

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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All Original Articles

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This is beginning to look very much like one of those atypical issues. The two Zine Columns have already been typed and are bloated beyond normal. And I've a number of topics here to cover, so this issue may not get to any reprinted material.

Normally I do not really get into my personal life here, but I thought you might be interested in my recent trip. We (my wife, brother, sister and her husband) hit London, Vienna, Budapest and Paris. What more could a dippy nut ask for??? Two things struck me about these cities, especially Vienna and Paris. The first is the very high quality of the food that we encountered. The pastries (except for London) are just beyond belief --- never have I tasted such goodies, as the Tunesian pastry in Paris, and topfengulatschen in Austria, for example. Even the mass produced material in Vienna, like robbs filled with muhn, a poppy seed confection, is superb. What passes for ordinary pastry here would simply not be salable in Paris or Vienna, the quality is too low. This extends to other types of food as well. I am quite a fan of rye bread, but never have I tasted the likes of dreikornbrot, as we had in Vienna. The famous bagettes (the spelling around here is pretty grim, eh?) of Paris live up to their reputation (and are price-fixed to boot), and are unavailable in the U.S. at any cost, because the flour is prepared differently there. Part of this higher quality food is simply a different value system. The typical Frenchman spends 2½ time as great a proportion of his income on food as does the American, and it shows. The basic foodstuffs are of higher quality there, from what I could see. In Vienna I saw an ordinary fruit shop. It stocked, among other things, four different varieties of pears, out of season, of course, and all identified with country of origin. One stall sold nothing but dried fruit in a dazzling variety, including special types of mixtures. And enormous leeks and oranges the size of eggs. One stand selling nuts and spices had four different types of paprika. Food is important --- in Paris most of the shops shut down around 12:30 or so for maybe 1½ hours so all can have a leisurely lunch. Did I mention cheese? Paris is in general somewhat expensive for Americans because of the disreputable state of the U.S. dollar, but cheese (and wine too! Some is so inexpensive that it is sold in waxed cartons like milk) is a big exception. Where I live in the supermarkets, \$2/lb will buy only the bottom of the line cheeses. In Paris (and London) that price will give you an enormous selection. We stuffed ourselves on camembert cheese at \$1.60/lb. A good sized cheese section of a store will stock over 100 varieties, some with wine and some with herbes and some wrapped in oak leaves. Fortunately we kept up a very heavy walking scheduld, which allowed us to eat so extravagantly (I actually lost weight!).

The other thing that stands out was the physica beauty of Paris and Vienna. Vienna has a grand sweep to it. As you know, Vienna was once the capitol of a mighty empire, and was built to be the nerve center of just that. Now it is a strictly second class country even by European standards, but the city is the same size. So one sees magnificent palaces used as office buildings and department stores.

But unlike even Washington, which is one of the US's more beautiful very large cities, ornamentation was considered an important part of a buildings design in Paris and Vienna. One constantly sees cloumns, festooned with statues of people holding up the building. Everywhere there are carved faces and designs on the sides of buildings, panels of marble even in small shop-fronts, beautiful wrought-iron fences, gargoyes peering out from the top of buildings, exquisite tilework surrounding an entrance-way, art-deco subway entrances --- I think you get the picture. One bank had enormous gilt-gold coins emblazoned on the sides of the building. There is always something to divert the eye.

I could go on and on; about the plays in London or the churches in Budapest, but that should give you a taste of why I so enjoyed my trip. For those of you put off by the cost, you might be surprised at how cheap transportation can be. Round trip NYC-London was only \$255 on Laker Airlines.

I've gotten some reaction to the review of Walker's Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy which appeared in #14/15. I had put this subject off, hoping to hear from Rod, but he tells me that he is not satisfied with what he's written. But he still gets the right of reply. Anyhow, several people commented on the length, including Bob Lipton who said that it was "almost as long" as the original publication I was reviewing, which is of course a ludicrous exaggeration. Baumeister said that 5 pages would have been more than enuf. My attitude was this: I wanted to do the job right, which meant taking whatever space I needed to cover everything that I wanted to cover, without regard to the actual length. In a sense it was an experiment to see how people would react to a really in-depth job. This attitude is a luxury that you can take if you publish your own dipzine: You can do things your way, and meet your own standards, not someone else's. Another factor that contributed to the length was the fact that I figured most of you didn't have a copy, so whatever I was commenting on I quoted, sometimes at lenght. It all adds up.

In my discussions of Rods choice of openings, I often used statistics of popularity. Both Curt Gibson and Konrad Baumeister (I'd say "See, great minds run in the same path", but I think they'd both be offended) hastened to point out to me that the most popular openings are not necessarily the best. Of course. Indeed, there is no such thing as a "best" opening. I just think that before you go spending time on some very obscure openings, it behooves you to cover the more commonly used ones: they are usually popular for a very good reason, viz, that they are the appropriate opening to use in diplomatic situations which are relatively common. Rod spent a lot of time discussing openings that would be appropriate only in the most unusual of alliance structures.

B.C. Milligan had some comments on my review(he was the editor and layout person): "Contrary to what many people believe(as you yourself seem to, to some extent) we hardly exercercise any control at all over people who do projects such as this for us. Such a "non-policy" is susceptible to criticism, but the feeling is (and in this case certainly was) that he knows a lot more about the subject than us, since all we do is print the game, My editing was limited to mostly mechanical things, with a few suggestions (such as the pictures which you felt were a waste of space) on content and organization. Rod did indeed write the entire thing, and as far as I know, the very idea of a guide was his -- in other words, he submitted it to us; we didn't commision him to write it. And, as my only rebuttal to what I consider to be an excellent review, let me strongly point out that Rod's "bouncing mirthful style" was NOT toned down "on orders from Avalon Hill." What the heck do we know about style, anyway? We're must a bunch of dull doddering game designers and editors."

Well! I'll apologize for my "tone down" statement. But I'll point the finger at Rod. In TMG #85, Lipton said: "There is the threat that this book, becoming standard, will force the actual play of the game into a mold. I could wish for a livelier book; Chess' major opening work, Ruy Lopez' famous essay, is hilarious as well as informative." To this Rod replied in TMG #86: "I share your worry that the guide will tned to stylize play of the game. Humor was not the solution, however; in any event

Avalon Hill desired a basically serious study."(emphasis added) It was from this exchange, which implied pretty strongly to me that it would have been more humorous, were it not for what "Avalon Hill desired", that I based my comment.

With regard to B.C.'s other point, this arises from my criticism of A.H. for deciding that the entire project should be done by one person. However, his version of how the Guide came about differs somewhat from what Conrad von Metzke told me. In that version, AH contacted Walt Buchanan to get a guide written. Walt asked Conrad if he were interested in writing it, and was told no. He then turned to Rod, who accepted. I assumed that's how it came about. If that account is wrong would Walt, Conrad or B.C. please correct me?

When I was in England, I was able to pick up a copy of Richard Sharp's book, The Game of Diplomacy (Arthur Barker Limited, London, 1978). This is a hardback book, 150 pages, and is a real treasure. Sharp, a professional writer, is one of the hobby's very top players and publishers. The book was not yet in the stores, and I was very lucky to be able to get a review copy. I had a chance to have a nice chat with Simon Daly, the Barker employee who was in charge of the book. The discussion centered on the question of distribution of the book in the US. He has been unable to get anyone interested. This includes Avalon Hill. Keep in mind that this is a pretty specialized topic! So he is stuck, and unless someone --- (the best choice would be AH) changes their mind, this book will not be available in stores in the US or Canada. I will be looking into the possibility of agenting the book, i.e. selling it thru the mail from my own home, dealing from a stash purchased from Barker. To do this I will need AH's permission, to avoid legal unpleasanties. I will be writing them about this, and will let you know how it turns out. If any of my readers happen to have any "influence" at AH, please see if you can talk them into being the U.S. distributor for the book. I will be writing a review, which should appear in Diplomacy World #22. The book ain't cheap: £7½, about \$15.

I have recently gotten a letter from one of my subbers, complaining that an article which I reprinted had unfairly maligned him. Further, he alleged that the writer of the article was indeed guilty of even worse things. I was taken to task for reprinting the article without checking out all the facts. Unfortunately, the letter was labeled as not for publication, so I cannot give you the details.

This is a matter I faced immediately when I began the zine. I realized that I had to either check out all the material, or none of it; half way measures would be foolish. But doing this would be either difficult or impossible. An issue such as 7/8, Villifications and Tirades, would be out of the question. The principles are often out of the hobby, or I have no address for them. And if I did check them out, there would be a long delay as I waited for a response. And if I did get a disagreement, then what? How should I know whom to believe? (It was enough trouble getting publishers to give me permission to reprint from their zine. I eventually decided that no response meant that it was OK, and if the zine no longer existed, that the pubber didn't care. In fact, I got only two responses from pubbers limiting what I could reproduce. But I digress).

This is a reprint zine (altho you'd never know it from this issue), not a zine of investigative journalism. I stand behind my own original articles, and I stand behind the editing that I do of the reprinted articles, but it cannot go beyond that. If I have strong reason to suspect that an article is inaccurate, I will check further. But if I have to investigate everything, then I will become paralyzed. Some writers, notably Walker and Boardman, lace their writing with jibes directed at others, even when the connection is periferal. If you don't like something said about you, I will bend over backwards to print your rebuttal. Indeed, I even pay for that material. I am willing to discuss this matter further if you can see a better solution, because I don't.

Next issue will be more normal. It will be a double issue on hobby history, as I promised earlier. Original contributions are encouraged, but I must have them by March 1, 1979, to be certain of consideration. Remember, I pay \$2/page in sub grat.

The Mutual Subs Question: Some traders respond.

Nothing that has appeared in DIPLOMACY DIGEST has elicited more response than my column on trades and mutual subs. I notice that Jerry Jones will be cutting back on trades for Diplomacy World, by giving a \$2 credit only, and only if you publish at least six issues per year. Writing in The Warmonger #34 (12-27-78), Alan Rowland defends trading. He begins with a summary of pubbers using ms, and then goes into his own reasons. Rather than interrupt with my comments, I'll insert numbers in (( )), which will be keyed to my responses at the end.

"...I am against mutual subs for several reasons, one of which includes the apparently trivial dislike I have for writing checks. However, my arguments against reciprocal subs stem from two schools of thought. The first is that postal Diplomacy is a hobby, not a job or a chore. I don't care whether I lose or make money (altho I believe that I make money since trades are not only an expense, but revenue as well); I set a price that I think is reasonable and tends to approximate my expenses. If a publisher is losing money on a trade, he should cut it, or in the case of those who lose hefty sums per annum, such as \$50 (a commonly mentioned figure), stop publishing. I have no respect for people who are foolishness ((sic)) to trade with quarterly publishers, and then complain, or those publishers who start publishing with the full knowledge that substantial losses (percentage wise) are common, and then bitch about how much money they lose. Perhaps the most eloquent and well-known member of the "mutual subs are unfannish" group is Robert Lipton, publisher of the soon-to-be-defunct The Mixumaxu Gazette. ((1))

My other objection is that by limiting trades, the flow of both ideas and news is hampered. While sending out a zine every month to a trader and receiving his every month amounts to reciprocal subs in monetary terms, psychologically they are different ((2)). A publisher will sub less than he will trade. ((3)).

As I dislike the reciprocal sub system so much, I have no intention of renewing my sub to DIPLOMACY DIGEST (tho the fact that I have found the past three issues too dull to read from cover-to-cover ((4)), and the issues are now sent two at a time to save 2¢ postage ((5)) ), nor will I continue to receive Brutus Bulletin. Perhaps I might change my mind in the future, but I intent to eliminate the deadwood among my traders, by resigning from or transferring my games, and the cutting trade. ((6)).

As my policy has been to mail the issue free-of-charge if I am more than two weeks late, no subs have expired in the last few months. However, as the issues are somewhat more regular (actually pretty regular) a number of subs will be expiring shortly...((7)).

1. I frankly don't quite see what these arguments have to do with the subject of trades vs ms. A person who is not well informed and has not properly planned in advance will find himself in difficulties, or will find his expectstions not met, regardless of whether or not he trades.

2. Psychologically different? How so?

3. This free-exchahnge-of-ideas argument I have heard before but is utterly unconvincing in my opinion:

a. This exchange-of-ideas-and-news is unfortunately talked about more than its actually practiced. Walter Luc Haas has commented on this too -- there is actually all to little reaction of Publisher A to what publisher B is doing. I feel a little awkward about mentioning this in a response to Rowland, since his editorial is a good example of the exchange-of-ideas, and since I personally have had pretty good response to some things I've written.

b. The ms vs question is a matter of who pays for what. The I"information" and "ideas" can be exchanged regardless of how things are paid for.

c. If fact, it is people like Rowland, who will not sub, who impede the exchange of ideas. In this regard, Rowland is being totally hypocritical. I have sent Rowland \$2.50 for 10 issues. To set up a mutual sub, all he'd have to do is return the cheque --- wouldn't even have to write a new one. But no, he's against subbing. That means that the flow of information between Rowland and Berch will be strictly one way. I do not create such barriers. If I want to get a zine, I get it. Period. If Rowland, and those who will not sub, want to get a zine, life is more complicated. In order for Rowland to get X's zine, X also must want to get Rowland's zine. This is letting the other guy have a veto, letting the other guy do your thinking, your decision making. So long as pubbers will accept my money, no one will have any say about what zines I get

4. Ulp!! Well, you can't please everyone. However, I wonder if Rowland isn't setting up an awfully high standard. I wonder how many people read his zine cover-to-cover. Even if they read all he writes (as I do), very few people follow more than a few, if any, games which they are not in. Do you, Alan, read zines literally from cover to cover, games and all?

5. I'm not sure where the 2¢ figure comes from, but if I only saved 2¢ I might not bother. In fact, I save 15¢ per subber per mailing, or about \$12 per mailing. That is not small potatoes, and that savings helped keep sub rates low.

6. Dropping out of games because you are cutting trade??? This certainly seems to be the ultimate in refusing to sub. If you don't want to trade, you'll drop the game rather than sub. This is both sad and destructive.

7. This wasn't part of the editorial, but merely his next point. While this is quite generous to the subbers, you are screwing the traders. There was a bout a five month pubbing gap. If I had been trading, that would have cost me  $5 \times 25¢ = \$1.25$  for the issue that was put out. Your zine just isn't worth that much. (Alan Rowland, 52 Eighth Avenue, Westwood, N.J. 07675. Subs 10/\$2.50. Openings available in Kingmaker and Diplomacy).

Also writing on the subject is Francois Guerrier, in Passchendale #4 (12-30-78) (Stanton Residence, Room 603-B U. of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ont K1N 9 A7 Canada, price about 3/\$1). He begins by agreeing, mostly, with Smyth's arguments for trading. These include the rather unfannish position that how the pubber runs his finances of his zine is none of the subbers damn business, and the argument that pricing is determined by supply and demand, rather than the expenses involved. He continues:

"My third point is the most important one. (Because I'm its original author.) In fact, the trader also is paying for the zine in the trade arrangement. He's giving something in return for the product I', giving him: his own zine. Permit me to make another analogy: Let's say that I have ten dollars worth of milk to sell. One person comes to me and buys \$5 worth of milk, and pays me with a \$5 bill. A second person comes to me with \$5 worth of oranges. I happen to want \$5 worth of oranges. So I trade \$5 worth of milk for his \$5 worth of oranges and we're both happy. In this example, no one has footed the bill for no one. The exact same thing applies to zines. Trading a zine for another one of about equal value presents no problem and is fair to everyone."

This is a very beguiling argument, but it addresses the wrong question. Of course, provided that the zines are of "about equal value" (and provided that they come out with about the same frequency, a very different assumption), then yes, the pubbers are acting very fair to each other. But I am talking about fairness to the subbers. If the zine is run on a break even basis, then those trade copies are paid for by the subbers. The only person who pays for zines to be published are those who actually shell out the cash. If A receives B's zine, and trades A's zine for it, it is A's subscribers who pay for the copy that B gets.

I'd like to summarize my position here before moving on. There is nothing wrong were trades per se. I would like publishers, especially new ones to realize that you do not have to trade if you want ot get the zines of others. Trading does have some notable shortcomings, which are not present in the ms system. The most important of these is the fact that the infrequent publisher is rewarded, because he receives 2 or more issues for every one that he sends out. Subbers should realize that, unless the publisher's total loss is greater than the value of all zines that he gets in trade, (which, I staunchly maintain, is quite rare), they themeselves are paying for part or all of the zines which the pubber gets in trade. Also, any balance sheet of income and expenses that the pubber puts out which does not include the value of zines received in trade is necessarily incomplete. A refusal to sub to zines in general cannot possibly serve to improve the exchange of ideas and information. And finally, I predict that the use of ms will increase over the next few years, and the use of the traditional all-for-all trade will decrease. As for me, I have at present about 18 publishers on my sub list. They all subscribe. There are no trades. (except for DW).

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you've got 15 or more centers, and your position is strong enuf for a sure victory, and you want to maximize your DT ratings, ALWAYS VETO YOUR OWN VICTORY. In fact, don't even go for 18 right away. It'll pissoff the GM and the other players and your postman to boot, but ypu should stop at 17, and group your forces for the big smash. The reason is that you get 34 points for winning, plus one point for each center. Why settle for 15 points when you could have 18 or even, say 21! You should have thought of that Bumpas, when you foolishly voted for your 14 center win.

My third objection has to do with the way dropouts are treated. Steve starts by socking them with a 5 point penalty, which is a fine idea. But oddly, if you drop a one center position, its not treated as a dropout. If you resign a position you don't get hit by that 5 point penalty UNECESS:

1. You resign with less than 4 units (except in S01) OR
2. You play more than half your country's actual game years

This is a very foolish and unnecessary tampering with the difference between resigning and dropping out. The problem with dropping out is that A) your country has no orders for one season, and B) there is uncertanty in the next season as to who the real ruler will be. Both of these disrupt the game in the dropout game, but not in the resignation game. That is why GMs are generally grateful for the resignation and scornful of dropouts. Both of these factors have absolutely nothing to do with the number of supply centers that you have. And yet Steve counts a one-center dropout as a resignation, and a 2, or 3 center resignation as a dropout. Such blurring of lines is unnessary and wrong. A dropout is a dropout, and a resignation is a resignation. For the record I will state that the only game that I have ever resigned from, 1977FH, was from a 3 center position. Details in DD #7/8.

The other criterion for converting an honorable resignation into the 5 point penalty of a dropout --- the fact that you've played more than half the actual game years --- is a total mystery to me. It was slipped into the final version with nary an explanation. For example, Bob Sergeant recently resigned from 1977HA for reasons unknown to me. If the game ends in 1905, he'll be hit with the penalty; if it ends later he won't. What's the logic of that? Why should events much later on, which he has no control over, affect how his resignation is treated?

All that Steve has to say about this is the following: "If he resigns with less than four units, well, that looks just too much like a polite way of dropping to me:" And I suppose, then, that the one center dropout (which is unpenalized, and thus treated like a resination) is a "polite way of" resigning, eh? A player who takes the time to resign, rather than drop, will normally have what he thinks are good reasons for quitting, and should not be treated as a dropout.

Other than those points, its a good rating system, and I commend them on their work. A final, unrelated question to the readers: I have really shot my mouth off this issue. Did you like it? Or do you feel cheated out of your reprints? Let me Know.

The Zine Column #10: Past and Future for Diplomacy World

All of you received, I hope, the addendum to #18, mailed on postcards. For those who did not, suffice it to say that Elmer Hinton will not be producing Diplomacy World: That will be done by Jerry Jones. I have had the opportunity to discuss DW at some length with Jerry on the phone, followed by an exchange of cassette tapes with him on the subject. What follows comes from those exchanges of ideas, and from Jerry's LDNS #24 and #25, plus others' zines and various phone calls.

1. Sub rates will begin at 4/\$4. I think that I am primarily responsible for persuading Jerry to give it a try at those "old rates". Overseas will be \$5; air \$3 extra. However, if a significant loss is seen at that rate, he will not hesitate to raise the rates. This is in my opinion, a smart move. The lower rates will produce a significantly larger circulation, which can keep costs down, because in printing, there are significant economies of scale, because there are large fixed costs associated setting up the "plates", regardless of how many copies are run off.

2. Trades are being discontinued. Instead, for those publishers who wish to send their zines to DW, and who publish at least six issues per year, there will be a \$2 discount on their DW sub. This is an interesting, and sensible compromise, and Jerry reports that he seems to have gotten little grief on this matter so far. Trades with LDNS will be unaffected. This move alone will save DW over \$300 per annum.

3. The AH subsidy to DW will disappear in 1979, as was originally planned.

4. There appears to have been some confusion with regard to Elmer Hinton, Jr. Horrifyingly enough, Elmer did not receive word that Jerry Jones, not himself, would be the new editor of DW, until he received the Addendum, which I sent as a courtesy copy. This means that, among other things, Conrad von Metzke did not call or write Elmer, nor did Jerry Jones or Walt Buchanan, nor did he receive LDNS #24. Nor was Elmer involved in the decision, or, as he put it, "I couldn't even get in on the final bidding for DW". Claw and Fang #98 (1-9-79) had an extensive apology from Conrad von Metzke on the subject, which also was not sent to Elmer, Jr. What on earth has happened to people's manners? Conrad's article read in part:

"Some day you may prevail upon me to tell the story of how Elmer Hinton, who was originally scheduled to take the magazine, got royally shafted. For now, let me just remark that if you happen to run across any statements by Elmer to the effect that the hobby, and/or certain individuals therein (but NOT Jerry) have attempted a swift and vicious kick to his genitals, he's absolutely correct. Did I say before that I'm not bitter? Bull. I am damned bitter. What was done to Mr. Hinton was an atrocity, and though the aforesaid mercenary attitudes which I developed required that I support such actions, I am neither terribly proud of myself nor kindly disposed to those who instigated it. All of which boils down to Conrad von Metzke's first law of postal Diplomacy: Excluding game moves, it seems to me that this is a hobby where one is either nice to one's fellow hobbyists, or one gets one's ass right straight out." Amen. But it does seem peculiar that Elmer first heard such sentiments when I read the item to him on the phone, long after I got the issue in question. Finally, Elmer will NOT be starting a rival DW. Any such rumors, regardless of source, are false.

5. While I am on the subject, there are several things that Conrad von Metzke has done that I totally disapprove of. Chief among these are the manner in which he announced that fact that he was leaving DW. Rather than doing it himself, he took to telling people on the phone, one of whom, David Crockett, told Michalski and Leeder. He told David that DW was "folding", and repeated this in a letter to Michalski which appeared in Brutus Bulletin #28, saying that DW "is officially defunct". He then discussed the mechanics of refunding the unexpired subs. In fact, Conrad intended nothing of the sort. He told me on the phone at that time that he would absolutely find a successor, no matter what, and that no refunds were being sent out. However, many people took him at his word, and there appeared, in Dragon and the Lamb, for example, extensive discussion and plans as to what to do with the pieces of DW, most especially the

"Need a game" feature. A great deal of discussion and thought was utterly wasted because it was premised on DW's folding, which never was Conrad's intention in the first place. Conrad may have thought that "officially defunct" language was needed to scare people, but I don't think so. I hope that the next transfer of ownership of DW is handled with more openness and class.

6. The new coordinator for the "Need a game" column in DW will be Lee Kendter, Sr, 4347 Benner Street, Philadelphia, Pa 19135, (215) 333-9729. All publishers who have game openings are advised to let him know; he plans to publish this list "about the first of every month" This information is from his zine Why Me? #11, 1-12-79. Several things are unclear, at least to me. I do not know if the list will cover openings in both regular and variant diplomacy, or just regular. Second I do not know if, once you are on the list, you must keep notifying him each month, or whether he'll keep you on the list until you tell him that your openings are gone. Third, it is unclear whether this list will appear in DW. It will be available from Lee for an SASE, and Lee criticized the lists which have appeared in DW as being "often 3 months old" If they do not appear in DW, then the listing will be much less useful.

7. For those interested, Jerry has given me an approximate breakdown on DW's circulation:

Gamestore sales:	225
Traders:	150
N.A. Subbers	375
Overseas Subbers	100
	<u>850</u>

This is of course as of last issue, and many people have not resubscribed. These figures are unofficial, and indeed, the impression that I had gotten earlier from Conrad von Metzke was that the numbers were considerably smaller, especially the gamestore sales figure. Incidentally, Conrad indicated to me that revenue from the sale of ads was virtually nothing, DW supposedly receiving ads elsewhere in return. Anyhow, according to Bob Hartwig, the IDA census (which incidently was never published and is well over a year old by now) shows over 1200 postal players in North America. At best, D.W., supposedly the postal hobby's flagship zine reaches less than half of those players. Jerry Jones feels, and I tend to agree, that the unreached face to face players as less of a fertile area for new subbers than would be those postal players who do not at present get DW. Of course to get them, DW may have to change, in order to entice them in. Personally, I think DW could use a circulation editor, whose job it would be to not only solicit more subs, but to find out why those postal players who don't get the zine, aren't interested. Is it the contents? Price? Frequency of publication? The fact that you can't play init? And we need to find out why players who have not dropped out of the hobby do not renew their sub.

8. As for dates, Jerry plans to take the zine to the printers by mid February. He has already received the material from Conrad, and that (some of which was typed) plus perhaps some variant material will be enough for that issue. The deadline for the next issue (#22) will be April 15, for those of you who would like to contribute. In this regard, Rod Walker's ill-conceived "style sheet" is not going to be used by Jerry, nor are there any hard and fast rules about what will or will not be acceptable. The cornerstone of DW will be the writers. Both Jerry and I will be, in our own ways, trying to encourage people who have not written before for DW to do so. If you've got a good article in you, then sit down and write it. Don't worry about whether or not we'll want it, or whether it resembles what has appeared there before. Even if we don't like it well enough to use it as it is, we may be able to either send it back to you with suggestions, or do the work ourselves (subject to your approval). In my personal opinion, the encouraging of writers, both by helping them, and by providing a showcase for the results, is one of the most important functions that DW has. Under Walt and Conrad, this function was not pursued aggressively, and this will change.

9. DW will be running a contest, and I will be chairing the judging committee for it. I will provide more details once the committee has been formed, but the idea is



completely thought out, and approved by Jerry, and will be, methinks, a lot of fun. The contest will be officially announced in DW #22.

10. DW will go back to printing a rating system, as Jerry feels that there is enough interest in this to warrant the allocation of space. However, none has yet been selected, and Jerry is at present unsure about how to pick one. The main question, at least to me, is whether the selection should be made on the basis of the best idea for a rating system, or the best functioning rating system, ie the one with all the data already imputed. Creating a rating system is pretty easy. But feed in, say, three years of game conclusions is a lot of work. If you have ideas on this subject, please send them off to Jerry.

11. There is also the matter of writers of individual articles getting paid. Some zines do pay their writers (such as this one, which pays \$2/per page), but if DW is to keep its rates low, then the money for such things just will not be there. I know that Bob Lipton, a self-proclaimed "bulwark" of "fannishness" in the hobby, was approached by Rod Walker to write his own essay on the future of the hobby. Bob asked to be paid, and apparently others have as well. Rod was not able to do that, and so the revision was never done.

12. One of the elements of the hobby that Jerry would like to see more of in DW is hobby history, and he will be working with CvM to try to develop material of this type.

13. Some misc. money matters should be clarified. It is true that Jerry Jones has and will be sending Conrad some monies, to reimburse him for some out of pocket expenses incurred by CvM on the zine in putting out #20. Second, Jerry will be trying to get some IDA support, possibly on a one-shot basis for #21. Third, some special expenses will be involved with #21, as a copy will be sent to those who failed to renew their subs after they got the now obsolete news about the \$9 DW. It is felt that many will resubscribe at the more moderate rates. Finally, Jerry will be saving some money by paying only for the printing, and possibly the collating, but will be relying Tom Mirti, and some friends, for the folding, stapling, trimming (necessary for a zine of that size) stuffing and addressing. And for a press run probably of 1000, that's a lot of work.

14. One unsettled matter at this point is the Hoosier Archives custodian. The situation is as follows. After Walter was unable to continue as custodian, the zines went to Conrad von Metzke. He was not interested in storing them, so after reading, turned them over Rod Walker, who is local. Rod, for reasons that are unknown to me, shipped them out to one Scott Marley. However, Rod did not tell Jerry about this at all. Meanwhile, Konrad Baumeister was picked by Jerry to take over the archives, and Konrad announced this fact in his EGGNOG.. Then the news about Marley was found out. As things stand right now, the decision between the two will be made entirely by Walt. I myself have never heard of Scott Marley. Konrad, however, is fast becoming burn-out material, as he has amassed a huge number of hobby responsibilities. In addition to that possible job, Konrad runs both regular and variant games in his own zine, and does quite a bit of writing for it as well. He also publishes an orphan zine named SWLABR (No, I don't. Probably has something to do with Cream.), and has been discussing becoming the Orphan Games Director for IDA. What's more, he has been involved in variant game design, and is thinking strongly of starting a variant zine this fall, and has even muttered in EGGNOG #22 about trying to become the Miller Number Custodian. And top this off with playing in about 35 ~~xxxx~~ games. While Konrad has so far discharged his various duties well, this is just the sort of overwhelming lineup that has all too often in the past lead to dropouts, from people who were every bit as conscientious at the start as Konrad is. Hm, I certainly seemed to have gotten off the subject here. (EGGNOG, 11416 Parkview Lane, Hales Corner, Wisc 53130; 10/\$3.50). In any event, "trade" copies for DW will be sent to Jerry.

15. Another matter up in the air is the proposal to have Diplomacy Review appear in DW, as a one page section or subzine or whatever you want to call it, to be

written by Elmer Hinton, Jr, who was recently elected to the position as IDA Periodicals editor. The only teensy little flaw in this well-wrought plan was that nobody bothered to consult Elmer on this matter (sound familiar?). Elmer was willing to do this, if others wanted it, but he doesn't think that its such a great idea, and is quite unsure about its constitutionality. He seemed to have little idea about what either Jerry Jones or Bob Hartwig wanted done with the column, possibly because they hadn't discussed it with him.

16. One other minor snafu exists with regards to the British demo game. Richard Sharp was authorized to set up the game, but, after not getting a response to several letters, asked Mills to set up a second one, which was done. Then Sharp was heard from. Jerry will be using the Sharp game, with his analysis.

17. I'd like to close with some personal observations. Altho I've never met Jerry, as a result of his tape, and phone conversations, and seeing what he's done so far, I have some fairly strong impressions. What stands out the most is his sense of commitment. He has a clear sense of the work that will be required to produce a first class zine, and I think he's willing to put the time and effort in. One of the most encouraging signs is his willingness --- and success at --- recruiting others to take on certain tasks. He seems especially interested in both encouraging writers, and in improving the quality of the material that he receives. I think that he will actively recruit the best articles that he can find. This is in some contrast to the attitude that Conrad had, which was more or less "all or nothing". He gave only the lightest nudge to people to write for him, and the rest he did himself. While this approach can and has produced fine issues of DW, Jerry's approach not only has the potential for producing a significantly better zine, but can significantly aid the hobby as well. Jerry has a vision of DW as being a centralizing, unifying influence in the hobby, and I think that he can pull it off. He is open to all manner of new ideas, but will apply his own critical facilities to them, and will not hesitate to get the opinion of others on these ideas. The main clouds on the horizon are finances --- which may force the sub rates up even in 1979 --- and Jerry's gamezine. It is obvious that Jerry has a great deal of affection for LDNS. But he's got something like 11 games going there, most of them 1904 or younger, and he writes for the zine as well: There's no question that the zine will be a major distraction.

So I have a very good feeling about DW, because I think that the zine is in the best of hands. I will be working closely with Jerry, both as the play-of-the-game subeditor and general palaverer. And I'm looking forward to the ride.

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The Zine Column #11

A new rating system arrives: Dragon's Teeth

Steve McLendon and Bob Sergeant have created a new rating system, and its about time. Ratings systems have fallen into some disuse in the last few years: time was when there were entire zines devoted to them. The only system that I know of which is being kept up and published is Leeder's ODDMOD, in Runestone. Procedurally, Steve has done a good job. He published the preliminary draft for comments, and then, in Dragon and the Lamb #38, published the final form, with a discussion of the comments and a defense of the final product.

The rating system is a blend of "Win or Draw only" and "strong Second" philosophies. It is slightly biased toward the latter, tho. For example, given a choice between a five way draw and five centers, versus 13 centers and coming in second to the winner, you are better off with the strong second. There's not an issue of right or wrong here, just philosophy. Everything is spelled out in admirable detail, altho given the reputation of the creators, its not surprising. Neither (I've never believed in those totally arbitrary rules on deviding words) of these chracters are known for slipshop work.'

However, there are some really peculiar rules. Since D & L is not a high circulation zine zine, a lot of people are not going to be aware of some of them, and will

be rather shocked when they discover the consequences. If you want to maximize your DT rating, you may have to do somethings that you wouldn't ordinarily even consider doing.

The worst example is Rule 13: If a voted win is given to a player with less than 15 centers, the winner will receive his entitled points but the other survivors in the game will not receive their normal points.

This skitzophrenic attitude is a big change from the previous version, which would have rated the game as a draw for all players, a staggering bonanza for the minor powers who tricked the leader into accepting a "victory". But this rule will needlessly prolong games? Why do players vote conclusions, vote wins? Sometimes it is clear that the leader cannot be stopped regardless of what anybody does, so why prolong the agony? Other times the leader could be stopped, except for the fact that one of the minor powers will not cooperate. Perhaps he has agreed to puppet in return for some reward, such as a specific placing, or survival, and does not see the justification for breaking his word. I cannot understand why this is an illegitimate attitude to take, an attitude which will cost you your rating for the game. And even if it did, its not just that player who isn't rated. The others, who would like to stop the leader but cannot, and bow to the inevitable, are penalized evenly. My own opinion is, unless the ratingsmaster has reason to believe that there is something not kosher about the game, then he must take the game as it is, as the players and GM have decided, and not try to second guess the situation, and redefine the games conclusion. If it isn't kosher, then don't rate it at all.

In defense of his position Steve begins by stating that the rulebook does not provide for a voted win at all, and that it exists only by dint of "precedent" and "traditions". This is preposterous. Rule III states "...players may agree beforehand to stop the game at a certain time. Players may agree to regard the player who has the most pieces on the board at that time as the winner." In a postal game, the agreeing "beforehand" takes the form of agreeing to the houserules. The Houserules normally define how to "stop the game at a certain time." That stopping is the voting of the victory, in accordance with the HRs, whatever they are. If they say for example, that no votes until 1905 at the earliest, then 1905-or-after is a requirement. The "certain time" is whenever the players vote (and the GM consents). In any HR that consents to a voted win, the players have agreed "before the game starts to recognize victory less than 18 centers."

OK, lets get back to the issue. In defense of his changing the old rule (i.e. 14 center voted win = draw) and in defense of the new one Steve says: "I objected to the 14-center rule for a dufferent reason: it forced a guy to veto his own win, which is just not right. For a conceded win, don't penalize the winner. Rather, penalize those who indiscriminately vote to concede (ie, the other players)"

Huh? "Indiscriminately"????? Steve just won't accept that there are perfectly good reasons for voting someone else a winner, that will apply when the winner has 14 just as well as when he has 15. Only to Steve, the the former is indiscriminate, the latter is not. So keep that in mind folks, when you're about to vote.

Perhpas you think that these occasions are rare, and thus automatically peculiar and suspect when they occur. Think again. I have checked Everything #21-31, except for #26-29, which Steve has at the moment. There were 29 conceded wins (I don't count a win or two by default). Of those 29, 15, or slightly over half, involved voted wins when the winner had 14 or fewer centers. Avery recent example was this months issue of Lies, Deceits, and Nefarious Schemes, REPORTING Jim Bumpas' 14 center victory with Austria on a vote. Sorry Dave Bunke, Craig Reges, Bob Hartwig, and Carl Eichelberger, but Steve (and I assume Bob Sergeant. Its his rating system too) just doesn't approve of your style of play. Oh, sure, Austria did take a 15th center in SO9, but then you guys had to go and vote the game over before 1909 was finished. That decision cost you guys a lot of points.

My second objection to the rating system is ironically linked to the first. If turn to page 6 for conclusion

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Don't forget: I will add one issue to your sub length for every new subber that you bring in. All he need do is mention your name or your zine when he subs. I can do this because you've saved me the expense of sending out a sample issue.

If the number 19 appears after your name, your sub is up. You won't get another issue unless I get either more money or an original article which I decide to use.

*Well, I sure hope I  
got it all right.....*

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