

THE ONLY ZINE TO FINISH IN THE TOP FIVE IN BOTH 1978 AND 1979 LEADER ZINE POLL IS....

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #27

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Potpourri

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Surprise! No, DD is not becoming a sub-zine to DG. This is strictly a one-shot deal. I am doing one of the biggest (if not the biggest) promotional distributions in the history of the hobby. Mailing samples individually is inefficient and rather expensive. This way I can go piggyback on some unused weight in the DW mailing. Besides, I like to try something different, sometimes.

DIPLOMACY DIGEST is my own zine, devoted to the presentation of articles about Diplomacy, mostly reprints. The widest possible range is embraced. This includes alliances, personalities, cheating and ethics, dropouts, cross game alliances, hobby history, gamemastering, the play of specific countries, humor, house rules, the play of specific countries, diporganizations, house rules, puzzles, tournaments, adjudications problems, negotiations, press, publishing, ratings, rules and rule changes, strategy, tactics, variants, stabbings, stalemates, villifications and tirades, statistics, face-to-face play, and whatever else I can come up with. The articles are drawn from my archives; with over 5800 zines it is the second largest organized archives in North America. There is enough in there to fuel DD almost indefinitely, assuming that my wife's plans to use the archives to mulch the garden are not carried out.

The structure of the zine does not vary a great deal. The articles are the backbone. There is also the front page editorial, which is normally devoted to other than telling my readers what they already know. In addition, a regular feature is The Zine Column. This is formatted for my discussing what is going on in other zines, or about publishing itself. This has included a detailed look at one zine, and an "insider's" view of the changes at DG. Other times I have tackled controversial hobby matters, such as the investigation report on the Gblm/Quatic business in

of capsule zine descriptions, collections of jokes, extensive lettercolumns, bits and pieces of late breaking news, coverage of other wargames, frequent accounts of my personal life, or airings of my political views. Not that I have anything against these, but its usually put into other zines. DD is for the person who wants to read about Diplomacy.

There are three types of issues. One is like this one, a potpourri. More common and more popular are the theme issues, frequently double. These have included Italy (#2), Austria (#16) (with both serious and humorous material), GM-player Relations (including a reprint of the famous von Metake-Lakofka debate on GM fairness/rigidity, joint orders, GMing errors), Villifications and Tirades (#7/8) (with some of the hobby's most colorful writers bad-mouthing each other) Stalemates (#10/11, the most complete collection ever published, methodically arranged, with articles on their use) Face to Face (#13), The Replacement Player (#18), and Hobby History (#21/22). (OOps, that GMing one was #4/5)

The third type are special issues, with all original material, usually written by me, or letters in response to what I've written. For example, #14/15 had an in depth critique of, and commentary on, Rod Walker's Gamers Guide to Diplomacy. The most unique of these is surely #25/26, which was born in the top board of the final round of this year's DIPCON. I collected all the orders. In addition, I was there with a tape recorder, and with the full cooperation of all the players, tape recorded two hours of player negotiations, as well as asides to me, table talk, draw vote discussions, etc. The issue has the moves, a full description of the diplomacy that was going on, and my analysis of the game itself. I have also woven into this a quiz, where you can test your ability to deduce what will be said next, etc. So far as I know, no one has ever done this before.

The zine has been published monthly for over

if he is too general, the article turns out to be a collection of platitudes that everyone knows anyhow. And specific techniques are often very personal, effective in one person's hands, and awkward in another's.

Anyhow, the first selection is from a letter by Alan Calhmer, the inventor of our game, and appeared in SerenDip #41 (30 May 1970))

I have been in a lot of over-the-board games, and I imagine that in every single one of them in which I had a beginner on my frontiers somebody said to him, "He invented the game. We've got to gang up against him to protect ourselves." I have overheard these remarks several times.

I have always gone to the beginner and told him that even a good player will get beaten if he is outnumbered, and hence what he is being told is nonsense. The first part of the previous sentence is true for all practical purposes, and it usually carries the second part, which is not strictly true - what they are saying is not nonsense. A beginner is always more worried about whom to trust than about the board situation. If I suspect that this argument is going to be used against me I ridicule it in advance while talking with the beginner - then when the argument comes out, the beginner realizes by actual demonstration that I was telling him the truth about that player, and what would be said in an effort to fool the poor beginner.

I usually offer an alliance that I believe is genuinely good for both countries - necessarily at the expense of some third country. Any alliance with "self-enforcing" provisions in it is a good one to offer to a beginner, such as "Neither Russia nor Germany will move pieces to Bal, Pru, Sil or Livonia." I take pains to explain that it is harder for either country to harm the other in a surprise attack. I then add that these alliances usually last a long time, which is true, tho the beginner has only my word for it. The explanation in which the actual surprise attacks are postulated and he is shown that each country will have time to defend itself is something that he can verify by his own reason, however. Of course I go thru the whole reasoning with him - you cannot guess what key point he might miss if he went thru it alone.

An interesting result is that I get not only the alliance, which holds in spite of the propa-

pendent on their self-enforcing alliance. Of course, once in a while one of them will reject a perfectly good alliance in some situation where a self-enforcing alliance was not practical -- in general, so much the better for me.

I think in my own case the challenge of that type of propaganda was useful in helping me develop my ability, and I think such a challenge would be good for the better postal players, too, if they can meet it.

((To this the editor, John McCallum, wryly added....))

By the way, do we want to protect players, beginners or otherwise, against comen? For each of us there is one comen that we don't want others protected against.

((Next up is Rod Walker, writing in Hoosier Archives #127, 1 Dec 1973))

#### TWO FACED HONESTY or ONLY MY MUNITIIONS MAKER KNOWS FOR SURE

In Diplomacy, honest is frequently the best policy. Not always, of course, but why quibble? There have been plenty of articles on how to lie effectively in this game. Certainly that is necessary. Honesty, or at least having a reputation for it, is even more important.

Diplomacy also affords us with the moral satisfaction of being able to tell the truth and lie at the same time. It is not always possible to accomplish this feat of verbal prestidigitation in a game, nor is it always desirable, but when you can do it, it's beautiful.

The circumstances under which it is possible involve two other powers -- your ally and your ally's primary enemy. I have done this a couple of times in a game and each time these two were battling for the win and my best hope was for second. The problem was, had I backed the right horse? That is, would there actually be a win, or would my actions cause a stalemate to develop? Would a stalemate perhaps even be better from my point of view? None of these questions were clear in my mind, and obviously the game situation was equally unclear to the others --- and consequently a pretty large premium was attached to my alliance.

The situation is thus one in which my ally is not certain he will win and his enemy is anxious to detach me from the alliance. The tempt-

ation is to begin switching sides (I need not say ((but he will anyhow)) that under appropriate circumstances, this situation can be perlayed into a win). It would be foolish not to take advantage of this opportunity. But what if your ally finds out what you're doing? Aye, there's the rub that makes us hesitate.

The best way, obviously, to insure that your ally doesn't find out that you're double dealing is to tell him. The plan, as you present it, is to pretend to be looking for a way out of your alliance. You treat with the enemy, gain his confidence, perhaps do one or two little things to "prove your loyalty", and then put him in a situation where he stakes all on a massive backstab, only to be stabbed himself.

What you tell your enemy is essentially what you've told your ally that you're telling him. You emphasize, of course, that you can't break loose right away, but need his help to prepare for it.

If you get the result you're looking for, you will have some control over what each of the other powers does --- each will be helping you in an effort to gain eventual advantage over the other. Each will feed you information which, in certain occasions, you will pass on to the other. Each will, ultimately, will be putting himself in a position in which he can be seriously damaged thru a decisive betrayal by you. The beauty of the situation is that you can betray whomever you wish, simultaneously, screwing him and earning the undying gratitude of the other. If the stab is decisive enaf, you might even go on to win the game.

Obviously, this kind of situation only arises in games which are very slowmoving, with large tactical stalemate situations on the board. Your two pasties need to trust you a great deal. This will of course be helped by a situation in which each is not likely to get anywhere unless he does trust you. The ultimate beauty of this is that you are essentially telling both sides the truth because, at that moment, you don't know which of them you will betray. Of course, it takes a lot of negotiating to keep this going, so be prepared to write, and write, and write, and.....

((The final item is Randolph Smith's "Apres-Stab: The aftermath of aggression" from his FolSiFis #100 (May 1978) (#314, 275 - 3rd St., S.E. Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada T1A 0G4). I have

unusual. When one 8 center power stabs an ally of equal size rising to 12 while his new opponent drops to 4...the stabber is clearly going for a win in most cases: Why does he succeed so often with 12 units when 22 are still outstanding against him?

To point out that the 22 are divided amongst themselves is obvious. "Stop-the-leader" is one of the most common reasons for an alliance, tho, and the stabber is a sure bet to put one together if humanly possible. He didn't get to 8 centers in the first place by being an idiot. His real problem is that his old opponents often are, and he can rarely scrape together enough force under the control of competent parties to stop the steamroller. In the average game, this accounts for the frequent wins from 12 center "starts".

Suppose you've been lucky enough to bring off such a stab, and you aren't yet sure that this game will take the usual course. Perhaps the other players are more capable than you've given them credit for, or if they're real turkeys, they may drop out next season and be replaced by someone to trample you without even moving his feet...can you improve your odds?

Relax. Lie back. Rest your weary bones ; contemplate your navel. You're not playing in the same game as you were before; it just happens to have the same players and Boardman Number. Take time to "forget" the old one, including the nasty details of the recent stab. You have one unambiguous and realizable personal objective ---18 centers---but assuming no NMRs it'll take several game years, and probably more work, to get there.

Recognize first that you have two classes of opponents now. The first is your old ally(s) , at best resentful and at worst too angry to answer your letters (write him anyway for sure, even if you have nothing more to offer than an apology and an explanation). However, you probably know each other better than anyone else on the board --- if he's a realist (i.e. he wants to do as well as possible, and he'll be the first eliminated if he fights you, so.....) or has a heavier grudge outstanding against a third player, you have a handle for continued limited cooperation. Promise him help against Tom, Dick and Harry, and probably second place in return for recognition of your new dominance. "Recognition" naturally involves no resistance to you; often,

ally considerable tactical freedom except on your common border (this is a good idea if he's receptive to the arrangement, as it will maintain his interest), the "client state" concept is too close to puppeting to sit well with some players. In that case you must rely on your second class of opponent, that miscellaneous bunch of guys you've been battling all along.

You probably shouldn't have stabbed in the first place if you haven't received positive feedback from some discrete diplomatic probes, altho for obvious reasons, promises made to one member of a strong alliance may be forgotten once the alliance is no more. ("May" is a bit too weak a word. In many cases, the promises will have been made solely for the purpose of inducing a stab, and thus will be worthless once the stab has occurred). Your trump card in negotiation with these people is their willingness to take whatever's offered, sometimes known as apathy. Remember, these guys have been, for whatever reason, the losers in the game. They're not as interested as you might think in the outcome, in the sense of "I don't have a chance, so who cares?" The transition from a two-power drive to a one power push is only important in terms of the one- or two-year delay before their own more limited goals can be fulfilled.

A dynamic and revengeful ex-ally, or the strongest power left on the board, is usually your only threat here. It's too, too foolish to pretend you're not out for a win to anyone --- but the offer of second place is still an incredible hope to a small but pivotal power. Pick one who is influential enuf to swing the balance your way in a head-to-head match, but too small to reasonably expect as good as a second place finish even if a stop-the-leader alliance were successful. Even a two center power may do the trick if he can work "undercover", since you're mainly after disruption in the enemy ranks: You can provide the muscle power. There's only one problem with a new ally who's too small: You may be unable to deliver second place, or whatever, as promised.

It's quite important to keep the promises you make at this stage, even if it takes a few extra game years, unless you're really endangering your own chances. A normal stab or other deception can be accepted by a mature opponent as part of the game if your reasons are clear. Once he's acknowledged you as the future victor and even worked for you to this end, what more can

Along this line, the "handwagon" effect could be embarrassing. If the opposition is more decided than you expected, everyone could accept your offers! Certainly you must contact all the players after a stab, but try to offer them different slices of the same pie at first...As I said, it's a new game, and with your true goals finally on the table, you can afford once more to be genuinely friendly. Repeat whatever got you started in 1901!

((That completes the collection: negotiations with beginners, with your ally's enemy, and after a major stab. Hope you found something you can use.))

### The Zine Column #17

#### Two Zine Polls Arrive

I assume that the Leader poll results are given elsewhere in this DW, so I won't even summarize. I'd like to thank you all for your votes, which gave me a tie for 5th. That result is gratifying, but equally pleasing is the large number of you who voted for DE --26. There are a few with more, but in most cases they have larger circulations than me.

The winner was Graustark, barely qualifying with 5 votes. Leader in this regard said "Many will view Graustark's first place finish as a fluke...", a view which I share. I mean no disrespect to the zine: It's the most reliable zine which has ever existed. But it seems to me that a top rated zine ought to be able to stir up enuf enthusiasm to generate more than just 5 votes. It turns out that there was a very strong correlation between ranking and the number of votes a zine received. 13 out of the top 17 zines got at least 15 votes. None of the bottom 16 zines got that many.

Finally, I must disagree with the lone person who gave me a 9 as a GM. Since I have never GMed a game in my life, I deserve either a 1 for never doing anything right, or a 10 for never doing anything wrong!

The 7th Annual U.K. Zine Poll was reported in New Statsman #7, June 1979 (Mick Bullock, 14 Nursery Avenue, Halifax, W. Yorkshire England HX3 5S. Prices are 12pence plus postage). 133 voted, substantially more than in ours, and the average player voted for more zines as well. This wealth of data was combined with Mick's penchant for statistics to provide a dazzling collection of different ways of presenting the results. Thirty zines were ranked, with the

median getting 46 votes (by contrast, the largest in the N.A. poll got 32). Results were calculated by the average, just as here, with additional breakdowns for pubbers and non-pubbers, and a 4th list calculating the ratio of these rankings for each side. Also presented was the median, and the average of the middle 1/3 of the votes. The most detailed for individual sides was a distribution by scores. Thus, for any side, you could see how many 9.0-10 votes were gotten, how many 8.0-8.9, etc. My favorite, however, is the Preference Matrix. For each pair of sides, you could see how many people ranked A better than B, B better than A, and tied. This list, as did others, had summary tabulations, showing total wins, losses, and draws to other sides. Then there were the positional votes. 30 points for the most favorite side on your list, 29th for the next favorite, etc. This is flawed by the problem of how to deal with those who voted for fewer than all 30 rated sides. There were other lists as well.

Anyhow, that should give us N.A. readers some taste of how "the other side" does things. Interestingly enough, there was no GMing poll, as we had. The clear winner of the Poll was Peter Birk's Greatest Hits, which has been published for over 5 1/2 years. He also writes on Poker for the side, and with the apparent abscatulation of my favorite (Dolchstoss) I think I'll give it a try (39 Handforth Road London SW9 GLL England.) Beware --- even with surface mail, British sides are more dear than N.A. ones, due in part to the disreputable state of the US dollar.

One type of listing that I would think useful would be a high-vote correlate. For those who voted highly for Zine 2, what other sides did that group also rank highly? If Z wanted to expand his sub list, a natural place to start would be those side's sub lists, plus the list of those sides which had 2 correlated with high votes there.

New Statman, incidently, had as its main fiction reporting gamestarts and ends, just like our Everything. #7 has an interesting comparison between the first 230 British games and the second 232 games, thru April 1979. It will give pause to those who favor the Ecomora Tournament Scoring system because they feel the need to make correction for imbalances in country strength. If you look at Calhauer

those who think they see big trends coming. For example, in DW #22, Steve McLendon said "In the past two years the number of French wins has been rising steadily...France may soon overtake Russia in total scoring." By contrast, in U.K. over the last (approximately) two years France has done quite poorly winwise ranking dead last --- even Italy had more wins. In Everything #42, out of 115 games, Germany had only 8 wins, and was last in the Calhauer Point listing. By contrast, in U.K., Germany is second in both wins and C.P. Does this mean that there is a new anti-Germany trend? Or that there's some big difference between N.A. and U.K.? Or is it just a reflection of the fact that Steve McLendon, a positive demon with the black pieces, isn't playing Germany so much these days? Of course not. These are just flukes and things evening themselves out. Even 115 games is too small a sample to smooth out the fluctuations. I assure you that when the next 115 games appear in Everything, G will be right back there in the pack.

Ha. I do seem to have gotten of the subject of side polls. .

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((Recently there has been a rash of kids born, sired by postal GMs. From Hoosier Archives #106 comes a view from Carol Ann Buchanan, wife of the (then) editor, Walt Buchanan (1-27-73)))

#### HOW TO HAVE A BABY BETWEEN DIPPY ACTIVITIES

It all started out as a normal day: dusting all the treasures in the Archives and polishing the Albatross Press (the super-delux A.B. Dick duplicator on which the infamous H.A. is printed). Next on the agenda was the mater of taking the beloved Albatross for a walk down the country lane and then(ugh) came the typing of 91 pages of H.A. for the next issue.

It happened while I was strolling down the lane with the Albatross tugging at his leash --- was that --- no, it's just my imagination --- no it is a contraction. Maybe the Son of H.A. is finally going to arrive, even tho he was already 13 days past the deadline for winter builds. Turning the Albatross around, I headed back home to pack my suitcase.

I was greeted at the door by my Diplomacy-fanatic husband. I said, "Guess what! I think the Son of H.A. is here!"

so, into the archives I trudged to begin typing the next issue of H.A. After 3 hours, I was allowed a coffee break of 10 minutes. I raced to the basement, grabbed the suitcase, dashed up the stairs and into the bedroom to begin flinging things into the suitcase. Just as I closed it, I heard the bell that signals the end of the coffee break. I never did get to my coffee.

"Honey, don't you think that I ought to at least call the doctor?" I ventured.

"Finish the typing first. We have to get this issue to press today."

So between contractions that were coming more rapidly now, I finished typing the remaining 76 pages of the issue. And on my 20 minute lunch hour I was allowed to call the doctor. He said to come to the hospital as soon as I could make it. I entered the Archives where Walt was just finishing running off the last page of H.A. Spying me in the doorway, Walter directed, "Get the stapler and we'll put the issue together."

"Honey, I just called the doctor."

"Do you realize that our circulation is now up to 347? And with the 50 extra copies I keep, that means that we only have to staple 397 copies. Maybe we should run off 3 more and then we'd have 400 copies of this issue.....what do you think?"

"Honey, I said I just called the doctor. He said to get to the hospital as soon as I could."

"We have to get this stapling finished first."

"But, Walt, he said as soon as I could get there!"

"Well, you can't get there until the stapling is finished. That'll be soon enough."

We stapled in silence for a while. After we had stapled about 230, I asked, "How many subscriptions and all do you have to get the zine sent to right away?"

Walter replied, "About 300, I guess. Why?"

Well, dear, I hate to be a bother, but the contractions are only 4 minutes apart now, and the doctor did say to....."

"We'll get there as soon as we can. Isn't that what the doctor said? Don't you know this H.A. must go out on schedule?"

A short while later I gasped, "Honey, can't

there a mailbox at the hospital?"  
"I don't know," I replied, lugging the suitcase toward the door while putting on my coat. Let's go!"

"Well," Walter pondered. "If you don't know whether or not there's a mailbox at the hospital, we'd better not take a chance. We'll stop by the postoffice on our way to Indianapolis and mail the zines there."

"On our way!" I screamed. "But that's 10 miles out of our way!"

"It'll just take a minute," Walter assured me.

And thus we left the house, taking the "short cut" thru Lebanon in order to mail the precious H.A. At this point the contractions were coming every minute!!

After making a stop in Indianapolis to buy more ditto paper (good grief!) we finally arrived at the hospital where I was rushed to the delivery room and five minutes later the Son of H.A. was born. Walt's first words to his new son began this way: "Now Bill, if you're playing Austria in a game, the first thing for you to do is to....."

The poor boy just looked bewildered. Later that day, Walter returned to the hospital after work, bringing presents for both Bill and myself. For Bill, he brought a miniature Diplomacy set, complete with miniature conference maps and a supply of postcards and writing paper. For me? Oh, yes. He brought me a present I would really use and enjoy --- a new ribbon for the electric typewriter! Help, I'm trapped in the archives!

(Note: For the record, Walter says I'm exaggerating --- that he actually forgot to mail the HA until the next day. And as a final note on the progress of putting out H.A., you should see how adroit I've become at Balancing Bill in my lap while giving him his bottle and typing the H.A. at the same time.)  
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((Scattered thruout the dippy literature is a variety of proposals that never got off the ground. Here is one, from Lerry Peery, from his Xenogogic, Vol 5, #4.0, 14 Dec 1972.))

#### TTT PUBLICATIONS: A PROPOSAL

As our last offering to the Diplomacy community at large we make the following proposal: That the international Diplomatic community

(Yeah That same group of unknowns who proposed the Johnny Awards.) create, establish, and maintain, a Diplomacy Hall of Fame.

This Hall of Fame will honor two categories of people: publishers/gamesmasters and players.

That members of the Hall of Fame (HoF) be elected by the publishers active in the hobby at the time of election by secret ballot.

That candidates for election to the HoF in either category no longer be active in the category for which they are nominated, and have not been active in said category for a period of one year prior to their nomination. ((Why? If they are no longer publishing, the odds are they are out of the hobby, in which case they probably won't care. This is akin to awards that are only given after the recipient is dead.))

That elections be held during the month of April, of each year, and that a committee of prominent Diplomacy Publishers be established as an ongoing screening and elections committee to supervise and conduct said elections.

That the purpose of this HoF will be to perpetuate the memory of past Diplomacy greats by memorializing them in this HoF and that the HoF establish, within the Diplomacy Archives, a record on each member to include: A record of all games and/or magazines published, a short biography, a photograph, and whatever materials shall be deemed appropriate for the Hall. That these materials will be open for inspection to all members of the international Diplomacy community seeking to learn the history of the hobby.

That for the first election, a committee consisting of 5 individuals of prominence including one officer of the IDA and one of the TDA, and three other members at large, be solicited from volunteers.

This committee shall seek knowledge of those past active in the hobby but no longer active and will solicit from current gamesmasters/publishers a list of prospective nominees. That this list will be narrowed by the committee to 35 (!!!) names, and that of these, 25 will be elected, in the first year, to the HoF.

Thereafter, each year, only two members may be elected to the HoF: Those being the highest vote getters among those voting in the

McIlvaine from Impassable #49, 14 April 1975))

### Demonstration games are Misnamed!

My last article for John ((Boyer, editor of Impassable)) talked about demonstration games. It appeared to be saying that the demonstration games are more valuable to the good players (as a means of getting great competition) than for people to learn by. This is very true; the current crop of demonstration games aren't worthy of the name. The so called demonstration games are interesting in themselves, and the commentary is very good in itself also, but it does not demonstrate the vital aspect of the game at all. What does a demonstration game really demonstrate? I would think that it shows a very important part of the game, and a point that every person playing should strive to become proficient at, namely, looking at gross moves and deducing what is really going on. When you are playing in a game you have the letters you receive to go on, you also have your own plans down pat, so you have a better perspective on the situation. Against this, in a normal game you will be totally unfamiliar with the players you oppose (or at least some of them). The "expert" commenting on the game knows the players involved and makes intelligent guesses as to what they are trying to accomplish. ((I disagree. The commentator may know little or nothing about the particular playing style of most or all of the players, or what he does know may turn out to be irrelevant)). He may get this information from the players involved, but I would think this would be somewhat unusual. He gets it from watching the moves and the press (this is how I've operated in my postal commentaries when I've done them.)).

If he can do this, so can you. When I look at the demonstration game in DW, or someplace else, I first set up the board and make the moves. I don't look at the expert's commentary. I then try to decide what is going on, and after I have made that determination I look at the expert commentary. ((This is exactly the procedure that I have always used for the DW commentary, and for just his reasons!)) Now, the thing to look for is not if he is right or you are right, but rather why you disagree. Is it something you missed? Is it something he missed? Or is it just a question of your putting a different "weight" on some of the events where he felt otherwise? This is where you learn. You look into the thinking process of someone picked especially for his ability to per-

1972CR, a DW demo game in which he played.)). This was a very fine job and yet even it was incomplete ((not everyone sent in correspondence, and there was heavy use of the telephone)).

Some players were hesitant to send in their negotiations and ideas. I can see their point, because such a study really allows one to "see" the thought processes of these players and, as I have said many times, the more you know about your opponents, the better you will be able to play against them. If a person accepts a berth in a demo game I would think that he has an obligation to turn these things over to the person gamemastering the game (if this is a condition stated in the beginning of the game). However, merely picking seven players and throwing them together does not make a great game. No, the seven know each other too well, and this really affects the outcome. In 1974 FK there were "permanent enemies" and such nonsense, something you will not find in an average game. I have read that the "press war" games that various people have tried to set up, by the simple procedure of playing seven known press writers together has been less than a great success. A game is not automatically great because there are good players (alho I suspect that the chances of having a great game are much higher), it is something that just happens (born not made). ((The "Press Game" that was set up in Claw and Fang hasn't, in my judgement, produced much in the way of good press)). Games that are outstanding should be reviewed after the fact and all information possible should be gathered by them and then published. Who decides what is a great game? Anyone that is willing to do the work in getting the data together and publishing it can decide this. This is not the entire story in Diplomacy for there is more to the game than one outstanding game...At the very least, you would have invaluable information about 7 people that could otherwise be only gathered by playing with them (and perhaps finding out the hard way). Reputations are easily made and not always correct. Suppose a player stabbed me in a game. I write a tactical article showing how X really stuck the knife into me. Impassable has say 140 people reading it, and now X has picked up a tarnished reputation. Even if I am somewhat mistaken, or if X has only stabbed me in all ((sic? was "one" intended?)) of his games, there he goes. There are more than one kind of stab anyway, but this is off the subject. Looking at a demonstration game is a much better way of evaluating someone than reading an article that

the article is backed by examples from lots of games, it might well show that the guy really does stab an awful lot, or may give some insight into when the guy actually stabs.)). Also you might see that something that you believe is a fairly innocent move is thought by at least a few people as a very threatening act. This type of analysis can be of use to the great majority of players and it is my hope that at the very least one such game is printed in every IDA yearbook.

((Frank touched on the subject of players' reputations in his above article, so I've included next an excerpt from one of Lew Pulsipher's Verhandeln columns, a potpourri article from Impassable #62, March 1, 1976))

...Have you noticed how people talk sometimes about player reputations, as the you could lose a reputation once made. Actually, it's quite difficult. Those who criticize people for not entering tournaments "because they're afraid to lose their reputations" aren't thinking. Has anyone ever suffered a decrease in reputation from losing? Not that I know of. Tournaments can only help your reputation, not hurt it. If Doug Beyerlein or Edi Birsan doesn't win the annual FTF tournament, or even come close, people say so what, they had bad luck with novices or something. That may be true, but the point is, the excuse is always there, no matter what the real reason may be, and so reputations don't suffer. Relative unknowns can gain a reputation (or be confirmed in lack of reputation or in a bad reputation) --- how many people knew who Blank or Wartenburg were before CITEI? --- but that's all. Once you're on top, then there's always available the excuse that people are ganging up on you because of your record, and that's why you don't do well anymore. There is some truth to that, but sometimes it is more a result of one's playing style. For example, Brenton Ver Floeg, the infamous stabber had continued playing, probably he would have had a difficult time. Would it have been because of his record or because people knew he couldn't be trusted in the long run. I think Edi Birsan is a good example of a person whose playing style, not his record, finally caught up with him. ((Oh? Birsan's swansong was 1976BG, a DW demo game. His rep as a stabber didn't prevent him from taking both Tri and Vie in FOI on his way to a spectacular Italian victory.)) Other people with very good records, but who have not used the stabbing style or another style not calculated to make friends,





((Variants have been published in BD, tho not those requiring a map. What follows is not strictly speaking a variant, but a companion game to a regular (or variant, for that matter) game. I don't know that any of these are being run at the moment, so perhaps this will spark some interest. A variety of different rules have been used. These come from The Pouch #49 11 Feb 1974))

1. Each player starts out with 1000 units of each currency: Pounds, Francs, Lira, Crowns, Piastres, Roubles and Marks. All are equal in value at the start of the game

2. Deadline for Bourse orders is the same as deadline for the Diplomacy game. Orders are in two parts: Buying and selling. You must always buy as much as you sell every turn. This is most important --- see below.

3. At the start of the game, one unit of each currency is worth one dollar. However, each time 100 units of any currency is sold ((I assume he means net sales)) its value in relation to the dollar drops 1%. Thus if in the last season the net total of everyone's orders resulted in 500 more marks being sold than bought, the price for the next season will be one unit equal 95¢, or 100 being equal to \$95. Each time 100 units of any currency is bought, the price in relation to the dollar goes up 1%.

4. You must buy as much as you sell in relation to dollars. For instance, if, on the second round, you sell 100 Lira worth \$110, you must buy, e.g., 115 marks (115 x .95 equals \$109.25 -- all fractions are lost). You must do those computations yourself, and you must do them on your orders so that they can be checked. If there is an error, as much as is possible will be bought for you.

5. If, for example, 999 marks net are bought, the price goes up only 9% -- all fractions lost.

6. At the end of the game, each player's value will be computed as follows: The number of supply centers each player owns times how many blocks of 100 units you have of its currency (fractions will be carried) Thus, if England wins and you have 2000 pounds (assuming she has 18 centers) you get 180 "credits" for England. The one with the most credits wins. Obviously, once a player is eliminated from a Diplomacy game his currency becomes immediately valueless and all trade in that currency ceases.

7. You may never sell more than 500 units of any

the holdings of each player in the game as they now stand. You must do your own computations to find out how much you are worth in dollars and how much the other people are worth.

9. Unless a country is eliminated, its currency will never drop below unit = 1%. The value of the currency in the other direction has no limit.

10. Anyone may join the Bourse at any time and receive 1000 of each currency still available.

11. No conditional orders will be allowed.

((I'd suggest that before you try to run one of these you call for critical comments, to see if any loopholes or flaws can be found. I personally think Rule 10 should be dropped. A player's strategy can be based on the number of players in the game. I'd also suggest a limit to the number of players in a Bourse -- if there are too many, open a second Bourse. This is a good way to spark reader interest in a game, especially a demo game. The players in the game should not be allowed to play in the Bourse; otherwise the game may be considered a variant.))

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((Ever wonder how to get a good press-interaction going among the various players? A common approach is to spew forth some insults and see who responds. Another is to start a story, as may have been tried in this, which appeared with the SOI moves in 1976AB, in 1901 and all that #59 (13 Feb 1976). The author is unclear; two of the games players were John Piggott and Pete Swanson, who played G and R respectively)).

John awoke. He quickly realized that he was encased in a coffin-box; the top half was transparent and in his first few glances, he saw little else but the six other boxes, each with an occupant. As he shifted his head to have a closer look, some switch must have been tripped, for the top of his tomb swung upwards noiselessly. Quickly, John scrambled out, already claustrophobic. His fear and amazement mounting, he quickly rushed to the other boxes, peering into each one, desperately looking for another to share his trepidation. He gave a small jump for joy when he recognized the blurred shape of one of the reposing figures. Almost manically, he pounded on the top of the top of the receptacle, sobbing. Magically, the top opened, and the recumbent being stirred. Dragging the hapless victim from his resting place, he embraced him.

"Pete, oh Peter!" he wept, attempting to

revive his companion. Swanson (for twas he) regained consciousness under the assault, and as he realized the juxtaposition of his mentor, he struggled free.

"Gerroff! Piggott! Wha.....where are we? What the hell's going on?"

"I don't know. I just....woke in the box over there - I don't know how I, or you, got here, nor where in heaven's name this place is," said Piggott, calming down. "Say, maybe this is heaven....."

"Don't be ridiculous," gulped Swanson. "What are we going to do?"

They both looked toward the other five boxes.

((An invitation, eh? In the next chapter, Piggott grew fangs, had a craving for blood, and "lurched towards Pete's throat." Do you think that this just might be related to Piggott opening F Kis-Bal and A Bar-Fru, and grabbing at War in FOI, even as Russia moved A Sil-Man, but was stood out of Man, by France! Both the game and the press had gotten off to a good start in this one.))

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((The final item for reprint comes from Ethil the Frog #43 (7 Feb 1974). If some of you recognise your self in the description of Andy Davidson, I hope you will swallow hard, and recognise that no publisher survives on cheques and orders alone. Author is John Piggott.))

#### AN EDITORIAL BITCH

In Grafeti 25, Brian Yare discussed the 1st Ethil player poll. Here's what he said:

"Andy Davidson will win this poll because he will get first vote from all or most (Ms. Why? Not because of any great skill on his part, but purely because he is so considerate of them. He never misses his orders, even tho he is in 50 games. He always writes clearly, naming the game and season. Different games always get different sheets of notepaper --- not the nearest scrap of computer printout. The only grouse we have is his lack of press, but we'll forgive him that because of his great care he takes over his orders."

The great Davidson myth strikes again! What theamatrical machinations does Andy utilise to drive normally sane people into paroxysms of illogic when they discuss him? What indeed does anyone see in him? Today, Ethil the Frog clears away the contradictions and explores the hidden

games field don't make much profit, and such money as is taken in normally covers only the cost of paper, stencils, postage and such. These amateurs publish for the response they get, thru the mails; the more interesting the responses, the greater the incentive to get the donkey work of stencilling and duplicating done, to bring out another issue. And if a gamesmaster doesn't get much interesting stuff in return for his effort, he might as well forid the mine.

Here is a catalogue of Andy Davidson's activities in the postal diplomacy field:

1. He writes no interesting articles
2. He writes no interesting letters of comment
3. He writes almost no interesting or funny press releases
4. He produces no sine to send other publishers in trade
5. He writes masses of sets of orders, thus increasing the boring work involved in adjudications (one of the most tedious tasks).

He doesn't seem to do much to justify his existence in the field, does he? Did you say Andy was "considerate" to us, Brian?

I'm not only getting at Andy here, tho --- the description above could apply to any number of players. And at least Andy doesn't make a habit of missing deadlines, and he writes his orders in a decent format which many players could do well to imitate. But he is by far the biggest sinner in that he plays in so many games without contributing anything of real interest to read. I mean, moves aren't really vitally fascinating, as I've mentioned in several issues of this rag.

The point I'm making is that the readers of any amateur publication can be divided into two classes: Those who would be missed if they dropped out of the hobby, and those who wouldn't. The members of the former category can be listed by a glance thru the columns of previous issues of this rag, and a peek at an issue of Games Openings for the publishers who trade with me. People who do not appear on the list..... well, if they don't want to contribute I don't really see what they're doing here anyway, because postal Diplomacy as such could not exist in its present form without the cultural intercourse which goes on between the more active people here. Even a short note from time to

of it, so this discussion will be somewhat piecemeal in this and coming issues.

One important question is what style of play is adopted by the players in the tourney. An insight into this comes from a letter from Bob Sergeant, a successful postal player: " I played (and a lot of other people played) to prevent anyone from getting near 12 centers. I was successful, in that I participated in a 4-way, 5-way and a 6-way draw, but what use was that?"

What use indeed. I mean no disrespect, Bob, but you (and those who played like you) got exactly what you deserved. You played for a draw and that's exactly what you got --- three of them. So what's your beef? But you wouldn't catch me playing that way. Nossir! In the highly competitive, time-shortened world of tournament play, this boy's gonna play to win. That means I try to gain some allies (or maybe just one) and start to sweep the board. Once we're in control, maybe a stab will occur, or we'll melee for the victory, or perhaps agree on a draw. Note that in helping my allies, I substantially increase their chances for winning, in contrast to Sergeant's approach. But it also gives me a reasonable shot at a win, and I value that chance high enough to accept the risk that I've only helped someone else's win.

Incidentally, not everyone agrees with Bob's analysis. Ben Zahlocki, the winner, drew the opposite conclusion, feeling that draws were almost worthless, and thus evolved the coin-flip strategy. In fact, this has been one of my biggest problems in dealing with the considerable criticism that BTRS has generated. I have been repeatedly whipped by contradictory criticisms. Another example is the reduced victory criterion, which for the 1907 deadline we were stuck with was 12. Costikyan and others don't accept anything but 18; Linsey thinks the idea is OK but likes his method of calculating it better. And Richard Martin, one of the players on the top board, suggests that it should be lowered. And so it goes.

But this debate is very healthy. Ultimately, people are discussing why they play Diplomacy, and what constitutes success --- basic issues. In a future issue I will print Greg Costikyan's stout defense of the Rocamora system, and my comments on it. Greg will be submitting that system to DIPCOM XIII, as will a modified BTRS, and Bruce Linsey's others like Russell Blau are perfecting theirs. People are writing and talking and this is good: May the best system win!!

been made, I have a very fundamental disagreement about the structure of the games. The present (as of 8-24) plans are for one round of three games. These would be scored by the Dragon's Teeth Rating System (a sensible choice) to give the winners.

This is no way to select a champion or champions. Would you pick a pro football champ by just counting points for and against? A Boxing king by tallying his knockouts? Of course not, and you can't do it here either. Dippy games are not equivalent or equateable. There is only one way to choose a real Diplomacy Champion: Put the 7 "best" players into one game and see what happens. Otherwise, you have the very real risk that the winner will just be a good player who happened to have lighter competition in his games. They will not be using standbys to replace dropouts, which will produce somewhat less even games.

I suggest a qualifying round of two games. The seven best scores would make it to the championship game. That would make a fine game for commentary, perhaps a Bourne, and as much hoopla as the hobby wants to give it. It assures that if there is a winner, he will have been someone who can triumph over very strong competition.

There is another very serious drawback to the present 3-game plan. I am of the school that believes that when a game starts you sit down right away and write all six other players. Some will be short and some long but they all must be written. I don't know about you, but I would find the prospect of having to write 18 letters immediately quite dismaying. And since you should always reply to your neighbors as soon as you hear from them, that's another 10 or so letters 3 or 4 days later. There is no time to be leisurely: The games will be on three week deadlines, and it's likely that no phoned in orders will be allowed.

This is no way to encourage good negotiating. The typical player will either be forced onto the phone, or is going to have to cut a lot of corners. And heaven help him if he has some other games due around then, or has to publish a zine. The organizers are concerned about balancing what countries people get. After all, only one person can play Russia in the Championship Game; one will get Italy. But the country you get is much less important than the diplomacy that you do. If you think 3 triweekly games starting at once is too much, or that a champ game is best, write Bob Sergeant 3242 Lapine Drive Indianapolis, IN 46224.