

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

---

Issue #120/121	Mark L Berch	Subs: 10 for \$5.50
June/July 1989	11713 Stonington Pl	Europe: 5 for 12
Personalities at Voice of Doom	Silver Spring MD 20902	Circulation: 77

---

This issue is the first time I've reprinted only from a single zine, in this case, Voice of Doom. And I've stuck to just one topic, personalities. With its enormous stable of regular contributors, there was a fair amount of this material, but the zine by no means concentrated on that. GMing, play-of-the-game and humor were also staples of the zine, and perhaps a few years hence such theme issues may appear.

I doubt that I.F.Stone ever heard of the Diplomacy hobby, but I'm pretty sure he would have approved of our I'll-say-what-I-want approach to publishing here. He was the most successful example of someone employing the axiom, "Freedom of the Press belongs to the man who owns a press" His 4-page newsletter went out for decades, and in it he said EXACTLY what he wanted. When poor health forced him to shut it down, he had 70,000 subscribers. He was a man who breathed life into the First Amendment. He died shortly before the Supreme Court's flag-burning decision. But more than once he remarked that the U.S.A was one of the very few nations on this globe where you could "spit in the eye of the government and get away with it." And that's exactly what the SC decision was all about --- can you "get away" with this form of free speech? If we permit this one exception to free speech, then the next exception, and the one after that, will come all too quickly, and something of America will be lost.

In the previous issue, I mentioned 1980HC, where Fred Townsend's Austria took Nwy in 1903 and Den in 1904. Fred writes me to say that "then I persuaded Germany to convoy me into Yorkshire where I eventually won the game by moving my army into London ...The only stronger Austrian game I've had was 3-4 years ago at a tournament in New Jersey. I built fleets for the first 6 years, became the dominant sea power with a Russian ally and lucked into an 18 center win by taking Belgium from the english channel." I quote this to point out that most you-can't-do-this-and-you-can't-do-that advice so often given in this hobby just ain't so. One of the glories of this game is that, given a good ally, you can do practically anything.

The "Lexicon of Diplomacy" is now available in another form. You can get this in LD #34/35/36, plus Some of Lex in #57 (there are some other items in those issues too). The latter includes new items additions and corrections. Anyhow, Jeff Breidenstein 8198 Curving Creek Ct. Springfield VA 22153 has rolled both of these into one, combining entries when needed, and adding some new entries, mostly for variants. Its available for purchase at \$2.50 directly from him. SoL is now 6 years old, and I've been thinking of doing an update. Do you all think one would be needed?

((I figure I'll start with myself. Games in VoD carried names of celestial objects; here, "SIRIUS". From #93, March 20, 1984))

(Not) The Ombudsman's Decision  
by Mark L. Berch

At first glance, the SIRIUS Matter would appear to be just an ordinary GM-Player dispute, going to the Ombudsman for his rubber stamp, to sanction the shafing of another player in another VoD game. Yet, appearances are so deceiving, especially in VoD. In reality, this is an attempt to swindle Mark Berch, perpetrated by Bruce, probably in cahoots with that windbag, Steve Knight.

But first, some background. This game had its origins in "Finchley Central". This was a game first described by Richard Walkerdine in Fthil the Frog, second cycle, #12. The first person to say "Finchley Central" wins. Brux decided that this game was so simple-minded that even VoD readers could master it. However, it needed to be adapted slightly because he didn't think his readers would be able to remember such an obscure word as "Finchley". Brux selected the name "Diplomacy Central" (the name of the variant game itself) out of the pathetic and transparent desire to have VoD thought of as the center of the hobby. The victory criterion was selected to be the first player to successfully order a unit to Albania. Brux had conducted a statistical analysis of all VoD games, and determined that F Tr-Alb was the second most common SO1 move, and therefore his readers have probably figured that one out (The most common is A Con-Bul, but Brux has been badmouthing that for so long that he's certainly not going to base his game on it.) And so the game was born.

Some of you are probably wondering: Why all the background? Is it really necessary to belabour the obvious, viz, Brux's low opinion of his readers? And what is its connection to the actual dispute? Well, none, actually. But Brux pays by the length, remember, so shameless padding is the order of the day.

Now, in the actual dispute, Steve Knight, the Austrian player, NMRed in S'Ol. "Neutral" orders were used as per the Houserules, which included F Tri-Alb. Brux, the only GM ever to have a sruch on his own HRs, declared his Houserules to be the winner. This was accompanied by Brux's standard set of smug remarks on how marvelous his HRs are. His HRs not only take care of all conceivable game circumstances (and many inconceivable ones as well) but also can win a postal game and given enuf time will probably publish a zine, get into a feud with Eric Kane, and ---who knows---maybe suffer burnout as well!

Anyhow, Steve Knight protested, and Brux asked all interested parties to send their remarks to the Ombudsman, viz, me. For those interested, I am a member of the International Ombudsman's Federation, Local 752. Yup, this is a union ombudsman, down with scabs, etc.

I have accumulated a disturbing set of frankly sinister facts associated with this game. Consider please the following:

1. Peter Ansoff offered to standby. His letter was written well before the game ended, but wasn't printed till well afterward.
2. The HRs have supposedly snatched a victory away from Steve Knight. But guess who actually compiled these HRs? Guess who organized them, who eliminated a few embarrassing self-contradictions and

who probably added a few ringers (this last point has not yet been verified, since no one other than Brux and Steve has actually read them thru completely)? Yup -- Steve Knight! Coincidence? Really? If Russia and Turkey both open to the Black Sea in SOL, do you call it a coincidence?

3. Kathy Byrne had been feuding with Brux. Suddenly, in a move that rocked the ECC, all was patched up! Within days, Kathy Byrne was entered as a player in this game. Another coincidence? Try to reconcile that with the fact that Ms. Byrne ((now Kathy Caruso)) has stated in 36% of the hobby's zines (latest count as of 2/27/84) that she would NEVER play under BRUX's HRS.

4. This game is a variant. Yet no Miller Number was ever given. Why?

5. During the period for interested parties to write me, the HouseRules never wrote me. Bruce had comments in VoD, but those were in behalf of his decision (well, in behalf of the rectitude of his decision, if you want to be technical). I find it strange that the purported winner didn't even present his (her?)(Its?) case in writing.

6. Bob Olsen, another player, writes, "My forged orders for SIRIUS got there one day late (I'll just BET they did)." What is that all about? Sounds very sinister to me.

7. Steve Knight has inexplicably declined to claim the win. This is very strange! Steve makes the point that since he only NMR-ed once, he could not have been removed. That being the case, Steve would still be in the game, and therefore would be the winner, as his fleet is indubitably in Albania. Yet he disclaims the win. Why?

8. Finally, we must wonder if the HRS hands (pages?) are really clean (unsmudged?) in this matter. The replacement moves are required (Rule V.2e)((that's a real citation!)) to be "neutral" Can moves which win the game really be considered neutral?

And what of the role of the ombudsman? I see that both Gary Coughlan and Dick Martin agree that they are useless ((Gary's conclusion arising, in part, from his dispute with Dick)). When Gary and Dick agree on anything, one must be very wary, Gary. (Say "very wary Gary" ten times quickly. Your lips will melt).

I am in an additional quandry. Steve's arguments (about not being removed because he missed only one move) are irrefutable. On the other hand, I am obligated by my terms of employment always to back Bruce.

Now possibly you are wondering, "What about the part where Berch gets swindled"? I'm coming to that. It is well known that Bruce pays for VoD material by length. Two pages get more free issues than one. Larry Peery can get two free issues just for clearing his throat. But there is an exception! There is a flat one issue payment for -- you guessed it -- an ombudsman's decision. Brux plans to get an entertaining article out of me --- and he only has to pay me one issue! Well, to hell with that!

Thus, I must make a decision which is not an Ombudsman's decision. I have to show that Bruce is right and that Steve is right, for reasons stated above. In short, I must produce the most extreme waffle of my entire career!

Yes, the Houserules won. However, the neutral orders, which are set forth in the HRS, are merely an agent of Steve Knight. They act on his behalf ---they are there to move his units---they are still his. You've heard of the legal expression "in loco parentis"? Well, the neutral orders were acting "in loco playerus" Therefore, Steve has won.

Please note that there is no controversy -- just as Bruce desired. Yes, we aim to please. ((Bruce's comments afterward gave me 5 free issues, and noted that the game was invited by Glover Rogerson, and that it did have a (graudulent) Miller Number))



((VoD #100, the final issue, was the most fabulous issue of a dipzine ever to occur. At 270 pages, it was by far the largest, and had virtually zilch in the way of photocopied filler. Exclusive of just game orders and reprints, 53 people contributed, many with extensive or multiple contributions. This letter is one of them))

Bob Howerton: I have been a subscriber to your magazine for several years and have watched your "dueling" with others in the hobby with interest. I have often wondered what really lay at the bottom of your "feuds". How could any one individual generate so much turm oil?

At last, I have learned the hard way. You must have a deeply embedded mean streak. To lash out so viciously at an innocent bystander as you have at me can only mean that you are obsessed with the idea of "getting" as many people as possible. Why you turn on those of us who have never done you any harm is beyond me ... Our relationship, which has been amiable in the past, must of necessity undergo a drastic change. You hit me where it really hurt in a manner I would not have thought possible.

Imagine if you will a peculiar set of circumstances which combined an unusually early mail delivery with an unusually late breakfast. I pick up the mail and notice that the latest issue of your rag ... has arrive. I carry this latest issue, along with my breakfast of bacon and eggs, on a tray out to the patio for a relaxing and enjoyable meal.

A really beautiful day --- the sun is shining, the birds are singing, God is in his Heaven and all is right with the world. "Ah, good," I mutter to myself, " I can catch up with all the latest doings and see if Don Burd and Ruth Glaspey, my faithful and trusty allies in QUASAR, and I have finally broken thru."

ZAP!!!

Almost as if by some manner of remote control, your struck your dastadly blow. You had somehow contrived to conceal in your envelope what I estimate at about 75 pounds of dirt which poured out over my eggs and bacon as I opened VoD in amazement. You claim this to be sand from some such place as Jones Beach which you wanted to share with your subbers. I doubt it could be called sand, but it was possibly from some beach as there was what appeared to be part of an old lifesaving ring sticking on one eggolk.

Now I ask, who but you would go to the trouble of shoveling sand all over North America in an effort to ruin someone's day? I'm sure that you could only guess at the results, but in my case it was devastating -- those were the last two eggs in the place. It was enuf to drive me to drink, except that there was ((now)) some flotsam in both the Orange Juice and the coffee.

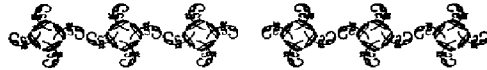
Well Bruce, you hit me where it really hurt ... to mess with my breakfast is an act of war....Somewhere, sometime when you least expect it, I'll be behind you.

This is no idle threat, coming from someone who has survived some pretty dark alleys from Berlin to Saigon. Of course, I have

mellowed out a bit over the last few years and I am willing to ... downgrade it to a prank if you admit that you really did with malice of forethought. I also expect a printed apology and a promise of a breakfast we should we ever meet.

PS To cap the disaster, my trusty allies, Don and Ruth, took the last of my supply centers and cast me out like an old shoe.

((To which Bruce replied: "...Just for kicks, I'm enclosing a bit more of it in your copy of this issue, Rob...No, no I'm kidding. I promise you a nice hearty breakfast if we ever get to meet...." I remember that issue. I had just taken my shoes off, tore open the envelope, and some of it landed there. Sand in my shoes seemed somehow appropriate))



((This next exchange comes from VoD #37, 6-2-81. The writer is Boardman))

((But perhaps some background first. There had been around that time a lot of discussion in the hobby about the problem with Tretick, and what to do about it. A number of publishers, including Boardman were very hostile to what he had been doing. Dwayne Shreve, however, felt it had gotten out hand. He composed a letter, purporting to describe several incidents involving Tretick in an outside-the-hobby context. All could be fairly easily checked out and discovered to be non-existent. He mailed it off to several pubbers, and had told me privately what he had done. I told him I didn't think anyone would touch it, since he signed it "Robert Ames", a pseudonym unknown in the hobby. To my surprise, Boardman ran it as a straight news item. I wrote him to say that it was a hoax. In a classic case of turning on the messenger, I got an angry letter from him, demanding to know who had done this. I initially wrote him saying that I'd have to get permission first, and then a short time wrote him to tell him it was Shreve. But Boardman was furious, and denounced me numerous times in Graustark as being in cahoots with Shreve, and never permitted me to reply that, in fact, I didn't know Dwayne was going to pull such a stunt till he actually did it. This letter from Boardman was written at a time when there were a lot of hoax and parody publications going around. The other names are all real people except for Blake and Dickens))

Dear What-ever-your-name-is:

Poor, poor BRUX! You have sent out so many things under other people's names, that nobody believes you any more when you sign your own. The name I sign at the bottom of this letter is my own. You cannot say that for your publications, can you?

And you have the colossal effrontery to call someone else "unethical"? You with your forged publications scattered all over the hobby? What do we get next - a sermon from Jean Harris on the text: "Thou shalt not kill"?

The last time I treated a letter from one of you clowns seriously, it was signed "Robert Ames", and you professed high humor because I believed that a "Robert Ames" existed. You lied. Have you ever heard the word before? "Lied". Do you believe that it is anything wrong?

In the same mail as your letter, I received the enclosed letter from another Robert Ames, this one operating under the name "Ozog". I see that this name is being withdrawn as unsaleable. Never fear; I know you'll be operating under more in a little while.

I have your word that the sentiments you enclosed were written by Mark Larzelere. And we all know what your word is worth, don't we? I have never had any such comments from Mark, who to the best of my knowledge is a genuine human being, and has been playing in Graustark for several months.

Don't you find it difficult keeping all those phoney names straight? Most of us find it easier to be honest.

In 18 years of postal diplomacy, I have learned one consoling thing about you liars, forgers, and rip-off artists. You all go away. Where is Bernie Kling these days? Who remembers the vanished game fees that were sent to Gary Jones or Scott Hanken? David Staples has long since sunk back into the prairie dog hole from which he arose. Nobody any longer believes that Penelope Naughton Dickens is a real person. Sooner or later you will join this noble company. Will you be missed? Stick your finger into a glass of ice water, pull it out, and look at the hole that is left. That's how much you'll be missed.

PS: If you're really interested in receiving copies of my exposures of your frauds, I can send them to you c/o Robert Ames.

((Linsey then replied))

((Since you are so confident that most of the hobby despises us "forgers", I'm sure you'll jump at the chance to earn a few bucks, simply by putting your money where your mouth is. Here's my proposal: I publicly bet you, John Boardman, \$100 that most of the active publishers in the hobby think that fake zines are fun, rather than dishonest. If you accept my bet, we will find a neutral party and each send him \$100. (Practically any publisher outside New York City is OK by me as a "neutral party" -- name several and I'll choose one or, if you prefer, I'll name about twenty and you can choose.)

After that, we will then pose the following question to all Dip publishers on this continent: "Do you feel that fake zines and other hobby hoaxes are good, bad, or indifferent?" My bet is that there will be more "goods" than "bads". The winner collects the money, and the loser must publicly admit (in his own zine) that his views on fakes are not those espoused by most of the hobby.

Since Mike Mills' Zine Directory contains a complete list of NA publishers through fall 1980, we would poll those people mentioned within, plus the people who have started zines in 1981. After all, we wouldn't want any "Eric Blakes" voting, would we?

If either party backs down from this bet, it can be assumed that he is not confident that his viewpoint coincides with that of the hobby at large.

It is said that a fool and his money are easily parted. Are you ready to take a chance at winning \$100 from this fool, John Boardman?)))

OTHER PUBLISHERS: PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PUBLICIZE THIS BET BETWEEN JOHN AND ME. THE POLL WILL BE MORE ACCURATE IF A LARGE NUMBER OF PUBBERS VOTE, THEREBY ENSURING A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE SIZE.

((Bruce has done various dares and bets from time to time, but I don't recall anyone ever taking him up on any of them. A couple of years later, tho, I had a poll of publishing practices, and asked, "Fakes, as they have existed over the past few years, are good for the hobby?" Agreeing, strongly or moderately were 18 pubbers, disagreeing, 5 pubbers, and neutral, 9. That was one of the two most unbalanced results I got for any such question. So I think Linsey would have won his bet. Incidentally, Ozog was Tretick's friend at the time, which is why I think Boardman dragged him in the the discussion.))



((We'll move away from the hobby for this gem from #60, April 1982))

### Pity the Monsters

A Response to Judy Linsey

by Garry Hamlin

"And it is curious how often in steep places  
You meet someone short who frowns,  
The type you catch beheading daisies with a stick..."

Back in college, when I used to work in restaurants cleaning the heads, now and then I'd find I'd been left little gifts -- "tips", if you will -- like someone defecating in the sink or tying a used tampon behind the grate of a bathroom fan. Back then, I used to wonder what kind of personality would commit such a desperately sick act -- then I met Bob Olsen (I'm teasing, Bob). But I know now there are worse monsters than these, or even the mutes and mumblers Judy Linsey's article ((VD #56)) makes reference to. The most

perfect ogres are not even those described by Auden in the lines above (called to mind by what I can remember of the geography of New York State). No, the worst of the bunch are those actually with some degree of geniality, but whose ingenuity, uncoupled with any shred of common sense, lends them the illusion of competence that makes them a threat to all around them. While that description may sound high-falutin', consider the following example.

The same evening Judy Linsey's article appeared in my mailbox, I had only two tasks to perform: to mind our two-year-old son and wash the dishes while my wife was at a meeting. The dishwasher had broken the day before, but we had a portable unit out in the garage which I rolled into the kitchen in the hope of cutting at least one task short. This was followed by several trips to the hardware store to get the right gismo to screw into the kitchen faucet. These trips were punctuated by the two-year-old's desperate cries of "Gotta poop, Daddy! Gotta poop!" (I cannot express in type the urgency of that demand.) Yet, with each trip to the john I found myself standing around for a quarter of an hour with nothing at all getting done.

Finally, I got the dishwasher running and my son calmed down, and settled in to read my new VD. But when I got back to the kitchen and opened the unit, I found that it had filled itself to the brim with scalding hot water, which it now refused to discharge. A lesser being would've taken out a pan, resigned himself to his fate, and started bailing the slop out. But in times of adversity I'm inclined to assume the posture of an epic hero struggling against his destiny. And besides, I had a plan.

I got out an old ear syringe, our garden hose, a mason jar, and my son's Play-Dough. I cut the hose into lengths, punctured the syringe, and tried to rig up a primitive syphon, using the Play-Dough as sealer and the mason jar as sort of a bell jar. All I accomplished in this was the destruction of a perfectly good garden hose and ear syringe, plus getting myself a scalding hot mouthful of dirty dishwasher.

But I still refused to pan the water out. Rather, I decided to wheel the unit over to the back threshold and tip the water out on the porch. So I unloaded the dishes with ice tongs (to avoid burning my hands), but unfortunately I was interrupted for twenty minutes by a phone call from an ally regarding some intricate Diplomacy strategy. (((Undoubtedly it was me, heh heh!))) By the time I got back to my task, I had forgotten that I hadn't removed all of the glasses from the top shelf of the dishwasher.

When I tipped the unit over the threshold, two things occurred simultaneously. The first was that the dishwasher somehow began discharging the scalding water from underneath the unit on my bare feet (I was wearing nothing but a robe at the time). The second was that the glasses on the top shelf began falling off and shattering on the concrete back porch. I was now holding a several hundred pound dishwasher (weight due to the volume of water) at a 45 degree angle while my feet boiled and our tableware disintegrated before my eyes -- and I could neither let go without completely ruining the unit nor find a place suitable to stand so that I could apply enough leverage to lift it back up.

Scientists have often remarked on the amazing feats people perform when subject to sufficient adrenalin. With a Herculean effort, I somehow managed to leap right over the dishwasher, through the door, and was now holding it up from the other side.

But this wasn't an acceptable solution either. Now I found scalding water spilling over my crotch, while my bare feet slipped and slid over wet ice frosted with broken glass. With an epic cry, I acknowledged the primacy of Newton's laws of gravity, and fell -- and the dishwasher fell on top of me, discharging the rest of the boiling water and the remains of the dishwear I hadn't yet destroyed.

Long I lay there, gazing at the pitiless moon and contemplating the cruel humor of the gods. When I arose, gimping back into the kitchen, with blood streaming from my feet and rear, I suddenly remembered that in all the confusion I hadn't seen my two-year-old in better than an hour.

Horror broke over me in waves as I followed the trail of destruction. The diaper pail had been emptied, with the contents strewn about the living room. The fireplace had been pillaged, with sooty fingerprints all over the walls as evidence of the crime. My Diplomacy board had been tipped over -- I found my English fleets, along with some correspondence, floating ominously in the toilet (something I desperately wished was not a portent of things to come). And, at the end of the trail, I found my son in his bedroom. Indeed, he had had to "poop". Unable to get used to the "potty", he had been unable to perform his duties, but once asleep (the posture in which I found him) he had

managed very well. I found him asleep half-naked on the bedroom floor, sprawling in his own excrement.

By the time my wife returned, my wounds were treated and the kid was cleaned up -- with a private determination on my part to wait until he's sixteen and gets a girl and let her housebreak him (enough is enough). While Kathy gazed at the wreckage in amazement, I uttered the only fitting epic reply: "Disaster broke over us; I alone escaped to tell you."

All of which is simply a way of saying that there are worse fates than dealing with monsters for a few minutes a week. You could be one and have to put up with yourself on a daily basis. Or worse yet, you could marry one. (Take heed, Ms. Linsey!) Bob Olsen has recently remarked that his private conception of hell is "driving to Chicago with Milhowski to meet Garry Hamlin". Given the above, it seems unnecessary to speculate on what my wife's conception of hell might be. Pity the monsters, Judy -- and beware of the ones who seem to know what they're doing!

((That essay almost caused a traffic accident. I read it to Mona while she was driving thru Baltimore, and she laughed so hard the car started to swerve!))



((This next short item comes from #8, 3-18-80))

#### The First Annual BYRNECON

##### BRUX Gets Walloped!

BRUX indulged in his favorite sport last weekend - face-to-face Dippy at the Byrne War Center in New York City. With his favorite country - Italy - our hero got off to a fast start, stabbing Kathy's Austria in 1901 and obtaining three builds. Alas, his ecstasy was short-lived; BRUX was subsequently attacked by every country except Russia by '03 or so and survived as a little blob in Serbia due to the kindness of Sultan Keith Schuerholz. But the others in the game, especially John Caruso (England), Kathy's daughter Phyllis (France), and Linda Simpson (Germany) screamed in bloodthirsty, sadistic delight when BRUX's lone fleet in Naples finally succumbed to the onslaught of Phyllis (age 10). "How are you going to write this game up, BRUX?" taunted mean Kathy after Italy proper fell. "Are you going to tell your readers that a 10-year-old girl did you in?" BRUX's face went crimson. Well, there isn't much that Italy can do when he starts out by annoying Austria only to find that there is a cast-iron E/F/G alliance dedicated to seeing BRUX wiped out! France wound up in Rome and Naples, England took Tunis, and Germany took Venice, with Turkey grabbing up the Balkans. BRUX can only delight in the fact that ex-friend Kathy was totally destroyed in 1903. Which really proved to be the demise of BRUX - Kathy hung around to mastermind the final stages of that awful French attack on Rome and Naples.

Afterwards John and Kathy and Linda and BRUX went out for a terrific dinner. Diplomacy always whets BRUX's appetite for blood, so he ordered (and got) (and ate) raw prime rib! Ask Kathy how easy it is to get BRUX drunk!

((Ah, yes, the innocent days at the beginning....))

((Lets squeeze a last item in here from #95, May 15, 1984. From Mark Lew))  
...i believe the rumors that highschool students are ignorant of writing skills (i may ignore them sometimes but i'm not ignorant of them). i have the dubious privilege of typesetting ... two of the local highschool newspapers and i correct gross errors of punctuation and spelling without blinking an eye, and i'd like to expunge the multitudinous extraneous words like "anyway", "besides", "furthermore", "speaking of which", "anyhow"... which the kids seem to think no sentence should be left without, as well as quotation marks, which litter the pages and have no discernable purpose  
.....



((This is from #25, Setp 2, 1980, written when he was working at IBM))

### DEADLINE FRIDAY - 8:00 PM

Lost amidst the bliss of dreamland, I placidly repose in serene, restful sleep. Warm, wonderful, and utterly content. Then... RRRRING! The cold, unforgiving, piercing trill of my alarm clock jolts me out of silent slumber and into stark reality. As I stumble out of bed... it dawns on me that this is no ordinary day. This is deadline Friday.

The first half of the day is like any other. I grope my way into work and perform my daily function of being a cog in the Great Machine of Society. But the real day begins when I arrive at my mailbox.. At that moment Bruce Linsey metamorphosizes from a regular, mild-mannered person into BRUX; that motivated, crazy wierdo that all of you have come to know and love. My mail, in the tradition of Roloids, brings relief. Ten sets of orders, meaning that I only have to make 6 collect calls to-nite instead of 16. Also 4 personal letters, 3 dipzines, two calling birds ((??)) and the results from my Brutus Bulletin game with 30-hour deadlines. But those will have to wait until another day. Today is Deadline Friday.

6 collect calls to make. Invariably, one of the offenders will wait until 5 minutes before the 8:00 cutoff to come home, and I will get the orders in at the last second. Anyway, my initial calls made, I sit at my "deadline chair" next to the phone, pencil and notepad poised to record all the last minute changes that people are sure to call in. My TV dinner finishes cooking, and I slip away to the table for 3 minutes to gobble it down, thus filling the yawning cavity in my gut. But I digest...

Back at the phone I sit, interrupting the silence only occasionally to attempt another collect call. RRRRINGGGGG!! The sound of the telephone reminds me of my alarm clock this morning. "THE VOICE OF DOOM", I ominously thunder into the mouthpiece. Some guy in BLACK HOLE wants to move to Hel instead of Hol. "Fine, you're going to Hel," I repeat, and hang up. 7:00 comes and goes. 6 calls later, its 7:45 and I grow still more restless. I make my final call miraculously catching the guy at home. Ha! Another month without an NMR. 10 minutes pass ... The "deadline chair" is about to make its monthly transformation into an "adjudication chair". One minute till 8. 30 second. 15. 10. 5. 2. 1. Eight O'Clock! I jump up to yank the phone off the hook, but before I can, it rings again. "Can I get the ECLIPSE results?", an eager voice perks. I answer as well as I can and hang up, forgetting to leave the fone off the hook. I settle down. The orders, previous issue, and Rule Book in hand, to get going on the ANDROMEDA adjudications. The fone rings again. "Listen, BRUX, I just want to change my F Ion ..." "Sorry, you're 2½ minutes late" I chortle, slamming the phone back down gleefully. I'm very sadistic when it comes to turning away orders just after the deadline. The closer, the better. The fone rings again. "Can I change my..." "Too late!" I cry. I am tempted to add "This is a recording"... Again the fone rings. "Would I like to pruchase a plot in a cemetary?" "Too late!" I yell again, before thinking. Now I come to my sense and remove the phone from its cradle. And settle down to do the adjudications

Ah, the pleasures of GMing. Do try it some day.

((No thanks. In VoD they once discussed how to handle a fone call where the player started to give his orders, but didn't finish them when the deadline moment struck.))

((This comes from #20, July 22, 1980))

A Diplomat For All Seasons

by Gary Coughlan

Yes, Virginia, there really is a Ron Kelly, but what is "really" known about him? Everyone knows that Ron Kelly is in circa 84 games hobbywise, he's a standby in every zine that is published and he lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

These are only the surface facts; the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. Ron Kelly is actually a closely-guarded secret of the powers-that-be in the Diplomacy world - the publishers, a.k.a. "pubbers". I know that these are cryptic statements but they are no more cryptic than the enigma known to the Diplomacy world as Ron Kelly. Bear with me and I will explain all, as the Wicked Witch of the West (not England! Don't anticipate anything in this story!) said to Dorothy, "All in good time, my pretty, all in good time."

The Ron Kelly that we have been led to believe exists may not be able to leap tall buildings at a single bound but he is certainly no mere mortal. Consider the following facts.

Ron Kelly is in approximately 84 games. Just think about that number "84" for a minute. (I am in only 8 games and I'm overloaded.) How could a mere mortal handle EIGHTY-FOUR GAMES?

If he gave each game equal time, it would break down this way: 84 games per month or 21 games per week or 3 games per day. If he had only 3 pieces in each of these games (in some he has less, in others, more), he must keep track of approximately 252 armies and fleets. By all accounts, he does keep track remarkably (superhumanly?) well. These time-consuming activities do not leave much room for a personal life but, as we shall see, Ron certainly has an active life.

Excluding the costs of time, paper and envelopes, it costs Ron Kelly \$12.50 in stamps every month just to send in his orders. In one year's time, he will spend \$120.00 on stamps for just sending in his orders! Even so, he has an even greater expense to pay - zine subs.

Since Ron Kelly is not a pubber or a guest GM, he must sub to each of the zines in which he plays (except Cheesecake! Plug! Plug!). Since he is a standby in every zine that is published in North America, he pays about \$125.00 in sub fees about every ten months or so. He never wins free issues because he never writes articles or enters contests. (In fact, he doesn't even respond to criticism of his playing style, such as recently appeared in The Dragon and the Lamb).

So, Ron Kelly must pay for his approximately 35-40 zines like the rest of us: by check. Thus, in addition to his 84 games, he must keep track of when his 35-40 subs expire, when, or if, new sub rates go into effect, etc. Can you imagine the condition his checkbook must be in? So many checks must be outstanding because of the painfully long time it takes pubbers to cash sub checks and get them returned to the subbers. In this situation, he is just like you and me, only more so.

Finally, there is Ron Kelly's reputation in the hobby. The conventional wisdom says, "Never stab Ron Kelly because he will eventually turn up in one or more of your games and get even with you." This statement is totally true. Many knifed backs are around to prove it. Like rock-and-roll or an elephant, Ron Kelly never forgets.

Because this is Ron Kelly's reputation, two questions immediately come to mind. One: How can a mere individual organize strategies and write orders for 84 games, keep track of 252 armies and fleets, keep his 35-40 subs current, have a work life and a social life and still get even with every player who has ever stabbed him? Two: Why would the pubbers, to a man, allow such a vengeful individual to play in their zines?

The answer may surprise you; I know that it did me. But let me backtrack and tell you of my first involvement with Ron Kelly which led to the answer.

I was placed in a game with Ron Kelly. I wrote to him. He never responded. Other people who had been in Ron Kelly's games told me that he never wrote to them either.

I thought about this and did some digging. It soon became evident that only pubbers ever heard from Ron Kelly, but never subbers. Randolph Smyth, pubber of Fol Si Fie, for example, claimed Ron Kelly wrote to him complaining about how Randolph incorrectly (UnAmericanly!) wrote his address. Other pubbers claimed he wrote them letters when he sent in his orders. But he never wrote any subbers. Puzzling.

Since Ron Kelly wouldn't answer my letters, I tried to phone him. He had an unlisted number. Another dead-end, but also another clue to be studied. He obviously valued his privacy highly.

Bereft of new ideas, I doodled around with his name. I got a dictionary on the meaning of names and found out "Ron" means "mighty power" and "Kelly" means "warrior". So "mighty power"- "warrior". What a fitting name for a marathon Diplomacy player, almost too fitting I thought.

I went back to what I knew for sure about Ron Kelly: EIGHTY-FOUR games, 35-40 zines, 252 armies and fleets, keeps track of all his stabbers, almost beloved by pubbers, much money for stamps and subs, never writes, "mighty power"- "warrior", unlisted phone number, lives in Alexandria, Virginia near Washington D.C. (home of real diplomats), no mere mortal.

A thought buzzed through my mind. It excited me. I hastily rechecked my facts. At last I had the answer to both my questions. I was sure of it. Ron Kelly, "mighty power warrior" was no mere mortal. Kelly was a Super K. RON KELLY WAS HENRY KISSINGER!

Now trembling, I saw all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle fall into place. "Ron Kelly" was a pseudonym for Henry Kissinger. The back cover of every Diplomacy game box proudly proclaims that Diplomacy is Dr. Henry Kissinger's favorite game. Of course he couldn't play under his own name; he had to invent a name. A name fit for a warrior and a mighty power. A fitting name like - Ron Kelly.

He could play Diplomacy on a large scale only if he were discreet. Only the pubbers would know his real identity and would, no doubt, fawn, as they do, just to have him in their zines. He would never write subbers and would keep his phone unlisted to protect his identity.

Kissinger doesn't have to worry about messed-up checkbooks or money for supplies and stamps for his habit, uh, hobby. The U.S. Government supplies the essentials, including F.B.I. agents to keep track of those who dare to stab him. The F.B.I., and thus Kelly-Kissinger, always get their man.

Personnel from the armed services help Kissinger plot his strategy, although the Air Force claims to be slighted, I've heard. So, some of us have been playing against the greatest military minds in America in our Diplomacy games. That's scary because some of us have been winning.

This Kissinger theory convincingly explains how and why Ron Kelly can exist and can be capable of so much.

As I said at first "Ron Kelly" is a closely-guarded secret of the pubbers. He is vengeful, holds grudges and gets even with his stabbers. But he is Kissinger and so the pubbers overlook these faults and consider it a badge of honor to be associated with a premiere diplomat, albeit a prima donna.

Mark Berch, pubber of Diplomacy Digest, also lives in Alexandria, Virginia, and is well known for writing voluminous letters on all subjects. Mark Berch has consistently refused to respond to my letters about this Kissinger theory.

No other zine except Voice of Doom would touch this story. You, the reader, can now draw your own conclusions.

((We return to #100 for this gem by Chuff Afflerbach, one of Vols best humor writers))

#### My Breakfast With BRUX

Thru the course of the years I have witnessed what I am compelled to describe as nothing less than the birth of a legend. My initial amusement has given way to genuine awe as my old pal Bruce Linsey has evolved into the persona of BRUX, Dispenser of the Voice of Doom. Today his loyal followers journey across oceans and continents for the mere chance of a private audience with him. Intimate accounts of their visits appear in print, adding further to the mystic aura surrounding him. Could this mighty BRUX I had been reading about be the same old mild-mannered Bruce Linsey that Frankie and I used to lock in his locker in high school?

It was time I found out. And what better time to pay him a visit than Labor Day weekend, when he would be laboring away at his 5th Anniversary issue?

But was I ready to meet the new BRUX? As I headed toward Dalton for our rendezvous at the pancake house, I thought back to one particular night in Maryland many years ago. It was over a case of beer that we had formulated our plans: the creation of alter egos to better serve our individual needs. My latest name had worn thin and dull; time for something fresh, unique, exotic and (most important of all) unpronounceable. Bruce felt it too the need to make a statement, and to go to the bathroom. "No More Mr. Nice Guy!" he had proclaimed in anguish. "Only the wailing and gnashing of teeth!"

I remembered my friend on that fateful night, like fingernails on a new slate, and could not repress an involuntary shudder. Yes, I was finally ready for my breakfast with BRUX. ((I believe this was meant as a parody on the then-big movie, "My Dinner with Andre"))

I had just finished my coffee when Bruce burst in. With the wave on an ink-stained hand and the flash of a disarming grin he put me immediately at ease. The he pounced. I leaped away from the table, too late to escape the scalding coffee overturned in my lap.

"Hyork, hyork, hyork!" There they were, the first words he had spoken to me in 5 years. Followed by, "I see you're still leaving your home centers unprotected!"

So this was BRUX. I quaked in my damp, steamy boots --- out of pain, yes, fear, maybe, but mostly out of abject shame.

"That's right, DR. Frankenstein," he hyorked, "behold your monster! For it was you who gave me my first Diplomacy game!" Then he flashed that grin again and slid unceremoniously into the booth. "Come and see what has happened to good old Bruce --- if you dare!"

I dared. This is what I had come for. But I would have to be cautious. I ordered tomatoe juice.

"you and I go way back, so I'm going to let you in on a little secret of mine. Why not, since I know a secret or two of yours, heh-heh, eh Chuffie? Matter of fact, its actually a big secret, big enuf to rock the hobby to its very foundation. Why, it may very well be The Big Secret. It's bigger than both of us. Yes, it's even bigger than Brux!"

(No kidding, that's how he actually said it. Exactly, word-for-word, verbatim... Every quote reproted here came straight from the -- ahem -- horse's mouth. Well, OK, so I expunged an ellipse or two. What can he do -- feud about it?)

Does it interest you to learn that there's a stalemate line in existance that has never, ever been reported -- not even in Diplomacy Digest? ((DD #10/11 has a very thoro set)).

"Hey, pal", I chuckled, "if you think that's going to shake up a zillion yawning, snoring..."

"SILENCE!" he silenced me. "And listen carefully. I am talking about a stalemate line that runs, not thru the board as you are so quick to assume, but thru Diplomacy itself. The entire hobby is split right down the middle by this line..." Here his voice became a whisper between clenched teeth, his knuckled white around the endges of the table. "... and I, BRUX, Dispenser of The Voice of Doom, put it there!"

I motioned to the waitress for more juice, and a napkin. "Just imagine," Bruce continued. It begins midway be-

tween here and Flushing ((NY, where then Kathy Byrne and John Ceruso lived)), and follows the Alleghenies to the Adirondacks -- or vice verse depending on where you stand. From there it runs along the Mason-Dixon line . . . Then its down the mighty Mississip and back up the Old Chisolm Trail. From then on, it alternatively bisects and parallels the Grand Canyon, the Continental divide, and the San Andreas fault, but not necessarily in that order. Of course, this is all just a general description. But its the detail, the intricacy, the subtlety that I'm the proudest of. If it simply followed th path of least resistance, it would mean nothing. But my line gerrymanders towns and neighborhoods, subdivides city blocks, barges right in and splits up individual households. It even runs down the middle of a few double and queen sized beds. Why,, "heh-heh," he chortled, "I even managed to steer it smack dab between the two halves of one of the hobby's schizoid personalities!" ((At the time this was written, "Linsey" was far more of a polarizing factor in the hobby than he is now)).

By God, he was really serious about this!

"That's right, buddy.."

I coughed. "E..er, Chuff. My stalemate line has so many twists and turns that it makes the Olympic Torch lok like it came on a laser beam!"

His last statement set off a fit of hyorking that didn't stop until the food came.

"And you, the omnipotent BRUX," I ventured, "are responsible for this?"

"Entirely thru the pages of VoD," he nodded, and began collating his stack of pancakes. A dab of syrup, a butter pat, the raspberry jam blurring with his purple fingers as he fell into that familiar phythm and picked up speed. ((VoD was at the time dittoed; using purple ink)). I prayed he hadn't brought along his foot stapler...

"Do you mean to say...?" Could it be said?"All the feuds ..." ((look, when the line ends, it ends))

"All the feuds. Ain't it beautiful?" He beamed with pride. "Not just a static stalemate line, but a dynamic one ---- taking its shape around the issues I have created! ((in tactics jargon, a dynamic stalemate line is one which requires not just holds and supports, but that one or more pieces be ordered to move)) I call it BRUX's First Law of Opposition: for every action, there is an immediate and opposite overreaction. All of Diplomacy boiled down to one big, well-supported bounce. Such a delicate balance of opinions --- a little bashing here, a little stashing there ---and all of it revolving around BRUX himself. ("Stashing" was a term coined by Bruce to label a type of circumstance where one brought in an ally to affect an argument)) Excuse me, I just have to hyork!" He did.

"But Brux, not all of these feuds are even real feuds. Doesn't that make it all nothing but a hoax? Nobody beleives that you and Ed Wrobel are really feuding, except maybe you and Ed. Adn Eric Kane has already offered you the olive branch. Forgive me for saying so but your stalemate line seems a bit stale."

"Ah, but you miss the point. My friend who rolled a one, Snake-Eye Kane, has simply agreed to disagree. And I have agreed to be disagreeable. That's all it takes. It creates enuf of a chain reaction to maintain the division long after the original issue has faded away. Likewise with the Wrobel affair. Dick Martin chops up his zine and sends it to me, so I chop up Ed's letter, print it, and send it to him. ((The

first part refers to an incident where Bruce had a single issue left on his sub to Dick's Retaliation, but the next issue was a double, so Dick Dick cut the issue in half diagonally, and naturally Bruce howled. (The Wrobel part I'm not sure of --- it might have referred to editing Ed's letter)). My concern is not so much the issue and where you stand, but how many of you are standing on each side. I'm particularly proud of that line crossing the Potomac ((River, which cuts thru the DC metro area)). I've harnessed the irresistible forcefulness of the entire WARTHOG horde((this refers to the Politesse crew)) to counterbalance the immovable objectivity of one DipIMaster ((Berch)).

"And Billy Highfield?"

"An outright case of civil Disorder. Anyone can tell you that I am the first person to defend the right of a player to threaten lives within the context of a Diplomacy game((such a humor item did appear in VoD)). But if he says that about my mother again, I'll kill him."

"I must confess," I confessed, "that its all beginning to fit. The endless disputes and controversies over GMing, houserules, double orders and such..." ((This refers to a dsipute in VoD over whether a unit ordered to both hold and support was double ordered)).

"Double orders!?" Our waitress stopped dead in her tracks. "Honey, let me tell you about double orders. We get them all the time. We got houserules that say we throw 'em out -- and the customer too!"

Bruce's eyes gleamed a gleam I had never seen before and did not like.

"Can it be?" he purred. "Another diplomat? Your comments are always welcome here. So tell me, how do you handle phoned-in orders? Do you accept them after the deadline?" She obviously would not need much encouragement to answer.

"Why honey, there's nothing diplomatic about it. If they call up after quitting time, they're plumb out of luck!"

Bruce interrupted me before I could interrupt...

"Ah, we've got a strict GM in our midst. But where do you stand on Padora's Paradox? Does the supported attack on the convoy which is attacking the support for another convoyed attack which is in turn attacking the support for the original attack still dislodge the convoy?"

Before I could warn him, poor Bruce was blindsided.

"I'd like to see you dislodge my convoy!" It was Mack the trucker, swinging his bulk around from the next booth and rattling dishes as far away as the kitchen. "You and how many armies?" But BRUX took it all in stride.

"How many armies indeed! Just suppose you're going thru all the orders...and one of them has a mislabeled unit. Whose responsibility is that missing piece?"

"Well," drawled Mack, "like my fictitious uncle down in Yoakum TX used to say: when you miss a piece, you're one behind!"...

What then ensued was a rather enthusiastic, if somewhat garbled round-table discussion touching on the ethics of making a stab across the table. And of course my friend Bruce (or was I actually watching the legendary BRUX?) was right there in the thick of it. I'm proud to say that I saw him at his best, tossing convoluted contortion upon contrived concoction until everyone was seeing dots ... it will suffice to say that the debate wrapped up with the trucker invoking his uncle's advice to "wrong no man and write no woman", while the waitress

reserved her right not to serve anyone...

I peeked out from under the table to see if the coast was clear. Bruce was grinning that familiar, guileless grin.

"Guileless? Did you see how guilelessly I turned two total strangers into mortal enemies? I tell you, Chuff, I've got all of Diplomacy balanced on a razor-edge of finely honed controversy."

It was time for the sixty-four volume question.

"But why? Why do you want to do it, Bruce?"

"BRUX! It's BRUX, got it?" he boomed. "Don't you dare call me that other name. I am BRUX, Dispenser of The Voice of Doom!" I was beginning to see where he was coming from.

"Right, BRUX. But for now I'd like to speak to Bruce"

"There is no Bruce!" he thundered. "Only BRUX! BRUX the Law Giver, BRUX the Omnipotent"

"Yes, BRUX, but I must speak to Bruce now. Bruce the Incompetant."

"Bruce isn't home!"

"Yes he is. I only want to talk to him for a minute. Please, Mr. BRUX, please let Bruce come out and play." Go ahead and laugh, but it worked. Mr. Hyde was gone as suddenly as he had come, and I proceeded to heckle Dr. Jekyll.

"Alright, Bruce, now tell me the truth. Why did you do it? Is it that important to your twisted psyche? It can't really be worth it --- even to BRUX--- if it means losing hundreds of dollars a month!"

For the first time, and only for an instant, the Dispenser of Doom himself looked thunderstruck. Then he let out a little cough, next a big cough, followed by a guffaw, which became a darcimonorious amount of hyorking.

"you don't mean --- hyork, hyork --- that you, hyork, of all people, hee, hee" he wiped the tears from his eyes. "I mean, after all, you do live in Oklyn..."

"Oakland," I corrected.

"Yes, of course, Oakland, that you of all people believe I'm actually losing money on VoD?" ...I'm making a hundred dollars an issue"

It was my turn to be stunned. Not really wanting to, I asked him how.

"Whyin postage, of course! You should see all the self-addressed, no-longer stamped envelopes I throw out each day. Yes, sir, thanks to a lot of free publicity from my hobby friends, I get requests for Supernova coming in by the truckload. And that's the secret of my success; there is no Supernova! It's Brux's greatest hoax!"

"Im-possible." I stammered... "You print letters from novices."

"Don't be so naive, Mr. 'Afflerbach'. Does National Lampoon print real letters? The fact is, I absolutely abhor novices. Its like teaching Junior High School again. Or worse, its like being in JHS again. Do you know how much I hated that? Can you -- yes you of all people -- guess how much I really hated being Mr. Nice Guy of JHS?!"

A self-conscious hush fell over the restaurant. Our conversation was clearly at an end. My friend stood up to leave.

"Well, I've got to get back to my publishing. Letters to edit, orders to reject." He turned to go.

"One more thing, BRUX" I braced myself for the coup-de-grace. "Are there really any games? Is there a zine at all, and do those

millions of loyal, screaming doomies exist? Or are you just setting me up for some enormously elaborate practical joke? Is it all just some diabolical plot you concocted to extract some bizarre form of revenge?"

... "Well, now," he finally answered, "I can't exactly slip Ex-Lax into your canteen, or hide water balloons in your sleeping bag, or run your underwear up the flagpole at Camp Runnamuck, now, can I?"

With that, he turned and left. On his way out, the door hit him in the ass. I watched him lumber to his car, that old familiar black cloud hanging over his head and a bolt of lightning nipping at his heels. Yes, he was still the same old Bruce we had all known and loved. What the hell, I even picked up the tab. But I damn sure wasn't going to stick around for any lunch with Linsey.

((Bruce gave him 12 free issues of sub credit (mind you, this was in VOD's last issue!) for "an article that was darcimonoriously Afflerbachian in its entertainment value" This vision (of the entirety of VoD being created because of Afflerbach) was suitably egomaniacal, but my favorite image was of Bruce collating the pancakes --- I'm surprised a non-pubber could have come up with that. I explained a lot of the references, but veteran VoD readers would have seen quite a few others in there as well. As for the feuding, while there was a fair amount of it in VoD, Bruce was also willing to print some good-natured needling about this topic too. Virtually all the other zines were utterly humorless on the subject, and I don't recall seeing any zine on either side willing to run an essay poking fun at the editor's propensity to feud.))

## THE ZINE COLUMN # 113

# NEW ZINES

Some new, or fairly new zines are around, so lets look at a few. The MetaDiplomat comes from Jeff McKee 1674 S. Parkwood Wichita, KS 67208 (50¢/issue). He has openings for an all-women diplomacy game, and seeks a standby for his round robin gunboat (7 players, 7 games) and players for 2½ and 5 week gunboat, and the first issue features a discussion of the pros and cons of you guessed it, gunboat. This is a person crossing over from PBFM gaming. Dipadeedoodah! is from Phil Reynolds 2896 Oak St Sarasota FL 34237 (subs 12/\$9) and has openings in Asian Diplomacy II and Illuminati. #5 has essays on genetic algorithms and animal rights, and reminiscences of rock concerts. Diplomacy Today is a Macintosh, laserprinted zine with sensational maps, and political commentary (Darrel Plant Reed College Box 1068 3203 SE Woodstock, Portland OR 97202. Firebrands runs an anonymous, simultaneous movement variant of Titan (Bill Salvatore 19985 Wild Cherry Lane Waters landing MD 20874). Electronic Protocol and Protocol come from Eric Klein (1 Sinai Circle #b10 Chelmsford MA 01824) who has a House Rule which avoids NMRs, and uses the AH computer program for GMing. Q-Who? from Russel Rowe (411 Wells Mill Rd #84 Oxford OH 45056) has an emphasis on military history. Upstart is now an independent zine (Garret Schenck 40 third Pl. Basement Apt Brooklyn NY 11231) with an emphasis on naval history. Victoriana (John Cain 76 Banool Rd Walwin Victoria 3130 Australia) covers the Australian scene. When the Lights go out (Jesse Severe 105 Lincoln St Sheffield IA 50475) is printed on an Apple //c, with regular dip at \$3 and is looking to run Milton Bradley's "Shogun". Megalomania (Rich McKey 20 Nonotuck St. Florence MA 01060, 10/\$7.50) has games for \$2. Victims Wanted (Shawn Erikson, 6313



22nd Ave NW Seattle WA 98107) has a number of variants available, with no game fee. View From Another Shore (John Dods, PO Bpx 2110 Ahuriri, Napier) and Damn the Consequences (Brendon Whyte 96 Waitatarue Rd, Remura) are so far as I know, the first zines from New Zealand. Entropy Jason Bergmann 10740 Lathrop, Dallas TX 75229, 10/\$6.50) has no-game-fee openings in regular and two forms of gunboat, plus Postal Junta for \$5. Mondo! is from Glenn Overby (c/o Octagon Enterprises, PO Box 36983, Grosse Pointe, MI 48232) whose fold earlier in the 80s of JIHAD! was one of the most catastrophic of all time. But he's back with apologies, refunds and a variety of variant openings. He plans to use the Rainstone publishing system, publishing weekly, with one game in each small issue, so that if you're in one game, you'll get a bundle of 4-5 issues each time. Subs \$9/year. The Big Top (Dan Gavrilovic 59 Deerfield Road Scarborough ONT M1J4X2) is the newest Canadian zine, and I should mention Cladestine Activities (Doug Acheson 95 Dundonald St Barrie, ONT L4M3T4, 12/\$10Can) which is several months old by now

This is an astounding collection, by no means complete, but it looks like the Freshman Class of 1989 is headed for the largest in North American hobby history, altho such a bumper crop of new zines will almost certainly lead to a higher than average folding rate, alas.



((One of several GMing controversies to hit VoD was the "Tro" affair, which was touched off when the GM, Linsey, ruled that "A Vie-Tro" was misordered. So many people participated that the ruling landed up being discussed outside VoD as well, which is pretty rare for an adjudication question. In the face of criticism that this was outrageous, Bruce landed up polling GMS, to discover that the majority would have ruled as he did. Now comes the player who wrote the orders, from VoD #33.))

#### How I Humbled BRUX!

(A Tro Story)

by Keith Sherwood

Yes, Doomies, I claim the honor of being the first hobby member to humiliate BRUX. The time has come to admit to/brag about my little plot. I appreciate the support everybody has given me in the "Tro" affair, but you were all actually just playing into my hands.

Uh, how can I break this news? I'll just say it straight out, I suppose. Back when the GALAXY game started, for reasons of my own, I felt it best to have my army remain in Vienna in the spring. However, certain things I had said in my negotiations made it necessary to give the appearance of wanting to move to Tyrolia. As a result, I decided to use a miswritten order so that the unit would stay put. To make sure "Tro" was ambiguous, I called BRUX and asked him how he would rule if I wrote it. He told me that since it was equally close to "Tri" and "Tyo", he would invalidate it. Then (already seeing a golden opportunity for mischief on the horizon) I made him promise never to reveal that I was going to misorder the unit on purpose. (He told me that he could never give out info like that anyway.) So, when I mailed in my moves, I made sure they included "A Vie-Tro".

That would have ended the matter, except for two things. First, it was necessary for me to continue to give the impression that the order was a mistake, so I wrote Bruce a follow-up letter of complaint to publish. Second, I realized then that I was in a terrific position to ruin the reputation of the hobby's most arrogant, despised, self-righteous SOB! So I wrote several letters to my friends in the hobby to get them to denounce BRUX for his totalitarian style of GMing, using the Tro affair as an example. Not only did several people write him nasty letters, but I even got an article printed in Emhain Macha on "Why Bruce Linsey Should be Thrown Out of the Hobby". (I meant this in jest, but more than a few people took it seriously and wrote to say they agreed!) Plus I attacked him in my Irksome press. Additionally, of course, there was Tom Mainardi's attack on BRUX in EM, which BRUX misconstrued as an attack by Mills, whom he blasted back in VD. (See how easy

it is to start a war??) Other people like Crud Martin and Mark Larzelere played right into my hands, with both of them printing unkind remarks about the GMing in VD because they disagreed with the Tro ruling. (Really, now, does anybody actually feel that Tro is not ambiguous? It's about the single most ambiguous abbreviation I could dream up if I had a million years to think about it!)

So look at my accomplishment! I have succeeded totally where other hearty souls like McKibbin and Caruso have tried and failed. Because of me, Bruce's reputation is shot for good--and the glory of it all is that he had to stand aside helplessly and watch because, as GM, he couldn't reveal my strategy of misordering units. Yes, Doomies, I had the unique pleasure of having BRUX in my front pocket, squirming like the tortured rat that he is! Because of me, everyone now thinks that he likes to play God. Call me a megalomaniac, but I am proud! Is there anybody else in this hobby - ANYBODY - who has ever been able to bring this high-and-mighty egotist to his knees?

In summary, I feel that now people should lay off him. I've succeeded in my aim of humbling Mr. Controversy, and for that I hope the hobby gives me credit. But BRUX and I are friends (believe it or not) so it's time to ease up on him. Oh yeah - congratulations, Bruce, for trying so hard to defend yourself. I think you showed uncanny cool-headedness in keeping quiet about what really happened after the entire hobby attacked you. I still think you're an obnoxious moron, but you're also the best GM east of White Sands National Monument. What's more, you can take the heat without wilting. In the final analysis, I repeat what I said last issue: I agree with you entirely!

((Thanks, Keith, and three free issues to you. Glad you gave permission for me to print this, finally. Roll us both down a hill in a barrel, and there will always be a stinking, slimy, obnoxious moron on top!)))

((The "Crud Martin" refers to Dick Martin; I don't believe that nickname is still in use. Many of the major controversies in VoD landed up having humor written about them, generally after the issues had been thrashed out. That essay wasn't intended to be taken seriously. Some of it I assume describes real events, but the original error in move writing was not done deliberately.))

## LETTERS

These two letters present unconventional views of GM-player relations. Back in DD #107, the Roundtable discussion Question #3, in which the GMs lists 3 retreat squares for the dislodged German fleet, but overlooks the 4th. The Germans do take that 4th option. The French write contingency orders for the first three but then, not knowing of the 4th, include "otherwise (i.e. he retreats off the board)...." Do you use that contingency, even tho it seems clear he didn't intend it for an on-the-board retreat? Very Tardv Mark Lew writes:

"...My GMing philosophy is that its perfectly legitimate for a GM to interfere with the game for the better and, more specifically, to try to determine the player's intent in interpreting their orders. However, I know that many GMs disagree with me and feel GMs should never try to judge intent.

"Thus, I'm surprised that you and many others (including ... arch-non-interventionist Bruce Linsey) in #3 will disallow the conditional order.... Such a disallowal is based not on what's written in the orders, but on what is presumed to be on the player's mind. Yes, I know "i.e." means "that is" and the phrase, "that is, he retreats off the board" is a false statement. So what? It is a parenthetical comment; the true condition is "otherwise".

"To be consistent, a GM who disallows this conditional (and who professes not to judge players' intent) must go on to disallow any conditional which is followed by a false statement in parenthesis...Would you disallow a conditional such as "If A Rur retreats to Mar (the capital of France)"?....

"Again, I believe that GMs should consider a player's intent. But Algorithmist GMs are asking for trouble if they interpret "Otherwise (i.e. off the board)" as any different from plain "otherwise". ((I do not agree that this is a "false statement" or a "parenthetical comment". The player basically says, "otherwise=OTB" But that is a false equation. What is inaccurate is not the entire phrase of "otherwise..." but just the "i.e.". It makes no more sense to throw out what follows the "i.e." (as you suggest) than to throw out what precedes it. The problem here is that the player has given us two labels for this contingency, "otherwise" (which covers both OTB and the actual retreat) and "OTB" (Since we do not know which label to use, neither should be used.)) ((Readers should keep in mind that all back issues are in stock, and you may comment on anything which has ever appeared in this zine. After all, if an essay can be reprinted 10 years afterward, comments can come in 10 years after that))

Next up is Bill Salvatore:

Saying that the players own the game is flagrantly unreasonable. The GM and pubber offer the players the opportunity to play; it's not the case that the seven players get together first, then hunt up a GM and pubber for their game. Hence, the GM and pubber share the ownership of the game. This is further evidenced by the money which the players pay the GM or the pubber for the opportunity to play is called: not "salary", but "game fee". In other words, they don't hire the GM, they buy a ticket from him.

((I don't see it that way at all. If I give you money to drive my car, it doesn't mean that you own the car, or even the "right" to drive me around.

It just means I've agreed to pay you for doing a job. Likewise with how we got together. It's irrelevant whether I put out a "Help Wanted" sign or you put out a "Driver For Hire" sign. And Fee vs Salary? That to me is just a matter of semantics.

To determine who owns "the game", we first must define "the game". To me, this is the the moves of the pieces. That is the essence of the game. And the pieces are moved by the players, not by the GM. The GM just follows an algorithm to determine which moves are permitted and which ones don't. The players are essential for "the game" for without them, nothing moves, and therefore, the game does not exist. But neither the GM nor the pubber is essential for a postal game. The players, having first agreed on a set of HRS, can all mail six copies of their orders on deadline day, one to each of the other players. Each player then have all the orders, and hence the positions, without benefit of GM or pubber. Hence, the GM and pubber are not part of the game, in terms of ownership. It is also a matter of hobby tradition. Unless a player violates the rules of the game, the GM/pubber cannot remove him. By contrast, if the players are dissatisfied with either pubber or GM, they can, by hobby tradition, simply move.))

I basically agree with your comments about what Ken Peel said (#116-117, p22-23), but I would have thought it acceptable if he'd said, "I heard, via (person's name), a rumor that..." rather than "I understand that". National security is not involved here, so a source should be mentioned, but if it is clearly marked as a rumor, it's OK by me.

If on the other hand he understands it, then he's implying that he's seen proof and that he's lending the weight of his affirmation... ((Agreed, a rumor should be labeled as such, and <sup>then</sup> most people won't put much weight on it. But that's why publishers don't like to use that label. But unless you are trying to squash what you believe to be an inaccurate rumor in the first place, why print them at all? Too many readers will put at least some faith in it. If you read something here, you should be able to rely on it as having actually happened. Every so often I'll make a mistake of course, but I generally rely on first hand sources, and I've kept out of a lot of trouble that way. One of the things that fueled the great feud was that both Bruce and some of his opponents described events which they could not verify had actually happened.))



((We turn next to #26, Sept 30, 1980))

Reflections on the Sensation of Frustration

or

How I Became a VOD Standby

by Garry Fairbairn

That funny Diplomacy magazine has arrived again, I see. Another item for my file on quaint U.S. social aberrations, cross-referenced with material for my prospective thesis on Techniques of Defamation in Amateur Publications.

Something new - a personal, handwritten, photocopied note from BRUX himself. "Congratulations and thank you..." - somehow, on reading those opening words, I have visions of Selective Service telegrams arriving. Well, I might just as well pour a rum and relax and enjoy it.

I am Russia. In CENTAURUS. Fall 1905 has just ended, with both Turkey and Germany dead. Austria and France together have 23 centers. Time for some cunning diplomacy. Unfortunately, no first names or addresses are given for any of the other players. (Pause to check back issues of VOD, nos. 23-14, 12 and 1.) Now I have one name - Austria, the same one who is attacking me from Armenia to Kiel. And the same guy who last turn ordered his Rumanian army to "kill Russian pigdogs". Prospects for diplomacy here appear rather limited, although he could swing his forces against France instead with only a year or two's turns necessary to execute the shift.

Sigh. At least I have six units left. Perhaps Austria's 12 can be held at bay one turn while I get addresses for France, England and Italy. Let's see, is it only winter next, or spring too? (Pause to check back issues.) Seems the seasons are combined. OK, then, let's see what Austria might do. First, he has to execute an autumn retreat to Ukr, Gal, Bud, Ser, Bul, or OTB. Hm. Two of those threaten my rear centres and I get no builds. He also gets one build, which can be in any of three places. That's 17 different combinations, a case for separating seasons if I ever saw one. (Pause to check back issues again.) In historic #1 it says "read the house rules next issue". That helps little when issues 2-11 aren't here. Why is that glass of rum vanishing so quickly? Why is my left eyelid starting to twitch? Why am I not reading that beautifully typed Cheesecake or that colorful Volkerwanderung? Why am I doing this when I have two Starweb, three Tribes of Crane, and StarMaster moves to do also? Not to mention three Dippy letters to answer, a solitaire T&T dungeon to design and three untouched board games to try.

Pull yourself together, man. Refill the glass. Back to VOD. What else can I glean from these turn results? Hm. Another BRUX note, on page 12. "Need a sub check." Money?. For this he wants me to send him money? Well, he can just - no, on second thought, if I don't pay him I'll never again get to read those interesting love letters Kathy Byrne sends him. Back to VOD. "Deadline for all games contained herein is September 26." I have 12 days, ample except for the fact the Toronto post office is having labor pains again and these orders will probably go through there on their way to wherever "Leisureville,

Watervliet NY 12189" is. He'll be lucky to get them by half-past October.

Only one thing to do. (Pause.) I could have sworn there was more in the bottle than that. Well, back to VoD. I wonder if that little "o" is really an "o". It would be more appropriate if it were another period. That would explain BRUX's mental problems - not being able to spell a simple word like "cheque", for example. And continually publishing extra issues, obviously because he forgets that he has already put out the month's issue.

Oh, yes. The game. It's impossible and he probably won't get my orders in time anyway. On the other hand, if I don't try then 70 subscribers will read the nasty things he says about me. And those legions of standbys of Diplomacy's glorious past will look down disapprovingly from that great board in the sky. And VOD will reject this shining example of stream-of-consciousness literature. More important, I just may have a chance in this game if France is getting ready to stab Austria. Austria tried to support France into Ber, but France ordered "Bur" instead and I kept Ber. Obviously just a clever French strategem to foil Austrian plans without Austria realizing what's going on. France must be subtly orchestrating a F-E-I-R alliance that will turn on Austria any time now.

OK, here we go. Start with orders entitled "if Austria retreats to Ukraine and builds in Budapest." Once this is done, just 16 more to go...

((I can fully sympathize with your frustration. But I'm not sure what else I can do for a standby coming in. On the xeroxed note that goes to all standbys, it also says that if you need any info about the game, you should just ask. This is hardly helpful when the Postal Disservices of two countries combine to make an exchange of correspondences take almost a full month, however. By now, you should have received all the addresses and house rules.

Thank you for the thought-provoking article, and three free issues to you.))

((Shortly after that appeared, Bruce switched to automatically sending player addresses to the standbys. VoD had an enormous standby list))

**THE ZINE COLUMN # 114**

# NEWS-GNUS-NOOZE

John Caruso (636 Astor St Norristown PA 19401) is again running the PDO auction, which is so useful because it helps support other hobby services. A committee (Arnawoodian, Lischett, Quinn, Del Grande and a Canadian) will distribute the money. The items to bid on include zine subs, sailing with Bill Quinn, various dip souvineers, back issues, "Diplomacy placemats" and much more. John has done a great job with this in the past.

#114 of the Zine Register is out, a superlative effort, the best yet of this type of thing from any pubber I have ever seen. Excellent writeups of zines, including many with several contributors. Alas, Peel will no longer be doing it. The new publisher will be Tom Nash, 5512 Pilgram Rd, Baltimore MD 21214, and costs will rise to \$1.50 per issue.

He will also be taking over the Zine Bank, which one of my subbers calls "by far the most valuable service to me as a newcomer". Send Tom \$2.50 for postage, and you'll get a big manila envelope full of sample zines. You can also list preferences, or zines you already get.

In the last DD I plugged 3 letter-col zines, HoL/Op, MegaD and Pass. In Vertigo #95, editor Brad Wilson very harshly criticizes me for plugging MD. Brad, shall we say, doesn't like Carrier ("... you do things that are destructive, hateful, and do the hobby no good" Brad tells him.) But the fact that I plug a zine here doesn't necessarily mean that

I agree with everything --- or indeed, anything --- that they have to say. This is particularly true for letter-col zines like MegaD and HoL/Op, where the editors write only a small proportion of the text. I realize that there are pubbers who will not plug a zine unless they generally agree with what the editor says, but I'm not one of them. Believe me, I disagree with a great deal of what Julie Martin says, but that wouldn't stop me from plugging HoL/Op. In this regard, Brad says to Carrier (the editor of MegaD) "when you publish something in your zine you are informally endorsing it unless you specifically say, "I don't endorse this." " I don't agree with that at all, and I think very, very few readers would assume that an editor endorses the content of letters that he runs unless he specifically disclaims them. HoL #19 had lots of stuff by me which I'm sure Julie didn't intend to "informally endorse" by not commenting on it.

Actually, I think the problem with Brad is that he's one of these editors who doesn't bother to review what he's written before he sends it out. For example, in that issue he piously points out that he can disagree with Fred Davis "but find no reason to hurt him personally" and does not call him names. And he writes, "...imagine my shock when I hear that Larry has listed me as a Red Boy! ... the language he used was hostile and spiteful." And yet, in that same issue of Vertigo, he repeatedly calls me "Hypocrite Berch" and calls me "Mr. High-and-Mighty" and says "There is no more unprincipled, arrogant, manipulative, vicious person in the hobby" than me. Imagine --- he complains of being the target of "hostile" language from Peery, then dishes out very hostile language against me, and then he calls me a hypocrite! Sheesh!

There has been some flak in the hobby's press about Larry Peery's decision that only those actually at DipCon XXII can choose the location for the next WorldCon. At least one of these criticisms -- by Guerrier in pass #88 -- neglects to say what is actually wrong with the idea, which is a curious omission. But Larry has solid precedent backing him on this procedure. Since at least 1972, the location of each DipCon has been determined by "those in attendance", as opposed to, as Guerrier put it, "the rest of the hobby". A small change was made in 1975 to make sure the location moved around, but the system has worked quite well since then and I see no reason why it can't be adopted for World DipCon. I see no reason why the postal hobby should have a veto over actions take by tournament people. It also has numerous practical advantages. How would "the rest of the hobby" make this choice? We could argue for years over who would be entitled to count the votes, how the proposals should be circulated, who could or could not vote, etc. But a meeting at DipCon is prompt and to the point. You raise your hands, they are counted, and the deed is done. "Where did you get the authority to do this?" Guerrier asks. Larry attended the first one, and so far as I know, nobody challenging him did. But beyond that, where did Boardman get the authority to name the game numbers after himself? Where did Martin get the authority to do a Census, for Linsey to put out a Novice Package, for Leeder to run a Zine Poll, for Mike Mills to put out a Zine Directory? He who seizes the reins can whip the horse. Especially when the proposals are, so far as I see it, perfectly reasonable, there should be any problem.

One of the most startling publications ever to arrive here was the Summer 1989 issue of the Known Game Openings Zine Directory, arriving from, of all people, Chris Carrier. For those who came in late, KGO-ZD was founded by Robert Sacks, because, as I recall, he was dissatisfied with Roy Hendricks' stewardship of the Zine Register. He later added Mr. Geryk as a coeditor. Unfortunately, these issues were so overlaid

with their personal agendas, and with Sacks' political agenda, and so nasty in places, that most pubbers wouldn't touch it. Sacks then turned the zine over to Michael Hopcraft and Brad Wilson. Picking up the story in this issue, Carrier tells that Hopcraft became so irritated with Sacks' that he turned the whole thing over to Carrier, who gleefully accepted. He earnestly insists that this is not a fake, and I think its legit because Hopcraft's review of DD is essentially along the lines of what he had written me privately. So Carrier has printed the material he got from Hopcraft/Sacks/Kathy Caruso/Alaric, plus his own comments, which often sharply differ from what he was given from the others. There's nothing in here from Wilson. Alas, the publication has some novelty value, but still cannot be recommended for exactly the same reason --- Carrier has simply put way too much of his own personal agenda, insulting personal remarks, etc. into this. Does this zine have a jinx or what? I'll look at it again when the next issue comes out, but for now, this zine needs to be cleaned up quite a bit.

Finally, Excitement City Limited has folded: "To be blunt, I can't be bothered to publish anymore." Expanding non-hobby activities and disenchantment with most hobby zines were the primary causes here. Fortunately, Simon has said he will be contributing to benzene, as if people needed yet another reason to sub to this great zine. I hope to see him there, because I enjoyed his writing in XCL.

#### 1989 AWARDS BALLOT

Once again it is time for the Diplomacy hobby to recognize its finest contributions for 1988. The following individuals have been nominated for the given awards. Ballots must be signed and returned to Larry Peery, Box 8399, San Diego, CA 92102, USA by 27 July, 1989. Recipients will be announced at DIPCON. Each winner will receive an individual plaque and custody of the perpetual award plaque for the coming year. Donations to help defray awards expenses are appreciated and checks should be made payable to Fred Davis and included with your ballot. Publishers are encouraged to reprint this ballot in their publications.

#### DON MILLER MEMORIAL AWARD --- "for outstanding service to the hobby."

- \_\_\_\_\_ DOUG ACHESON, for his work with the Canadian Diplomacy Organization.
- \_\_\_\_\_ DON DEL GRANDE, for his work with the International Diplomacy Ratings System.
- \_\_\_\_\_ STEVE HEINOWSKI, for his service as Boardman Number Custodian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ MELINDA ANN HOLLEY, for her work as EVERYTHING publisher, and gamemaster.
- \_\_\_\_\_ REX MARTIN, for his work in promoting the game and hobby.
- \_\_\_\_\_ KEN PEEL, for his work as publisher of THE ZINE REGISTER.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ROBERT SACKS, for his work as publisher of KNOWN GAME OPENINGS.

#### ROD WALKER AWARD --- "for outstanding literary achievement."

- \_\_\_\_\_ KEN HAGER, ERIC LAWSON, BRUCE LINSEY, and REX MARTIN, for the DIPLOMACY feature issue of The GENERAL, Vol. 24, No. 3.
- \_\_\_\_\_ NELSON HEINTZMAN, for his skills as a diplomacy negotiator in 1986AI.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ROBERT GREIER, for his "A Novice Publisher's Point of View on Publishing," in KATHY'S KORNER/WHITESTONIA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ROBERT SACKS, aka Karl Alaric, for his "Darkside Analysis," in KGO.

#### JOHN KONING MEMORIAL AWARD --- "for outstanding play of DIPLOMACY in any venue."

- \_\_\_\_\_ GARY BEHNNEN, for his play in 1987CK (Perelandra).
- \_\_\_\_\_ MELINDA ANN HOLLEY, for her many games and occasional victories.
- \_\_\_\_\_ MARC PETERS, CANCON '88 Winner, DIPCON '88 Third Place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ MIKE PETTY, for his victory in 1985AV (Not New York).
- \_\_\_\_\_ DAN SELLERS, DIPCON '88 Winner


NAME

HOBBY AFFILIATION

Mark L. Berch  
11713 Stonington Place  
Silver Spring, MD 20902



*at of cards*

Larry Peery   
Box 8416  
San Diego CA92102