

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Tournaments

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## B & B Duplicators

Thousands of speeches, essays, and books have been written in the past decade about the challenge from Japan, and "what to do about it" (to quote from the cover of the Feb 26th issue of FORTUNE). I don't claim to have the whole answer, but I do have a little piece of it: We need more companies like B & B Duplicating.

They have printed every issue since #2, except for #42, which was a fake put out by Bruce Linsey. Indeed, I'm their oldest customer. The procedure is very simple. I drop off the camera-ready master one day, and I pick it up about 24 hours later. I'm not just saying that its "supposed to be ready" or that its "usually ready", I'm saying its done. In 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  years, only once was it not ready --- I had to wait an extra day. Add its always done right. I've had two printing errors --- both of them entirely my fault. And this is not a deluxe service. About 5 years ago, I called around to some other companies to see if B&B's rates were generally in line with other companies. No one quoted me a cheaper rate.

They don't have fancy digs (its in the basement of a downtown office building) and unlike so many US companies, they haven't expanded wildly to try to be all things to all people. Its a certain slice of the market that they do --- flyers, pamphlets, convention programs and the like.

But what they do have is reliability. And I don't think US companies realize how important this is to the consumer. If they do, they certainly haven't acted like it. Industry in this country seems to be far more focused on making deals than making products. They chase the elusive corporate image, and product perception, rather than a reputation for reliability and fair pricing. My bank spent millions of dollars on a name change to "Fedstar", a gibberish word. Then two or three years later, they are bought out by another bank and it all goes down the drain. In the recent past, both of our cars died. We went US for one (Chrysler minivan) and Japanese for the other (Camry). The reputation that both of these had earned for reliability was a major part of our choice.

The Japanese are not supermen. What we need are not a lot of speeches by politicians or protectionist trade policies. We need more companies run the way they do it at B & B duplicators.

## Letters on Tournament Scoring Systems

(Back in DD #122, I had a rather extensive discussion of the Scoring System used at DipCon 1989. It drew too much response to put into #123, so it goes into this issue. First up is Mark Lew:))

I must strenuously object to your statement, "Computer dippy is a very similar experience to playing gunboat." The primary complaint about the computer program is that it plays horribly. Even if its tactics weren't as awful as they are, it would take an extremely sophisticated program to have any sort of long-range strategy, such as uniting against a leader, or sensing when two powers are allies and responding accordingly. Such things are commonplace with real-life gunboat players. You seem to be making the assumption that gunboat consists of tactics and nothing else. Nonsense. All of the strategic planning and psychological outwitting which make diplomacy interesting are still there. All of the problems which are usually dealt with through negotiation are still problems, but they must be faced using more subtle communication and intuition. The mental battle between gunboat players is rather like that between a batter and a pitcher. Each must try to read the other's thoughts and at the same time try to be misleading with the signals he himself is giving off, with the nuances of the psychological environment varying depending on the position of the board, and the history of previous turns. Even without verbal communication, gunboat still matches wits against wits. The computer game does not.

((I accept that the computer is far less formidable an opponent than a gunboat player. But I wonder if the differences outweigh the similarity: Both gunboat and vs computer is Diplomacy without diplomacy. That makes for a similar experience. As for facing long range strategy and all the rest, perhaps you are speaking from more experience than I have. I've played FTF gunboat about a half a dozen times, that's all. My experience is that the leader faces players trying to defend that they have, without much "uniting against the leader" beyond that. -Isn't that what the computer does?))

Most of your numerous criticisms of the Dipcon scoring system are valid; the scoring system overall was, as you say, terrible. However, you are wrong to criticize the scoring of the team event. Your complaint seems to be that a player who had a good finish on his own board and a lousy finish on his teammates' boards got a low score while a player who had a lousy finish on his own board and a good finish on his teammates' board got a high score. Yet that was the whole point of the team event. It was represented as a variant in which a player's score would be the average score of his team. The intent of this variant rule, I presumed, was to encourage cross-gaming along team lines, sort of like what you'd see in one of those postal (non-gunboat) round robin tournaments in which seven players each play one country on each of seven boards. (I thought, and you'll probably agree, that this was a pretty dumb idea for a variant, but that's not the point.) I went into the game intending to coordinate with my team members (My team captain David Hood can attest to that) and assuming that others would too, but as it turned out most people ~~each~~ didn't know or didn't care that it was a team game and played it just like an individual game.

So you can reasonably argue that having a team event was a dumb idea, sort of like having a computer event was a dumb idea. But you can't argue that it was scored improperly.

((I think you are on a tangent with this crossgaming bit. Sure, a 7-player round robin (7 players in 7 games, with a different country in each) encourages cross-gaming if non-gunboat. But the "you" that is assisted in Board 1 is still the same "you" as in board 2. The "team" in round Robin is still 7 yous --- and not a different person. I don't see how a player could "coordinate" here at DipCon at all. You played your game, and then when it was done, you found out how the others did. What is there to coordinate? The question of scoring the team games I'll return to a bit later.))((Next is Don Del Grande))

There were four major events and three minor events. Each player was permitted to participate in all seven events if they wanted; their highest two major scores and highest minor score counted toward their total. As for the exam, it was a "North American Diplomacy Board Examination" - if that sounds familiar, it's because they used to be regular features in LIFE OF MONTY. You guessed it; I wrote those questions - not Larry. (The idea of having an exam as part of DIPCON was not revealed to me at first; I ended up using questions that originally appeared in LOM a few years ago just to get 35 - of which each exam had 25, not all 35.) NADB examinations usually have three types of questions: Diplomacy, the hobby, and trivia (which was left off of this one); there are just so many questions about "the game" that I could think of. By the way - any reason why you commented about the "size of the mapboard" question but not the "August 15" question? At least the former was multiple choice....

((Yes, one of the questions did call for knowing that Joshua Berch's birthday was August 15th. But really, what is appropriate for your zine, which is a kind of family, is going to be very offputting to somebody unfamiliar with the postal scene. I'm surprised that you either don't see or won't acknowledge, how unfair this is to use such results as part of an overall score))

"John Galt...doesn't qualify to finish third." I would agree with you IF this year's DIPCON was meant to concentrate on "regular Diplomacy". It was Larry's intent to stress the different variations on Diplomacy - that's why not doing well in "regular Dip" did not necessarily mean a poor showing overall.

(("not doing well" hardly conveys how badly Galt did: 2 eliminations and a 2-center survival. If a player with such a miserable record could, and did, finish third, its sends a clear message: your skill at regular, ordinary dippy can be pretty much irrelevant to your final score. To me, that is downgrading regular dippy too far.))

Of course the "poor playing" members of a team that did well got a lot of points. That's why it's called a TEAM tournament! (Don Williams was the only member of his team not to get a draw; his team earned first place, and as part of that team (a small part, true), he got the same points as the others.) And there was no doubt that some of the results came about because players of teams that weren't doing well were letting themselves get eliminated and/or agreeing to draws for the other players in their game.

((I'll take up this point in response to the McIntyre letter))

...You're confusing the "dip scoring system" with the "DIPCON scoring system" Each of the major events ... gave 40 "DipCon Points" for 40th place, 39 for second, 38 for third and so on, down to 1 for 40th place....minor events scored 20 for first, 1 for 20th. ((Yes, I understood that)) As for how Hohn and Nick finished one-two; Originally, the individual scoring system (which, again, I designed, and discussed with both Larry and Ron Cameron) was to count both rounds, but when I had to turn away two players from round one because there were 51 players, I changed it to score each player's single best score, and use the other round's score in case of a tie...((Its not clear to me why having two extra players caused you to alter the scoring system. And I have some qualms about changing a scoring system once things get started. The fact that the second game is virtually discarded (used only as a tie-breaker) is just another example of the downgrading of regular dip. I mean, you don't see anything else being discarded, do you? But my main objection is that it treats the better of two games as being much more significant than the poorer of two games. Why? It seems that the better and the poorer game are equally good measures of the players performance ---- after all, they are both equally the product of his skill ---- so they should be treated as equally important. Why not just average them if you care concerned about comparing 1-game-played with 2-games-played? Lest this seem too abstract, consider the following:  
 Player a: 3-way draw, Elimination  
 Player b: 4-way draw, 4-way draw  
 By your way of thinking, player a has done better, as his better score beats b's better. But I would rate b as having turned in a better performance, not a, because I will give all 4 games equal weight))

Speaking of scoring: please note that my system does not ignore SCs in favor of wins/draws as some systems do. A win is worth 50; anything else is worth the number of SCs plus (16 for a 2-way; 11 for a 3-way; 8 for a 4-way; 6, 5, and 4 for further draws). Yes, a 16-center elimination is worth more than a 4-center in a 3-way draw. (The "best" player that was affected was Eric Adlrich; his 6-center two-way draw put him behind two 11-center 3-way draws.)

((This is a side issue, which I didnt get into in my original editorial, as it is a matter of personal philosophy how important SCs should be. But I don't agree here. In my view, a two-way draw always should beat a 3-way, and a three-way should always beat an elimination))

I have to agree that the events with few participants - variant (SkinnyDip), exam, and computer - should have been scored differently as far as DIPCON points is concerned. I have two ideas: (a) first place worth "full points", last place worth zero, and the other places scored with equal points between them; (b) for events with "n" players, first place is worth (n-1), second (n-2), and so on down to zero for last place.

((Either sounds sensible. Don also notes that for his IDTR rating system Cho got the most points, since only regular dip counts. Next up is Bruce McIntyre))

The DipCon scoring syssem may have been awful -- OK, it was awful -- but a) Larry himself reports that those attending recognized the strong performance of Cho, and that Birsan gave away some of the prizes for 1st

-overall, to Cho, obviously in recognition of a fine performance; and b) the concept could be retained with a far better scoring system. But let me first digress:

((Birsan kept the trophy, and gavethe other prizes away. This was very sportsmanlike of Edi, who was under no obligation of any sort to give anything away. My problem is not with Edi's personal conduct.))

Side note here. The "rank" method of scoring has a wide following: duplicate bridge, Olympic ice-dancing, playoff qualifications for pro-sports in any number of leagues --- all rely on placing the ranks, instead of the raw scores - of utmost importance. ((Playoff qualifications is not really a scoring system based on rank, it is a cut-off based on rank)). In duplicate bridge, scores of +1440, +690, and +680 on the same hand might get 12, 11 and 10 matchpoints despite the huge differences between the 12 and 11 compared with the tiny difference between 11 and 10. In ice-dancing ((a similar situation prevails).....You may criticize the fact that 2-way + win and 2-way, 3-way had only one point between them, but I don't see you criticizing the system that produced the rankings (on p. 62 in DW #55) and I think I've shown that the rank system has parallels in other sports competitions. ((I didn't criticize the underlying system for scoring individual games --- tho I have some disagreements with it because thats just a matter of taste/personal preference. I agree that converting individual scores into a ranking has precedent and I've played many a duplicate bridge game under those conditions. It has a great leveling effect, however. But if you have, for example, 16 bridge hands played, any anomalies that comes from this leveling effect tend to cancel each other out. You need the ranking effect to process this huge amount of data. And it is legitimate to argue that on any given hand of cards, what really matters is who got the best results, the second best, etc. There are so many individual competitions here. But at a two-round dippy tournament, we have a very different situation. There is just the two games, each taking many hours. To convert this just to a ranking produces far too much leveling. There is no need to "lose" the information about the gaps between the players.))

The high scores produced by the system for "wretched performances" in the team games is due to players whose teams did well despite ((that player)) doing poorly ((and of course, vice versa)). I'm not certain, but if 3 or 4 members of a team were doing well, wouldn't the others on that team be ganged up on? ((Not that I know of. People were simply busy playing their games)). There are parallels here too with other individual sports that are played as teams, such as tennis (in Davis cup or team play, a player could win a gold medal despite never winning a point if his team carries him), bowling, and even most pro team sports --- I can name a number of very mediocre players who have won a World Series. ((No you can't. No player wins a World Series in baseball--- the team itself does. If the team wins, sure, everyone is a member of the winning team, regardless of how he personally did. That's fine. But when it comes to calculating a player's RBI, we just use his individual performance --- we don't pool everybody's results.))

Is it fair to criticize the results of a scoring system when all the players agreed, by participation to its mandate to decide the winner? ((Yes, it most certainly is, provided the terrible results come from a badly designed system in the first place. The fact that players agreed in advance does not immunize any aspect of a scoring system from criticism. To begin with, what choice did the players have even if they had analyzed?)) Its certainly fair to criticize the system, but the concept was not bad.

Suggestions for another try might include weighting the individual tournament more and the minor events less, having an individuals score in the teams rest 50% on his teams's finish and 50% on his personal result, and for God's sake, make computer Dip a minor event or at most a sideshow... And ... the rank points given should be such that...((he then repeats the first of Del Grande's suggestions))...All of these are sensible suggestions and any one of them would probably have put Cho in the #1 spot. ((I think the concept was bad.I realize its an unpopular view, but I see nothing gained by even having a "team competition" such as Larry had. These were, as I understand it, mostly ad hoc teams, no different than choosing up sides in a pick-up game of basketball. So what's the point of having, or playing for, a "team". This isn't even a team in the sense of, say, a bridge partnership or a college hockey team, where players train together and interact during competition. Its just a giant scheme for pooling individual scores, no more. What is gained by this? I have a visceral dislike for anything that introduces more luck into a game with no dice and no cards, etc. And you are lucky if you happen to land up on a team with 6 other successful players, unlucky if you are not. And if you are going to have a team competition, then the winning team wins. Don't try to feed back the team's success into the individual player's performance. Let the player be rated on what he himself did. Give the trophy to the winning team, and let them sort out who gets to keep it. An alternative approach would be to superimpose a "team" on the individuals competition. Run an ordinary two or three round individuals tournament, and score it accordingly. But postal zines, or local dippy clubs, or the BNC staff, or whatever, could each designate 7 players (with their consent of course) as the official "team" of that , say, zine. When it was all over the individual scores of each team's players would be added to see which team happened to have done the best. In effect, editors (or whoever) would try to put together the strongest team, and players wanting to be on a team would decide which one to play on in advance --- or which one would have them. This would be a complication for the tournament GM, who would have to make sure that no board has two members from the same team, but if you had at least a dozen boards.)) ((And as for variant and gunboat, sure, they belong in a DipCon --- in their own tournament. But give a trophy or a plaque for each one --- don't roll it all into one like Larry did. I'd rather give out three trophies than one anyhow. And this way you avoid the inevitable problems about how to weight each individual event. By tradition, the "DipCon Champion" is the winner of the regular dip, simply because thats the core of our hobby. So, no, I don't think the "concept" was good at all.)) I'd like to know (from Ron Cameron and the other committee members) if Larry got this sort of positive criticism and simply ignored it, or whether they all just said "try again" without suggesting anything. ((Only Larry can answer that)). ((Text up is Jeff McKee))

I'd like to point out that Larry's scoring system was given to every registrant in a packet in a packet ((etc, etc. Larry is very methodical about such things, always has been))....I know Hohn Cho read it, because he and I discussed our scores before they were announced, and he was confident. Cho did very well in all the major events, scoring no less than 37 points in any of them, but his minor events only gave him 5 points. He would have won the tournament if he had just taken the SADB exam, which would have given him a minimum of 9 points no matter how badly he did. ((Great. A scoring system provides that a player can jump from 7th to

1st place just by turning in a blank sheet of paper! It just amazes me that Larry can call the system a success when it can produce such a result. Even if one adopts the reforms set forth by Don and Bruce, some guesses in the quiz --- blind guesses --- should be enuf to lift the player off the bottom, giving a few precious points.))

Even tho the system did well for me, I definately agree that it was hopelessly flawed. Computer Diplomacy be ... perhaps a minor events ... even better as a side whow. Plus, the victory criteria are flawed. The event should have been decided by the year in which the computer was conquered, rather than the time it took. Knowing the computer's awkward abbreviations for some proviches and fast typing skills are no qualifications for a champion.

Cuerrier's contention that the NADB was partisan toward PBM players was definately true. I did hear a couple of my PBEM buddies who took the exam talk about Kathy Caruso's birthday and shrug their shoulders. The only realistic minor event was gunboat. The team event might have had significance IF there had been many more players (e.g. last year's World DipCon) and if the whole con's participants had taken the even seriously. As it was, there were a few organized teams and the rest were just pickup teams of people who had nothing else to do.....

In conclusion, to avoid criticism without suggestion, here's how I would have structured the tournament. 75% goes to the Individual Dip winner. It simply isn't a Diplomacy Championship with any less than that. Then the remaining 25% can be devided up among any reasonable number of events, such as Variant, gunboat or even computer, if it is reasonably administered and scored. Team Dip should have its own championship and not be included in the Individual standing. When there are more points than players, they should be scaled, say from 40 to 0 by even steps, so the last place player gets 0 points, rather than 40-X.

((I could live with that, tho I'd give even variant and gunboat their own tournaments as well. The luck factor in the computer torunament could be reduced by having all players play the same country, and by rigging the computer program to give everyone the same S01 orders (and for those who selected their own same S01 orders, the same F01. This would force everyone to play at the same time, which might not be practical.))

((Ordinarily, I do not reprint from US zines unless the material is at least 5 years old. But I want to make an exception to include some further remarks made by Jeff McKee in The MetaDiplomat #9, Nov 1989:))

I've seen quite a few 'explanations' about what was wrong with the scoring system at DipCon since I started collecting stuff for Meta. There's no question in anyone's mind who I have seen make the effort to write about Dipcon, that the scoring system was not good. I've seen two different editors crown Hohn Cho as the Dipcon Champ (one gave a top ten list even). I can't quarrel with the feelings of these editors, but I do contend that not even disgruntled editors can change history. Edi Birsan is the DipCon Champ, no matter how much Hohn Cho deserved to win (I also believe he deserved to win). The responsibility to choose a champion rested in the hands of Larry Peery and Don Del Grande, and they could have chosen a champion based on who had the most hair growing out of their belly button if they wanted. Larry is defending his choice (albeit perhaps not very well) in the midst of critical opposition. Perhaps in the future Dipcon leaders will not be so secretive about their scoring systems. Let's hope so.

((I'm not trying to change history. I said explicitly that the final standing listed Edi Birsan in first place. Yes, of course Peery had the right to the Crown Birsan the champion in the official records. But to me, CHO was the "champ"))  
((We turn again to Jeff, this time in #11))

No one has ever been able to explain to my satisfaction why a player in a draw with the most centers should get any more points than another player in the same draw with fewer centers. To me, they ought to be equal, or if anything, the player with the FEWEST centers ought to get the most points, after all, if the player has enough influence and/or a good enough position to warrant inclusion in a draw with Mr. Big 14 center So-n-so, he ought to be rewarded for achieving parity with fewer resources! I agree, though, a great majority of the people I've talked to say the more centers, the more points. Why? It just seems so intuitive, I guess. But I've never heard a satisfactory, logical argument. After all, the larger power had to agree to include the smaller power, right?

((I happen to agree that those who draw should share equally, using SC figures just for tie-breaking purposes. And the original form of the Berch Tournament scoring system, used at DipCon 1979, did just that. I modified it for DipCon 1982 to provide for a small bonus for top-dog and a small penalty for bottom man. I did this because of so many complaints about equal treatment. But a "logical" argument can be made. If the game has been called on account of time, it makes sense to give more points to the person who was leading the race when darkness fell, even if no one had time to win. That person had played himself into the best chance of winning, so he should get a higher reward. But this is even true in games that are genuinely stalemated. The dippy board is riddled with stalemate lines. Calhamer was later to say that he did not realize when he created the game, how expansive these were and what a profound effect these would have on the board. Stalemate d games are often frozen into "unnatural positions" simply because a player had the defense of stalemate lines, rather than allies, to help him.. A declining power is around only because of this, whereas if the true diplomatic outcome could be achieved without interference of the stalemate lines, they would be out. Its not a compelling argument, but its a logical one.))  
((My letter in #11 also pointed out that a strict Calhamerian system would provide for too small a gap between 6 and 5 way draws, and between 5- and 4- way draws. Thus, if the game is worth 60 points, a 6-way is 10 points, and eliminating someone to go to a 5-way gives only a measly 2 extra points, a 20% return on what might be a sizable risk. Likewise, 5 to 4 way just goes from 12 to 15 points. To this, Nash replied:))

As far as the point spread between four, five and six-way draws, I don't have any problem with there being a small difference. If a game is a four way draw, that means that nobody's played really well (or the largest power hasn't played really well). Same with 5 and 6 way draws. I say let them all get low scores and get stuck in the ties in the middle of the pack! I think a four-way draw is a realistic end to a game in which less-than-adequate Diplomacy was played, but not one suitable for an event such as the "North American Diplomacy Championship."

((This is a very elitist notion. The scoring system is not there just to pick the winner of the "Championship." If thats all you needed to do,



you could probably dispense with the scoring system altogether. It should be easy to spot the top half dozen or so performances. A small committee could probably use subjective criteria and pick a champion. But the scoring system is there to service everyone. Jeff seems to be perfectly willing to lump 4, 5 and 6 ways draws together "in the ties in the middle of the pack." I'm sure not. If a scoring system can perform a service for the top players, separating the winner from the two way drawer, and separating the two way drawer from the three way drawer, then it can perform a service for the middle player and for the weak players just as well. They paid their entrance fee just like everyone else. So they are just as entitled to have different outcomes rewarded with different points as the "big boys" are. This is true even for the weakest players. There should be a meaningful difference between a weak player who just survived and one who did not.. Sure, that type of discrimination isn't going to be relevant in determining the "championship", but it may be pivotal in determining whether a given player finishes above, say, the bottom third. Do not scoff. I had to play in several tournaments before I was finally able to finish above the bottom 1/3, and I can recall how pleased I was.))



David Hood, Tournament Director for DipCon XXIII has suggested that the following scoring system, used in the past for Dixicons, be used again:

1st	100	points	
2nd	60		
3rd	45		
4th	32		draws to receive the average of included places
5th	20		ties to be treated in the same manner
6th	10		2 points to be awarded per supply center
7th	-		

In my view, such systems (and I've seen similar ones) which strongly reward coming in second (or even 4th!) can produce some awful results. Suppose the game has deadlocked 17-10-5-2. Mr 17 says to Mr 10: "In a 4-way draw, you get 59½ points, plus 20 for your centers = 79½. Lets divide up Mr. 2. You then get 60 for coming in second place to my win, plus 22 for your 11 centers, totally 82. So Mr. 10, seeking to maximize his score, accepts the deal (lets assume Mr. 17 will consider no other deal). What kind of scoring system encourages a player to throw the game to another player??? The scoring system should reward Mr. 10 for assembling an alliance that stopped Mr. 17!! Here's a more extreme case. Suppose its 17-7-4-2-3. Ms. 7 has just managed to assemble a large alliance which stopped 17. For this, she gets 51 and 2/5 points, plus 14 for her centers, totally 65 2/5. But suppose she hands over one of her centers to Mr. 17. Now she gets 60 plus 12 for 72. She gains over 6 points by handing over her own centers?! I am unalterably opposed to any system which encourages throwing the game to another player (first case) or which encourages suicide (second case).

These are by no means the only problems. As Guerrier points out, an 18-16 outcome divides the points 136-92. That seems like a very small gap between the winner and the loser. Or take an 18-15-1 outcome. Here

Mr. 1 will garner 47 points. But the same 1 center result in a six-way draw will get 46 3/4 points. Admittedly, neither player has done well, but it seems to me that the latter player has turned in a somewhat better performance, yet his score is fractionally less.

Nor is this all. A player with a win and a 6-way can actually total less than 2 16-center second place finishes. You can also have very anomalous SC payoffs. Suppose the game is about to be won, and you are wired in third, 2 SCs behind the second place player. If you snatch a center from the 4th place player, it will be worth 2 points. If you snatch a second one, it will throw you into a tie for second, so that this SC will be worth  $7\frac{1}{2} + 2 = 9\frac{1}{2}$  points. The third SC, giving you an undisputed second would thus also be worth  $9\frac{1}{2}$  points, but the 4th one would be just the 2 points. So the SCs are consecutively worth 2,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ , 2. This is so arbitrary, especially since the whole process of snatching centers from the 4th place player is so meaningless when the leader is about to win.

I have submitted my own scoring system, used in 1979 and then refined into its final form in 1982 (for DipCon XV). It rewards winning and drawing, not losing. SCs are there for tiebreaking. I hope that it, or a similar system based on those values, is used in 1990.



((And for a little perspective, a reprint from Saint George and the Dragon #61, Feb 1981, by Bob Sergeant))

#### ON THE SUBJECT OF TOURNAMENTS

In any hobby or sport a tournament should mean and is intended to create great competition. Tournaments are also vehicles to increase interest in that hobby or sport. To achieve these objectives it is unquestionably important to establish an atmosphere which will promote fair, keen edged competition on an on going basis. That is, year after year a tournament must be well organized and smoothly carried through, and all judging of results as well as any ruling on questions about tournament rules must be done in a fair and unquestionably unbiased manner to insure it's success. It is somewhat of an understatement to say that Diplomacy Tournaments overall do not fit this criteria. The fact that they don't is totally inexcusable.

The objective of this article is 3 fold. One, to expose some of the stupid bullshit which has occurred in the seven tournaments I've played in since 1976. Two, to suggest some guidelines for operating future tournaments. And three, in suggesting these guidelines I hope to open the topic for some constructive dialogue.

There is no intent here to establish a bunch of rules to follow. The guidelines laid out within this article are suggestions which are derived from conversations I've had with many many tournament participants. Additionally this is not an exercise in muck raking I have purposely excluded the names of the people involved because I don't think identifying those individuals is relevant to the task at hand.

Basically, I feel we can divide the problems plaguing diplomacy tournaments into two groups: Those which result from bad planning and those which result from what is either a lack of concern for the players on the part of the Tournament Master (TM), from stupidity, or from an attempt to defraud.

I will deal with the second group of possibilities first and for my purposes here I'll assume no attempt to defraud exists because I have no evidence to the contrary.

The first situation I would like to relate occurred about mid way through the second game of the tournament when play was delayed for about 20 minutes by external causes. When play resumed one of the players on the fourth or fifth board did not return. The T.M. told that board to wait. The players waited an additional 15 to 20 minutes until the T.M. would

appoint a new player. When the time deadline for the game came that board was beginning to read their Fall 1906 moves. The T.M. forced that game to stop right then and the Supply Center count reverted to Fall 1905. While all the other boards played thru Fall 1906. Because of the T.M. forced delay the French player on this board lost his 15th center and the "Best France" award. Pretty stupid situation huh?

But it gets worse!

Like the tournament where the first round was scheduled to go to 1908 and the second round to 1907. This meant, of course, that to win a best country award a participant had to either do well the first day or exceed the first days leaders in one year less play the second day. Nothing to it, right? Second game, Fall 1907, a player on board 2 was in position to top the first days high for his country if he played another year. To be fair the T.M. allowed that game to go one more year. If that player achieved the number of centers necessary he would, of course, receive the appropriate prize. However, to be fair to the other players, who could very well be in the running for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd overall, the T.M. had to let the Fall 1907 scores stand for the other players. With nothing to lose what player is going to try to keep another from taking the prize? The other six people on that # 2 board fell all over themselves and each other trying to get out of his way.

As far as the problems bad planning has caused, most of them are pretty well known. At one tournament there was so little space that tables and boards were placed in the hall only to be later forced back into the badly over crowded room because of fire regulations. Another time too many boards were set out and as a result the players were spread too thin. Many boards had 5 or 6 players. In the process of reshuffling the players much time was lost; the actual start of the games was set back over a half hour. Rather than extending the game dead line the T.M. cut 5 minutes off of each of the first six seasons destroying the possibility of accomplishing anything through diplomacy. In addition several people were moved from board to board to board and by the time they got to the board they would actually play on the other five of six players had already chose sides and divided the board up making the newcomer the odd man out.

I've got a file full of stories like these. Most of them have, for the most part, gone unacknowledged. We'll never know how many people stopped playing // Diplomacy Tournaments because they were victims of incidents like these (the best diplomacy I've ever played against no longer plays in tournaments because (it is rumored) of one of these stupid situations).

So much for complaining about it, now what do we do?

The first change that must take place is with the individuals who run the tournaments. They must recognize that they are there to provide a service to the players. They have volunteered (or been drafted) to make the tournament an enjoyable affair. Therefore it should be approached on a somewhat serious basis with necessary planning done ahead of time. I'm sure many of the T.M.'s do look at the job this way. I'm just as sure that many don't.

The second thing that must change is the manner in which the organizing session is conducted; and here I'm speaking to the players. There is almost always a group bunched around the T.M. and his assistants slinging the bull. It is also inevitable that while the T.M. is trying to explain how the tournament will be run and how the scoring system will work the players are walking about, renewing friendships and reviving animosities, complaining about last years tournament, groaning about how this year's tournament is going to be run, and generally creating a problem for the T.M. and other players (on this point I really know of which I speak, I'm probably one of the biggest offenders). Now my first reaction is to simply say this has got to stop, but knowing Diplomacy players the way I do I know that would be impossible. I think a better solution would be for the T.M. to allow more time for getting things organized.

There are two additional methods of improving tournaments. The first is simply experience. We must recognize that the game Diplomacy is not the easiest game to develop a tournament format around. The more tournaments take place the more information we'll have about running them. Since I began taking notes on this topic 5 years ago the improvement has been just short of incredible.

//

The second method is to get feed back from the participants. Some T.M.'s have ignored suggestions from participants. Some have begged for suggestions and gotten none. It is the responsibility of both parties to communicate for the benefit of all.

When I started my study I incorporated as part of it a study of what players like and what they don't like. What follows is based on the interviews I conducted and the conversations I listened in on: (In order of popularity)

1) Better scoring system.

This has been knocked around a lot already so the only two comments I would like to make at this time are: One, keeping the tournament scoring system secret from the players is a stupid idea, and two, I think Calhamer's system, as used at Dip Con XIII, is definitely on the right track.

2) More games per tournament

3) More time per season

5) Stop game give aways

I've combined # 2, #3, & #5 because my comments and partial solution connects the three.

Because of time limitations it is almost impossible to add greatly to the number of games or to the amount of time allotted to each season. I suggest the following format. A tournament consist of three games; one late Friday night, one Saturday afternoon, one Sunday morning. The games would consist of seven years; 1901, 02, & 03 would be 40 minutes long (20 per season), 1904, 05, & 06 would be 30 minutes long (15 minutes per season) and 1907 would revert to 20 minutes per season (giving extra time to set up and make those last minute stabs). The first two games would be played by all players and would be used to determine the recipients of the "Best Country" awards and the seeding for the final round which would be played by the top 14 players only.

This format gives more time per season where it is most needed, the beginning and the end, without making the game too long. It, I feel, will reduce the possibility of a game give away by cutting out the level at which this is most likely to occur. At the third table and lower, players who are down to their last 2 or 3 pieces will have a greater tendency to throw the game to the high man so he can catch the tournament leaders. If that tendency should show itself at the second board the final game could be the top seven players only. Finally by having a final round with only the best players involved you increase the prestige connected with reaching that plateau.

4) Stop cross board playing

I see no solution and am completely open to suggestions here.

Overall I've seen significant improvements take place in the last 5 years and I'm confident that the weak areas can be shored up to everyone's benefit.

((Calhamer has designed several scoring systems, one of which was re-printed way back in DB #13. The one Bob refers to was used at DipCon XIII ((incidentally, can one properly hyphenate a woman Funeral??)) in the summer of 1980. As modified in early 1982, it is as follows: The winner scores 30, all other zero. In drawn games, players score their SC total, plus 10. A sole leader gets a bonus of 2 points. In addition, if the leader's SC score exceeds 8, all other scores are reduced by the amount the leader exceeded 8. Thus, if he had 10, all other scores would be hit with a -2. Finally, no one could get more than 3 times their # of SCs held. It is patterned, as Allan said, after the "Games Behind" statistic in baseball. He also said that this was just to apply to

time-curtailed games, and that draws that were agreed upon would not be permitted.

Calhamer (who invented the game of Diplomacy) did not like the process of spending a lot of time negotiating a draw, turning the game into "just ... a kind of vote". There is always an incentive, he argues, to picking up another center. He also disliked the process of shortening the draw, when the leader wasn't gaining any centers. Thus, a leader in 13-12-8-1, in Calhamer's view, should do better than the same person in 13-13-8. So his scoring system penalizes the leader for losing his sole-lead in giving that one center to the runner up.

By contrast, I felt and still do, that voted draws are entirely legitimate. You cannot force players to continue play once they have decided the outcome of the game, and why should you even try? The whole point of a game is to have an outcome, and if its reached by persuasion, whats the problem? The whole game operates on persuasion.

But my main problem with this scoring system is that it does not provide enuf incentive for a win in borderline situations where the leader might or might not take the risks involved in a shot for the win. Suppose minor powers are being mopped up, heading for a 16-10-8 stalemate --- surely a common setup. This will be scored 28-12-10. The win just jumps him to 40 --- not even half again as big. And I don't like the emphasis on avoiding ties by the leader, which seems to me to be a rather minor point.

Some of the other ~~ap~~ points that Bob makes are right on target, and I have seen these problems myself. It is very frustrating to find that the proper physical arrangements have not been made, or that organizing time is cutting into playing time, as has happened so many times. Its is difficult to assign groups-of-seven from a large pool of people in a short period of time, trying to minimize "local" interactions, and TMs need to plan well in advance to cope with this.))



((Lets take a break here to move to some lighter material. This is excerpted from "My First DipCon --- the untold Story" by Steve Knight, appearing in VoD #83, August 1983. This would then be DipCon XVI))

..... By game-end, tho, I had somehow managed to luck my way into a 16 center Russia. (So it was a 4-way draw. So shoot me). Swartz,Becker, Russell: "Nice game" Compliments from real Dip players! Oh, wow!  
Heigowski: You know, I think you've got a shot a best "Russia" Oh boy!  
Eric Kane: "You'll probably be on the top Board Tommorrow" Oh, shit!  
Try to understand. I had come to Detroit hoping that I would simply survive the stupid tournament; to find myself on the top board would be alarmingly better than I had ever dreamed. Visions started appearing in my head of someone taping a bid sign on my back reading "I'M NEW HERE, STAB ME" just after I drew Italy against Birsan, Kehnster, Byrne, Masters, Buchanan and Ditter. No matter that only one of those six was actually there, as far as I knew; my paranoia cared little about its target.  
This colored the rest of the evening for me; I was jittery and irritable, and not even the privilege of sitting next to Mark Berch when everyone went to Greektown ((for dinner. What a trek that was!)) could calm me down. I ended up back at BRUX & Co's room, along with most of the

Mob. ((It was)) One wild way to finish an evening --- the hoped for Dip game never materialized, so I wrote a promised letter home while watching a 4-way gunboat game...((etc, etc)) Things finally simmered down about 4:00, when I fell into a fitful sleep, wondering what the second round of the tournament would bring tomorrow.

This presaged the only mar on the weekend, which occurred the next morning when I failed at my bid to be known as the "Hobby Alarm Clock." A reconstruction of the events after the fact indicated that something on this order had happened: ((Mark)) Luedi's alarm had been set for 7:30, to allow us plenty of time to get to the 9:00 start. When it went off, Luedi hit the alarm, but not one of us stirred. I however lay dozing for a few minutes, woke up with a start, immediately thought, "Tournament! TopBoard! Oh, Shit!", gathered up my stuff, and stumbled out of the room half asleep ((and having woken no one else up)). Talk about comatose.

It wasn't until they started calling names for the second round that a semblance of rationality pierced the clouds. "Bruce Linsey" No answer. I looked around the room --- where the hell was BruX? Where the hell was the rest of the guys? Oh shit .... I found a pay fone and called the room, where my fears were confirmed: They were all asleep, and I was willing to put some money on the fact that I wasn't going to be their favorite person that day.

I returned to the tournament room just in time to have Marc Peters greet me with a big smile: "Hey, Cupcake, you're on the top Board" Oh, shit --- it was turning out to be one hell of a great day, let me tell you. Things drew up a bit when I drew France; Fred Townsend was England, and he got together with myself and Eric Ozog's Germany to put together yet another western triple. This was fine until Eric started getting a bit nervous about taking the brunt of the fighting while England had a relatively easy time of it in Scandinavia, so I went ahead with a stab of England. This gave an all-clear for Al Pearson's Turkey and the Asutrian to get together and harass Brian Lorber's Italy. Due to some inept tactics on mine and Eric's part regarding trying to wipe out the last English army in Yorkshire, we ended up with an AFGT 4-way. Not bad, especially since the game was rather flexible for a top board.

The game itself, tho, didn't even come close to my unreasonable fears, which was a relief. It was interesting, however, trying to juggle diplomacy on the board with the real-life Diplomacy that had arisen because of the "Alarm Clock" controversy. Mark Luedi came over and expressed some understandable annoyance. I was feeling guilty because a couple of the players, Mark Frueh in particular, had some very decent standings from the first day that were in a shambles because they didn't get to their games on time. So what the hell could I say?

If I were Shep Rose, I suppose I could have said, "Ha, it was all part of my plan to keep you guys out of the second round so I could do better!" If I were BRUX, I could have said, "Sorry, but you had not explicitly requested wake-up insurance, in accordance with Hotel Rule #7." If I were Rusnak, maybe, I could have said, "Go fuck yourself; I'm not your Mom, and it's not my fault if you can't get up on your own." If I were a bald-faced liar and carried over Diplomacy into my personal life I could have said, "I tried and tried to wake you guys up, but you just wouldn't." Or perhaps, "No, I got up before your alarm went off; I wasn't even there, and you're damned lucky I called you at all." I was

But no, I'm me, so I could only say, "I'm sorry guys, I fucked up,"

and feel guilty and take some flak. Its a bitch trying to be a nice guy in this hobby. ((I don't know what that last crack refers to, since he hasn't gotten into trouble trying to be a nice guy. He got into trouble because he left the room without waking up the others. But if this chronology is complete he was never delegated with the responsibility of getting the others up in the first place. And Luedi especially was awake enuf to shut off the alarm clock, right?. At any rate, this is how he got his "Alarm Clock" moniker))

...my two h-ways were, to my amazement, enough for 7th place and a nifty certificate. I had not only survived my baptism by fire, but had come thru it well enuf to have Marc Peters remark, "Cupcake, if I hear you whine, 'but I'm only a novice' ever again, I'm going to push your teeth down your throat, OK?"

To my mind, tho, the tournament finish was merely icing on the cake. The best thing about DipCon was, in a word, the people and the events: watching strained civility overlying the feuds. Everyone seconding Mark Berch's nomination to the DipCon Committee after he let it be known that ((if I had been elected)) "My Wife would slit my throat." Fraternizing with all the faceless people who were only faceless names before, and seeing how their postal personas compare with the real-life personality. And above all, making friends with a bunch of cutthroats. This is one hell of a hobby, folks. ((Many people have commented on the fact that hobbiests sometimes are very different in person that would be expected from their persona's as seen in zines. I have seen this many times myself and have had other tell me that I am not what they expected from reading my zine and letters. To some extent, the postal hobby allows us an outlet to be something a little different than we usually are. Thats a common observation. But it also may be true that a Convention, with its artificial atmosphere (somewhat of a boys-night-out) also allows people to live a certain sort of role that they would not ordinarily. It is more social and also more competitive. And you are thrown in with people that you know in a certain way, but have never spent time with. Of course, this is all to the better, as each of these environments allows us to be a different "me".))



#### PLAYING THE SCORING SYSTEM

I play the scoring system at any tournament I'm at. And its not just me --- top players do it too: Most or all of them. You should too.

Pay no attention to the finger-waggers and other whiners. Tournament Diplomacy is no parlors game, or some purest undertaking unrelated to context. Tournament Diplomacy is arguably the most competitive format for the game, and the scoring system is an integral part of the game as it is in any other form of ranked competition. If you bid a small slam at the bridge table, and you are considering going for an over-trick at a small risk to the contract, of course you consider the scoring system. At rubber scoring, its lunacy. At ordinary duplicate scoring, it may well be quite sensible. Its no different in chess --- and its no different in Diplomacy.

So make sure you understand the system, so you can keep your eyes on the prize. And don't hesitate in your negotiations, to point out that the other guy will be doing the same thing. Of course, this being Diplomacy, there's no particular need to be truthful about this.

If you're trying to convince your ally that France will probably do XYZ, point out that the scoring system will tend to push him toward doing XYZ. It doesn't have to be even remotely true --- just believable. If someone you are diploming with seems to be a little confused about the scoring system, you don't have to straighten him out --- unless its in your interest to do so. If misrepresenting precisely how the scoring system works will aid your diplomacy, go ahead and do it. As with all forms of deception, you have to consider the possible price of getting caught. But you can always argue that you misunderstood it yourself.

And lastly, don't feel bad about doing something you wouldn't ordinarily do, but for the scoring system. Players are supposed to try to maximize their score. That's always good sportsmanship in a Tournament.

In Tournament Diplomacy, the scoring system is inextricably tied up with the play of the game itself. Don't try to separate them.

Since much of this was typed, I see in the literature for DipCon that teams of some sort will be used, altho the teams performance will not affect people's individual scores. I'm not sure how these teams will be organized. So I'll throw out an open invitation: ANYONE WHO WANTS TO PLAY ON THE OFFICIAL DIPLOMACY DIGEST TEAM SHOULD CONTACT ME PRONTO. I WILL GET BACK TO YOU, ONCE I HAVE SPECIFICS ON HOW THESE TEAMS ARE TO BE CONSTITUTED. I don't know, for example, whether people can play on multiple teams, how large the teams are, etc. I'm presently planning to attend, and if possible, I will field a DD team.

## LETTERS

Francois Guerrier: Your idea of a "debate Zine" strikes me as very sensible .... There have been several discussion zines, past and present, but none have ever really offered as strict and as formal of a writing structure as you suggest. However, I don't think so specialized of an effort would be economically viable --- even in a hobby where money and balance sheets are not at a premium. Most discussion zines have had one thing in common --- only Voice of Doom could be said to have had a substantial following in excess of, say, 45 readers ((Looking in my current ZR, I see House of Lords at about 40; same with Pass) ... even the relative success of VoD could arguably be described to its emphasis on games. This suggests to me that they've gone as far as they could toward specialization: they are able to hang onto about 40 subbers because of the variety they have to offer. I'm not at all convinced that a formal debate zine would be as interesting as the interaction that takes place within a letter column, particularly if it runs much over 3 pages per topic. ((I can't really quarrel with that logic, tho I see two possible "outs".

The first is that this isn't really a discussion zine because of the differences I set forth originally. Hence, predictions based on the track record of discussion zines aren't valid. And second, if the issue-discussion zine has traditionally been based on the model of an open lettercol, and 40 subbers is the best that this format has been able to fetch, then maybe the solution is to approach issues-discussion with a totally different format.))

Nevertheless, the idea would be of considerably more merit if run simply as a section within an existing zine....((He then outlines how this would work, somewhat along the lines of the old Point-Counterpoint feature of the "60 Minutes" of yesteryear. This would



then let the games basically provide the subbers. Its an idea. But as yet, no one has stepped forward to take the idea forward. So this idea at present has the same status as my suggestions earlier for a Hobby Yearbook, and for a Hobby Newszine. Intriguing, to me at least, but with no one there to carry the ball, its in deep limbo.))

**THE ZINE COLUMN # 117**

# NEWS-GNUS-NOOZE

Lee Kendter (Sr) 4347 Benner St Phila PA 19135 has resumed publication of his zine WHY MF? This is exceptionally good news for players. The first run of the zine was 77 issues and folded cleanly with the end of its last game, and Lee says that no issue was mailed more than 48 hours after the deadline. I played in one of those games --- and there were no errors of any sort in the entire game --- a remarkable feat. Those two factors make Lee one of the most reliable GMs the hobby has ever had. Subs are 10/\$8, Game Fee \$3 for regular and gunboat games. The zine will likely be warehousey, as Lee isn't much of a writer, tho he will pay free issues for contributions. Opportunities like this don't come along very often.

On the other hand Kaissa #200 has recently appeared, always an impressive feat. Most of this is a history of his various publications, in and out of the Diplomacy hobby, since 1976. Elmer Hinton has had a lot of interesting ideas over the years, but for some reason, very few of them seem to come to fruition.. There is a game opening, but I must say that with the exception of Tretick/Oaklyn, no GM has ever engendered so much expressed anger and criticism from his players. These concern accuracy and punctuality, and even costs, so I can't say that he is recommended, even tho he's been at it a very long time. The issue reports one game end, and in it I see that 6 of the 7 original players either dropped or resigned.

If you like to play in very large variants, one to consider is the 15 player version of WWII, which has a couple of openings left (Marc Peters 370 North St Sun Prairie WI 53590. Game fee is \$6, u. to So I Lied are free I think).

As you are doubtless sick and tired of hearing from me, there are, unnecessarily, two variant record keeping systems. But there is improvement, of sorts, on this front, so I should report this to you. The Jan 1990 issue of Lord of Hosts calls this custodian the MNC "under the covenant" at least half the time, avoiding the confusing MNC for at least those mentions, as Grigsby is the MNC. Also, the numbers there are being called "recategorized MNCs" --- again, Grigsby gives out the real MNCs. The standards used, however, for these game designators seem quite restrictive. They aren't assigned "until the variant has been started a number of different times." Not only that, but "Umpteen game starts of the same variant in the same zine over a three months period won't justify a designator." I can't imagine why not. If a game is being played, what is gained by denying it a designator? Sacks' rules have never made any sense to me at all, and this is yet another example. But that'll be the problem of Brad Wilson, who will be the new MNC/UC

Tom Nash (5512 Pilgram Road, Baltimore MD 21214) has put out #15 of the Zine Register, and a splendid job it is. Zines here and abroad are listed, with a small description of what to expect. This is useful not only as a lead to new zines, but for a snapshot of the hobby as it now exists. It puts an impressive face on the hobby. One thing we could use would be a bit of statistical overview. For example, I count 81 North American zines devoted in part to Diplomacy or its variants. How does that compare to, say, 3 years ago? What's the median zine price? ZR is itself priced at \$1.50, and at that he's taking a loss, altho I think it he narrowed the margins, he could put the same thing in a lot fewer pages. But its a super job, a lot of work --- and it shows!

A number of folds, current or upcoming, are in the news. House of Lords #22 announces that #23 will be the last: "I think most of the discussions here have run their course" (not my impression. #22 for example has some interesting ones just getting under way.) Dick also cites a lack of free time, with Julie going to law school and he probably going back to grad school. However, this lively zine was revived once before and who knows, it may be again.

With #200, Fol Si Fie has folded. This was announced quite some time in advance. Randolph Smyth's numerous essays on negotiation have been among the very best the hobby has ever produced. Indeed, on the psychological aspects of the game, his writing has no peer, so I hope he will continue to write for other zines. FSF has long been a mainstay of the Canadian hobby, tho never with a particularly large circulation. Randolph never sought much in the way of hobby visibility. But we got a lot out of him anyhow. He was a CDO Ombudsman, the second Runestone Poll Custodian, and took on a fair number of orphaned games in his day. And FSF was a place where you could carry on a good discussion on GMing or play of the game. DD will be reprinting FSF material for a long time to come.

And finally, Fred Davis has announced that in August, Bushwacker, the longest-standing variant zine the hobby has ever seen, will be folding. More on this during the summer

Maniac's Paradise recently put out #13 and looks like a player-oriented zine. Douglas Kent 54 West Cherry St #211 Rahway NJ 07065 has openings in Dippy (\$5), Gunboat (\$2), Kremlin II and Youngstown IV (\$5 each). The difference in game fees for regular dip and gunboat seems curious --- its the same work to adjudicate either game. I wonder if this represents a difference in demand for the openings? (75¢/issue).

Guerrier's Passchendaele hit #100 not too long ago, and mocked the usual hobby tradition by putting out the "smallest issue yet" --- only 2 pages (including a table of contents. with all listed as page 1!). But alas, this is no longer to be. Guerrier has announced that P is folding, and has sent out the appropriate refunds. He will continue the games in a warehouse format. No reason for this was given, tho he refers to a possible few additional issues just to get rid of the backlog of letters and articles. But it may have been burnout from such a high volume of publishing, I don't know. March and April, for example, featured 4 good sized issues, totalling 118 pages in all, with very very little waste. I don't think non-pubbers can understand the amount of effort that it takes to put out this volume of material, month after month. This is especially true for a zine like P, where a great deal of the writing is

his. There was, for example, a very well done reader forum on questionable financial practices affecting pubbers and subscribers. Or in issue #104, he looked at the very old practice of trying to avoid too many "local" players being in a game. Generally no more than two is the goal. But what if a player moves, or players marry? These can increase the number of local players. Comments are then collected from Brosius, Hanna, Holley, England, Klein, Liscette, McKee and Nelson, giving a nice range of opinions. These were followed by extensive comments of his own, in which he zeroed in on considerations such as how important ratability should be; does the "rule" enhance player enjoyment of the game; enforceability; the greater likelihood of local players forming ceteris, etc. The whole thing ran 5 pages, and the reader was thus treated not only to a good range of individual views, but an analysis of the topic in some detail. I know of no zine in North America which so diligently catered to the desires of the serious reader, the person who liked to go into the subject in depth, who liked a good focused discussion, who liked to be exposed to a range of views. Francois was also quite willing to write about his personal life, and was presumably aware of the fact that these essays did not always put him in the best possible light. #104 includes a remarkable essay on how he became, he thinks, a father (At least, I think he thinks he is the father. He was more than a little coy on this), and the entirely unsatisfactory aftermath of this. It's a compelling essay, in part because of FC's rather unorthodox approach to the entire business. I'm going to miss this sort of writing, and I hope that Francois will be contributing to other zines now that he won't have a full sized zine of his own.

Incidentally, the issue above --- when players move so as to make the game more local --- also arises when replacement players enter the game. The problems arise not only if the player is local, but more acutely, for any restricted entry game. The former is not normally a problem --- GMs usually have enough players on the standby list to avoid putting a local player in, tho if a zine is very local to begin with, or is winding down, even this problem can arise. But if it's an all-women's game, can a man be put in? Can an experienced player go into a "novice" game? Can a second US player go into an international game? Because of the difficulty of finding the right person, these problems may be harder to avoid. The concern of ratability does not arise here, but this may violate the "spirit" of the game. If the players specifically wanted the kind of environment available from a restricted entry game, is it fair for the GM to erode it? If players were specifically recruited for an "expert game" --- say, limited to those with at least two wins --- doesn't the GM have a specific obligation to find such a replacement, even if it means delaying the game? I tend to think so.

The first category in Nash's "1989 Rusty Bolts Awards" was "It seemed like a Good Idea at the Time" Award. It seems to me that the results show that the real winner of that was the RB awards themselves. Despite the fact that people were permitted to buy votes for this a measly 18 people participated. Many of the "winners" received no more than 4 votes, which is a pretty meaningless result for a "hobby" poll. It may be that the preponderance of "negative" categories (e.g. "incompetent play" turns people off (me, for one). A long time back, Robert Sacks ran the Gemignani Awards with negative categories, and ran into a lot of flak for that. The dyslexic Margaret Gemignani was, I think, the first well known woman postal player in the hobby, altho she was hopelessly inept, both at order writing and letter writing.

In the local-boy-makes-good department, Don Ditter (one of the hobby's top postal players and a former BNC) formed his own computer software company, and has two products on the market, PC USA, and PC Globe. These are electronic atlases, and have gotten very impressive writeups. The April 3, 1990 New York Times says these belong on "the honor roll of the class of 1990". It merges maps and databases in a way that makes it very easy to use. Each are \$70, for IBM PCs and compatibles need 512 KB and a color graphics adaptor (Phone 602-894-6867).

Don Del Grande (142 Eliseo Dr. Greenbrae CA 94904) wants, by June 1, nominations for his Life Awards, now in, I think, their 4th year. Categories: Hobby Genius, Best Zine or subzine for Hobby News, Zine/subzine for best letter column, Biggest Hobby Personality, Best Gaming Convention, and True Hobby Masters Society. Its an upbeat, positive kind of award, which I really like.

Julie Martin (17601 Lisa Dr. Rockville MD 20855) has put out the 1990 PDO Census, listing addresses for 611 US and 120 Canada. Its nicely printed, unreduced, and a great buy at \$1. This is a good way to centralize things. Just keep this, and make updates in it as people move or join the hobby.

#### Some Quick Con Plugs:

DipCon 23/ Chapel Hill NC June 22-24 (D. Hood 15-F Estes Pk, Carrboro NC)  
Atlanticon 90 Baltimore Jul 13-15 (Box 15405 Baltimore MD 21220) 27510  
CanxCon U of Toronto Aug 3-5 (D. Acehson Unit 5, St 330 320 Younge St,  
Barre, Ont canada L4N4C8)  
World Beach Con, June 25-29 "or thereabouts" at the house of Tom Nash,  
5512 Pilgram Rd Baltimore MD 21214. Let him know if yer interested.

Altho its been said many times in many ways, it bears repeating, and since this is a reprint zine, I'll quote from the letter of Steven Carlberg in BTD #14: "One thing that became apparent in reading those postgame statements is the important fact of Diplomatic life that different players have different agendas. Some want the solo win, and nothing else, and will bail out of a sure two-way tie to take a wild chance at a solo. Others are so convinced that a solo is beyond reach that they will play the whole game looking for part of a 2-way and never even bother to look for the possibility of winning solo. And then there are the different reactions when the cold fact that you aren't going to win or even get a piece of the tie sets in. Some players ... simply ... NMR ... Some play for "survival". Others suicide with prejudice, trying to hurt the player they figure is most responsible for their loss. ... And then there are the players who are in the game for ratings, and mainly want to do better than the average for whatever country they are playing. A similar twist befalls those who are trying to win in tournament play and mold their goals to the particular system in use. In the game reported here, one of the Russian player's main goals was simply to see how far from St. Pete he could get his fleets. And the Turk was in the game to examine the meta-gaming experience of Diplomacy ... all this is part of Diplomacy. You have to figure out where the other guy is coming from..." So so true. And this is part of the overlooked agenda of the early part of the game. The above reminds me of a game I was in once, a tournament

game, and I was having a lot of trouble working with a neighbor. The solution was to realize that this guy really liked to take risks, and in fact, one of the prime reasons he played Diplomacy was to give him an outlet to take these chances. He really wasn't in it primarily for the "diplomacy" or even the outcome of the game. He just liked figuring out which risks to take and which ones not to. So an alliance whereby he took significantly more risks than me would be just fine with him, even tho it would go against my normal instincts. Once I adjusted to what he wanted from the game, things worked more smoothly. In talking to him later, I learned he was a hospital orderly, studying to be an LPN. It was a job that gave him no outlet at all for taking risks. I mention this because "different agendas" doesn't necessarily mean game-outcomes or specific game board goals. It can be something more related to the experience of playing the game....Incidentally, the lettercol in that issue has more discussion of those endagame statements, in terms of what people want to get out of the game (and recently concluded 1988HE in particular).

And speaking of a) taking risks, and b) things that need repeating: Don't trust the USP"S". I've had two recent experiences with their malperformance. In one case, it took 10 days to go from here to Canada, which converted my excellent chances for a win in the FSE Demo game to a 4-way draw. In the other, it took 9 days for a local delivery, to a place less than a hours drive from here. Fortunately, the GM gave me a call on that one. I don't really mind paying 30¢ for a letter or 20¢ for a postcard. But I do mind their lack of reliability.

But speaking of formats, and pardon my ignorance if I'm just out of it, but is anyone around phying dipoy by fax machine? The curious thing (curious to me, that is) about fax is how its been marketed just as a business tool, rather than a consumer product. Still, there must be a lot of these machines around where hobbiest work. There's a lot of precedence for this in the hobby. When the hobby started moving away from ditto and mimeo, most of it, especially for smaller zines, was done on employer- or school-owned fotocopying equipment. And the first PBEM games were actually run on private computer networks, essentially requiring that all players work for the same company.

All of which tends to further reduce the influence of geography. For example, GMing a game, exclusively for players in a different country is almost unprecedented. The first case of this was when von Metzke in California ran a game just for Canadians, to help along the Canadian hobby. But Eric Klein of the US tells me he has an all-French game and an all-Dutch game. The scope of Eric's operation is just mind-boggling. Between his two zines, he has 230 players!!! Previous mega-operations (Dolchstoss, Shenandoah Services and Rebel) aren't even in his league.

Another international record, I think, has been set by 1990CB, the game getting underway in Vasschendaale. It is, I think, the first postal game with players from 4 continents. as he has players from Malaysia and Australia.

The postal Diplomacy hobby was born out of the Science Fiction hobby, but nowadays that combination is pretty rare. One zine which does feature both is Penguin Dip, which recently had issue #33. (Steve Dorenman 94 Eastern Ave #1 Malden MA 02148. Sub's 10/15)

For those of you who came in late the Berch WAP or Continuation of campaign HR sez that a player who NMRs is charged with an NMR, a standby is called, but instead of all-units-hold, his previous season's moves are reused. Each set of orders is considered as a tentative set of orders for the next season. Some GMs are using this. In Dolchstoss #138 I see a variation on this. GM Richard Sharp's writeup for 1986GN includes the following: "In 1911, disaster: Russia's Spring orders were so late that ever I couldn't accept them; in autumn ((fall)) he sent in no orders at all, so I used his spring orders rather than having him drop out. This resulted in the Russian capture of Smyrna..." This seems a rather arbitrary action for a GM to suddenly step up with. If the HRs provided that late orders are automatically treated as for the next season, that would be one thing, but I don't see such a rule. And if later orders could be considered in that way --- why not all orders? Incidentally, that game was yet another good example of the folly of not replacing dropouts. The game had four such players, who abandoned positions of 5, 4, 4 and 11 centers. Not replacing such positions magnifies the harm, as it generates additional NMRs for each season until the country is eliminated.

On the other hand, if you are interested in the very sensible British system of combining Winter with Fall (rather than with Spring), the new zine Crimson Sky has such an opening for #3 (Mike Gonsolves, 203 Brookside Terrace Hagerstown MD 21740. Subs 50¢/issue)

The recent BTDT notes that Mickey Preston is planning to run a league of Rotisserie Baseball. This is a baseball simulation game in which players have a team comprising real baseball players. It's a hobby of its own, and its astounding the amount of money that can be made servicing this hobby. Play is based on the actual statistics of the players themselves. There are about a dozen or so such computer services around. Typically, they update the stats weekly, and handle player transactions, which usually arise from the fact that the real player has gotten injured. Jerry Heath, who runs one of them, expects to gross \$60,000 this year, providing such services to about 100 leagues. He sends his results out by mail, but those with a modem can get same-day service. This is big, big money --- could our hobby ever support such an enterprise?

DIPLOMACY DIGEST, having no deadlines, can never be late. But this is a bit ridiculous. I've never had as much trouble putting out an issue as this one. Originally, it was going to be a single issue. But when I realized I'd already run over 12 pages, I decided to go for a double. Shortly thereafter, I ran into trouble. Another scoring system letter I'd plan to use turned out to overlap too extensively with points already made. A good size reprint essay turned out, on rereading, to be just too flat, and even drastic editing couldn't tighten it up. I had vaguely planned an original essay on Kibbitzers and Tournament Play. I'd planned to do it as a How-To (get the best use of of kibbitzers), but I couldn't get any decent ideas. I thought of recasting it as an ethics quiz, to elicit response for a readers forum, but couldn't come up with a good set of ethical dilemmas. So instead, you get just those past three sentences. All this frustration engendered a great deal of procrastination, and I let a lot of other hobby stuff slide too. Sorry.

But, I've got to get a decent issue out for distribution by DipCon, so lets get this one out at last, Berch!

1990 AWARDS BALLOT

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOBBY ROLE: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTIONS: Vote for one choice only in each category. The above ID portion MUST be completed. Receipt deadline is JUNE 11, 1990 !

1990 DON MILLER AWARD

For service to the hobby;

- \_\_\_\_ FRED DAVIS: For 18 years of BUSHWACKER & work with Mensa Sig & Variant Bank  
\_\_\_\_ STEVE HEINOWSKI: For work with the Boardman Number Service  
\_\_\_\_ MELINDA ANN HOLLEY: GMing numerous games in the hobby, her 'Zine REBEL and work with EVERYTHING  
\_\_\_\_ TOM NASH: Publishing ZINE REGISTER and BEEN THERE, DONE THAT  
\_\_\_\_ LARRY PEERY: DIPCON '89, 'Zine DIPLOMACY WORLD and hobby census work

1990 JOHN KONING AWARD

For outstanding play of Diplomacy;

- \_\_\_\_ EDI BIRSAN: '89 DIPCON Championship  
\_\_\_\_ GARY BEHNEN: Play by Mail play in 1989  
\_\_\_\_ HOHN CHO: '89 DIPCON Championship  
\_\_\_\_ STEVE COOLEY: Numerous FTF Championships, excellent play in DIPLOMACY WORLD Demo game  
\_\_\_\_ FRED HYATT: Winner CANCON '89

1990 MELINDA ANN HOLLEY AWARD

For quantity participation in the hobby;

- \_\_\_\_ KATHY CARUSO: 'Zine KATHY'S KORNER, Orphan Service help  
\_\_\_\_ LINDA COURTEMANCHE: Subzine HIGH INERTIA  
\_\_\_\_ JIM DIEHL: Multitude of games; no one's ever met him in person  
\_\_\_\_ MELINDA HOLLEY: 'Zine REBEL and multitude of games played and GM'd  
\_\_\_\_ CATHY OZOG: Overseas participation and 'Zine CATHY'S RAMBLINGS

1990 ROD WALKER AWARD

For literary excellence;

- \_\_\_\_ LARRY BOTIMER: Article UNABASHED BOTIMER, 'PLAYING ITALY' in 'Zine KATHY'S KORNER # 155  
\_\_\_\_ FRANCOIS CUERRIER: Article 'LOWBALLING' in PASSCHENDAELE #97  
\_\_\_\_ JACK GARRETT: Article 'NEW GAME START' in DARK MIRROR #6  
\_\_\_\_ GREG MAYNARD: Article 'OR: WHY MY NAME IS NOW MUD' in THE LAST RESORT  
\_\_\_\_ GREG & LINDA MAYNARD: Article SURVIVAL AS A DIPLOMAT'S WIFE in PENQUIN DIP #30

Please vote early. Deadline of June 11th will come early. Publishers are encouraged (begged) to reprint this ballot in their very next issues. Should anyone wish to receive a copy of the articles nominated for the Walker Award, send postage and your request to RON CAMERON, 7821 Bouma, LaPalma, CA 90623 OR FRED DAVIS 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043. Winners will receive perpetual plaques, nicely engraved. This COSTS MONEY so please accompany your vote with a dollar donation.

The committee this year was to be indeed complimented. It was no easy task to pick a final ballot as the MILLER AWARD category alone had, counting multiple nominations, 20 nominees. 2 Canadians were asked to serve on the committee and 2 women, all for various reasons, mostly workload or personal problems, declined. However, the 1990 committee needs no introduction as their feats and contributions in and to the hobby are too well known. A good mix of pubbers and excellent players. Heartfelt thanks to each: GARY BEHNEN, MARK BERCH, FRED DAVIS, DAVID McCRUMB, TIM MOORE, MARK PETERS. It will be fun to see which of the finest are awarded their due at DIPCON. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!! !

RON CAMERON, HOBBY AWARDS COORDINATOR

Mark L. Berch  
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