

Home of The Zine Column, but otherwise, "content without form" is:

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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This is another one of those stride-briskly-into-the-quicksand issues, for the topic is a sensitive one. Inside is a look at what is probably the biggest dippy cheating scandal to hit England, a look at what constitutes deception of the GM and much more. There is an abundance of British material here, probably because the game is looser there; stunts that would get you severely criticized here is much more acceptable there. Plus there are quite a few characters who will try to pull such a stunt just for the fun of it, even if it has little chance of helping things.

A few quick takes on lastish...Konrad Baumeister is apparently backing off that ill-advised idea...I appreciate your comments on the "Awards", and no, I see no contradiction between criticizing some of these people on other matters and giving them these awards. Actually, I don't have too much to say here, so I'M gonna switch the rest of the front page over to a TZC column, so it won't take as much bite from the rest.

The Zine Column #27

Zine Nooze

A number of my subbers have started their zines this summer, so I thought I'd list:
Al Pearson Route 1 Box 17785 Kearneysville W. Va 25430 (Just Among Friends)
Bernard Sampson 123 Sixth Street Middlesex, N.J. 08846 (Torpedo)
Mike Conner 3214 Beverly Road Austin, Texas 78703 (Lone Star Diplomat)
Jack Masters 25711 N. Vista Fwys Dr Valencia, CA 91355 (Black Frog)

Its interesting to note that three of these of these are Zeroz/Offset. In the next few years, the use of X/O will continue to rise. This will be due in part to new technology coming on stream for photocopying: Fiber Optics. Those machines will have some limitations (the optics are fixed, so the document must move, making books impractical) but they will significantly lower the price of these machines, down to about \$3000 at the bottom of the line. This means greater penetration of these machines into small stores and offices, meaning that access at workplace or via parents will increase. Indeed, the gap in prices between more fannish methods and Xerox is smaller than you may think --- Ron Brown in MM #23 reports that he plans to lay out "well over a thousand bucks" for a new mimeo. Not of course that Ditto is Dead (hm -- good headline!) Indeed, Passchendaele #26 and #27 featured astonishingly good repro, probably as good as the medium is capable of. But lets face it folks, inking drums and pinning up sheets on the line to dry are traditionally fannish, but they aren't very creative, and creativity is what the hobby is all about (the amateur publishing hobby that is).

Fakes are back in center stage again. Eggnog was faked with a modest job. In it is a very old essay -- about 8 years ago. To me, that points a bit of a finger at Ralph Morton, which means that Cuerrier might have had his finger in it too --- some of the humor sounds like his, and not someone like, say, Rod Walker. Jack Maters sez that (turn to page 14)

((Starting things off will be what was perhaps England's most celebrated cheating scandal. It did not occur in some obscure corner of the hobby, but to one of the best known players, in a solidly establishment zine. Our story starts in Ethil the Frog #21, 26 Jan 1973, with an essay by the editor and GM, John Piggott))

TREACHERY IN MALCOLM STREET!

Sometimes, spectators of Ethil games have asked me whether I experience any problems with having some players live so close to me. Up till now, the answer has been a firm "no", but I regret to say that this is no longer the case. Last Thursday, when about half of the players had sent in their orders, I returned to my room somewhat earlier than usual, having decided not to attend a physics practical session. On opening the door, I discovered Andy Davidson industriously copying down various sets of Orders from "A", "B", "D", and "G" games.

Obviously, I couldn't let Andy get away with this. As I saw it, I have three alternative solutions to the problem: I could dismiss him from the games and appoint a standby player, or I could suspend the game and call for a resubmission of the orders, or I could order all Andy's units this season to stand whilst the other players performed their planned manoeuvres. The question was, which? I asked Don Turnbull for his opinion, taking as example a hypothetical situation --- this maybe wasn't quite fair to Don, but I couldn't think of any other way to get Don's views, especially as Andy was in the same room at the time ((!!)) and I couldn't really order him to leave the room while in someone else's house. Anyway, Don advised that a player offending in this way should be chucked out of the games, because altho this would be a legitimate tactic in face-to-face games ((not where I play)) players have paid money to participate in a postal game, and are entitled to receive absolutely fair treatment in matters of this sort.'

I thought this a trifle harsh, on reflection, so for onee I've decided not to take Don's advice. ((I should explain that England does not really have an "ombudsman" tradition as we do. GMs often just consult their peers (other GMs), and most often they consult Don, as he seems to have some sort of Grandfatherly image, and was Britians first postal GM.)) Rather than call for resubmission of orders (which I feel would be unfair to the rest of the players, because Andy already had details of any stabs they might have lined up for him, which he would obviously been unaware of normally), I decided to rule that Andy's units shall stand unsupported for this season of play. I hope that this seems a reasonably fair ruling to the other players.

This business obviously raises the question of whether Andy has been pulling this kind of trick before. Andy denies it, and personally I feel inclined to believe him at this time. ((Why? If Andy had gotten away with this stunt undiscovered, and John had happened to ask him the same question, would he have admitted what he had just done? I can't imagine why he would. It seems to me the same reasoning would apply to the actual question that John asked him.)) It's unfortunate, tho, that he happens to be doing well in all his games, because the suspicion must now automatically arise that his good positions are due to frequent foreknowledge of other players' moves.

I have warned Andy that any repetition of this will result in his immediate removal from all games. In a way, all this is my fault, for not keeping players' orders under lock and key. They will be, in future, tho its going to be a damned nuisance forever locking and unlocking doors. I hope no-one criticises me too heavily over this, because quite frankly I'm already feeling quite pissed off about the whole business. ((Note that last sentence. Its the closest that John can come to actually criticizing Andy. And he seems to be concerend mostly for the extra bother. You would think that Andy's actions would at least rate a few sentences of withering criticism, no? And you would think that in the next issue, Andy would be all knids of contrite. Well, guess again, 'cause next up is from #22))

A number of people have commented on my handling of the Davidson affair recounted last issue. Gratifyingly, most supported the action I took, tho a few thought I should have taken Don Turnbull's advice and cast him out from all his games. Unfortunately,

there have also been a few dissenting voices, like this one:

Andy Davidson: Might I be permitted to say a few words in my defense before a mob of enraged Ethil readers descend on Cambridge and string me up from the nearest lamppost that isn't already festooned with bicycles. I am, of course, referring to the great Spy Scandal as reported in Ethil #21 .

Everyone seems to assume automatically that I was breaking the rules, i.e. cheating (horrified gasps). So, lets take a look at the rules of Diplomacy. What do we find but that "in the Diplomacy period nothing is sacred". In all the face to face groups I've played in this means that looking at other people's orders, if you get the chance, is perfectly permissible. Ah-ha, you all cry, but this is postal play. I can hardly disagree (((!!!))) so we now look at the rules covering postal play then applicable, These are the Ethil house rules as published in #1. The first sentence states, "The normal rules of Diplomacy (9171) will be in operation unless otherwise specified." That seems pretty clear to me; so where's the bit saying that reading people's orders is illegal once the GM has read them? Try as you might, I don't think you'll find it: "Deception of the GM is not tolerated under any circumstances", maybe? I'm afraid that won't do; not only have I not lied to John about this, but I have repeatedly warned him that it was quite possible for me to conduct such espionage, and suggested that he improve his extremely lax security.

Thus, what John is doing, is making up a new house rule to cover the situation, and then applying it retroactively. I can't; stop him from doing that (as John said to me, "I'm the GM and I can do what I bloody well like".) but don't expect me to like it. After all, I have to work on the basis of the rules as they stand, rather than any that might be invented in the future. If I find a loophole in the rules, I don't see why I shouldn't take advantage of it...

That's my main argument completed, so now for a few incidental items. About Don's comments to John: What does money have to do with it? People often pay money to play in face to face games, in the NGC and CUBWC for a start, so surely there's a contradiction somewhere?

There's the idea that John's punishment is more lenient than having me kicked out. That's not so - I don't mind being kicked out, I've got plenty of other games to keep me happy. However, it prolongs the agony having to miss a season (and also the builds) and then struggle on with the crippled remains of a once great country - tho I admit it hasn't had much effect on my position in 1972 ABde.

As for the unfair argument, it's not as if I'm the only person in the country who can do this. lots of players live close to GMs, and those who don't will have advantages that the others don't have. Anyway, if Diplomacy were made completely fair, every game would end in a seven way draw.....

((The whole point is, it isn't fair to all the players equally. If you're playing in a face to face game, and someone reads your orders, won't you take steps to rewrite your orders so that he can't benefit by your espionage? Damn right you will!

((Okay, so this is a postal game. I submit that when a player's orders have been lodged with the GM, it is now, for that player, "after the period for writing down the set of orders" even tho he and other players may still submit further sets of orders up until the deadline period has passed. That player therefore has a right to expect that his orders will not be read by anyone until the adjudications are made, and you must be as aware of this as anyone else.

((OK, my security system was lax. That doesn't automatically allow you to go snooping around in my room, does it? The fact that you told me I ought to tighten up my security is no excuse for your behavior.

((What advantages have those who live far away from GMs? None as far as I can see. And while it's true that you're not the only person who could carry out such antics,

that's going to be small comfort to poor old Evan Evans from Penmaenmawr, who plays postally because his face goes red whenever he plans a stab, when he finds his orders have been read and he doesn't even know it!

((You've brought up a fair amount of verbiage in trying to justify yourself in terms of the rules of Diplomacy and my houserules. As you pointed out, no rule covered this situation, and so I had to make one up. Many times in the past the rulebook and houserules of various magazines have been found inadequate; my present rules are a conglomeration of years of experience in postal play. It is perhaps unfortunate that I applied my new rule retroactively, but I felt, and I still do, that I had no real choice in the matter. If you feel so bad about this, then I suggest you stop bleating about how cruel it is to stick around watching your country disintegrate, and resign like a gentleman and get out while you're still ahead.

((Ultimately, you know, my final answer is one you have already trotted out: I'm the GM and I can do what I bloody well like....))

Then there's your hypocrisy in refusing to accept my orders for "B" game, and then complaining about the lack of orders for the game. And what about the past moans about people who miss moves spoiling the games for others --- another contradiction, I think. There are further aspects of your hypocrisy that I won't go into, 'cos you won't print them, but I'll leave them for people to guess about.

((I presume you are referring to the situation in BritDipCon I, when I (and several others) were able to read sets of orders for War Bulletin games. In particular, I saw Michel Feron's orders for 1971BU; however, my orders had already been submitted at that stage, and I took no action as a result of my espionage. I suppose you have further examples of my "hypocrisy" - your letter suggests as much - but you don't seem to be very willing to put your arguments forward, whatever they may be.))

Finally, should you have any further doubts, Gentlemen of the Jury, God himself has given his verdict. As a trial by combat ((!!)), John and I played two games of Situation 4 - needless to say, I won!

((Yes, and you keep beating me at bar billiards, you bastard; and that's a game I'm supposed to be good at! Never mind, I'm sure Geoff Corker will give you the come-uppance you deserve when he arrives here next October. I hope you don't expect to do any work here, Geoff.....))

Richard Walkerdine:.....As for Andy Davidson, I expect you'd prefer to leave that episode as quickly as possible. Complete expulsion from all games would probably have been a bit harsh for a first offense, especially as it was a first offense not only for Andy but also for any of your readers. Your action and public announcement of the affair will probably guarantee Andy's good behavior, and if you couple this with a warning that anything similar will be dealt with more harshly in future I think you will probably have done as much as anyone could in the circumstances. And that will be my last word on the subject; some things benefit by continued discussion, but with others, it's best to get them over with as soon as possible, and leave them well enough alone. ((And that just about sums up my sentiments)).

((But not mine, naturally, as I have reprinted this whole matter, albeit more than 7 years later. And this sounds like a nice one for a GM poll, especially since I have quite GMs now on my mailing list. How would you rule if you were the GM? If you feel that the impossibility of the event makes an answer unrealistic, then how would you advise another GM? If it matters, assume that the player isn't a DD subscriber:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Do nothing at all | D. Expell him from his games |
| B. Inform players and reset the deadline | E. Other (specify) |
| C. NMR him for that season (what JP did) | |

If the response is large enough, I'll break it down according to experienced/inexperienced, so give me the number of years you've been gaming. If you attack comments, please be sure to indicate that they are off the record, otherwise I'll assume it's OK))

NORTH AMERICAN DIPLOMACY FEDERATION: HOBBY BOGEYMAN OR BOON?

Last December I received in the mail "And Now For Something Completely Different" from Rod Walker, which turned out to be the "specs" for a brand new organization, complete with historical background, a proposed constitution, and a call for suggestions and criticisms. I cackled with glee --- ripping this apart would be such fun! Next, I assembled the tools of my trade: my bound volumes of Quibbler's Quarterly, "The Almanac of Obfuscation", "Nitpicking by Number", plus several items by Robert Sacks, including "Triumph Through Terrific Titles", "Let's do it my way", and of course, "Sacks on Sub-Sub-Committees." I plowed thru the entire affair and came to a dismaying conclusion: I couldn't find any really serious problems. Oh, I had about 20 criticisms, but nothing major, and besides, the Constitution is easily amended. So I sent off the 20+ items to Rod, but told him that I was willing to ratify it even in its present form. And, as it turned out, so was everyone else. This was no accident. Rod has had a lot of experience at this sort of thing, and he had a good idea of what was acceptable. There then followed several issues of a discussion zine, and a round of votes, with the issues on which we were split put off until later. Ratification by everyone but Sacks and Lipscomb followed, and NADF was born.

NADF is a federation of hobby custodians. It is and must be a "federation" because each of the custodians is an independent service, and NADF does not change that. Each of us is still responsible for doing our jobs, including raising the money for it if no other source is available. We are banding together for whatever benefits will accrue to us in doing so, and to benefit the hobby as well.

One of our prime responsibilities will be to replace a non-functioning custodian when the normal methods fail. For example, once upon a time, a certain Boardman Number Custodian absquatulated, but did not appoint a successor. The result was a lot of complaints and delays, and ultimately much more tangled work for the next BNCs. Even today the records are not fully back in order. It will be the NADF's responsibility to see that this does not happen again with hobby custodians.

At present, NADF is in the final stages of internal matters and finalizing its membership. There is no precise answer to the question, "Who is a custodian?" By and large, it is whomever the rest of the custodians think is, a somewhat self-iterative process. If an offer is made, and declined, fine. And if any of the custodians change their minds, they can just resign, and that ends any obligations on both sides. There is neither coercion or obligation, beyond what you want to do.

The first order of substantive business is to locate an NADF Ombudsman. If your game has a Canadian in it, it's covered by the CDO Ombudsman (Cuerrier), or if it's in the PDT, it's covered by me, but otherwise, as of Jan 1, 1980, you were out of luck. I personally know of at least 4 disputes that could have been handled MUCH better had an Ombudsman been available. Of course, if you don't want to use one, fine, but at least this way you have the option. Anyhow, this will almost certainly be Randolph Smyth, and I think that without NADF, the present state of affairs would continue indefinitely.

No sooner did the word get out, than the criticism started flowing. Leading off was Cuerrier who worried that we were trying to "merge" with CDO. But by its very nature NADF is in no position to merge with other organizations. We seek cooperation of course, but this cooperation need not entail any changes in the nature of the other organization. Anyhow, that matter has been cleared up entirely after numerous letters. The rest of the criticism has gone along the lines of: "You're a mass-membership Dippy organization, so a) why wasn't my opinion solicited b) we've seen this before and know it won't work c) You're just trying to kill off the IDA d) You're not organizing this right for a mass-membership outfit e) who needs it. I'm leaving out some of the purely ad hominem stuff.

NADF is NOT intended as a mass-membership organization. Incidentally, I see nothing wrong with them, and while IDA has been a fiasco during the last few years, in its prime it got a lot done for the hobby, but that's another subject

There was also a genuine piece of GM press earlier on, so I doubt if any reasonable player would be fooled: Pete seems to have allowed for this, never actually thinking that anyone would NMR because of it - ((dubious speculation)) tho even if he beleived it would cause NMRs he should still have printed it.

I can find nothing wrong with what Pete has done, and in his position I would have done exactly the same thing. If anything, he was overfair to the affected players, being quite within his rights to carry on without giving the players an opportunity to vvote on whether to allow late orders. Diplomacy is not a game played by gentlemen, and fair play doesn't come into it. If a player finds a way of gaining an "unfair" but leagal way of gaining an advantage - good luck to him. Incidentally, players in Meglo-mania are warned that if the same were to happen here I would make the same decision as peter did.

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((One way of fending off such disputes is to cover these type of stunts, in general or in particular in the House Rules. Very few GMs do so. Here are some that touch on general ethical questions. The first are from Passchendaele:))

XI. Deception of the GM: A player must have the GM's permission before entering a game under an alias: No mention of the use of a penname will be made in the zine. No one may "borrow" his pseudonym ...((by using)) another player's name. A player may mislead the GM and the other players as to his age, sex, job, education, etc if he bel-ives this will improve his chances in the game.

It is forbidden to play several positions in the same game under multiple identites or to use a mail drop location to conceal a fact of importance to the game It is for-bidden to forge the GM's or the publisher's signatire in a letter to another plaer. No one may forge another's signature in a letter to the GM or the publisher. It is forbi-dden to mutilate another's letter and send it to the GM or publisher while making it ap-pear to be authentic. All players are warned against "signing their orders" in the co-coursse of their negotiations with another player.

No one may prejudice an opponent's chances by undermining the information and other services which the publisher and his GM make available to all players as recompense for game- and sub-fees. ((This appears to be ruling out a phoney readjudication, but it is unclear to me if the press stunt above would be bared under this.))

((The next excerpt comes from Hessel's DIMAN #29, 1/22/77:))

III A) Cheating -- "Cheating" is derined as an unsuccessful effort to dec#ive the Games master by submitting orders for moves, retreats, builds and/or removals, and signing an eroneous name thereto, in such a manner as to suggest appear as tho it were written by another person. Such offenses shall be dealt with severely; upon detection, such perpetrators shall be immediately expelled from Diman games and their subscriptions ter-minated with no refund. There is no penalty for sucessful attempts to decive the GM. However, there is no stature of Limitations.

((Next is from the Meglomania 1979 HRs (Chris Tringham)(Chris incidently puts out one \$f the most interesting and chatty zines around and I will be doing a review of it for DD a little later in 1980))

Deception of the GM is not allowed, but everything else is - so don't come complaining to me when another player "cheats", or dec#ives YOU!...If you are in doubt about these rules ((his HRs)), the Diplomacy Rules, or the legality of any scheme to fool the other player, please ask me. If you wish to deliberately mis-order a unit, or are planning to issue a fake readjudication, tell me. As long as its legal, I will be happy to give assistance/advice - but my main concern is toknow about it, so that I don't des-troy your plan unintentionally. (If you had tried to bring about an NMR from a fellow player, then it saves me the worry of looking for his orders and even checking with him to see if he sent orders.) ((I do wonder about that "assistance" bit. I really

games with me know my signature and would have spotted this travesty a mile off anyway! And I never use blue carbon paper, nor is the typewriter much like any of the five I use. ((And what of those not favored with a signed letter from Richard? Or who aren't sure whether he uses 5 typewriters or perhaps a sixth they weren't aware of. And how would anyone know what type of carbon paper he doesn't use??))...

((In the next issue, he presented "some views on the Great Youngstown Readjudication Scandal". In that issue, I might add, Richard totally changed his format and printing style, going from mimeo on 1/4 inch paper to offset digest-style. So much for this supposed GM consistency that players are supposed to spot the lack of))

Peter Birks: The question is: Was it illegal? Some people know the full story, which is too stupid to recount in these pages (no need to agree, Sharp), but I reckon that a forged adjudication is, at the moment, legal. Whether it should remain so is a matter for debate. Let me throw up a test question, tho. Suppose the forger of a fake readjudication telephones the GM to find out whether the readjudication is a forgery. He asks the GM, "Has there been a readjudication?" Is that legal? Or has the player deceived the GM? My personal view is that any player is entitled, at any time, to enquire whether there had been a readjudication or not; but then again, I'm biased.

Robin Brown: ...I agree with ...((Dagger)).. 100%. Any amount of lies, threats and comical letters from anyone, in or out of the game, is perfectly fair and above board. But as the GM does not really exist within the framework of the game itself, he cannot be part of the game or part of the deception. There must be one reliable source of information on which players can rely without question: The GM. Tho I would be the first to agree that I am not a good player I should hate to think that the only way I could gain an advantage would be to behave as someone has toward Stuart. It would be better not to, play at all. I'm very sorry to hear that you not only condone this sort of thing but admit to having taken similar action yourself. "Tradition is not the word I would use to describe this sort of conduct. I doubt very much if Alan Calahmer intended it when he game the world Diplomacy.

Greg Hawes ((Speculates and offers some proof that Birks did it, and indicates he was in fact fooled, concluding:)) "Oh well, I'm on my guard now."

Editorial Comment: There was another letter from Stuart, but I'm afraid that I've mislaid half of it; roughly it accepted my ruling but restated the case for changing the rules to cover this sort of matter. There has also been a great deal of (largely ribald) verbal comment from others, the long-term player coming down massively on the side of the forger, as was only to be expected.

Now, I know who did it, so I won't comment on Greg's letter. So far as Pete's question goes, this is obviously a nasty point - I think it is deception but of course its impossible to prove it was intentional. Robin, I think puts the case very well for the small but obviously earnest minority, tho I don't think we can bring Alan Calahmer into it - did he envisage postal Diplomacy at all? I can only disagree - like Greg, who admits to having been deceived completely, I learned mistrust the hard way. My view is that anything goes except deception of the GM, because that is the way I understand the game. I can even imagine cases where a breach of a law of the land would not in my view be unethical in Diplomacy! ((Exactly, and this is part of the anything-goes problem. What's to prevent a player from pulling the orders out of the GMs mailbox; thus NMRing his opponent? Or intercepting the zine from a player's mailbox? None of these involve deception of the GM.))

Robin's argument is that the GM should be above suspicion. Fair enuf. In the same way you might regard the Archbishop of Canterbury as above suspicion, but before you commit yourself you would do well to make sure that the tall, robed, impressive apparition on your doorstep really is an Archbishop and not just Duncan Morris in Drag... ((I side squabely with Stuart and Robin, and I like Cuerrier's way of putting the matter. Such actions undermine the services that players have paid for, and that's not fair))

