

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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All Original Material!

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In my reading of hundreds of dippines, going all the way back to 1964, I have found that the most common single s~~u~~r~~r~~t for a dippine is something along the lines of "The zine is late because....." That won't happen here because there is no dead-line date. Nonetheless, its not Sept anymore. And the reason that this didn't ap-pear in Sept has a bearing on the fututre pricing and appearance of the zine.

It all began when I brought #13 (which should have been dated July, incidently. #12 was June) to the printer, only to hear him tell me that he was out of the printing business. I always knew that it was a sideline with him. His main business is what's called an "outcall message service" (see what you're missing out there in the country, Michalski?), and I guess that he decided that he didn't need the cover any more. Any-how, he steered me to the retail outlet of the man that he actually sends his printing to, warning me that the prices there might be higher. So off I trundled into the basement of this building. Sure enough, there were all these huge printing presses. I introduced myself, pulled out the masters for my zine, and asked for a quote for 150. "So its you!" exclaimed the man. I was then firmly told that my business was not wanted, then or in the future.

This is reproduced by "photooffset". Basically, a photograph is taken of the page. If reduction is desired, the photo is taken thru a lens, to shrink it down. A negative, or plate, is prepared, and the printing is done directly from this. For this to work properly, it is important that everything be of the same darkness. If they "focus" on the darker material, the light material will not be dark enough to appear. If they pick the light, the dark stuff will "burn thru". It would be like trying to get in focus something that is two feet, and also two blocks away. Can't be done properly.

The material that I had been submitting was a real hodgepodge. Much is mimeod or dittoed, and then just cut out of the zine and pasted up. Even the backgrounds were of different colors sometimes. Further, I used my trust manual typewriter. This means that each letter has its own individual level of darkness, depending on how hard I happen to hit the key. The result was that they frequently had to "shoot" a given page several times, before they got the right balance of light and dark. They didn't complain, because my zine was just one item in a lot of business that my "printer" was throwing them, so they just put up with it. But all that was now changed with me coming in outside the context of a batch of other material.

So we discussed the advantages of electric typewriters, and of carbon ribbons and the like. And he finally agreed to give me a price for that issue. A steep hike I assure you. I agreed, and so you got #13, at considerable loss to me.

I then sallied forth to buy a used portable, a Royal Medallion I at a local pawn-shop. When I got it home, I discovered that the return button didn't always advance
turn to page 23 at the bottom

Fundamental Stalemate Positions, V
by John J Beshera

The thrust of this analysis is to highlight those positions in which a portion of England is controlled by each of the combatting powers. Unless noted to the contrary, the supply centers owned by the western powers are: Bel, Ber, Bre, Den, Edi, Hol, Kie, Liv, Lon, Mos, Mun, Nor, Par, StP, Swe, and War (16).

I. A preliminary configuration of the minimum number of units required to hold these supply centers:

Armies: Boh, Bre, Bur, Gas, Mos, Mun, Sil, War, Ukr.

Fleets: Eng, Iri, NAO.

A Bre S & Gas, A Bur S & Gas, A Mun S & Boh, A Sil S & Boh, A War S & Ukr, A Mos S & Ukr.

II. An amusing variation in which the English Channel is vacant:

Armies: Boh, Bur, Par, Pic, Lvn, Mos, Mun, StP, Sil, War.

Fleets: Bre, Iri, NAO.

A Mun & A Sil S & Boh, A Lvn S & War, A StP S & Mos, A Bur-Gas, A Pic-Bur, A Par S & Pic-Bur, F Bre-Eng, F Iri-Eng, F NAO-Mid.

III. Brast is occupied by the enemy and Clyde is vacant.

Armies: Bel, Boh, Bur, Par, Pic, Mos, Mun, Sil, War, Ukr.

Fleets: Eng, Iri, NAO, Wal, Nth.

F Liv S F NAO, F Wal S F Eng, A Pic S & Par, A Bel S & Bur, A Mun & A Sil S & Boh, A War & A Mos S & Ukr, F Nth S F Eng

IV. There is an enemy unit in Clyde.

Armies: Boh, Bre, Bur, Edi, Gas, Lpl, Mos, Mun, Sil, Wal, War, Ukr.

Fleets: Eng, Lon, Nth, Nrg.

F Lon S F Eng, A Wal & A Edi S & Lpl, F Nth S F Nrg, A Bre S & Gas, A Bur S & Gas, A Mun & A Sil S & Boh, A War & A Mos S & Ukr.

V. There is an enemy unit in Wales.

Armies: Boh, Bur, Cly, Gas, Lpl, Mos, Nth, Par, Sil, War, Ukr, Yor.

Fleets: Bre, Eng, Nrg, Lon.

F Bre & F Lon S F Eng, A Yor & A Cly S & Lpl, A Par & A Bur S & Gas, A Mun & A Sil S & Boh, A War & A Mos S & Ukr.

VI. There are enemy fleets in Wales and Lpl.

Armies: Boh, Bre, Bur, Gas, Mos, Mun, Sil, War, Ukr.

Fleets: Cly, Eng, Lon, NAO, Nth, Nrg.

F Cly & F Nrg S F NAO, F Nth & F Lon S F Eng, A Bre & A Bur S & Gas, A Mun & A Sil S & Boh, A War & A Mos S & Ukr.

((Note that all holding units are twice supported)). While position VI gives an appearance of fluidity, the Western powers may not advance without jeopardizing the stalemate. If the enemy attempts to chance the type of units situated in England, there are maneuvers available to the Western Powers to again lock up the position.

VII. There are enemy armies in Wales and clyde and an enemy fleet in Liverpool.

Armies: Boh, Bre, Bur, Edi, Gas, Mos, Mun, Sil, Ukr, War, Yor.

Fleets: Eng, Lon, Nth, Nrg.

A Bre & A Bur S & Gas, A Mun & A Sil S & Boh, A War & A Mos S & Ukr, A Edi-Cly, F Nrg S & Edi-Cly, F Lon-Wal, A Yor S F Lon-Wal, F Eng S F Lon-Wal, F Nth S F Eng.

VIII. The Irish Sea is vacant. There are enemy armies in London and Yorkshire and an enemy fleet in Wales.

Armies: Boh, Bre, Bur, Edi, Gas, Lpl, Mos, Mun, Sil, Ukr, War.

Fleets: Cly, Eng, Nth, NAO.

F Cly-NAO, F NAO-Iri, F Eng S F NAO-Iri, F Nth S F Eng, A Edi SA Lpl, A Bre & A Bur S & Gas, A Mun S & Boh, A Sil S & Boh, A War & A Mos S & Ukr.

IX. There are enemy armies in London, Wales and Yorkshire.

Armies: Boh, Bur, Cly, Edi, Gas, Lpl, Mos, Mun, Par, Sil, Ukr, War.

Fleets: Bre, Eng, NAO.

F NAO-Iri, F Eng-Iri, F Bre-Mid, A Edi-Yor, A Liv S A Edi-Yor, A Cly S A Liv, A Par & A Bur S A Gas, A Mun & A Sil S A Boh, A War S A Ukr, A Mos S A Ukr.

I. there are enemy units in London and Wales.

Armies: Boh, Bur, Gas, Liv, Mos, Mun, Par, Sil, Ukr, War, Yor.

Fleets: Bre, Eng, Nth, NAO.

F NAO-Iri, F Eng-Iri, F Bre-Mid, F Nth-Lon, A Lpl-Wal, A Yor-Wal, A Par S A Gas, A Bur S A Gas, A Mun & A Sil S A Boh, A War S A Ukr, A Mos S A Ukr.

((Oops, I omitted the following from the above article: "The object in VII. is to prevent the opposition from switching the units in Liverpool and Clyde. If that should happen, England is in peril!))

Southern Stalemate Positions
by Eric Verheiden

Recently, Mark Berch published a compendium of stalemate lines in Diplomacy Digest #10/11. As noted in the introduction, there are a few remaining positions (discovered by John Beshara and myself) which have not yet been published. John's positions appear above, my contribution appears below.

These positions involve a southwestern alliance (most likely against a northern-oriented Russia) holding Turkey, Italy and France, Iberia, Tunis and parts of England, Austria and the Balkans. Except as specified, Austria must be friendly or extinct and as always, no enemy units, fleets in particular, can be behind allied lines. In addition to the minimal positions presented and the variations noted, some further minor modifications are possible.

1. Armies: Cly, Edi, Yor, Pic, Bur, Mar, Pie, Ven.

Fleets: NAO, Lon, Eng, Con, Bla, Arm

Supply Centers: England, France, Italy, Turkey, Iberia, Tunis (15)

A Cly S A Edi, F Lon S F Eng, A Pic & A Mar S A Bur, A Pie S A Ven, F Con & F Arm S F Bla.

It will be noted the the defenders have a spare unit in this position. The loss of the Black Sea can be withstood if the three Turkish fleets are replaced with units in Arm, Ank, Con and Smy (or Syr). Orders would then be A Ank S A Con, A Smy(Syr) S A Arm. A unit in Bel could be held with support from Eng and Pic. In fact, the position could be expanded to hold additional territory in Nwg, Nth and Ruh, if not additional S.C.s.

2. Armies: Bel, Ruhr, Bur, Pie, Ven

Fleets: NAO, Nwg, Edi, Yor, Nth, Lon, Eng, Con, Bla, Arm

Supply Centers: France, Italy, Turkey, Iberia, Eng, Tun, Bel (16)

F NAO S F Nwg, F Edi & F Yor S F Nth, F Lon & F Eng S F Nth, A Bel & A Bur S A Ruh, A Pie S A Ven, F Con & F Arm S F Bla

Again, the defenders have a spare unit to compensate the loss of the Black Sea, or for use elsewhere. Expanding a bit further, the defenders are no less than three units to the good:

3. Armies: Ruh, Bur, Pie, Ven

Fleets: NAO, Nwg, Edi, Nth, Lon, Hol, Hel, Con, Bla, Arm

Supply Centers: England, France, Italy, Turkey, Low Countries, Iberia, Tun.

F NAO S F Nwg, F Edi S F Nth, F Lon S F Nth, F Hol S F Hel, F Con & F Arm S F Bla, A Bur S A Ruh, A Pie S A Ven.

With three units to spare, the defenders can afford the loss of the Black Sea, or even an enemy fleet in Tri, against added units F Adr, A Alb, F Ion S A Alb. Further positions expanding in a northerly direction may be found in my "Western Stalemate

Positions" (Diplomacy Digest #10/11, pages 9-10).

From Position 1, suppose the defenders are unable to capture Edinburg. The position is stailound, altho the extra unit is lost.

4. Armies: Cly, Lpl, Yor, Pic, Bur, Mar, Pie, Ven

Fleets: NAO, Lon, Eng, Con, Bla, Arm

Supply Centers: France, Italy, Turkey, Iberia, Lpl, Lon, Tun (1b)

F NAO S A Cly, A Lpl S A Yor, F Lon S F Eng, A Pic S A Bur, A Mar S A Bur, A Pie S A Ven, F Con S F Bla, F Arm S F Bla.

To compensate for an enemy fleet in Tri, the position must be expanded thru the Balkans to 17 centers:

5. Armies: Cly, Lpl, Yor, Pic, Bur, Mar, Pie, Ven, Alb, Ser, Bul

Fleets: NAO, Lon, Eng, adr, Bla, Arm

Supply Centers: France, Italy, Turkey, Iberia, Lpl, Lon, Tun, Gre, Ser, Bul (17)

F NAO S F Cly, A Lpl S A Yor, F Lon S F Eng, A Pic S A Bur, A Mar SA Bur, A Pie S A Ven, A Alb & A Bul S A Ser, F Arm S F Bla.

With the addition of the three Balkan centers, much more of England becomes expendable, provided no enemy fleet can be built in Tri and Belgium compensates the loss of Liverpool.

6. Armies: Wal, Yor, Lon, Pic, Bel, Bur, Mar, Pie, Ven, Alb, Ser, Bul

Fleets: Mid, Iri, Eng, Bla, Arm

Supply Centers: France, Italy, Turkey, Iberia, Lon, Bel, Tun, Gre, Ser, Bul (17)

F Mid S F Iri, A Wal & A Lon S A Yor, F Eng & A Pic S A Bel, A Mar S A Bur, A Pie S A Ven, A Alb & A Bul S A Ser, F Arm S F Bla.

Peculiar as it looks, the foregoing position is actually minimal; lose one unit and something must be left without sufficient defense.

To withstand the complete loss of England, Tri must be occupied; Bel becomes indefensible if England falls and France becomes rather-crowded with defending units.

7. Armies: Pic, Par, Gas, Bur, Mar, Pie, Ven, Tri, Alb, Ser, Bul

Fleets: Bre, Mid, Por, Bla, Arm

Supply Centers: France, Italy, Turkey, Iberia, Tun, Tri, Gre, Ser, Bul (16)

F Bre & F Por S F Mid, A Par S A Pic, A Gas & A Mar S A Bur, A Ven & A Alb S A Tri, A Bul S A Ser, F Arm S F Bla

Further expansions to the east lead to the positions such as those found in my "Minimal Southern Stalemate positions" in Diplomacy Digest #10/11, page 13).

This article, complementing those published for the most part by John Beshera, Robert Lipton and myself in the past, should just about complete a listing of all possible stalemate position.

The Zine Column #2

TRADES: TIME FOR A SECOND LOOK ? by Mark L Berch

Item: In the IDA's Publisher's Handbook, Len Lakofka calculated that to break even running a ditto zine, using 1975 prices and not amortizing the machine costs, a (non-playing) subscriber fee of 30¢/issue and a game fee of \$9 was required.

Item: A publisher friend of mine bewoaned to me not long ago that even at 40¢ per issue (which never went over one oz) he could not break even.

What links these two together is the ubiquitous institution, the trade. Len allocated 1/3 of the circulation to trades. The unnamed GM has 40% of his, trades. There is nothing extraordinary about these figures. The Tetracuspid mailing list of Sept 1977 listed half of the circulation as trades. But who actually pays for these? The Subber!

Let me put this very baldly: A trade is a system whereby the publishers can swap their wares and palm the cash costs onto their paying subscribers. The most spectacular example of this is Diplomacy World. Walt Buchanan has built up the largest Dipsine collection in the hobby ("Hoosier Archives") largely by Trading DW for any dipsine.

If the publisher breaks even, all the costs for the trade are borne by the subscribers. If they publish at a "loss", they've probably still passed along some of the costs. A N.Y.C. publisher put it to me very directly: "A major reason behind my starting a zine was so I wouldn't have to pay for subs." But it doesn't have to be that way. DIPLOMACY DIGEST is available only by subscription (with the minor exception of an archivist). I get zines because I find them interesting reading, or because I play in them or both. But neither of these reasons have anything to do with my subscribers, so why should they defray my sub costs? I am not saying that I object to publishers trading, or that there is anything intrinsically wrong with it. I subscribe to many zines whose publishers trade. If they want to run their zines that way, fine.

What I do object to is the holier-than-thou attitude sometimes taken by traders toward those who use the alternative, "mutual subscriptions" (ms). In his lead editorial in The Mixomani Gazette #79, Robert Lipton blasted the ms practice, labeling it as "nons ensce" and saying that those who use ms "penalize the people who do the work". He then cancelled several (but not all) of his mutual subscriptions. Two reasons were presented. First, trading has "fannishness", as it harks back to "way back when". Now, I don't mean to be disrespectful, but the argument that something is best because "We/They-have-always -done-it-this-way" has never impressed me regardless of context. A practice must stand on its own merits. The second reason presented is bookkeeping. Bob correctly points out that "If I do not keep track of the amount in the till, I cannot ever collect any money from Wileman. The trade (sic, presumably he means ms) total can rise to \$5, \$10, any amount he likes, and, unless I threaten to cut off trade, he need never pay a cent."

The poor dear.

The solution to Bob's awful quandry is very simple. You write down by Wileman's name the last issue that he's paid for. When it comes near that issue you remind him. When you go past that issue you cut him off. Sound familiar? It should -- that's just the way I presume Bob treats his subscribers. That the simplicity of ms: everybody gets treated the same, regardless of whether they have the time or inclination to be a publisher.

On the other hand, trades, or an exclusive reliance on trades has several drawbacks:

1. Trades reward the infrequent publisher. Given that both zines are worth trading for, the more frequent publisher must decide whether he wants to exchange 2, 3, 5 or even 10 of his issues for one of the other guy's. If his zine is in precarious financial condition, he may decide that he (or his zine) just can't pay that much. If someone is publishing a monthly zine that keeps pushing the one or limit that its budgeted for, he may want to toss in an extra issue to clean up a backlog of press, letters, etc. The trades are a strong financial disincentive to do this, as the traders will get this mid-month issue for free. With ms you don't have that problem.

2. It can produce awkward inconsistencies. For example, lets take Bob Lipton and myself. Altho he proclaims "I do not set up 'mutual subscriptions' " that is precisely what we have. I have a subscription thru #13 by virtue of two subpayments, and later receiving generous compensation for two pieces of fiction. He has a sub with me thru #15 by virtue of a cheque sent me, which "set up" the ms. I don't know why he declined to cancel this when Wileman and Leader got the axe. If we were to switch to a trade, what of his payments for articles? Bob won't pay cash for reasons he's already stated. Yet he can't give subcredit either because there is no sub. He might try to trade it with an article of his own. But this is haphazard -- I might not be interested in what he writes, and in fact, DIPLOMACY DIGEST has a rather limited market for original material. With an ms this problem doesn't exist.

3. Trades perpetuate the fiction that everyone's contribution is the same. Of course, to Bob, that is not a fiction: "... it should be remembered that one is theoretically receiving equal information. To assume otherwise is historically unheard of." I wonder how thoroly Bob believes this. He doesn't trade with all zines, so obviously some are more equal than others. And he certainly doesn't pay as much for a one page article as he pays for a five page job.

4. Trades incite less than fully honest balance statements. Pubbers are occasionally wont to give their readers a breakdown on costs, generally for a single issue rather than a whole year. The "income" side almost invariably includes only cash collected. The monetary value of zines received in trade -- the money you would have to spend to get them -- is ignored. This can be pretty substantial; for a big time publisher, it can exceed \$100 per year. If these were included I suspect that most zines would at least break even, or certainly could write off some the ~~xxxxx~~ loss-per-issue.

5. Trades cut down on paid subscriptions, if what appears in #4 is true. Since most publishers would not want to make a profit, the logical choices are either to up the zine size or the printing quality (thereby increasing costs) or cut the subrates. Both of these are likely to draw in more subbers. On the other hand, without the subsidy from subscribers, most pubbers would cut the number of zines that they get, so its hard to say what the effect would be on total circulation. My suspicion, tho, is that trading depresses total circulation.

6. A categorical refusal to use ms when requested leads publishers to do peculiar things. One: GM who had been publishing for about six years told me that he had never subbed to a zine since he had started pubbing and didn't see why he should make an exception. Fortunately for me, he reconsidered. But this attitude has caused Lipton to refuse to get zines that he knows are worth getting (worth to him). It is manifestly silly to say that publisher Leeder and publisher Wileman (who has since folded, incidentally) "penalize" Publisher Leeder and publisher Wileman by adopting the ms approach. And if, the numbers of those who use ms increase (as I believe will occur) will we be accused of mass suicide?? The most preposterous example of this attitude has been in my relationship with Brad Hessel, publisher of Diman. He had been kind enuf to send me several samples, and urged me to trade. Intrigued, I went back and read essentially the complete run of Diman's, collecting articles for eventual reprint here. I was quite impressed, and wrote him, a letter that appeared in #41. This gave my impressions of the whole zine, and is in a sense a forerunner of Zine Column. I offered to do a mutual sub. The difference between this and a trade were in principle, purely semantic. This is because we both have the same sub rate, 10/\$2.50, and we are both monthly zines. So in setting up the ms, no money would actually change hands. To my great surprise, he turned down the offer, telling me that if I wanted to get Diman, I'd have to sub. No reason was given, altho he did continue to enthusiastically recommend the zine to his readers. As I did want to get the zine, and such matters as "pride" don't normally get in my way, I did sub to Diman. At this point you may say: What's the difference between you guys? One refuses to ms,, the other refuses to trade. The difference is in the bottom line. He wants to get the zine and he doesn't; I want to get the zine, and I do. Of course, Brad may have known something that I didn't, because I have not received a single issue since June, and for all I know, the zine has folded.

7. The ms system allows the publisher to set a fair price for his own zine; the trades arbitrarily price the zines the same. I have had little trouble setting up ms (except as noted), perhaps because in most cases my zine costs less than the other pubbers'. This means that eventually, I will either have to give them a small amount of cash, or will have to write for them, if they pay for such contributions. This does not bother me. If I think that their price is too high, then I don't sub, otherwise, I take their own estimate of the actual fair price of the zine. Indeed, in the extreme case, there are those who never sub. If the other pubber does not want my zine, they say, then I don't want his. This is called letting the other guy do the thinking for you, and its one of the worst habits an intelligent person can get into.

8. Finally, there is a touch of arrogance and intolerance in Lipton's attitude which for him is both unusual and unbecoming. He is saying to Leeder (and soon enuf, I suspect to me): I will accept your zine only if your subscribers foot the bill! You will arraigne your values (i.e. who pays for what) my way! I will not be treated like a lowly subscriber!

9. I suggest that it is time for another look at trades, and I hope that this article will stimulate some debate. Responses are encouraged, and if I get some good

ones, I'll print them in a future issue. While I repeat there is nothing intrinsically wrong with them, trades and especially a refusal to use me when asked have some distinct drawbacks. Pubbers, especially new ones, should realize that trades are not the only way to proceed. Mutual subscriptions, which treat everyone alike, are a viable alternative and I predict that as time goes on more pubbers will use them.

A CRITIQUE OF ROD WALKER'S THE GAMES GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY
by Mark L Borch

Rod Walker, for those of you who came in late, is one of the grand old men of Diplomacy. For ten years he edited one of the wittiest dipzines of all times, Erehwon. He's also been the Boardman Number Custodian, written numerous articles, been involved in hobby politics and the IDA and in feuds and the like, and has been an active contributor to the variant scene as well. Under the sponsorship of Avalon Hill, the owners of Diplomacy, Rod has written the most comprehensive publication on the subject of Diplomacy (except possibly for Peery's work, which I haven't seen). Physically, the product is very attractive. Full sized and center stapled, it resembles The General, except that the paper isn't slick. The print is slightly smaller than what you'd see in a newspaper, and the printing is absolutely flawless. In addition to the text proper there are a series of droll cartoons (all of them from sfab but one; a little more variety would have been nice) and some Avalon Hill ads. Inserted in the text is a puzzling array of inserted paragraphs. Some are in parenthesis, some in brackets; some in italics, some in regular type; some prefaced by NOTE or PRELIMINARY NOTE, some not. One gets the very strong impression that these are the contribution of others, but Rod has stated that he wrote the entire thing. What follows is my own critique and commentary, with the exception of material labeled with a @, which was taken from Bob Lipton's review in The Mikumaru Gazette #85.

The first section is, natch, "Introduction", and is very carefully written. This would be a good one to show someone who asks why people play the game. Rod has the good sense to reprint Calhauer's classic "This is Verdun" quote on last ditch stop-the-leader alliances. A summary of the history of the game is given. The revised rulebook is listed as 1966, but mine has 1961 on it. Still, there are things here which could use a little work. "Appeals to friendship and past favors have no relevance to the game." isn't very realistic. When we get to the "Objectives in Diplomacy" section, I start to see things that I don't agree with. "With seven players, any one of them has a chance of winning of about 14%." This ignores draws. Over 1/3 postal games end in draws, and I suspect that the figure is even higher in face to face play. Rod gives a nice summary of the "Win or draw" only style, "Strong Second" and "What the heck", but then comes up with a puzzler: "Balance of Power", which he differentiates from Win/draw only in that even for the leader "victory for himself would only be a secondary goal". That, and the fact that everyone makes sure that no one is eliminated. That philosophy reduces the game to the level of a parlor game. Strangely enuf, Rod considers this to be the "ideal playing style". I don't know about Rod's rule book, but mine defines winning as the "object of the game". While people are entitled to their own styles, I would consider a game in which everybody was concerned with the Balance of power, and not winning or drawing to be very strange indeed.

This is followed by a helpful section called "When and How?" on how to set up a good face to face session. His advice that you should have two sets available is a little silly, tho. The Introduction closes with some thing called " 'Good' Diplomacy", which is a waste. He repeats all over again his notion of the "ideal" game, and concludes with some generalities. In this regard, I want to clarify what I mean by "waste." With one important exception which I'll get to, I don't mean that we'd be better off with a blank. But this publication has only 36 pages, and in places, it is painfully obvious that Rod just didn't have the space that he needed to cover something fully. More space could have been created, in my opinion, by shortening or jettisoning parts that I consider to be a waste of space, either because its repetitions or because Rod is saying very little.

The Second section is entitled "Elements of the game" and is rich indeed. He begins with "communication", not an easy subject to write directly about. Here, Rod just picks one topic: The importance of continuing to write to your enemies, in several different settings. It's hard to avoid lapsing into generalities, e.g. "The game is too unpredictable---don't overlook any possibility, no matter how unlikely", but the advice here is solid and well put.

It is in the next part, "Alliance and Treachery" that we start to get a very strong dose of Rod Walker's personal philosophy, rather than a broader view. For example: "In the opening negotiations, there is nothing wrong in promising everyone everything just short of the moon." There sure is when you write Mark Serch. Extravagant promises raise the suspicion in me that the person is insincere. Such talk is a waste of both of our time, and gives an air of unreality to the start of the relationship. Another is "A game in which the players keep their agreements is usually dull" I'd agree with that, if all the agreements kept were long term ones. But a game in which agreements are usually kept, but are of short term duration can be very exciting indeed. I refer you to my article in Claw and Fang, #86. Another: "The best rule for any stab is this: Will it yield a decisive advantage? If so, do it." This is a very incomplete piece of advice. You should also consider whether the same decisive advantage, or nearly the same, can be obtained without the stab, albeit it will normally take longer, and may be less certain. If so, you're probably better off in the long run not stabbing. It is crucial to look at both sides of the coin in these matters. The non-stab attack may gain you a puppet later on, rather than a bitter enemy. And that series of non-stabs may keep the rest of the board off guard for the final game-winning stab! Or consider: "In an ideal Diplomacy Game, players will stab each other often" You will see a lot of that in this Guide: One man's opinion elevated to the level of gospel, of "ideal".

The next part is "Aggression and defense", supplemented with some nice examples. But occasionally Rod runs into trouble by overstating things: "The best thing is to have all available forces at the war front." But after warning that this is "an invitation...for a stab", he states "It's a good idea to have a reserve at the other front(s)" These two statements are mutually exclusive. You cannot have "all available force" at the war front and "a strong reserve" at the rear. Also, I don't personally agree with his final: "In Diplomacy a great power seldom has enough units to move forward in two directions at once" This is in fact how victories, especially for Russia and England, occur. You do need an ally of sorts at each front, usually. One front is more common.

Next is a curious part called simply "cheating", and covers forgeries, eavesdropping and the like. Again, Rod simply declares as proper tactics that others would not accept. As the prime example: "The flying Dutchman". This is an extra unit which has been slipped onto the board while nobody was looking...So long as nobody notices the addition...the deception is not illegal." If Rod wants to run his games (this is really a face to face tactic) that way, fine. But I resent his flat pronouncement that this is proper. After all, the Rulebook clearly states "A country may have only as many armies and fleets on the board as it controls supply centers." The flying Dutchman clearly violates that rule, which has no provision for its suspension when others do not notice its violation. This is a matter on which reasonable players may be expected to disagree, and I don't think that the hobby is served by such dicta ~~ex cathedra~~ from on high. In general, however, this is a lively section, covering also miswritten orders.

Element #5 is "Stalemates". Readers of this zine can be smug in the knowledge that (if they have #10/11) they already have a much better collection. That aside, Rod has done a very good job here; a lot of work went into this. For my taste, it is too condensed, because the Centers held have not been listed. This forces the person trying to figure out just what he needs to conquer to set up a line to do quite a bit of work. There are a few problems here, tho. The first is his curious policy on attribution. In some cases, the earliest discoverer is listed, a nice touch. But the heavyweights of this aspect of Diplomacy, Vagts, Lipton, Beshers, and Verheiden are not properly credited. And Rod apparently still cannot resist a totally unnecessary jibe at Beshers, by quoting a rare error of his. There is a typo in position 6. The last sentence in position 3 was stated earlier in his premises. His crisp summary of stalemates at

the end is marred somewhat by his assertion that stalemates ... "In the last analysis, it represents the ultimate failure and breakdown of diplomacy" I can't agree. Particularly if the stalemating alliance is a large one, the stalemate lines successful formation can in fact be a major triumph of diplomacy.

Element #6 is "The small Time", a gem of a section on the play of the game when you have very few units. One thing that was left out was the question of why a leader would want to take a puppet, aside from the time saved by not wiping him out. A prime reason is that the puppet's units will usually be at the front, or even beyond it, whereas the leader would have to spend quite a bit of effort bringing fresh units to the fore. That may not even be possible, particular late in the game. It is important that the puppet marshal every possible argument to the master to increase the chances of acceptance. Also, the country that went on to win tho at two units was not Italy, but Germany, in 1972EM, unless there's been another one.

Next is "The Convoyed attack" This contains a thoro explanation of all the advantages of using a convoyed attack, including Speed, Flexibility, Surprise and Security (the last referring to the fact that you can attack from a sea space without having to move from it). Unfortunately, Rod's bias has gotten the better of him again. As he considers it "the most powerful move in Diplomacy", he certainly isn't going to tell you any of the drawbacks, is he? He won't, but I will:

1. The convoy ties up extra units. Even an unsupported convoy uses two pieces at the very least. A long convoy that fails is a greivous waste of resources. Even if it succeeds, movement to the front of the fleets is delayed. Thus, in 1972CR, Doug Beyerlein convoyed A Gon-Spa, and as a result, at least two ^{units} never got to the front.

2. For multifleet convoys, the move previous to the convoyed can be harmed. It often happens that some, but not all of the fleets will be in position. During the move in which the last fleets are positioned, the others will often be restricted in what they can do, for fear of stepping out of position.

3. Security can actually be less. A fleet that is ~~not~~ convoying might be supporting another fleet instead.

Closing out this section strongly is "Some other tricks of the trade", a fine collection of tactical ploys, including the unwanted support, the indirect support, off the board retreats, the forward retreat, and the phoney war. These are laced with examples, and the diplomatic background for these procedures is outlined as well. Tightly written, full of specifics, it is a fine close for Rod's strongest section. And well you would be to savor it, dear reader, because Rod is about to get into Big Trouble.

Section three is entitled "Playing the game, The Tactics and Strategy of Diplomacy". He begins with an overview of the board as a whole, with a strong understanding of the terrain of the board, a definition of the various stages of the game, a few words on the Dual alliance, and a ~~xxx~~ chapter called "The great Powers" which I'll skip for now. What follows are seven chapters, each following the same format for each country. There is a strategic overview, opening negotiations, with a paragraph for each country, a numbered listing of some openings, followed by a paragraph on each opening, and a chapter on the midgame and endgame situations, plus a map showing, presumably, the expansion routes for each of the great powers. Altho some of this is quite good, there are several serious problems:

1. Rod's prejudices are very strong here, so that perfectly reasonable plans of action are either badmouthed or totally ignored. This is a reflection, I suppose of a philosophical difference between Rod and myself. I believe that a work such as this should try to show the various options to the player, to expand his horizons. Rod apparently believes in the lead-you-down-the-right-path approach, steering you away from bad alliances.

2. Rod has shown appalling judgement in the choice of openings to use. Time and time again perfectly respectable, popular and flexible openings are ignored, and in their place are exotic, rarely used openings that are suitable only in the most un-

usual of circumstances. Numerous examples of these two points will be presented.

3. The maps are a horrendous waste of space, in part because they have such a low information density. Collectively, these maps consume 1½ pages, 5% of the whole. Let's take the France one. The great power is in Black. Emanating from this is an arrow into Iberia. A Second one goes thru southern Germany, thru Austria and thence into Turkey. The southern naval route goes thru Italy and again into Turkey (bet you didn't know that France gave Turkey so much trouble, did you? On the other hand, the southern route into Mid isn't shown at all). A Fourth straight line goes thru Northern Germany and thence to Central Russia. FINALLY, there's a curved route, thru England, and into Scandinavia. What have we learned? That France can conquer pretty much the entire world by moving largely in a straight path from her Imperial Borders. Big deal. That entire map took up more room than the midgame and endgame sections combined. In my opinion, the maps should be either dropped entirely, or if not, reduced even further. And the errors corrected.

In the following discussions, when a percentage figure is given for an opening, this is based on Mick Bullock's compilation of 547 British games, the most complete collection in the entire hobby.

The discussion of Austria gets off to an awfully weak start, "Austria's great strength is in supply centers.", but otherwise is OK. The map, however, is a disaster. The naval route is given as thru Italy, which is OK, but from there into the Atlantic! Austrian Fleets in the Atlantic are a pretty rare sight. On the otherhand, the much more common use for Austria's navy, attacking Turkey, doesn't appear. Equally strange is the attack on Russia. This is given as via Rus-Sev-Mos. I don't have statistics to back me up, but I'm certain that this is very much the minority. The first Russian center normally taken is neither Sev nor Mos, but War. Invasion from Galacia, to War and Ukr simply isn't mentioned. Under negotiation, Rod has some advice I personally don't agree with, for example "Austria usually has a strong interest in keeping France out of Italy" Huh? If Austria is allied with Turkey against Russia, or vice versa, nothing quite beats France taking up Italy's attention. Especially if that I-F battle can be kept fairly even, which it will be, provided Turkey's fleets are busy. Rod seems to be excessively worried about "French fleets in the Mediterranean", but that's a lesser risk than an Italy with nothing much to do. Rod also badmouth's the A-T alliance. While listing loads of disadvantages, all he can say in its favor is that "its unexpected nature makes it doubly potent". I will be discussing this alliance in some detail in an upcoming Diplomacy World article, but suffice it to say that this alliance has plenty to offer both countries, especially at the beginning of the game.

The choice of openings leaves much to be desired. Under F Tri-Alb, A Bud-Ser, Rod lists, A Vie-Gal, and A Vie-Tri, but what do you think is the other one listed? A Vie H? In his discussion, he says that its "not recommended". If so, and if its seldom used, then why waste space on it? On the other hand, the A Vie-Bud option, which is the third most popular Austrian opening, is nowhere mentioned. That's a poor decision, because that opening, if you feel you can risk it, gives you some interesting options for the fall. You can support yourself into Rum without tipping the Russians off with A Vie-Gal. Or you can attack/support an attack into Rum, while still supporting yourself into Gre. In addition, you can scoot into the Ion, while still going for both Ser and Gre. Another opening not mentioned is the Hedgehog: A Vie-Gal, F Tri-Ven, A Bud-Rum or Ser. This is a very good opening to use if you are sure of an I-R alliance. This may have been omitted because Rod apparently doesn't set much store in the I-R alliance, and because it presupposes an A-T alliance. On the other hand, space is wasted with such oddities as A Bud-Rum, F Tri-Alb, A Vie-Tri (0.6%) and A Vie-Tyo, F Tri-Adr, A Bud-Tri (0.9%). While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with giving coverage to these peculiar openings, I don't think they should be given the exposure at the expense of much more useful openings.

At this point, the narrative is interrupted by the sudden appearance of English

material, to be repeated later in the proper place. It seems that AH was in such a rush to get it out before Origins, that they didn't bother with such matters as checking the galley proofs. As a result, 1/2 page is wasted.

The midgame and Endgame sections are respectable, if you ignore Rod's continuing cracks about the A-T alliance. The discussion is quite specific, a pleasant change from usual discussions of these topics in S & T articles in general.

You wouldn't think that there'd be much to disagree with in discussing English Openings, but I'll have to make an exception here. Listed first is F Lon-Wth, F Nwg-Nwg, and A Liv-Edi. In the discussion of this, passing mention of the A Yor option is given --- but just to criticise it. That is very cavalier treatment for what is the most popular Opening for England. I do not want to get into another discussion of the relative merits of these two, as I have already done that in DW #15, but the Yor option does have its points, so I think that Rod's discussion lacks balance. The other opening mentioned is F Nwg-Nth, F Lon-Eng, A Liv-Wal. Again, there is nothing wrong with this opening, but the A Liv-Yor is a lot more popular, and it gets totally ignored. In doing so, Rod has missed one of the points of the F Lon-Eng opening. When done with A Liv-Wal, it means that England is very confident that the fleet move will succeed. Otherwise, he'll be stuck with a useless A Wal. In fact, F Lon-Eng in this opening nearly always succeeds. England wishes to seriously menace France. The A Liv-Yor is quite different. Tho it also threatens France, the deadly convoy doesn't exist. More importantly, it may exist solely to block an anticipated F Bre-Eng, and in fact, F Lon-Eng is frequently blocked by France. As such, it is not "blatantly anti-French", but a recognition that things are bad in that sector. In that sense, the Yor option is really a different opening. Thus Rod has discussed only the second and fourth most popular openings, pretty much ignoring the others, and this section must be rated as inadequate. The remainder is fairly decent, albeit rather short. Statements like "The Anglo-French alliance is the most powerful on the board (except possibly for Russia/Turkey)" are, in the least debatable, and I fail to understand why Rod feels the need to make such sweeping evaluations. There is no discussion of the FEG triple alliance here, with the result that we see statements like "England does not want war in Scandinavia" To the contrary, one of the most successful English strategies is to Secure Scandinavia, and then concentrate in the West.

French openings are a rather complex matter, as France has a wide choice of goals and methods of reaching them, and Rod hasn't done too bad a job here. However, there are shortcomings. There are, of course, the traditional hopelessly obscure openings that Rod is so fond of, here: F Bre-Mid, A Mar-Pic, A Par-Gas, 0.4%, for example. The most serious omission is of any openings in which France puts two pieces on Belgium. In fact, about 1/5 of all French openings accomplish this goal (or try to), and indeed, no mention in the openings and negotiations is given to trying to take Belgium. Of these openings, two are most popular. One has F Bre-Eng, A Par-Pic, A Mar-Spa (6.4%). Not only does this place two pieces along side Bel, but has the wicked convoy to England (the fear of which may divert F Nth from Bel)! In fact, if England has done the wonderful, wonderful A Liv-Edi as suggested by Rod, the convoy to Wales cannot be stopped. An army in Wales will just devastate England's offensive potential, as not only Liv and Lon must be guarded, but Yor as well, plus England must deal with Fre F Eng. Thus the opening has another value other than seizing Bel by force. Rod of course doesn't like all this as he suggests that the attack on England "is best delayed until 1902." The other is F Bre-Mid, A Par-Pic, A Mar-Bur (5.9%). This is anti-German rather than Anti-English, with Mun the secondary target, and probably gives a better chance at Belgium, since Germany is more likely to be France's rival than is England.

There are several other things that I don't care for in Rod's openings. The first is his statement that F Bre-Mid, A Mar-Spa openings are so basic that "there are few times when anything else would be a good idea." Rod is just plain wrong. In fact, fewer than 1/3 of all French openings employ both those moves. The by far most popular French opening, F Bre-Mid, A Bur S A Par-Bur is not included. Rod says "few times", and yet nearly 1/3 of all Englands open F Lon-Eng. -11-

A Second area in which I disagree is his "In general, get Spain and Portugal, even at the price of losing a home center." In my personal opinion, this is backwards. There's no big hurry, especially for Portugal. But if you lose a home center, you not only have the task of trying to regain it (which takes two units usually, at a minimum, whereas a neutral takes one), but you must also guard Gascony. An enemy army in Gascony has such scope that the loss of Gas in 1902 usually means that France will not survive. Third, I think that Rod missed the boat on the F Bre-Mid, A Par-Gas, A Mar-Spa opening. This opening gives France the free use of her fleet, provided that Pie and Bur are unoccupied, allowing for a delayed strike against E or I, because the armies can handle Iberia. Alternatively, she can jump back into Bur. However, if you're faced by an I-G, you'll feel pretty stupid.

The other sections here for France are short and not particularly well written. Thus, we have sentences like "France's success depends on her diplomatic ability." Or: "Because France often beads Russia, she does not want a Russo-Turkish war. On the other hand, encouraging a Russo-Turkish alliance is tantamount to suicide." Real useful advice, huh? Or he says "France's first victim is usually England or Germany. In either event she will have Iberia and Belgium...." I think it likely that if the first victim is England, Germany will more likely than not have Belgium. Or in dealing with Italy: "First, Italy should not interfere in the West. Second, Italy should be prepared to attack Germany..." In short, folks, Rod does not have much of a feel for France.

Germany, however, is another matter. His openings are in comparatively good shape. True, of his six, three are rarely used, with popularities of 1.1%, 1.1% and 0.2%. But three of the major four ones are mentioned, and described properly. I would have liked to have had the fourth as well, F Kis-Den, A Mun-Bur, A Ber-Kie. This is a fairly aggressive opening, and may signal a simultaneous E-G attack on both France and Russia. One might expect to see Italy moving on France, and one other eastern country at least attacking Russia.

Germany's map is not terribly informative, with arrows going practically everywhere. There are some oddities, tho: Italy is shown being invaded not thru Tyo, but via France. And an army arrow is seen going straight to Con. In fact, Germany seldom takes Turkish home centers. The strategic and negotiation discussions are generally in good shape, tho there is one sentence that I would take issue with: "It is a good idea to attempt to discourage any Austro-Italian alliance. That usually spells trouble for the Kaiser." That has not been my experience. I-A war means that I will not likely be available for an alliance against France, and A will not be available as an ally against Russia. This was in fact precisely my problem in the earlier stages of 1976IF. This aside, Rod has done a good job here, and the material is well organized, with good mention of the FEB alliance, for a change.

With Italy, Rod decides to try a bit of revisionism. Leading off the list of Openings is the "Lepanto Opening", A Rom-Apu, F Nap-Ion, A Ven-Tyo! This is reprehensible. The Lepanto is possibly the most written about opening. Every schoolboy knows that it has A Ven H. Rod's attempt to redefine it will only cause confusion. The Tyo option already has its own name, given by Doug Beyerlein, The Superpower Opening. If Rod prefers the ~~2W~~ A Ven-Tyo, fine, but this is no reason to try to change the labels. In fact the two choices are quite different, as Rod recognizes. However, Rod is so biased that he refuses to give good reasons for A Ven H. The only one he can manage is completely garbled: "...it does have the advantage, however, that A Ven H A Apu S A Ven caves Ven if Austria puts two units on it and still allows Italy to build." Yes, this is true. But you can do this with A Ven-Tyo too: A Apu S A Tyo-Ven. This in fact is slightly superior to A Apu S A Ven, because you may (if Austria doubly attacks) still hold Tyo, and have Ven open for a build, which A Apu S A Ven does not. Furthermore, Austrian openings that have F Tri-Adr, and A Bud/Vie-Tri occur less than 3% of the time. So Rod has really given us no good reason at all, the sly dog!

The move to Tyo gives Italy the option of attacking Germany, or cooperating with Austria in an attack on Russia. It thus has the disadvantage of potentially annoying either one or both of them. There is really no need to move on Russia unless Italy is pretty convinced that the R-T is quite strong and does not wish to join.

If you are set on attacking Turkey, it is risky to embark on another adventure which may require a build that you planned to use in the south. However, the main drawback to A Ven-Tyo is that it may make you more vulnerable to a stab in FO1. I do not really want to get into a discussion of which is "better"; both have their points, and the reader should recognize that these are rather different openings. Rod then gives a description of the naval attack on Turkey during 1902. There is no mention of the fact that quite frequently, this attack never takes places. This opening can be used rather nicely against Austria in SO2 by convoying to Alb or Gre, or shooting the fleet up the Adr. Rod doesn't mention this fact because Rod does not approve: "On no account should Italy stab Austria".

My objections to Rod's treatment of the Italiana openings goes beyond this, however. Altho a couple of little used openings are discussed in loving detail, some major ones are ignored. One is A Ven-Pie, A Rom-Ven, F Nap-Tyr/Ion (17.7%). This opening preserves Italy's Flexibility by not making a firm east vs west commitment in SO1, and allows him two different routes to that fifth center. The other is A Ven-Tri, A Rom-Ven, F Nap-Ion (11.8%). This is Italy's most aggressive opening against Austria, and if done in conjunction with A War-Gal, probably bespeaks the I-R alliance that Rod chooses not to mention. But the main reason is that Rod just doesn't like Italy attacking Austria right off the bat. In discussing A Ven-Tyo, A Rom-Ven, the best he can manage is "there are those rare occasions where Italy will want to attack Austria" Rare??? Those two openings alone account for more than 1/3 of all Italian openings. Even if A Ven H, A Apu-Tun is counted as 100% anti-Turkish (which is not how it turns out), Italy attacks Austria more often than Turkey, France and Germany combined. So when Rod says "rare", he means "I think it should be rare".

Rod's discussion of the midgame is fine, but the endgame discussion starts off with a puzzling statement: "Italy's typical endgame position finds her with...11-1h centers...her ally is usually Austria." Wrong. When Italy reaches this level, the odds are that Austria is gone. Not always, but usually. Again, Rod's antipathy toward Italy attacking Austria is expressed in an entirely unrealistic statement about how the game turns out. Also, while Rod discusses various endgame situations with the Eastern alliance, none are given with a western alliance.

Next is Russia, and again, Rod's selection of openings to use shows astonishingly poor judgement. Six are listed; three of these have popularities of less than 1%. However, 4 of the six most popular aren't listed! The reader is thus getting an utterly unrealistic portrait of how Russia is actually played. Far and away the most popular Russia Opening is A War-Gal, A Mos-Ukr, F Sev-Blk (22%)(assumes F Stp-Bot in all cases here). This is ignored. This, however, the best opening if you are anticipating an immediate A-T attack. And we all know by now what Rod thinks of the A-T alliance. He doesn't like it, so therefore it doesn't happen, so therefore there's no need to mention the Russian moves to cope with it. Instead, Rod waste s his space with openings based on A Mos-War, or A Mos-Liv. The other matter completely botched are the A Mos-StP openings. These are important --- one game in four will have them. But what should we do with A War? Rod gives us two openings, one with A War-Gal, and one with A War-Lvn. However, the latter is absurdly unbalanced; the former risks antagonizing Austria without the muscle to resist if Austria strikes back. In fact, the substantial majority of the time Russia goes for the low profile in the south with A War-Ukr. This has the advantage that Rum can be supported, or an attack to there can be supported, and also has the advantage that an army is now available to defend Sev. Neither of these are accomplished with A War-Lvn or A War-Gal(or rather, if the latter succeeds, you do have support into Rum, assuming that Austria isn't sufficiently annoyed to cut it).

The strategic overview statement for Russia contains this misstatement: She is the only Great Power (aside from Italy) that can sustain the loss of one or more home centers and still maintain a stalemate line." I don't know what Rod was thinking of when he wrote this, but even aside from the English positions mentioned elsewhere in this issue, there are stalemate lines which slice thru France, Germany, and Austria. In all cases, the great power could survive in the center behind the line. Indeed, it is

entirely possible for a Great Power to lose all of his home centers and still be part of a stalemate line. His allies may be unwilling to cut him out of a share of the draw, or it may not be possible to safely eliminate his units. Other than this matter, the overview section is in good shape.

I want to turn next to the I-R alliance, particularly the I-R alliance with A as the first victim. Altho Rod protests in The Mixmaxu Gazette #86 that he did mention this, I don't really think what he says qualifies. Under Italy, he says "The Tsar can be a good friend", and points out that "Italy frequently has no where else to go". This is hardly adequate. In the Russian chapter, for Italy, he discusses mostly how Russia should encourage I-A alliance, with no mention of an initial I-R vs A alliance. Further, the Italian moves for this, as stated before, are not given; the Austrian moves contra this alliance are also not given. In fact, this alliance can be of enormous value to both I and R. If A-T forms, even for only 1901-3, then only such an alliance can stop them. If A-T war breaks out, A can be crippled quickly, and then Turkey will find himself completely boxed in. Once this is over, either I-R can take on G, or take on E-F, with Russia handling the north, and Italy the south. This phase normally will begin even before Turkey is dispatched. In this alliance, both I and R can grow easily without getting in each others way. Another alliance that gets short shrift is R-G: In the endgame discussion, there's no room for Germany: "The best strategy would seem to be developing one flank and then the middle, or the middle first, and then one flank." In the negotiation sections for both countries, joint military action against A or E is not really explored.

.. I don't want to get into a big discussion on Turkey, partly because Rod has done a good job here, and partly because I will be exploring the subject in detail in an upcoming article in DW. My main objection is Rod's repeated backmouthing of T-A and T-I alliances. The former I've already mentioned, but T-I doesn't fare much better. Under Italy, he calls the alliance "stupid". Under Turkey, he refuses to acknowledge the fact that this alliance can work out. Under negotiations with Italy, he says that "sooner or later, her exposed back ((Italy's)) is going to catch a scimitar." The midgame discussion makes no mention of an I-T alliance. In both the Endgame and negotiation sections, a stab of Italy is listed as "almost inevitable" In short, the reader gets the impression, the strong impression, that Turkey should either ally with Russia, or have no eastern ally. This is very narrowminded thinking.

This tour of the countries completed, Rod decides to take a breather from Diplomacy, with "A little Guide to Terminology". This curious chapter has, for each country, the full name of the country, the ruling house, capital and Ruler in 1901, complete with photograph. This business takes nearly one page and is a complete waste of time. If these figures often appeared in press releases, I suppose one could make a case for this, but this information is completely irrelevant. Furthermore, Rod has chosen the 1901 rulers. However, the game is not even set in 1901, its set in about 1914. The selection of 1901 as the label for the first year is purely for convenience.

Coming up next is the one aspect of the Guide which I find truly objectionable, the discussion of the rankings of the great powers. It begins with a disorganized and wordy introduction, terminating in his definitions for win, place and draw. In the last case, it is unclear just what Rod has done to the figures: "Draws. The rules state that all survivors share in a draw. That ruling was not followed here. If four survivors had 16-16-1-1, the draw was treated as between the first two players only." I'd sure like to know why Rod has taken such a highhanded attitude. I'd also like to know what other draws Rod chose to shorten.

What follows is Table 1, one of the best presentations of statistical information I have ever seen. The first column gives the country name, the second, the number of wins. The next give the number of 2nd, 3rd, etc, place finishes for games in which the country merely survived. The next columns repeat the place finishes, this time for those games in which the country was eliminated. Next are the draws, with columns for two-way, three-way, etc. This is completed by three columns of cumulatives.

In short, its all there. Rod should have confined himself to a few generalizations, and let the reader draw whatever conclusions he likes. But no, Rod is just getting started. After mumbling for a few lines, he presents Table 2. This is just a repeat of the wins, and cumulative eliminations data of the preceding Table. Rod calls it "two extractions", but its the exact same numbers repeated again. Next he processes this information thru not one, but three ratingsystems: Clhamer, Reinsel, and Overall, and Reports this mass of numbers in Table 3. There is also a lengthy description, not only of how each one of these systems does its calculations, but of how these results compare one to another. The discussion is sometimes confusing. All of these results are frozen in time, as they are based on the same 803 games. Yet at times, Rod talks as if they represent trends, e.g. "The basic reason ((why the Wicked Witches have taken a beating)) is that players are more aware now of the threat posed by the witches. More and more often alliances against the corner powers have appeared, England and Turkey have begun to win less..." He also draws a lot of conclusions that anyone could draw from just a careful inspection of the tables. All of this consumes over one page.

But its not all just here. In fact, it starts back on page 4, in which a detailed description of the operations of a country preference list is given, including a sample, completely worked out. A lot of space devoted to a pretty minor topic. Next, on page 11, just preceding the country chapters, he covers the same country rankings all over again, this time in a qualitative manner, with E-T-R listed as the "most potent", F-G as not "quite the threat" of those three, and I-A being "in the cellar" (altho if you look at the statistics, you see that Austria is in fact #2 in victories). This discussion consumes 1/3 of a page. And finally, Rod's swansong: On page 29 he starts with the ratings systems again. The Brobdignag rating system is trotted out, with a complete description on how the calculations are done, and the ratings for all the countries all over again (the order is essentially the same as the "overall" system system on page 21). Then there's the "Boardman (or Center-Year) Ratings system", with the countries ranked according to how they did in the Sample Game.

My objection to this is not so much the huge amount of space, and repetitious treatment. What I find truly objectionable is the impression that the newcomer will get from all this. The implication is very strong that the name of the country you get will have a major impact on how well you will do. This is absolutely not the case. One of the true beauties of this game is how well it is balanced. The prime factors that will determine how well you do at this game are:

1. Your tactical, strategic, and negotiation skills
2. Your ability to get your moves in on time in postal play.

Compared to these, the matter of which country you get pales. But that's not the conclusion that one would draw after seeing all the time and effort that Rod has put into all the nuances of comparative country strengths. And that is a great tragedy.

Coming up next is "The Geopolitics of Diplomacy" This appears to be a continuation of the "the Strategy of position" which appeared 11 pages earlier. The purpose here is to develop an overall strategy, an overall game plan. The general idea that is explored is the method whereby a great power tries to both gain control of his zone (east or west) at the same time prevent anyone from doing that in the other zone. Various approaches toward this goal are described, with examples. Sometimes the zones don't quite work out as east-west. And this is a very difficult strategy for Italy to pull off. However, there's only so much space to explore this matter, and Rod has done a good job.

The fourth section is a sample game, 1966AA, which appeared in Graustark, and was known for its quality press. Rod starts off in a curiously coy manner. After noting that "Personalities play a large role in Diplomacy", and giving some information about player strengths, and where they hailed from, Rod doesn't give any names! Thus we don't learn that Rod himself played Austria. The game ended in a ...but I'll let you see for yourself. I might note that at least one rating person (Lakofka) listed the games conclusions differently. This is a strong section of the Guide,

and I recommend that you take out the board and play out the game. After each season or year, look at the moves and draw your own conclusions as to what's happening. Then read Rod's commentary. I think that you'll usually find that his comments have added to your understanding of what occurs, almost regardless of your level of skill. I certainly learned from it. Rod does have one embarrassing moment: The Spring 1901 moves. It seemed that most of the players just didn't choose one of Rod's approved openings. Four maps, at strategic points in the game are presented. Over six pages are devoted to the game, but in my book, it was well worth the space.

Next up is "Postal Diplomacy". He starts with a brief review of the origins, and then goes into the mechanics of how its done. I don't think that his prices are quite right. Game fees are listed as "between \$3 and \$10 pergame" for US games. In fact, there are quite a few sines with game fees of less than \$3; some don't charge any. On the other hand, Game fees as high as \$10 are quite rare indeed. Similarly, he says that sub prices are "between 15¢ and 35¢" Is this right, readers? Are there a significant number of sines about with prices of 20¢ or less? On the other hand, I know that there are quite a few sines priced about 35¢. Another unrealistic statement is "...the direction of communication, as well as the content, can be kept secret. Npbody knows who's writing to whom." This ignores the rather common practice of passing letters around. Indeed, I've even gotten my own letters back. You can try to keep it secret, that's all. Further, in a well played game, you know who's writing to whom. You assume that every one is writing everyone else, unless you have some pretty good information to the contrary.

This is followed by the usual disclaimer of any AH res ponsibility for what happens in the postal hobby, and a good pitch for players to take up replacement positions. He might have mentioned one other advantage to taking these positions. If you are just entering the hobby, and want to do something other than opening games, replacement positions are the way to do it.

This is followed by a brief description of some hobby institutions, including the Boardman Numbers, DM/MPA and IDA/NA. No mention is made of the British dippy institutions, which is a curious decision, since those are in some cases better than what has appeared in the US.

Next up is nearly 2/3 page devoted to the subject of ratings systems. This has been partially discussed earlier. I personally do not think that this subject merits the space and detail that its given. Included are some systems, such as the Center-Year referred to earlier, which to my knowledge, are only of historical interest in rating players and are not presently being maintained. The inventor of ODMOD is incorrectly given as McCallum; correct is Leader.

This is followed by a plug for Diplomacy World, and then a brief mention of Conventions. This latter item is completely out of place in the Postal Section, and belongs in Section VII. Finally, there's "Communication in Postal Diplomacy". Red tells us again that thereare forged letters. This time he does mention letters being passed about. He repeats that "the fact that two players are even speaking to each other can be completely secret". (Incidentally, part of the function of good editing is that you can avoid this type of repetition). In general, this section is a little sketchy.

Before moving on, I want to point out some items that didn't even get a mention in the postal section, and in my opinion, should have:

1. Press. Inexplicably ignored. How many people do you know who think that ratings rate 2/3 page, and press nary a mention?
2. Cross Game alliances. These can exist only in Postal Diplomacy.
3. Telephone games, which are often covered under the rubric of Postal dippy. Some people consider this to be the best form of Diplomacy
4. How games can become irregular
5. Publishing, tho mentioned briefly later, belongs here
6. Rulebook adaptations for Postal plays.

- a. The use of neutral orders in 1901
- b. Allowing unordered units to retreat
- c. Differing approaches to draw voted

The next section is entitled "Diplomacy Variants". Unfortunately, I am somewhat out of my element here, as I know little about variants and have virtually no playing experience. Rod Walker has a very long background in this area. So its entirely possible that most of what follows is utterly worthless.

Rod begins by setting out the various categories: Change the rules, change the board, or change them both. Coming up next is a very important decision: Which board-variant should be used? Because of the distribution of the Guide, this has the potential of being the most widely distributed variant in history. For years to come it would likely be the first variant tried by incoming players. If it turns out poorly, they would likely be dissuaded from trying another. If it works out well, presto! A new fan. The variant should give the curious player some notion of why variants are so popular.

The actual choice, in my uninformed opinion, does not meet these standards. Indeed, it isn't even a variant according to the way the term is generally used. Its called "1958 Diplomacy" and its map forms the back cover for the Guide. It is not an amateur variant to Diplomacy, but a predecessor, the game as it existed before its present form, which appeared in 1959. The board is not too much different except for several features. The first is the addition of more minor provinces (land provinces which are not supplycenters). Each country gets an extra one, except for Turkey, who gets three more. This means that battles will be much less decisive, as a greater proportion of province seizures will not result in a supply center changing hands. The second difference is that the sea spaces, especially the Atlantic, are more finely divided. Thus, fleet mobility is reduced, and convoys are more difficult. A convoy from Liverpool to Africa takes four fleets, as opposed to two in the present game. Third, home centers are treated differently. Only one, the naval base, can be used to build fleets. The game begins with that fleet, plus two armies in the "capital". The result of this is considerable less flexibility, as such subtle considerations as which home center to build that fleet in are gone. Thus, it is extremely difficult for France to become a Medit sea power. Not only can she not build in Mar, but it takes four moves to go from Bre to Wes. Russia cannot build at StP(nc). These are the major changes.

One rather serious problem is with Italy, who is considerably weaker than in the regular game. Ten is not a supply center. Since Naples no longer borders on the Ionian, Ital F Naples has no supply center target in 1901. Since his armies begin in Rom, Mar is out of reach, and it is no longer possible to place a supported attack on Tri. Indeed, the only neutral available is Switzerland, which he can attack with a single unit in FO1. However, so can both Germany and Austria, and France can put two armies on in in FO1. Nor is this the end of Italy's problems. Altho he has less to fear from France (not normally a 1901 problem anyhow), Austria is in much better position. Russia cannot attack Austria, and the Balkans, rich as they are are further fattened by the fact that Alb is a supply center. Thus, both T and A can get two neutral from the balkans, and still leave Rum for the russians. This leaves Austria's third unit available to defend Tri, and one unit is all that's needed. Nor is a stronger Austria Italy's only problem. Turkey has an absolute lock on both Bul and Gre, and is less vulnerable to Italian naval attack. Italy must first go thru the Aeg to get at the Eas, and when she gets there, she'll discover that Eas doesn't border on any supply centers! It's no wonder that in the game of this which was played in Quarmall, Italy never took a supply center.

To be fair, the player here does have the option of having two units in the same space, but by and large you have much less flexibility here. If you want to convoy, you first have to put the fleet onto the coastal province (not in the water). Russia begins with three units in StP, Turkey with all units in Con. There are other imbalances as well. Germany can take War, or Austria can take Ven, both against any defense. Portugal cannot be taken in 1901 by anyone, etc etc.

My point here is not that this variant is less balanced than the regular game. This is true of most variants. But I cannot see why anyone would want to play this, except out of curiosity. It does not present, as variants usually do, some compensating, intriguing new factors to make up for what is lost. I assure you that if Calhauer had decided to stick with this version of the game that there would be no Diplomacy hobby.

In Rod's stylesheet for DW, he states specifically that he does not want un-playtested variants. I'd be curious to know just how much playtesting this one actually got. I don't mean at the hands of Calhauer & Crew. They obviously found this severely wanting. There is the game that Rod GMed for the face to face game in Quarrell. Any others?? By contrast, there are a number of variants that have had considerable postal playtesting, not to mention face to face use. Of these, one could say that they've been tried by many, and found acceptable. The same could not be said of this variant.

In my opinion, one of the Youngstown's would have been a better choice (they are all fairly similar). This is the most popular variant to use a changed board. There have been dozens of games played postally. The sole problem that I am aware of is that there would be some problems fitting the map on the back cover. It could be done however, tho the provinces would be a little small. Since the rules adaptations are pretty minor, more text space would have been freed up to discuss play of the game. It is possible that Rod rejected this because it requires even more players than regular Diplomacy. I suppose that there is some justification for using 1958 because of its historical interest, but interest in such matters is quite low, not enough to justify all this space (1 2/3 pages).

The next variant isn't really a variant in the usual sense of the word either. It's just the five man game from the rulebook. 1/2 page is devoted to this one, not worth the space either. Rod gives a good summary of the tactics of the game, strategy really, but this isn't a very balanced game. With both Germany and Italy gone, France has a pretty easy time of it. If France wishes to attack England, he has a potential ally in Russia; But if England wants to attack France, no flanking action is available. Rod recognizes these problems, BUT AND OFFERS SOME SUGGESTIONS ON How to jury-rig the game. He then closes with three short descriptions of "Bid Diplomacy"; "Twin Earths Diplomacy" and a two person game, "The great War".

But there are several things missing. First, it has been my impression that one of the prime reasons for the popularity of the variant scene is designing variants. This is an activity which has no analogue in regular diplomacy, and thus makes the variant hobby unique. There is no mention of this activity whatsoever. It certainly deserves several paragraphs, summarizing the principles of variant design, the importance of playtesting, the question of balance vs realism, etc. Also missing is a description of the most popular two person variant of all time "Intimate Diplomacy". So: Again I repeat that variants are not my bag. But I suspect that those who are into this will find the chapter unsatisfying.

Section VII is devoted to Clubs and Tournaments, beginning with a crisp and thorough description of the former. This is very helpful and very specific. One question I have: Rod refers to a "network of such clubs". This is the first I've heard of it. I wonder if this is just wishful thinking.

Next is a long section on tournaments. Again, a careful description, with fine attention to the important details. This section is marred by a second typesetting error, one not caught by Lipton or Walker (snicker, snicker) because the third chapter, on Publishing a Club Bulletin, is inserted into the middle of the tournament section.

Rod next tackles the very tough question of tournament scoring. This must deal with the twin problems of curtailed games (which the rulebook covers very inadequately) and differing notions of what constitutes success at the Diplomacy gameboard. Some sensible suggestions on curtailed games are made, but when we get into the scoring section, Rod runs into the same problem I've mentioned several times before:

poor judgement in deciding what to write about. I have been to only three major Diplomacy Tournaments, in Baltimore in '76, Staten Island in '77 and Poillon in '78. Rod gives two scoring systems, and neither of them closely resembles the systems which were used at all three. These used points for SC's, plus a (usually) larger bonus based on how many other persons playing the same country you did better than. This resembles the system used in Duplicate Bridge. Not only that, but the second system described by Rod was one which, at the time he wrote it, had never been used in a major Diplomacy tournament. I just don't see why untried systems are given all this space, yet ones which have been repeatedly employed aren't. The system is the one described in Diplomacy World #19, which penalizes people for surviving in the face of a winner. Rod justifies this with the observation that "the Mongols...reserved their most savage treatment for those who resisted the longest". Big deal. What does the ethical system of the Mongols, who existed only centuries earlier and on a different continent, have to do with this game? I don't want to go into the matter in any great detail here, because I will be publishing a full rebuttal elsewhere (probably in Diplomacy World). Suffice it to say, Rod's plan will encourage people to suicide to a probable winner, present serious obstacles to pushing a very strong country back, and gatepersons already eliminated from the game a potentially important role.

Finally, there is the section on Publishing a Club Bulletin. The major methods of reproduction are lightly touched on (and along with this, hectography is also mentioned, for no apparent reasons. No hecto zines have existed for a long time, and it is unlikely that there ever will be another one again). Oddly enough, there is no mention here of what to put in the Bulletin. That appears way back in section 1, a rare bit of poor organization.

The closing section is entitled "Questions Answers", and they deal exclusively with rulebook questions. Altho some of these questions are very sensible, I have several objections to air. The first deals with #11. This is basically the unwanted, unneeded convoy question which has been discussed extensively in these pages. It is clear from this debate that postal publishers are deeply split on this matter. But Rod gives no indication of this. He just flatly states that the army can move. The convoy rule is just dismissed as being "not relevant". Just like earlier on the flying dutchman legality question, Rod sets himself up as SOME SORT of final arbiter. This is a genuine rulebook ambiguity, as Calhmer has so stated. Another question is the one on Pandin's Paradox. Who cares? This is such an intricate situation that it has never occurred in any postal Diplomacy Game, and it is unlikely to ever occur. So why waste our time on it? I would have liked to see a question on "mis-written" orders (such as labeling an army for a fleet) which occurs much more often. Perhaps something on how to conduct draw votes, and how to interpret the farthest-from-home rule on removals from cd would have been much more useful.

The Guide is then finished off with some ads. Oddly, the Diplomacy World AD IS completely obsolete, referring to the editor as Walt Buchanan.

Mention should be made of Rod's writing style. Those familiar with Erehwon will know that Rod has a bouncing, mirthful style. This has been toned down considerably here, presumably on orders from Avalon Hill. There are some superb phrases here, tho. My favorite is his dead-on-target quip that in Diplomacy "suspicion is a professional courtesy." The general level of the writing here is extremely high. The sentences read smoothly and precisely, and jarring phrases are pretty rare. Its much better than what you're reading now, I assure you!

Time now for some summing up. The bottom line is that I strongly urge you to buy the Guide (available from Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Road., Baltimore, Md 21214 for \$3.30). In fact, if you've been in the hobby for less than, say, two years, I'd consider it to be mandatory. This is the publication to get the big picture. It is so well organized that it will function well as a reference item. Taken as a whole, Rod has done a splendid job. This represents an enormous amount of work (altho Rod was paid), and is well worth the purchase price.

And yet, as I have tried to point out, this work is seriously flawed. It is not nearly as good as it could have been, even given the space limitations that Rod labored under. The question is then: Why? One could say that since Rod wrote it all, it must be his fault. But its not that simple. Somewhere along the line, a decision was made, presumably by Avalon Hill, to have the entire product written by one person. This was a mistake. I'm not saying that Rod was the wrong person to choose. Quite possibly he was the best possible choice. AND MANY OF THE SECTIONS ARE superb (I'm having a little trouble with my shift key here). However, that does not mean that he was the best choice for all of the chapters, for all of the material. Section III, on the play of the countries is the weakest. Someone other than Rod should have been drafted to do that one. There is no law that something like this has to be done all by one person. And its unlikely that all the aspects be excelled in by the same person. Had Rod (had the time to have) showed the manuscript around I'm sure that many of the problems that I have pointed out would not have occurred.

Rod has publically asked that suggestions for improvements be brought forth, so that the next edition will be better. This essay has been written in that spirit. My major recommendations are these: Take care of the two typesetting errors. The sections on openings in most cases must be redone. A serious attempt should be made to reduce the impact of Rod's bias on the play of the countries. The major-power expansion maps should be either replaced with text, or have their errors corrected and reduced even further. The enormous emphasis on the relative strengths of the countries, and of the details of so many rating systems should be curtailed. The countries and their leaders's pictures section should be dropped. The list of material omitted from the postal should be added. Especially there should be something substantial on editing a postal dipzine, and on Press. And finally, the variant section should be looked over to see if the three pages have really been used properly.

Well, this has really gone on and on, hasn't it? Gads: 13 1/2 pages. I do hope that many of you buy it. And Rod, you've got the right of rebuttal.

THE FACE-TO-FACE ZINE CAPER: WHY I DID IT
by Mark L Berch

Yes, folks, it was I who perpetrated Face-to-Face. I had three objectives:

The first was the most obvious: to stir up some interest in face to face (FTF) diplomacy, which gets little attention in postal zines. Most postal players equate Diplomacy with postal Diplomacy. To try to grab attention, I felt I had to be a little outrageous, a little overdone. I also discussed positions that I don't necessarily personally agree with. I play FTF rather infrequently, for example. However, if you look carefully I didn't actually say that I personally held these views.

I also had to be anonymous, partly out of fear. My searching look at the fact that Avalon Hill's subsidy all went to postal diplomacy was very much of a skewering of a sacred cow. And people who attack sacred cows sometimes land up as hamburger. I am not a long-established publisher with a substantial network of allies --- my zine was (then) still in its first year. I was afraid that it would be misconstrued as an attack on Postal Diplomacy (which did happen). I planned to surface only if I saw that Face-to-Face was treated with total condemnation, which I wasn't sure that I could deal with.

My second reason for publishing was for the amusement of myself and others. Anonymous zines have often entertained their readers, both with the contents, and with speculation as to authorship. Usually, however, these are phoney issues of ordinary dipzines, and thus the interest does not extend much beyond the readers of the zine being hoaxed. A recent example would be the fake Runestone of a few months ago. I wanted to try something completely different from that. As New York City is often a source of different ideas, I strived to make it appear that it came from a NYC publisher (the NYC postmark was courtesy of my sister at Barnard). This entailed altering my normal writing style in a clumsy attempt to mimic what I've seen in NYC

zines. I learned that I cannot compose well in other than my own style of writing: Face-to-Face was not well written.

I then hoped to use my role as an editor of (what's usually) a reprint zine as a way of urging pubbers to write something in their own zine about Face-to-Face so it could be reprinted here. In this I was not especially successful. Mention was made in Dragon & Lamb, Warmonger, Rebus Sic Stanibus, and Brutus Bulletin. The only major treatments were in Summ and Diplomacy World. I am appreciative of this attention. I had hoped for some indignant responses from NYC pubbers, but that didn't happen. Possibly they were afraid to criticize for fear of offending a friend.

The caper fascinated my wife, which was a pleasant surprise. Ordinarily, she barely tolerates my Diplomacy activities. But most of all, I amused myself. Its hard to explain, because its a bit of a private joke, I guess. I recall clearly a conversation with Conrad von Metake in which he speculated in some detail as to who it might be. Not that that these exchanges were always pleasant. I'm sure that I flushed when my attempts to elicit a reaction from Brad Hessel resulted in his calling it "that thing written by a two year old." In fact the first comment was Steve McLendon's (first comment in print) statement that it was a piece of trash. As it turned out, his prime objection was to its being anonymous, certainly a justifiable position position to take. In none of the responses did anyone suggest to me that I might be the perpetrator.

Maybe what topped it off was my anonymous letter in DW #20. In that, among o other things, I quoted an exchange between John Michalski and Mark Berch, taking issue with both of them, even as Mark Berch's comment had both defended and criticized Face-to-Face's ideas. It was a schizophrenic sort of fun.

There was a third reason, unrelated to the other two, which I don't want to go into at present. Suffice it to say that I have a project in the back of my mind, which may or may not come to fruition. For that project to work best, there needs to have been a zine such as Face-to-Face. If it ever appears, you'll understand.

Anyway, that's the story. I hope you've been at least a little bit amused. In the unlikely event that any of you want a copy of the zine (or a Xerox of the number off the bill so you'll know I'm not hoaxing you here) it can be had for an SASE.

The Zine Column #4

ZINE NOOZE

1. New Canadian Zine Hits the Stands!

Have you ever written a piece of press so good that you felt you ought to be paid for it? Now there is a zine which will do just that: Paschendale, available from François Coerrier, Stanton Residence, Room 603-B, University of Ottawa, Ottawa Ontario, Canada K1N 9A7. In addition to paying for articles, which is not that uncommon, François pays 1¢/line, or 50¢/page for press. I have a theory that new zines which come out will usually need something that makes them unique, something that will allow them to stand out from the masses, to do well. A specialization or, to use the biological term, a niche. His payment for press may well make this an excellent press zine. We'll have to see, but he has a good idea here.

Also unusual is his method of pricing the zine. Usually there is either a flat page charge, plus postage, or a per-issue charge, regardless of size, but François has got an interesting wrinkle. He charges \$1/3 issues, or 33 1/3 ¢ per issue. If it goes under 8 pages, he'll deduct 2¢ for each page short. On the other hand, if it goes over 8 pages, he only charges you 1¢/page. Definately stacked in your favor.

As readers here know, I do not normally plug brand new zines, and I have known François only a relatively short period of time, as he and I are in a game together. However, my correspondence with him on the subject has left me impressed with his preparation. While he will be using college repro facilities, he has also lined up

alternative facilities just in case. His finances seem to be in order, and indeed he has been staked a huge cache of paper. And he likes to write, or so he says. So things do look promising.

His first issue, at 12 pages, contains exactly what I like to see in an issue #1: A complete set of house rules. He seems to have been influenced by Randolph Smyth in this regard, because these are in considerable detail. While I do not personally agree with each and every one of them, the coverage he gives is quite extensive, so you'll know just what to expect. A good start. There is also a review of a wargame, and a couple of letters to boot. There is the start of a chess column, which I assume will be a regular feature. He also tosses in a buncha jokes, and assorted quiz questions, for prizes. All in all, its a very ambitious start.

Not only that, but he's also starting a french language zine as well, called La Citadelle, which I don't have a copy of and couldn't read even if I did. I am hopeful about this. Canada has suffered some serious losses in its ranks in 1978, and a newcomer will be sorely needed. If first appearances are reliable, these zines will step into the void.

2. Eggnog pours out of Claw and Fang!

Eggnog has up until now been a subzine to the heavily subzined Claw and Fang, in which Konrad Baumeister (11416 Parkview Lane, Hales Corners, Wisc 53130) ran three guest GMed games. He has now decided to branch out, and with #13 has gone public. His own games he runs in the regularly numbered issues; half numbered issues will have the continuing games from Claw and Fang. Isn't all this just fascinating?

The centerpiece of the issue is "The EGGNOG Story", a history of Konrad's involvement in the hobby which goes back to 1970 in one form or another. There's also a reprint of the heavily reprinted Leader Zine poll, along with Konrad's comments on it. "The Overstuffed recliner" is Konrad's own column, and there are a series of capsule zine reviews. There's also a bit of disorganization. On page 1, he states that there are game openings listed on page 4. On page 3 he states that page 4 has "a lengthy list of game openings". One page 4, however, there's only a dull humor item by Konrad's brother. Its only when we get to page 8 that we find out that..... there pretty much aren't any. All the regular games slots are filled (two regular gamestarts appear), a youngestown gamestart is announced and his last variant (Swiss Diplomacy II, whatever that is) lacks only two people and is doubtless already filled. No more games will be opened until a game is finished, and the furthest along is the game he brought from Podunk News, which is only in 1903 (I Predict, however, that Konrad will in fact open at least one more game before one of these five ends. Remember, you read it here first)

So why should you get this zine???? Konrad says that he has a stash of articles to be run in his zine. If they are as good as what I have seen in Claw and Fang, then it will be a pleasure to read them as they come out. Konrad is a pretty successful Dippy player, and I assume that he will be drawing on his experience in this matter. Subs are 10/\$3.50, with a sample available for an SASE

You will notice that in this review and in the above one, I cannot vouch for their GMing for the simple reason that I have not played in a game with either of them as a GM. However, François tells me that he has GM over 20 face to face games. While that is not the same thing, it does give some indication to me that he likes GMing, and that is an important prerequisite for being a good GM. And Konrad apparently has had Don Horton's confidence, which I'm sure means something.

3. Speed Freaks ready to shoot up a new game!

Its always a pleasure to mention Brutus Bulletin, even if its to plug a venture

that I wouldn't be caught dead in. John plans to run a game with 10 day deadlines. He should be the one to do it-- his regular deadlines are only 14 days, and he's been extremely punctual with those. So here's the place to try it. If there's enough demand, he'll open two. He recently concluded 1978AX in the main zine. GF will be \$3 without sub (i.e. run on flyers), \$2 with a sub, or \$1 if you're already subbing. As a special dispensation, he'll graciously acced to receiving a phone call for your orders, tho he will not guarantee he'll be there. However, I should warn you that this will likely be pretty much of a telephone game, especially in the early stages, so there had better be a jangle in your pocket.

However, you don't need to participate in such overamped gaming to enjoy BB. John runs a fantastic Letter Column. Issue #22 had over 8 pages of them. And there was so much left over that a week later, #23 came out with another 71 pages of letters. The authors included me (well of course I'm going to mention myself first), Rod Walker, John Boardman, Richard Kehrner, Konrad Baumeister, Jack Frost, Greg Costikyan, Roy Smith and Randolph Smyth. These issues normally push the two-oz limit. I sure am glad that I run a different type of zine than BB, because I certainly would not want the competition (John Michalski, Rt 10, Box 526Q, Moore, Okla 73165; 12/\$3)

4. Big changes come to Diplomacy World

I imagine that most of you get DW, and many of you are wondering whether its such a good idea. DW is going to go bimonthly, 6 issues a year. In addition, the price per issue will go to \$1.50. The prime reason for this is the increase in printing costs. Walt Buchanan, the former publisher, had a special deal, which of course Conrad, half a continent away, does not. That will add something like \$150 per issue to the costs. And that's not going to sit too well, especially since DW has had some trouble appearing on time (#20 was delayed at the printers due to a papershortage.)

Nonetheless, I hope that subscribers don't walk away. DW is after all, the flagship of the Diplomacy Hobby. The best writers appear there (not all of them, of course, but far more than any other zine), and the best graphics (that I am aware of) are also at DW. And, in my opinion, DW's quality is very high. Issue #20 is the best I've seen, and I've read them all except #1. I say this despite the fact that several people dared to criticize me there. Not that the issue didn't have its problems --- there was some repetition, as the same information appeared in several different places. And Conrad should know by now that DW really can't be an up to date news zine with (the previous) quaterly format. But some things really shined. Conrad had one of the best dicussions of telephone games anywhere, the best, really. "Fugue" showed that he hasn't run out of ideas just yet. And the concluding comments from some of the Demo game players were in places absolutely fascinating (more will appear in the next issue). Yes, the zine has changed from Walt. In my book, its better.
XX
things one whole line. So back it went (I had a 30 day warentee). There was then a very frustrating wait for several weeks. Thenit was ready. I typed and typed. And then, exactly three days after the warentee was up, it died. OOOh was I mad. So out to another shop, where I was told it was missing some parts. Anyhow, what they'll charge me when I bring this in I don't know, but sub rates may go up. In the meantime, I have to retype everything, which I'm not happy about. My typing is both slow and inaccurate.

Which I hope is not the case with the two new articles which appear here on stalemates. I will pay 4 issues to anyone discovering a small error (above the level of a typo) 6 issues for anyone discovering additional lines in the context of these articles (not just simple expansions) and 8 issues for a major error, such as a way to crack the line, or the fact that one of the lines can force an expansion against any defense. In case of multiple entries, I reserve the right to pay only the first ones. But I don't expect to pay at all.

Next month, we go back to reprints again, the stock in trade.

Mark J. Borch
492 Naylor Place
Alexandria, Va 22304

THIRD CLASS
PRINTED MATTER

IF A 14 or 15 APPEARS BY YOUR NAME, YOUR SUB IS KAPUT!