zine. However, as the Candian Diplomacy Organization Ombudsman, there is no excuse for transferring a game without even asking the persons in that game... I signed up for .. 79Khm because I wanted to play in R, not Robert Sacks' zine. I am not impugning Mr. Sacks' character; I do not know the man. Moving the head of this game to New York would increase mail time ((Bob is Canadian)) to the point of practically eliminating negotiations. In short, I ask you to refund my gamefee..I will notify Mr. Sacks in time to get a replacement. I will also renew my subscription to R. This doesn't affect any of my other games, as you have been a great GM. Until now.

John Leeder ...I don't feel that you are right in saying "there is no excuse for transferring a game without even asking the persons in that game." The cases where players have been consulted are distinctly in the minority. In most cases, of course, a GM simply drops out, and the Orphan games Custodian or whoever finds a new GM. Then players are happy to have a GM rather than an abandoned game. I feel that I am being more conscientious than most in taking the trouble to find new GMs rather than simply abandoning the games. This is because I plan to remain in the hobby rather than dropping out entirely.

I'm flattered that you like my GMing to the point of not wanting to play under a different GM. But the facts have to be faced. Some of my games have to be transferred. The choice of which games are to be moved is govered by mynthoughts as to which games will be least harmed by a transfer (e.g. non-worldwide games) and which games other GMs have asked for, and in a couple of cases ((the variants)) (Gesta Danorum and Flintlock) by a sentimental desire to retain the games of my own design. I have not hesitated to transfer games which I have found intensely interesting to GM (e.g. Jihad!).

It would be nice if it were possible to consult with the players as to whether or not they want their games transferred. In point of fact, its not feasable. Some games have to be transferred. Your game is one of those which falls into the category of transferable games. A competent GM has offered to take it. Declining to transfer it because of the wishes of one player is regrettably, not possible ((Its also not what Bob asked for. He asked for consultation, not a veto))

Anyway, I think you are being precipitate in deciding to resign. You should give Robert Sacks a chance. He's a veteran GM. I'm sure he will set deadline of adequate length to allow negotiations (After all, if a new Yorker can play in an Alberta-GMed game, surely an Albertan can play in a New York-GMed game. Surely your reason for resigning is not balking at losing the advantage of living near the GM!...)

As for the gamefee question: If you do resign, I don't feel that your reason for resigning is a valid one. It has long been established in practice that a player who resigns from a game cannot expect the return of his gamefee. A player makes a committment to play. Any player change harms the game in some degree. A playerwho voluntarily harms the

game cannot expect a return of his financial investment...I don't feel that my action in transferring 79Khm is unreasonable; neither do I feel that you as a player has been harmed by the transfer.

I'd be quite happy to discuss this further if you still disagree. I feel a public discussion is called for, since so many players are in the same boat as you. I'd also be quite happy to have the new CDO Ombudsman(Francois Guerrier)) mediate...

((This was a very typical Leeder response. Very calm, no personal offense taken, and features a blend of logic and precedence. But it did not mollify Albrecht, as we see from his response in #274:))

Bob Albrecht: In this case, you could have asked the players. I think games being transferred to a new GM is different than if R folded...

You cannot commit a wrong by using the excuse "I am being more conscientious than most". If you think that starting and then three months later dropping them is "conscientious", then your morals are lax. I signed up to play in your zine. Why did you transfer 79Khm? Why any particular game? Could you explain the basis.... It is perfectly feasible to ask players. That kind of excuse is laughable. All you do is enclose a note asking players if then mind, and then the ones that do not reply, assume a yes answer.

In short, only one year was played before you abdicated so shamelessly. I demand satisfaction.

John Leeder: ...This kind of overreaction is what makes a GM want to drop out rather than making the effort to find new homes for the games. I can't imagine what you expect to gain by impugning my integrity, but if you can't combine ((sic? limit?)) yourself to the issues, then don't bother discussing. ((I suspect that to Bob, this was an issue))

What "wrong" have I committed? The CDO Code of Ethics (to which I subscribe) states: "If at any time I find myself not longer able to maintain my habitual standards of punctuality, to the point where the games are seriously affected, I will turn the games over to another GM rather than carry on in an inferior fashion." That is exactly what happened here. You're getting something better than before. Also, I'm not dropping any games. If I were ... you just wouldn't hear from me ... I am not committing any "wrong" by arranging for you to get better GMing service than you had before.

As to the reasons for choosing 79Khm ... since so many of the games are variants, obviously some of the transferred games must be variants. Robert Sacks asked for one to three variants, stating: "I prefer your newest games, with as many US players as possible..." Both these criteria fit 79Khm. This is why 79Khm ended up as one of the transferred games. ((If Leeder had mentioned Sacks' (eminently reasonable) criteria at the onset, his actions would have appeared less arbitrary))

As for your outlined process of consulting the players, sure its possible. But of what value is it when the games have to be transferred? Obviously you would have said "no" if I'd asked you. Obviously also the game would have had to be transferred. Any consultation would have been a sham. If a large number of replacement GMs had requested variant games, I might have been able to seek player approval before transferring games. That situation did not obtain, therefore we couldn't af-

ford the luxury of democracy. ((No, consultation could well have completely avoided this problem. All you need is some flexibility, which was already provided by Robert Sacks. He said, "I prefer...", not "I require" Player consultation might well have produced the following Leader-to-Sacks letter: "... and for your last game, you've got a choice. 79Khm meets both your criteria, but one of the players has vociferously objected when I wrote the players, and thus likely will resign. Game XXX doesn't meet your criteria nearly as well, but no one objected. Which one do you want?". If Sacks takes XXX, then the problem is solved --- and he well might prefer to take a game with no player change. And even if he takes 79Khm, the player would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that an attempt was made to take his wishes into account))

. You are losing nothing. You're obtaining better service at no extra cost. What's the problem? If you wish to continue discussing this, please do so in a calm and reasoned manner. If not, please carry your arguments to the CDO Ombudsman, not to me. ((Then in #280, I checked in with my views:))

Mark Berch ...I feel that Bob Albrecht and possibly other readers may have gotten somewhat of a misimpression from John Leeder's writings.

This deals with the situation where a GM decides to transfer a game to a new GM or zine, and the GM believes himself to be acting properly, i.e. I am not dealing with the situation where the GM just abandons the game.

Most agree that the game belongs to the players, not the GM, but in practice, it doesn't work that way. If a GM decides to switch the game to a new GM and/or zine, he will normally just announce that he has done it, state his reasons, and assume that his reasons are proper and sufficient. His reasons, as far as he is concerned, are correct by definition. A player cannot expect that his opinion of the validity of the reason will be sought before or after the fact.

As an example, one game I am in was with a GM who had been GMing for five years, very highly thought of, and ultra reliable. I was thus astounded to open the zine one day and to discover that the game had been turned over to a new GM, someone I had never heard of. The reason was quite simple: the guy had asked for a game to run. Rather than telling one and all that the next new game would be guest GMed, he picked our game and transferred it. There was no consideration of too much work or change in life situation or what have you -- indeed, more games were opened later. And our game was not selected because it was the youngest (it wasn't) but because it "is composed of my steadiest players" ---- some reward for being steady!! So we got a shorter deadline, and a less capable ((as it turned out)) GM. Our opinion was not sought before or after the transfer. So far as GMs are concerned, any reason they think to be sufficient is sufficient in their eyes, period. Leeder's reasons for transferring are exemplary, probably the only fully valid reasons, but don't get the idea that his procedure is the norm --- far from it, say to say.

There's nothing unique about this. In the summer of 1978, Bob Lipton had a big falling out with his chief Guest GM, Robert Sacks. Supposedly as a result, Sacks pulled all of his games (around seven) out of Lipton's zine The Mixumaxu Gazette. The dispute was on a matter unrelated to Diplomacy hobby. Did either GM try to poll the players on where they wanted to play? Did Lipton actually try to block the move? Not on your life! All he did was reach a financial settlement with Sacks.

He also gave a description of what the dispute was all about, how it arose, etc. He did not even mention just what Sacks' reasons were for pulling the games out. From his point of view, the reasons were just not important enuf to mention. It suffices merely that the GM wanted to pull the games out. The "why" does not matter.

In another incident, a Guest GMed game of mine was suddely pulled out into a new zine. It seemd that the GM decided to publish his own zine. We were not asked in advance whether we wanted to play in a brand new zine rather than one fully established. I'm not saying I was harmed by this. Indeed, there was no charge for the new zine, which turned out to be a lot more reliable than the old one. I'm talking about attitudes.

In none of the cases that involved me did I protest. There would have been no point to it. An ombudsman (naturally, an experienced GM) ((Ooooooh, what a cheap shot! Don't worry, I'll pay for it !)) would simply point out that GMs have decided that GMs may move their games at will. By tradition they do not poll their players on such matters, nor do they suffer gladly complaints afterwards.

So keep this in mind, Bob. John Leeder's reasons did in fact comply with the CDC Code of Ethics and with common sense. But don't get the idea that such behavior is the norm. Even in those cases where the GM beleives himself to be acting properly, its not the norm. And one final thing: Don't forget that you're the one who's upset; he's the one that's pleased. So he will not reply to your intemperate language with similar language of his own. He'll just sit back and score points off you.

John Leeder: Your letter bringsmup a fair number of issues, somewhat distinguishable...In general, I feel that GMs should not have a cavalier disregard for the players interests and wishes. Only the strongest reasons justify moving a game. In most cases where this happens, the strongest reason of all prevails: the GM has become inactive. In others (such as my own) the GM can no longer do an adequate job, certainly a strong enough reason.((I agree that this is sufficiant reason to give up some or most of a GMs games. GMs do find that cirucmstances change, and they cannot carry the full load. I don't beleive that they should put themselves then into an all-or-nothing situation. My objection, both in Leeder's cases and in those deadling with me, was the failure of the GM to consult with the players. Their interests cannot be intellegently taken into account unless the GM takes the trouble to find out what they are))

Your other examples deal, not with a change of GM, but with a change of zine. This seems to me to be quite a different issue, as a person can get a zine merely by subscribing to it. I'm not sure I see a change of zine as being as great an injury to a player as a change of GM. As you say, "Most agree that the game belongs to the players, not the GM..." yet you seem to be saying that the publisher (as opposed to the GM) owns a piece of the game as well! Can you amplify your thoughts on this? ((I don't see this as quite a different issue, and which has the greater possibility of injury isn't the point. The issue is that significant changes are imposed on the game without consultation with its owners, and in some cases, without adequate or even any explanation, as if the players simply were not entitled. I'm not saying that the publishers has a "piece of the game" --- its not that he was wronged when the game was moved to a different zine, its the players whose interests must be guarded.))

Re;your ombudsman comments: it doesn't go without saying that an Ombudsman will automaticaly support a GM just because he's a GM himself (after all, he's likely an experienced player as well; at least one

IDA Ombudsman, Henry Kelly, was not a GM, and my first choice for CDO, Ralph Morton, isn't one either). ((All true. Indeed, I've been used a number of times as an Ombudsman)) Nor will precedents automatically be followed when the fly in the face of common sense or natural justice. You don't seem to have much faith in the capacities of any individual to handle the ombudsman function! ((I do. I don't know what got into me to make such a cynical comment))

((The discussion then continued in #283, March 3, 1980))

Randolph Smyth: Mark Berch's response to Bob Albrecht's complaints was on the right track, I think, but danged verbally all around the meat of the matter. Bob is relatively new to the hobby - once he's been around long enuf to discover how really badly a GM can screw his players (or phasing all his games by dropping silently out of the hobby, with no refunds made, is one of the lesser evils possible) ((That doesn't sound very "lesser" to me!)), his attitude toward you should moderate considerably. In many ways, Canadian players have been "spoiled" in recent years by the almost universally high standards of Canadian zines --- they don't know the depths to which a game can be plunged if GMing/publishing procedures are sufficiently bad. ((That's true, but that isn't and shouldn't be the point. So I don't think I was dancing around it --- I didn't want to be sidetracked by it. It is not a useful response to a person who complains of what he perceives to be unfair treatment to say that it could be much worse. Leeder's actions should be judged by some objective standard, not by the standard set by the very worst of the hobby.))

Konrad Baumeister: On the Albrecht letters, it's obvious that he's only crying about losing the advantage of living close to you, nothing more. He'd rather keep the advantage and keep the slower publication of the results than have Sacks GM the game on a quicker schedule. To have his attitude is obviously baby-like. If you don't use the word "reprehensible" when speaking of this attitude, I will... ((Longtime readers of this zine know that I have little patience for arguments which proceed from assigning base motives to people we don't agree with. Unless a person has stated his or her motive, that just speculation, and how persuasive can any argument be based on speculation. Alas, such "reasoning" is endemic in the hobby, and I've seen most of my friends do it from time to time)) ((Konrad goes on to explain how he's had games of his never restarted)) I have, through my own SWLABR and MOBY GRAPE, transferred a little under 20 games from folded zines to either me (former zine) or other GMs (latter zine). Nobody has even complained to me about their games continuing, or about the location of their GM, even tho some lived in far-away places... ((So what? If no one else complained, does that mean Bob can't? I suspect that most or all of the cases Konrad refers to deal with defaulting GMs, a different situation))

Robert Sacks: Albrecht is of course entitled to decide not to join your games in future. After all, you gave up the games because you were overloaded, so it is unlikely that you will be starting many new games.

I am a little upset with Mark Berch's version of the succession of The Flying Orphan ((Sacks' zine)) from The Mixumaxu Gazette ((Lipton's zine)). Since it is based solely on what he has seen in TMG (and perhaps heard from Bob Lipton), it is rather one sided. ((It was based just on what I saw in TMG, so in that sense its really Lipton's version, not

Berch's version)). The fundamental reason for the succession was a growing mistrust of Bob Lipton as a publisher, which was expressed to the players of TFO in the first issue. As it turned out, Lipton fired the other GGM without cause the next month, merely because Lipton was moving to Boston and it was inconvenient for him to have his GGM in NYC. The actual break was brought on when Lipton attacked me in the pages of TMG, and refused to print a response. No games master can trust a publisher who does that. I would agree that the basis for the dispute was not within the hobby, but by printing it in a hobby zine he made it into a hobby dispute. The secession was a fait accompli; neither Lipton nor anyone else had any opportunity to say or do anything. Indeed, it is doubtful whether there was any basis for an objection; of the 7 games, four were orphans I was responsible for (by this I think he means that somebody else had orphaned the game and that He, rather than Lipton, had restarted them), one was a game started in the now defunct Pellucidar with myself as the original GM, and two were started in TMG with myself as the original GM. In any case, no player objected. Since then, all the games (except the one from Pellucidar) have been completed to the satisfaction of the players.

I strongly take issue with the assertion that the game belongs to the players. The game belongs to the GM (or the publisher, depending on the arrangements between them) in trust for the players. The difference is important: if the game belongs to the players they have the right to expell one of their number for any reason (such as he's about to win); if the game belongs in trust for the players, he has the right and obligation to prevent such nonsense. Given the existence of this trust, it follows that the GM has the right and obligation to transfer it to another GM when he can no longer fulfill it. Only when a GM defaults on this trust do the players potentially have a say in determining a new GM; more likely, some orphan placement arrangement will go into effect, and a new GM, selected again without reference to the players (unless they choose to abandon the game altogether) will step in.

((With regard to the transfer of the games originally from TMG, my original point was never whether or not the transfer was justified, but the fact that the players had no say in the process and were not given an explanation at the time (tho Sacks says here that they were subsequently in TFO). As to the point about players not owning the game, I assure those new to Robert Sacks that he is not joking; this is not satire or sarcasm. I don't see any real distinction between his concept of GM owns in trust, and GM owns period. As GM, he acted in such a way that, as he says, the players could not object, because he didn't give them the opportunity to. How he came to be the GM is hardly the point. The fact that Sacks was a replacement GM in 4 of the games hardly robs the players of their rights.))

((An argument that players don't own the game because such ownership would permit them to expell players at will is nonsense. Ownership never carries unlimited rights. If you own a house, that doesn't give you the automatic right to torch it, keep it in a condition unfit for habitation, etc. The players don't have unlimited rights either. They have given up their rights to act other than in compliance with the House Rules. But the fact that they have given up those rights ~~does~~ doesn't mean they have given up ownership in the game. Players have a right to select a new GM if they so desire (tho whether this would have to be unanimous is an unresolved issue). Practical considerations may limit those rights (they may not be able to find a new GM), but they do own those rights))

John Leeder: At one time I felt that a publisher should keep an eye on

his guest GMs and check up on them if they're violating HRs. committing irregularities, etc. I even made a ruling to that effect when I was IDA Ombudsman. I now feel, however, that there are cases where this does not hold true. e.g. in the case of a "hands off" agreement such as I have

with the guest GMs in Runestone. I suppose I would intervene with Blair or Julian in the case of gross incompetence or misfeasance. However, players have other options in such cases, such as voting the game to a new GM, appealing to the Ombudsman, etc. In many cases, GGMs are novice GMs, getting their feet wet; in such cases, supervision by the publisher seems sensible. In others, such as experienced GMs who have no printing facilities and thus must GGM, and would be less necessary, and could result in awkwardness in cases of differing philosophies where neither is really wrong. Perhaps it is important for the publisher and the GGM to spell out their relationship, more so than it has been done in the past, at any rate....

((My observation has generally been that players seem to assume that the pubber is keeping an eye on the guest GM, to a much greater extent than pubbers actually do. If something goes wrong, they are apt to start with the pubber rather than an Ombudsman. That seems sensible. Not only are they much more likely to know the name of the pubber than the name of a good Ombudsman, but the latter is more chancy. The players may not agree on a suitable Ombudsman, let alone the GM agree. The players likely assume, not unreasonably, that the GGM is somehow beholden to the pubber, as the GGM may not be able to function without the pubber. For a publisher to remove a GGM who was still willing to run the game is exceedingly rare. The only case that comes to mind was that Don Horten did remove Oaklyn (Buddy Tretick) for gross mismanagement at a game Tretick GMed in Claw and Fang))

## THE ZINE COLUMN #106

### Runestone '88

One of the reasons I so very much enjoy plugging the Runestone Poll is that I'm pretty sure that I'll be delighted to print the results. This year is no exception. It's a great pleasure to be able to report that Praxis, a zine I greatly enjoy, had won the poll of zines. This zine is in the tradition of Brutus Bulletin, Voice of Doom, and No Fixed Address in providing for a lively interaction between reader and publisher, in a context where all can get a fair hearing (Alan Stewart 702-25 St, Mary St Toronto, Ontario Canada M4Y 1R2). Filling out the top 10 were The Zine Register, Penguin Dip, Diplomacy World, Perelandria, Benzene, Cheesecake, The Canadian Diplomat, Magus and Kathy's Korner/White-stonia. The subzine poll was won by "Shadowplay", followed by "Fiat Bellum" and "Out to Pasture". The GM poll winners were Andsy Lischett, Jim Benes and Kathy Caruso.

A staggering 508 people voted in the Runestone Poll. Vastly more people directly participate in the Runestone Poll than in any other single hobby enterprise. That is the truest measure of the Hobby's acceptance of the RP. Voting has become a normative form of hobby participation. At least 40 zines publicized the poll (more than that, since Bruce's list omitted DD and probably others)

Diplomacy Digest gathered 89 votes --- only three zines received more. The zine fell to 22th (from last year's #16). This is not too surprising, given the fact that DD doesn't appear all that frequently these days, and never has been that large. DD did better in two of the

more specialized listings. 46 Canadian votes were tallied, and of those, DD finished #3 --- the top ranked non-Canadianzine! Why this is true I do not know. The other is what he calls the "All-time Finest list" Basically, he goes back to 1977, converts all the results to percentiles, and then tallies the amount above the 50th percentile, adding the total over the years. This then tallies the ability to stand out year after year. On this list with a commanding lead is Diplomacy World. DD runs 4th on this list, and I'm very proud of that. DD's days of being in the top 10% are probably over for ever, but I'll do well in the merathon.

All the data and much more appear in The Cream Shall Rise #4. For each zine, the matchups against other zines are printed. For example, 7 people preferred DD to KK/W, 8 the reverse, 4 gave it the same vote. He also gives the breakdown of actual votes. DD's votes are heavily concentrated in the 6-9 range. While getting only 2 votes in the 1-3 range, the zine got 3 zeros. If you three are subbers, remember, refunds are always available for monies paid --- no questions asked. He also gives a history curve, done in percentiles. Comparable info is given for subzine and GM polls.

But its all the side material which gives this publication its richness and readability. One extended analysis attempts to see if potentially great GMs and zines can be spotted in the first year's results. The data seems to indicate that good-initial-years are much better predictors for GMs than for zines. There's a nice look at "Comet Zines" --- start bright, fall fast. I had previously used The Fighters Home as the classic example, but the 1988 poll shows Blunt Instruments to be the most spectacular example yet. He also looks at the opposite phenomenon, what he calls rising stars, which have shown steady and very rapid increases. Rebel easily tops this list. He provides a lot of info about the voters themselves. There is a complete list of all 508, along with a hobby identification for each. There is a remarkable list of 125 people who have voted for the last three years. He has his "hobby health index", somewhat pretentiously named, which basically looks at the mean

vote cast for the three polls. The rise seen in 1985-7 is sharply reversed in 1988, and Bruce spends some time trying to figure out what (if anything) this reflects

The issue also has a fair amount of more personalized material. He has a list, with mini-writeups, of what he considers to be the Ten Top Hobby News Stories of the past year. These included The special issue of The General bringing a lot of novices into the hobby, the great success of DD, WorldCon, the Bad Boys, the return of a lot of former pubbers, a spectacular fake, etc. Its interesting (to me anyhow) that of the 10 that Bruce picked, 9 would be considered positive. He also has a list of the hobby's "40 most prominent and influential personalities" You might think he'd use this subjective evaluation to settle some old scores, but in fact, the top half of this list includes most of his most prominent critics. Printing his own ballot I think was unduly self-indulgent, but his "What makes a zine great" was a more ambitious project. He set up various categories (Articles, appearance, Personality/chattness, etc) and then gave his own opinion as to the top ten ratings in these categories, and then, looking at the actual poll results, tries to determine which category ries contribute most an least to success. Another revealing section is "What they're Saying" These are pages of, snippet quotes (miniquotes) of people's views on the polls. He has the self-confidence to include the critics, but they are overwhelmed by an avalanche of praise and appreciation. Anybody who wonders just what the hobby makes of the Runestone Poll can get a pretty clear start from this.





((Lets have a look next at the handling of concession votes. We'll start with Joan Baker, writing in Paroxysm #29, 5-16-76))

### THE CONCESSION VOTE

...It will often happen that a concession to one player or to several players (that is, a draw) will be proposed and voted upon. Almost every drawn game ends in this manner, and almost every game has a concession proposed at some point.

GMs have not been able to agree on how to count the votes of those who didn't bother to vote. Many count the failure to vote as a yes vote; this has been especially prevalent recently. Many other count it as no which means a veto.

The argument of those counting failure as a yes vote are that if someone didn't bother to vote, they either don't care or don't deserve a vote. However, the danger of this is that one yes vote and as many as 6 failures to vote can result in the concession being passed --- obviously not an act of overwhelming genius. ((This actually happened once in a Voice of Doom game. The GM accordingly declared the game over. The players petitioned the GM to restart the game. Even the VoD HRs, the most thoro ever assembled in the hobby's history, failed to cover a case where such a petition occurs. Linsey accepted the petition, and restarted the game.))

The argument of those counting it as a veto are that the failure to vote is almost always caused by minor carelessness, and it is unfair to penalize them when they would normally oppose the concession. Also, if they actually do support the concession, they can always vote yes on it later, but if they don't want to, yet it passes, there is nothing they can ever do about it. The dangers of this are that it tends to increase player apathy toward votes (that is, they are less likely to make a vote, however they may feel), and it can happen that all players are in favor of a concession --- but one forgets to vote, accidentally vetoing it.

But there is a better way than all of these. Simply require that a majority of the players still in the game must vote yes on the concession, and that there be no vetos by failure to vote((i.e. NVR=Yes)). One positive no vote would still veto.

This shows that a majority of the players do want the concession. Perhaps one of those who didn't vote was against the concession? Perhaps, but he didn't make his feelings known. Perhaps he really was neutral, unable to decide... In any means, it wouldn't be fair to the other players to go against their wishes just because one player didn't express his.

((To this essay editor Doug Ronson replies:))

This is definitely an improvement but not perfect. There is still the problem of the single player who is winning who misses his vote and the concession goes thru by the votes of the rest of the players. Since most GMs accept general orders ((true then, but I'm not sure its true now)), I suggest that players submit general orders stipulating that they vote "no" on all votes except for, perhaps, one including them in a two way draw ((or win!)).

((For those looking for other types of compromises, here's a few more off the top of my head:

1. No Vote Received = Yes, unless the person NMRed that season, in which case, it counts as No. The theory is the player has suffered enough penalty from the NMR.

2. NVR = No vote, and it takes 1 no vote to veto. In this case, a single NVR would not act to veto, but two of them would. Two NVRs may indicate that the proposal wasn't given enough prominence.

3. NVR= No, but when that happens, the GM puts the player down for a yes for the next vote(s) in the next season that a ballot is held. Of course, the player can override that yes with a definite "no" vote the next time around. The theory here is that the GM will "protect" a player's right to veto once, but not twice in a row.

Obviously, both NVR=No and NVR=Yes are both practical, and both camps have fine GMs in them. I've never written on this topic before, and since my approach to this question is quite different, I think I'll format my views as a separate essay, which follows))

A PHILOSOPHICAL CASE FOR NO--VOTE-RECEIVED = No  
by Mark L Berch

The first question that needs to be answered here is one that normally isn't even considered: Is a player obligated to vote on a draw or concession proposal? My own view is that he or she is not.

The essence of playing Diplomacy is the timely submission of orders. Of course, if you don't communicate with the other players, you probably won't do well. But if you are submitting orders, you are, at some level, playing the game, and if you aren't submitting orders, you aren't playing the game. When a player signs up for a game, he obligates himself to send in orders in a timely manner (If the GM charges fees for the game and/or zine, he'll need to pay those too). If he fails to meet those obligations, the GM is entitled to penalize him, by freezing his units while others move, or by not permitting him to play on the game any longer (booting him out).

But draw votes aren't in that category. You can play the game perfectly well without them. They are an optional feature. They are a shortcut, to get the game to a point that all players agree on, without having to go thru all the seasons to get there. Its useful to have a mechanism to save extra seasons of play, but that doesn't make it a mandatory feature. A player is no more obligated to vote than he is obligated to propose concession or draw votes. Together, the two are useful, but if one isn't mandatory, why should the other be? Proposing it is a player instituted action, so why should that create an obligation on other players. The Rulebook certainly doesn't say that you have to vote (or even acknowledge that a vote has been proposed), and, come to think of it, House Rules don't say that you have to vote either. Vote proposals are frequently part of some player's diplomatic strategy. Why should a player feel obligated to cooperate in another player's strategy (by voting)? If a player does not feel that it is in his interest to vote, why should he feel obligated to vote? This is particularly true if the GM is the sort who publishes the exact tally (e.g. "Vote was 4-1 in favor of the draw") A player may feel that the whole purpose of the vote is not to demonstrate that the players have agreed on a conclusion to the game, but that the propose was just to "smoke out" his position? Such a tally could be used to pinpoint (at least to the satisfaction of the other players) how he feels --- or perhaps even as part of a plot to misrepresent how he feels. Why should he be obligated to play along with a vote that isn't in his interests. Most experienced players know the feeling of hoping that no one will propose this or that draw vote!

If you accept this proposition that a player shouldn't be obligated to vote, then I think you should agree that it isn't fair to penalize him if, for whatever reason, he doesn't vote. A penalty is legit for failing to send in orders, for that is a player obligation. If he has the right not to vote, then he shouldn't be penalized for exercising that right.

And NVR=Yes is a penalty. He's lost his ability to veto the draw. You could argue that NVR=No means he's lost his right to assent to the draw, but by not voting yes he's not given his assent in the first place. He is at risk under NVR=Yes of having his game end, right out from underneath him. That's can be as bad as being kicked out of a game --- in either case, you can't play any more.

A game ends when there is a) winner, b) stalemate, or c) agreement to end game. If a player cannot stop either a) or b), then he deserves to have the game end even if he wants it to go on. But as for c), if he doesn't want to stand up and be counted, he has that right, and we shouldn't act as if he gave agreement when he exercised that right. The game was formed with his active consent, and lacking a) or b), cannot end without that consent, explicitly given. He has every right not to vote, and every right not to give that consent in the form of not voting.

((Next we have two contrasting views on how the results of a concession vote should be reported. We start with Lew Pulsipher, writing in Paroxysm #20, March 21, 1976))

...How should the draw vote be revealed to the players? A GM, by revealing who voted how, can give important information to some players. For example, two players have allied and agree to a two-way draw. One asks for such a vote, and the other votes "nay", planning to stab his ally at a later time, while the remaining opponents vote yes. If the GM reveals who voted how, the plans of the ally are revealed. In other words, he must either prematurely stab when the draw vote comes up (and when his ally will be particularly wary, if he's smart) or he must give up his plans and say "yes". If it is not revealed how each player voted, then the player planning the stab can ((lie and)) say that an opponent voted against the draw, and no matter what the opponent says, the target won't really know whether his ally is playing him false or not. Of course, the opponent can call for a vote, then vote no, and try to convince each of the allies that the other player was the one who voted no, intending the stab! In other words, if the GM reveals how each player voted, he has robbed players of several options. On the other hand, in a face-to-face game each player would probably know how each other voted. And in a real life situation each country would probably know where the others stood. Whether you want to reveal the vote or not depends on whether you think of Diplomacy in real life or game terms, and on whether you think Postal Diplomacy should be as close to FTF DiP as possible, or that it ought to be different. My own method is to say only whether or not the vote succeeded --- I do not even give the count. ((An opposite point of view comes from Rod Walker in #29:))

I announce the full tally. What is this passion for secret votes? The argument that it is a diplomatic tool is a red herring. It is easy to vote "no" to a draw and explain that under the rules all survivors share equally in the draw so there was no sense in voting for a draw excluding somebody when the vote was ineffectual ((To this, editor Doug Ronson interjected: "Come on now, Rod, most GMs allow votes not including all survivors"))((Rod's argument can be revived by the person averrring that as a philosophical matter, he opposes draws not including all survivors. Of course, if the vote you want to secretly oppose is a draw of all current survivors, then even this argument will get nowhere)) Having open votes for draws (or concession) can be just as useful and just as effective (perhaps more so) as a diplomatic tool as all the secrecy and hocus pocus stuff, so why not be open and honest in the first place.... ((To me, the point really isn't what would happen in real life or a face-to-face game or being "open and honest". The GM should decide first in his own mind what is the point of conducting a vote in the first place. There are two very different choices:

A. The vote is just one more area for diplomatic maneuvering. GMs prefer to provide the players with as much room for this as possible. To maximize the info and possibilities available, the GM would have to at least announce the numbers for and against, e.g. 4-1 in favor. Even better would be to do the practice done by at least one GM (Randolph Smyth): If a player requests that his true vote be revealed, the GM will comply. Whether telling who-voted-how would increase or decrease diplomatic scope is problematic. It obviously gives more information, but it makes it impossible for a player to misrepresent his (or even another player's) vote.

B. The vote is an effort to determine whether the players have in fact agreed on how the game shall end, i.e. is there any point in continuing to play the game. If the players are all agreed on the outcome, then there's no need for further seasons. For this, all you need is pass-fail. It doesn't matter what the score is if the vote fails, so you don't announce it. Indeed, a purist wouldn't even announce the "nay"-- vote, as the mere continuation of the game would indicate that there was no agreement.

In my opinion, either view of the purpose of the draw vote is entirely legit, and thus, the choice is a matter of taste and philosophy. I favor B. I don't see any need to add diplomatic scope to the game, and thus I'd prefer to have the draw vote perform only its "official" role. I have consistently opposed the practice of GMs adding requirements not in the rulebook (unless essential for postal play), and similarly I would prefer not to add this diplomatic feature as well.)

(Wrapping up the reprints is the excerpt from an essay by Scott Hanson, which first appeared in Coat of Arms #11, June 1982))

GM's always place the orders they receive in a safe place. This is important and I was certainly not going to be an exception to this rule. I looked around my apartment and realized the safest place would be the trashcan. If anyone wanted to see a copy of their previous season's orders I would know exactly where they could find them, the Mpls dump. Now when the deadline date rolls around one does not have to be bothered sorting orders for each game. You simply decide right then and there what will happen. It is however very important that you take into consideration the players. For example: Suppose Woody is in your game. You immediately put his country in a horrible mess. If Bob Olsen is playing have him disorder 2 out of 3 units. If Baglady Byrne is in the game she should be attacking each of her immediate neighbors. If you are lucky Martin or Palter will be in your game. They should NMR. If Steve Langley is playing you are going to need a wild imagination to make up his usual weird press. If you have Mark Larzelere playing he must have moves which are cunning and vicious. Mark pounces like a lion and ALWAYS looks for a win, whether it be postal or FTF.

What happens if one of your players complain? Don't worry about it players are basically stupid. If one happens to lodge a complaint tell him to 'go to hell' (a trick I picked up from Jack Masters)

There are many other methods of GMing, with my method the GM leaves nothing to the players except paying the game fee. I remember some of the other GM techniques. One of my favorites is the Mike Mills theory. In this one the GM takes and keeps all players orders for all his games in one folder. Now come deadline day Mike randomly pulls out 7 sets of orders, one from each country. Quite often you will notice in Emhain Macha a player disordering or a country with 4 units may try to order 9 units. That is all part of The Mills T.S. theory of GMing. The next part of Mike's method is what scares me. He will NOT print a supply chart after the fall turn! He waits for the players to tell him what they own! I remember in one particular game, it was just after fall '02. Woody wrote Mills claiming 18 centers, Mills who is Irish and quite cowardly did not wish to disagree with Woody, who is twice Mike's size, awarded Woody an Austrian win in '02!

Then there is the Italian trio, Caruso, Mainardi, and Arnetto. These three are so stupid that they try to go by the book. I remember observing one of Arnetto's games. He thought everyone started out with 18 units and the winner was the first one who got down to 3 units, 4 if you were Russia. Poor Arnetto was reading the book backwards.

The Coughlan technique is one I like to watch but would never dare to try. I am not mean like Gary and cannot dictate like this southerner. Playing in Gary's Europe Express means the week before the deadline Gary will call you on the phone and tell you what to write in the press and how you are to compliment him and EE. Gary really does not mind if you don't comply. He simply sees to it that your country dies, very rapidly and you never get another gamestart in EE as long as you live and maybe even longer. Another major part of the Coughlan style: is to change languages every season, that way the players will never find their game and Gary will certainly not tell them if they have a habit of not doing as they are told. I remember one month when Bruce Linsey forgot to let Gary know how much he enjoyed EE. Instead Bruce complained about the postal service, which employs Gary and which Gary is very proud of. Do you know Bruce's entire copy of EE was written in Korean that month! Now Bruce calls Gary each month asking how he can be of service to the mighty southerner.

Perhaps one of the best techniques is used by Glenn Overby. It is the least time consuming for the GM and also is the most profitable for the GM. Once the game begins and the announcement is made the GM never gets back in touch with the players. It is up to the players to guess or read the GM's mind as to where their units are. After several months of guessing the GM will tell you how you are progressing in the game. If and only if you call his house 3 times a day on 3 consecutive days.

# NEWS—GNUS—NOOZE

I'm pleased to announce that this year I've shared the "Rod Walker Award for excellence in writing with Fred Davis. Fred got it for the variant catalogue. I got it for the GMing Roundtable which appeared in DD #107-109. One person has been so unkind as to refer to my contribution as "all Mark did was string the thing together and add a few comments". I won't name this writer because his judgement is (rightfully) so highly respected that the mere citation of his name will put two strikes against my rebuttal. Can't have that. Anyhow, I've gone thru the entire roundtable and counted the lines (just because he had better things to do with his time doesn't mean I do). The results show that 48½% of the writing was mine. Some of that of course was the questions themselves. But this is legitimate. I believe that one of the factors in the success of the Roundtable was that the questions, most of them multi-layered, were able to elicit such a wide range of views.

And if you like contributing to such roundtables, DW #52 has another in its "You Be The GM" series. Unfortunately, Peery forgot to tell the readers to send in responses to me or set a deadline, so I'm mentioning it here. It concerns a little used but handy practice, that of giving the GM a postcard to mail back to the player, so the player will be assured that his orders have arrived. But what if the player wanted to use it for some, well, nefarious, purposes. Could he? Have a look at those scenarios and let me know what you'd do.

And also on the topic of Fred Davis, his Bushwacker reached #200 not too long ago. B is by far the most reliable variant zine that has ever existed, and Fred is the most experienced variant GM we've ever had. Unlike other variant GMs (many others I should say), he runs both his own and others' creations. Most issues have a fair amount of reading, frequently dealing with astronomy and space, one of Fred's continuing interests. For a zine to run 200 issues is extraordinarily rare. Others have noted that Graustark did this (long ago), as did Runestone, tho the latter did this with mostly weekly issues, that frequently were just 2-4 pages, which he'd bundle approximately monthly. However, since that I've read have all failed to note that the very reliable Libertarian also reached 200 issues. I also note that Dippy long ago passed 200 and I suspect is beyond 250 by now.

Another excellent issue of The Zine Register has arrived from Ken Peel, enlivened by Ken's comments strewn among the capsule reviews. But there is something of the type which I don't much care for in #13. Ken writes: "I also understand that one or two individuals wrote or called the University of Chicago raising alarms about Geryk's hobby activities. I've heard two names mentioned, but I don't know for sure who did it."

(Parenthetically, I will say that a) unlike many zines, I haven't discussed the "Bad Boys of DIP" business here in DD because I've never felt it was worth the space b) I'm not sure why Ken chose TZC for this, since this alleged incident has nothing to do with the hobby's zines.)

My objection to this is two fold. I don't like this business about criticizing the misdeeds of unnamed persons. To me, this is gossip-column titillations ("Guest what senator was recently spotted..."). What are we supposed to do here --- settle on someone we don't like, and then just assume that's who it was?? If you think it's you being referred to, how

can you properly respond? If you argue that "it wasn't that way at all" you just set yourself for the "Who said I was talking about you" response to what you say. An exception can be made if the miscreant did in fact act anonymously, but there's no indication here that it's the case here. I say spell it out or leave it out --- anything else is a disservice, and does little more than promote gossip. It's not just Peel who has done it --- I've seen Peery, Linsey, Walker do it too.

The other issue is more serious. In my opinion, the esteemed Mr. Peel has no business airing such a story unless he is pretty sure it actually happened. But how could he be? He doesn't know if it was a letter or a phone call, and he doesn't know who did it. The account has a distinctly third party air to it --- "...I've heard two names mentioned.."

This is no academic complaint. A few years back we had The Great Feud. One of the main things that fueled it was that people were willing to criticize letters that they somehow, er, well, couldn't actually produce. People talked about phone conversations that they weren't a party to (or didn't have one of the parties as a source). Now, I don't know whether this U of Chicago event occurred or not. But I do know what got the hobby into trouble before. But I am saying to Ken --- and everyone else for that matter --- this: If I open a zine, and I see you talking about a letter you can't produce, I'm likely to point that out to my readers here, or in that zine, or both. I have seen too many cases where no such letter ever existed in the first place. I hope that my publically declared intentions in this matter may deter the appearance of at least some of this material in the hobby's zines.

Ken, if you can produce that letter, or retract your statement, I'll gladly report that here. If not, I'll report that too.

A somewhat unorthodox publication, Been There, Done That is being put out by Tom Nash (5512 Pilgram Rd Baltimore MD 21214). This will be a subzine to The Scribblerist, a postal zine, and The Armchair Diplomat, an Electronic mail zine distributed on CompuServe. Plus, he'll distribute it directly via hard copy if you like. The first issue features a gamestart (which apparently will use postal-type deadlines), and some lighthearted comments about the hobby.

In Everything #77 BNC Steve Heinowski announces that he is now looking for a replacement BNC. If you'd like the job, contact him at 860 Colorado Ave #2A Lorain, OH 44052. To do this job well, you will need quite a bit of spare time, a good sense or organization, and a tough hide. Also in this issue is a GMing survey. I had suggested to Steve that my Publishing survey a few years back had gone quite well, and perhaps we could use a GMing one. He's got a lot of good questions, and I hope that all GMs will take the time to respond. The gamestarts have some curiosities. Two of them have no zine or GM listed. Melinda Holley is GMing 6 of those 20 games, and is a player in three more. The game finishes show one game with 5 GMs, another which ran till 1924, yet two more games with Behnen and Diehl as original players.


Lets do some short takes here. Don Del Grande 142 Elsieo Dr Greenbrae, CA 94904 has openings in Dippy, Kingmaker, 1830, Talisman, and Kremlin.... Rod Walker tells me that former Diplomacy hobbist Greg Costigyan designed the game version of the movie Willow... War and Peace HAS FOLDED. This is a zine which I greatly enjoyed because it put out a steady diet of game related essays.... Lee Kendter Jr has returned to the hobby, this time with a zine Get Them Dots Now!, a variant-oriented zine, including one which has only fall and winter seasons. (264 Spruce Ct Bensalem PA 19020. Subs 10/\$7.50)... The Diplomacy Alliance Against AIDS, run in conjunction with the 1988 Runestone Poll, collected about \$1400.

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