

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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GMing Errors

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Its been about 16 months since the last "Oaklyn Warning" here, and in that time a few new things have occurred, and of course, a lot of new people have entered the hobby. If there were one person to avoid in the entire hobby, that would be Bernie Oaklyn. As a GM, he is the mostly intensely criticized GM in the history of the hobby; even his freinds criticise it. His games are riddled with errors. Even the attempts to clear these up are as often as not used as pretexts to berate the players, or for further waffling. For example, the 3-31-81 issue of FLD had this with the F09 results for 78CQ: "What a mess! France has either had a flying dutchman ((an extra unit)) on the gameboard for several gameyears or owns one more center, possibly one of Germany's named centers" A respectable GM would have checked the records and given an unambiguous answer. He has also engaged in a number of unethical practices, such as GMing games with his own sin as player (James Alan), using players at the same address, but hiding this by having them get mail at their freinds house. He has tried to get a player to cover-up a very serious GMing error, and was removed as a guest GM (by Don Horton) after a chorus of complaints from the players for GM-interference in the game. Second, as a player he is very hard on GMs. Three GMs (McLendon, Sergeant, and Kendter) WERE ACCUSED by him of a "set-up" when things did not go well for him. He has entered games as a co-player with his son without telling the GM, and several GMs have caught him at outright lies. He was recently expelled from 4 games, 2 for refusing repeated requests to renew his sub, and 2 for violating a House Rule against offering another player a cash bribe. Most GMs, for a variety of reasons, will not permit him to play. Third, and perhaps most serious, is his dishonest attitude toward those in the hobby. He just plain makes things up, usually for his own zine. He has attributed to me actions and statements that I have never taken. Other targets have been Vic Carpenter (accusing him of dropping out of games) Ron Kelly, Lee Kendter, Rod Walker, John Michalski, Fred Davis and many more. He makes life very difficult for those trying to do their job. Earlier this year, Lee (as BNC) asked him for the country assignments for the list of players that Bernie had sent him, so that a number could be assigned (the BNC needs this). Bernie response was to heap abuse on him, making wild charges about Lee's "private rating system" (there is no such thing) in the aforementioned FLD issue of 3-31-81. Many of you have probably seen or heard of the letter that Bernie printed from Don Ditter (as it was reprinted elsewhere in Black Frog). Well, it turns out that Bernie removed material from it without using the traditional "... " notation, but worse, entire sections were completely rewritten. Worse, 2 entire paragraphs were added (the last 2), including this sentence, "I hope, for the hobby's sake, that you continue to publish your fine gamezine and that you will continue to overcome the continual barriers placed before you." This did not sit well with Don, who wrote me recently, "Bernie's answer to my irritation was, 'I just wrote what I thought you meant.' With such logic,

we could all be in trouble." He goes on to say, "He does put a lot of work into his zine, but his destructive nature does the hobby no good. The hobby would be better off without him." Bernie is still around, and will be as long as he feels like publishing, and as long as he can find a few pubbers willing to let him play. He apparently gets new subbers from those just entering the hobby. But please, don't play there, and don't believe that he says about people in the hobby without checking with them.

I wanted to make a few comments about reprinting, and about printing letters. As you know, hundreds of items have been reprinted in DIPLOMACY DIGEST. All have one thing in common: The name of the contributor is given. I would be expected to be criticized by the hobby if I dropped this policy. The same principle, it seems to me, should apply regardless of the format of the material reprinted: Articles, letters, or artwork. With an increasing proportion of zines using high-tech reproduction (Xerox or offset), more are reprinting artwork, done not by the editor, but by someone else. Sometimes these are e.g. drawings per se, sometimes they are cartoons with new captions. The ones in Just Among Friends are my favorite, with very clever captions relating to people in the hobby. Rarely, however, are the contributors named. They should be. If you see the name nearby, or if you don't think it will survive your printing process, the name should be added --- it only takes a few seconds, and a tiny amount of space. Credit should be given where credit is due --- for articles, letters, and artwork.

A bit of a controversy has arisen in the pages of Europa Express about Gary Coughlan's policy of often publishing just excerpts from people's letters, and in some cases, breaking up a letter into parts when it deals with multiple topics. This question arose before in England, when Richard Sharp had the same procedure. Richard at that time said he was getting, as I recall, 50-80 letters per issue, and there obviously wasn't room for all of them. Some of his snippets got down to the size of just phrases. Personally, I think the idea is fine. It has two advantages. It allows the editor to include a huge number of writers. EE #10 has letters from 30 people! This gives a very attractive mixture of different views (of course, the fact that he had 43 pages in that issue certainly helped!). Also, this permits the letters to be grouped by topics, making it much easier to follow a discussion, and to see differing points of view on some topic presented side-by-side. The main disadvantage of such a procedure is that it takes much more time. One must be very organized to get this sorted out into topics when it is done, and editing does take time. While I'm on the subject, I should say that this was a very interesting issue, with additional articles, hobby nooze, and loads of press (including Bruce Linsey rearranging the names of other players in the game to new and sinister meanings). He has 17 subbers from Europe, more, I'm sure than any other US dipzine ever, except DW. No longer is EE a zine of great "promise" --- it really is accomplishing things (Gary Coughlan 4614 Martha Cole Ln Memphis TN 38118).

I just got from Andy Lischett the tattered shreds of the cover sheet, which is all he got of DD #53. The USP"S" gave him a contents-lost form. They also took a pen and scribbled all over the stamp. They lost my zine, but were going to make damn sure that I didn't use that stamp again!

Recently, a fad has arisen of publishing a "playlist" --- what the editor was listening to when he did all this boring typing. What I've been listening to is CNN --- Cable Network News. This is a 24-hour all news TV station (the signal is distributed via satellite feed). It's been in operation only a little more than a year, and is obviously understaffed. But that colossal amount of time available means it can give an amazing depth to its treatment of the news. Right now, there is interest in what the Polish government is telling its people, so CNN has been showing live and uncut the Polish evening nooze in TV --- direct from Warsaw. All that's added is the translator, so you see what the Polish people see. If they want to spend 20 minutes showing the latest photographs from Saturn, they can do it (and beauties they were). If some big bill passes Congress, they can put together a panel discussion and talk about it for 10 minutes --- on the regular evening news, it would be lucky to get 30 seconds. Plus they've got Daniel Shorr, one of my most favorite newsmen/commentators. As I type, they are running Robert Poli's resignation Press Conference --- live and unedited.

Shall We Devide The Hobby?

Some people like to play dippy postally. Some like to write articles, some keep rating systems, some publish, some like to place orphans, some GM, some play in variants some run tournaments, some keep the hobby's records (BNC, archivists, etc) some design variants, some favor writing press, someone else does a Zine Directory, other contribute letters-to-the-editor. Many people do more than one, and there are a few lunatics who try to do everything. The wide variety of rules gives the hobby a richness and diversity. When I look at how someone participates, I look at those areas where they do contribute. I consider this to be a "positive" approach.

Quite the opposite has been touted recently. Here, the critic concentrates on what the person isn't doing --- and of course criticizes them for it. Editorializing in #3/4 of his Coat of Arms, Steve Arnawoodian says that there are those who "don't play in any Diplomacy games as far as I know. From what I can tell they are simply hanging around to make life miserable for those of us who play games." And of course there is a penalty for this failure-to-participate: "I really can't see why anyone who isn't playing has the right to mouth off." He names me, Fred Davis, and Rod Walker. These sentiments were echoed by co-editor Tom Mainardi, who says that me, Walker and Davis "should crawl back into your shells", and "you guys have a lot of nerve spouting off." Writing in Whitestonia #43, John Caruso notes that "these guys don't play games ... and they could give two shits about our hobby." (no names are given).

Fred I don't know about, but there are people like Rod Walker and Konrad Baumeister who don't play postally any more. So what? Why is it that we have to look at what people don't chose to do rather than what they do do? As for myself, I do play postally. I'm in 2 games and that may go up to three shortly. However, I doubt that this will be enough for these busybodies. Arnawoodian suggests that, "Perhaps the obnoxious few should try playing in 25 games of diplomacy." And Caruso notes, "So we are the ones with the experience, the ones who are fair, the ones who care. Not the guys who play in 1 game every 35 years." I have joined only one new game in the past 3 years. There was a time I was in 8 games, but it was too many. I am comfortable with my present load, and if thats not enough to suit others, thats just too damn bad

Nor is this the only focus on what people don't do. Caruso notes that these troublemakers, as he calls them, "very seldom GM", and says, "If you need help, get in touch with ...((he names 9 people))...or any of your reliable pubbers who GM games." Not pubbers, mind you, but pubbers who GM games. Who does that shear off? The pubbers who don't GM --- you guessed it, Berch and Walker.

I have never GMed postally and I never will. The reason is simple. I don't think I'd do a very good job at adjudicating postal games and getting out the results accurately and promptly. So why should I ask someone to play under me when there are plenty of people around (like Caruso) who can and do this job well? So I do what I enjoy --- writing editorials, doing the Lexicon, etc, but mostly reprinting articles.

Nor is this the end of their divisiveness. These guys talk about "the self-appointed big-shots" and "those who supposedly control the hobby." The best response to this garbage is a contemptuous sneer. Whether it comes in the form of a boast, such as "We are the people who run the hobby" (honest, that's a direct quote from a recent zine!) or in the form of criticism of others, its straight demagoguery. The same goes for talk like "they are the ones who try to force their opinions on everyoneelse." (that from Steve). Ridiculous. No one can force opinions on others.

This is an old game, and its called "Lets devide the Hobby." As Steve puts it, "Yes, I think the answer is that this 1% of the Diplomacy postal hobby would do very well if it went on its own.", and complains that zines printing the letters from these people are "wasting my money." There have been other such attempts --- those who insisted that everyone take sides in the TDA-IDA controversy, or geographically --- those who wanted to view things in terms of New Yorkers vs Everybody else. So now it will be those who don't play vs those who do, or some such nonsense. To hell with that talk. This hobby should be open to anyone wanting to contribute.

Kicking this issue off is the following item from Fall of Eagles #46 , Jun 1980, and is written by its editor, Richard Hucknall;

STORM OVER FINISTERRE

Recently, I was asked to arbitrate a dispute over a GMing decision and I thought you might be interested to hear the details as the episode does illustrate how careful and exact a GM must be. In this case several apparently unimportant events which were not properly dealt with led to wholesale disaster.

The game concerned is Ardrossan, an invitational regular Diplomacy game in Finisterre and those involved are Graham Box (GM), John Sandell (Turkey) and James O'Fee (Russia). The facts, ascertained from lengthy telephone conversations with all 3, are:

F is not being produced at present as Graham is busy with other things. However, he continues to run the games and the results are printed up in Mike Allaway's Pyrrhic Victory. The FO4 adjudication for the game appeared in PV #28. In this issue, there is some confusion over the next deadline for the F games. On page 3 at the end of Mike's editorial, Mike printed "NOTE THE DEADLINE UNDER THE FINNISTERRE GAMES SHOULD ALL (BOTH) BE PUT BACK BY *ONE WEEK* (I.E. ADD SEVEN DAYS TO THEM)". Tucked away in the middle of the zine on page v of the section including the F games it said "the next Diplomacy (and other games) deadline is TUESDAY 22nd APRIL"; and then on the back page "FINISTERRE DEADLINESTUESDAY 29th APRIL."

On the receipt of PV #28, John Sandell noticed a GMing omission - Russia was entitled to a build but was shown as "no change". So, on April 15th, John Sandell wrote to the GM pointing out this omission and saying, "if I don't hear from you I'll assume the build is A(xxx) and that the deadline will still be May 6th." (Richard has removed the name of the build) Graham received the letter and filed it away until he had time to reply. He never did reply as he was too busy.

On April 29th, the intended deadline, James O'Fee phoned Graham with his R orders which just so happened to be a stab on John Sandell's Turkey! The same evening Graham decided to hold over the game because he had not notified anyone of the missing R build and because of the confusion shown by John concerning the date of the deadline. Apparently players in other F games were also confused and Graham decided to hold these over also.

On May 1, Graham tried to contact all the Ardrossan players to tell them of the new deadline of May 17th. He succeeded in contacting John but failed to get James. Around this time James wrote to John (under the impression that the deadline had passed) informing him that he had stabbed him! PV #29 was then published showing the new deadline of May 17th but James objected and claimed that the deadline of April 29 should be adhered to and John Sandell NMRed. I was then approached by Graham and James to arbitrate.

This sorry chapter of errors began with PV #28 and the confusion over the deadline. I know it was confusing because I myself am playing in a F game and I confess that I didn't take the trouble to sort it all out. Instead I sent in orders well before the earliest possible deadline, and left it at that. The blame for the confusion must lie with Mike Allaway. He was the one producing the zine and should have made it more plain, altho I accept that he may well have been mucked about by Graham. Having accepted the deadline was not clear, it is difficult to suggest what Graham could have done apart from the very expensive act of advising all players of the correct date. I suspect he was already thinking of the possibility of holding the games over that had missing orders.

However, with Ardrossan, Graham had the perfect opportunity of ensuring that at least the players in the game knew the correct deadline. As John had pointed out the build error, Graham should have advised all players of the Russian build and at the same time he could have clarified the deadline date. By forgetting to deal with John's letter the affair was made worse and Graham has only himself to blame for the ensuing problems.

On the evening of the deadline Graham decided he would hold the game over --- presumably having re-read John's letter - but he did not mention this when James rang with his orders. Had he done so then James would certainly not have written the "sorry I stabbed you" letter a few days later to John. I don't know if Graham had made his decision to hold over the game, before or after he spoke with James, but I wouldn't criticize Graham for not telling James of this even if he had already decided. Personally, I never advise players if a game is to be held over as it can give a player who knows it will be held over an unfair advantage. There is nothing to stop him contacting another player after the deadline and asking him how he ordered. The other player, thinking his moves safely with the GM and the deadline passed, may well divulge his moves thus giving away his strategy only to find a little later that the game is held over. Altho this option is always there for any player, I don't think its fair for the GM to divulge this information prior to the zine appearing.

James should really have had more sense than to write John the "sorry I stabbed you" letter. Altho this was done with the noblest of motives, a player of James' experience should have appreciated that foul-ups of this kind can, and do, happen, and that its always safest to wait until the moves are seen in black and white in the zine.

The decision is really a straightforward one between adjudicating with the orders to hand at April 29th and MNRing John Sandell, or holding the game over and allowing John to submit orders in the sure knowledge that James intended to stab him that season. No matter what decision it is certain to adversely affect either John or James. In fact, if the game were adjudicated and John NMRed then players in other F games that were held over would surely have a good case for their games to be adjudicated on the same basis.

I believe that John's letter of April 15th is the key. While pointing out the build omission he also, in effect, asked for a clarification of the deadline. Not that John was confused by the statement in PV #28; he simply didn't see the deadline on page v, but had seen the deadline on page back and added 7 days as instructed on page 3. So altho John believed the deadline was May 6, he was asking Graham to let him know if he intended extending the deadline beyond this date in view of the fact that John thought Graham would be advising all players of the Russian build. The letter put the ball squarely in Graham's court and as John heard nothing more he was entitled to think that the deadline was May 6.

My decision is to condemn quite strongly the inept way Graham has handled the game since PV #28. I appreciate Graham has had more important things to do but this is really a case of a GM spoiling a game. Unfortunately, what is done cannot be undone and I can see no alternative to agree with Graham that the game should have been held over. I believe it would be totally unfair to penalize John with an NMR when he had, in effect, asked for a confirmation of the deadline. Without doubt, James has had a rough deal and is entitled to feel aggrieved at the way Graham has handled the game. In fact I think James is entitled to some form of compensation as he can probably claim with some justification that the game has been spoiled for him...

I'm sure that eventually Graham made the correct decision to hold the game over and his bad handling of the game created such a situation that this was the fairest way out of it. I'm sure you'll agree that it does demonstrate just how careful and precise a GM must be if a game is to flow without incidence.

((I find Richard's comments about never advising players, prior to publishing, that a game has been delayed/held over, unpersuasive. A player is foolish to reveal his actual moves until he is sure that the game is locked in, and I'm not sure the GM is obligated to protect the players from this particular folly. Richard's notion that he can prevent this by saying nothing "prior to the zine appearing" is not realistic. People do not get their zines all on the same day. A Player, having just read that the game is delay^d, can phone a player much more distant from the GM, and casually ask if he got his zine yet. If the answer is no, he can lie, say that he hasn't

gotten it either, and then try to worm out of him his moves (perhaps starting with a dishonest version of his own moves to loosen his victim up). There is nothing a GM can do about this. Of course, this is only a sidebar on the above.)

 The following appeared in Paroxysm #20 and was written by Robert Correll (1-11-76)

1973GM Transfer of Game to Paroxysm

It is my understanding that Burt Labelle((publisher of Pellucidar)) wishes that the game be transferred to another zine. I have recieved a request from Blair Cusack that the game be transferred to Paroxysm. Robert Correll has agreed to GM this game to its conclusion at no charge to the players on the understanding that A) all players must agree to the game's transfer to Paroxysm, and B) that FO9, the season in which Burt Labelle allowed 3 Canadian players to NMR because of the postal strike in Canada be replayed. Altho it is unfortunate that Len Howard's orders were printed and adjudicated, I do not think it is fair to consider the season legitimate when 3 of the 4 players NMRred at no fault to themselves. A postal strike is a postal strike , and this is postal Diplomacy. I think this is especially binding as to my knowledge, the players were informed prior to the strike that the game would continue ((??))

I have been talking to Doug Beyerlein in this regard, and he noted that if such an injustice were allowed to stand, there is every possibility that the game would be declaired irregular. If the transfer to Paroxysm is acceptable under these conditions please drop me a line as soon as possible..... ((All players, including Len, approved, and Randolph Smyth went on to win the game. Of course, with Correll making his acceptance of the game conditional on Len's approval of the replay, he didn't really have much choice in the matter, did he? I hasten to add that RC did make the better choice))
 XXX

What follows is extracted from Randolph Smyth's article "Could you be a GM?" which appeared in The National #11, 9-4-79 The article gives a wealth of useful advice about GMing, but the portion I've selected here is the last section, as it deals with the theme of this issue.

....Finally, a little test to see how you would perform as a GM in some sticky situations. I've given you 5 "messes" which are not unlikely to arise (you can count on an average of perhpas 2 such problems in the course of each game). Cover the page and work through the questions below before reading the answers at the end - no cheating
 QUESTIONS:

- (1) While GMing a game, you moved, and one of the players NMRred on the next two dead-lines. You replace him with a standby, but within a few more weeks, a letter arrives from him. He says he never received your change of address notice, and his letters to your old place were not forwarded; he only saw your new address listed in another zine. Do you leave things as they are, or will you now kick the standby out and give the original player his position back?
- (2) You receive phoned-in orders from a player and read them back to him. The day after the deadline, you adjudicate the game and notice that you've written "F Edi-Nor" you can't remember whether he ordered the unit to North Sea or Norwegian Sea. He's told you something about the diplomatic situation on the phone, so you know that a delay may hurt his chances as much as leaving the unit unordered. Will you try to fone him back to confirm his order after the deadline? If so, and he's not in, then what?
- (3) A player claims that the orders he submitted last season were not the ones you printed in the zine. You normally throw out orders as you adjudicate, so there's no way to check this. One of the other players has stabbed him, so replaying the season will displease others. What do you do?
- (4) Several months after a player NMRs and his position is ruined, you come across his orders, misfiled, which would have given him an excellent game, This problem has been raised before: the only solution suggested was to burn the offending orders at midnight and scatter the ashes. Would you dispose of the matter similarly, or are you bound to reveal it and try to rectify the situation? How?

(5) A couple of players in one of your games have a real battle going, complete with stabs -- and hard feelings. One of the players is also in another game, in a delicate relationship with another power whose player is in the process of dropping out. You neglected to call a standby on the first NMR, and the first player's opponent submitted unsolicited standby orders for the position going into disorder. The intent and effect of these orders need not be described further! Your standby list is short, but will you accept these orders from a player who is clearly only interested in a cross-game feud?

ANSWERS: (of a sort)

....None of the questions have right or wrong answers. In these cases, tho, each involves a specific oversight by the GM, and could have been avoided if the procedures had been better. You may be able to avoid these specific problems as a result, but the exercise is really intended for you to provide your own answers to the following:

(1) Are you interested enough in GMing to have worked thru the questions as instructed? If you skimmed the questions and skipped down here to brilliant answers on a silver platter, you may be in trouble when real problems arise in your games.

(2) Did you come up with a solution for each situation; more important, did you appreciate that other people might have good arguments to use against your decision? As a GM, you have to set a delicate balance sometimes, between being decisive enough to propose a solution to a hazy problem in spite of some mild objections, and being flexible enough to yield to a higher authority (probably the Ombudsman) if there is serious opposition to your ruling.

(3) How well are you able to articulate the pros and cons, and the thought process that led to your decision? Do you have a definite procedure to follow in case of future objections? As important as the decision itself is the preception by the players that the GM has done his best with a tough problem. To paraphrase somebody or other, you must not only govern well, you must seem to govern well. Without being too wordy, take a paragraph to explain your discussion ((decision??)) rather than a sentence to announce it --- it will pay off.

((That "answer" #1 was pretty sneaky, eh? But Randolph makes a good point with it. Don't think these type of incidents don't occur, or are very rare. Situation (3) occurred this year in a LoM, and a recent incident in, of all places, Randolph's FSF was parallel to (1) (it involved a player who moved, but GM sent to wrong address). Doug Beyerlein once fell victim to (4) (a misfiled order), tho I believe he caught it in time. Situations similar to (5) have occurred several times in the past.))

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The next dispute is drawn from Greatest Hits #75, August 1980, GM and editor is Pete Birks. In most British games, players submit W builds along with Fall orders, contingent on whether they are getting them, of course. The scene is 1979GZ, S04 results:

A little explanation here. There was a misadjudication in FO3, whereby I put the English unit in Pic rather than Bel. I sent out a readjudication to all players correcting this (G built A Kie, E was eliminated). But on deadline day I received a letter from Malcolm Whytock saying ((Malcolm was Germany))....

"The problem is that #74 has only just been forwarded to me and unfortunately there is an error in 1979GZ..."

Malcolm then goes on to point out the error, and the result of the correction. He then continues, ..."I have assumed we are now on a double deadline ((game delay)) - the exact same thing happened in FO1 and we went on a double deadline then - and so I have not sent in any orders - I hope that's alright!"

Unfortunately it most decidedly isn't. The HRs state on Page1, Rule (3) that the players should send in 2 sets of orders, one assuming that the error will be corrected, the other assuming that the adjudication was correct as given. I see no choice therefore but to NMR Malcolm. The reason for a double deadline after FO1 was that the error was not pointed out in time to me, so the situation is not exactly the same. Sympathies to Malcolm, but he really has himself only to blame. ((Next is from #76)).

Michael Yeo ((French player)):"Your decision ... is interesting, if only for the reasons given. My first reaction was naturally to ask for a copy of the HRs ... but then remembered that someone had done this before. Malcolm has presumably already drawn your attention to the press in GH #68 where he asked for one, and told that they were out of print, but were all fairly straightforward. Unfortunately, you didn't mention Rule 3.

I then turned back to FO1 where he says the same thing happened, but you claimed you weren't told of the mistake in time. GH #70 seems to differ on this point: "... Someone asked for a holdover (players were notified) and since I am 3 sets of orders short (2 more than I expected) I can only assume that they think it will be granted."

So it would look as tho the reason for the holdover was the number of people who hadn't submitted their orders rather than anything else....However, what he may well have remembered is that there was another error in FO1 (which you never owned up to!) regarding the placement of one of Germany's units. When sending in my orders (the first set) for FO1 I pointed this out, and told you that I had drawn Germany's and England's attention to it. This was never to my knowledge officially readjudicated (altho we correctly assumed that it had been) and so it is that mistake which makes it a different situation (2 errors in 1901 is different after all!) I would agree with you that Malcolm has only himself to blame, as on both occasions I have written to him early making it clear there had been a mistake. He can't really be blamed for not reading HRs he has been told are out of print!

Malcolm Whytock: Thanks for the NMR. Totally deserved of course and I usually expect to get kicked in the teeth thusly whne I think I'm doing the correct thing. What made it worse was that you knew what my position was in that I was 300 miles, or whatever, from home and you cannot have expected me to have the HRs with me or be able to read them from that distance.

You say that I am wrong in claiming that the situation was the same as in FO1 because the error was not pointed out to you in time. If this was the case then my memory must be failing me because I clearly remember receiving the readjudication well before sending in my orders. When the adjudication came out the game was held over not because someone had asked for a double deadline but because they had not written at all! Thus I had a lot more right to a DD than they did. I'm no lawyer (I'm no anything) but I did watch The Paper Chase (and good it was too) and would this alone not prove that you werw wrong in your decision (Precedence or something).

Peter Birks, GM: I think the main task here is for me to sort out those facts which I considered relevant in deciding whether to hold 79GZ over last issue. First, knowing t that Malcolm was 300 miles from home and unlikely to have the HPs with him was, regrettably not a matter that I could consider. Secondly, the fact that Malcolm was at an address which made it likely that he would not receive the readjudication in good time was also irrelevant --- if Malcolm chooses to be at an address where adjudications or readjudications do not reach him in time, that is hardly my fault. He could quite easily have informed me of his address before that deadline. He failed to do so. Thirdly, the ease with which I could have held over the game is something which I no longer consider --- taking the line of least resistance is the habit of most GMs and probably causes more trouble than anything else. By way of example, I think I slightly did this with the FO1 adjudication (because I had not yet printed the HRs) on the grounds that I would cause a furor if I ran the game 3 orders short. Altho I hope to show that the situations were different, I also claim that you can't expect to be able to tie GMs like precedent restricts some judges. The GM, to be cruel, is not judge, but God. If he made a mistake nine seasons ago, that does not mean he has to make the same mistake again and the player has no right to assume that he will do so. Having said all that, I must re-emphasize that the situations were not identical.

In reply to Mike Yeo, I'm surprise that he has no copy of the HRs...Malcolm... has received a copy, but didn't have it with him. That is the first point which makes the situation in FO1 and SO4 different. So far as I recall, the readjudication for FO1, which was substantial, was between 3-week deadlines (another difference) and so,



far from having over a fortnight to diplom, 7 days was more likely. Third, the mis-  
sed adjudication this time could be perceived and corrected by all players with the  
exception of not knowing the German build which, obviously, Germany would have known  
(but would Germany have known that the other players knew? Or would he assume they  
didn't know, and thus the game would have to be held over?). Once again, so far as  
I recall, this was not the situation with the FO1 error. 4th, as Mike points out, there  
was an error that was not readjudicated (and which I forgot to mention in the holdover  
but did confirm in telephone calls) until very shortly before the planned SO2 deadline.  
I am not doing all this to justify my actions in SO4, simply to point out why my  
actions in FO1 and SO4 were different. I reiterate that mistakes in the past, if they  
occur, cannot be used to tie the GM in the present.

And so, I not only stand by my decision, but I remain convinced that I was right.  
I hope people do not imagine, when a decision is made which affects them seriously and  
which easily could have been avoided with a holdover, that I am being deliberately  
malicious and malignant. I am not. I had a long long thnk over adjudicating 79GZ  
last time, and might well, when a less experienced GM, have held the game over. But,  
after pacing the carpet for 10 minutes or so, and mulling things over (including such  
points as Malcolm being 300 miles away from the address to which I had sent the re-  
adjudication) I decided that (1) the HRs are specifically clear on this point, so that  
to hold over would result in me breaking the HRs, and therefore open to indefensible  
criticism from another player in the game ((I wonder if his HRs specifically oblige  
him not to hold over the game. Unless they do so oblige him, the GM has a defense))  
. (2) that Malcolm had only himself to blame for not being familiar with the HRs, that  
even if he had not received the HRs, he should have sent in a conditional set of orders  
, and that his failure to do this was a result not of logical thought but a lack of  
commonsense and common courtesy to myslef and to toehr players in the game. Therefore,  
I adjudicated the game, knowing that I would cause the flak, which I have done.

GMs earn their money at times, I tell you.

((Whew! That was a long one, but I hope it was worth it. It does touch on several  
themes common in error situations. If the GMs error becomes small and correctable  
enough, he may well place the entire burden on the player to take care of it. Second,  
a factor that a player thinks ought to be taken into consideration may well be viewed  
by the GM as irrelevant. Third, a game delay is a cost, and the GM must decide if the  
circumstances justify this cost, and will not automatically grant it. There is a limit  
to how accomodating a GM will be. Fianlly, people's memory of what happened even just  
a few gameyear's ago can be surprisingly selective --- or innacurate.))

~~~~~  
This next horror story comes from Lies, Deceits, and Nefarious Schemes #55, April 1981
and its by its editor and GM, Jerry Jones:

On a related matter let me show you what can happen in a Gand and allow me to ask what
should be the correct resolution. In 1979P I have screwed Stan Johnson. It was not
intentional. It was a combination of errors, errors that had to all fall into place
perfectly for the mistake to happen. Basically, it is this. Two units move to the
same space. On the typed adjudication sheet, neither was underlined. The correction
was made on the sheets mailed to the players in the game. Here comes the first error.
Apparently the corrected sheets did NOT go to the players in the game. They must have
gone to someone else not in the game. I had my sheet with the corrections on it. Prob-
lem #2: As the orders cam in for the game a few of the players made mention of the er-
rors but I checked over to my sheet and they had been corrected so I skipped over the
comments. Now, here comes the next boo-boo. When I laid out the game for adjudication,
I grabbed one of the "extra" LDNS copies by mistake ((pubbers usually print more copies
of an issue than they actually need)) rather than the corrected one and for some reason,
that I cannot explain, I allowed one of the standoff moves in, and adjudicated thusly
(i.e. as if, in the previous season, one of the moves had succeeded, whereas in fact both
had failed)). Also, Stan had not seen the error and had ordered his unit out of a space
that in one issue I had said it entered. So now everything is screwed up. And what's

worse is that its a no-win situation. How do I correct it? To replay the season is n not totally fair to the others. May e a stab ocured that by replaying the season would cause to be ineffective. I can't allow Stan to reorder his units. I can guaren-tee that he would not have done what he did and his position would be better than it is by just letting the units stand from where they are.

I understand (hopefully others do also) that this is just a game and we should not get too bent out of shape over its outcome, but Stan has put a lot of time and effort into the game and for it to be destroyed because of a blunder by me is more than I can stand. If it was anyone else but Stan I would be totally destroyed by this. Many players in the hobby would take a matter like this to God himself but I feel that Stan will deal directly with me on this. Maybe I am wrong and I wouldn't blame Stan if he were to raise all kinds of hell. I guess what I am trying to do is apologize to Stan and to all of the other players in the game and to all the players in LDNS as well. Something like this shouldn't have happened here but it did and I am at a loss for words. So I am asking all subbers to LDNS and the players in 79P to offer their sugges-tions as to how this should be handled so I may resolve this quickly. ((Alas, I have no idea how this all turned out. #55 was the la t issue of LDNS I ever got, and I don't know that another was published. In the game report, which just gave the correct positions, he suggested "Either F11 can be replayed, the game continues as shown or call a draw." He explicitly and directly left the decision up to the players, saying, "I will abide by any devision you make" ---- without saying how they should go about making this decision (a vote?). Turning it over to the players is a novel approach , but I am dubious. Even if left to a vote, most will just vote their board position, and the GM is hardly in a position to tell them not to do that. This seems to me to be just a formula for delay.))

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((To round things out is my letter which appeared in Murd'ring Ministers #23, 8-15-80))

Thank for your plug in MM #21. Also, I noticed several people used my name there ((in regard to the "Black Hole Affair")) and I'd like to make a few comments of a more general nature.

We are all of us human and so we all make mistakes. And sooner or later, all of us are bound to be victimized by such an error. So we don't really differ in that regard. Where we do differ --- and thus where you can get a measure of a person's character --- is what happens in the aftermath of an error, especially one that can't really be rectified ((completely)).

Is the apology unambiguously broadcast, or just muttered? Is the apology ac-cepted for what it is, or does the victim just use it as a sharp stick to poke the malfeator? Do people take responsibility for their actions, or do they say, "He made me do it."? Do meople try to limit the consequences of the error, or try to widen the conflict? Does the malfeator try to learn from his mistakes or does he act resentful that the victim brought the matter to light? Does the person use inflammatory or ab-usive language? If the victim (as is often the case) is a little bit to blame too, does he "own up" to even that mild indiscretion?

More important, does the person genuinely try to respolve the matter and get on with the game? Being a good GM is more than just accuracy and promptness. It also means that you must be able to admit that an error has been made in judgement, and that you try to find a way to ameliorate the damage. And a good player does more than get his moves in on time and keep his sub up. He must also cooperate with the GM when er-rors occur, and not view it ((just)) as an opportunity to clobber the GM.

These comments, I might add, are not directed at any specific people in particular. ((Thats it for the theme of this issue. I had thought I had a bit more on this exact topic when I started, but some of the items, on close inspection, did not deal precisely with GMing errors. I hope to get some responses to what appears this issue (as happen-ed with #38, another controversial issue (ethics)). If you don't want it printed, be sure to say so. And of course, typing it single spaced with a good ribbon is always helpful if I decide to run it.))

And now, da nooze: Bob Sergeant has won 80IZ in LSD as Russia. Combine that with Bob's win with Russia in GenCon East 1981 and its safe to say that that jinx is over. In #71 of Bob's Saint George and the Dragon, he has an interesting but short article on "Making the First Move" (beginning an attack). This of course has the advantage of seizing the initiative, of getting the forward piece. But, as Bob points out, "you have lost some of your options." And you become very vulnerable to betrayal by a supposed ally who has not done anything for you just yet. On another topic, I'd like to echo and expand on Bob's advice: If you're playing in, say, 5 games, or rather, plan to play in 5 different zines, if you can afford it. This will expose you to a wider variety of people, giving you a better chance of avoiding the complications of being in several games with one person. It staggers your deadlines some, it will expose you to a variety of GMing styles, and if you do extremely well or poorly in one of the games, you won't have to deal with that in your others. And of course, its seldom a good idea to put all your eggs in one basket, GM-folding-wise.

Doug has decided to revive his "Beyerlein Player Poll"; anyone playing postally or publishing may vote for the top 14 players of those currently active. Send your list to him, in order (numbered 1-14) at 640 College, Menlo Park CA 94025 by Feb 15, 1982 (but do it now lest ye forget). The list can be based on personal experience, games observed, ratings, etc. You don't have to vote for 14, but Doug asks that you vote for at least 7. The results will be available from him starting April 1, and will appear in DW.

As I mentioned lastish, Jack Masters in BF #56 printed some vulgar quotes about Kathy Bryne, and attributed them to Fred Davis. This incident has led, quite understandably, to some strong criticism. Unfortunately, some of the reports that I have seen have displayed shockingly poor judgement. Masters was criticized for publishing this, which is proper. But they gave the Masters version of the business, i.e. that Fred had written the letter, without bothering to give the Davis version, viz, that he hadn't written the letter. The version in Coat of Arms 3/4 implies very strongly that Davis did write those words, which to my mind is totally irresponsible, the business of just giving the Masters version, but not Fred's denial. Masters, I might add, has not produced the letter. I think those pubbers who gave the Masters version but not the Davis denial owe Fred an apology and their readers a clarification.

Now for some quick takes... Dragon and the Lamb #60 has a very funny item bemoaning the idea of husbands being coerced into being in the delivery room.... Fred Townsend 3709 35th street NW Washington DC 20016 is seeking data on tournament results. Of course, if his results disprove my own theory that Russia is the weakest country at tournament play, I'll be forced to denounce the whole thing... California Reports #22 has arrived from Doug Beyerlein with comments on computers in Diplomacy from Rick Loomis, Gene Boggess, Don Ditter, Hugh Polley, Robert Cheek, Elmer Hinton, Ben Schilling, and Steve McLendon. A lot of variety.... Jack Fleming 5000 22nd Ave NE #211 Seattle WA 98105 is trying to organize an all women game.... A Tip of the hat goes to Bern Sampson who has taken the 80IY and 80LN orphans from the defunct Invasion.

New Zines:

Tacky Lu Henry 6056 Waverly Dearborn Heights MI 48127 Subs 30¢-47¢ per issue
Aragorn Jeff Sloan 722 Northern Heights Dr. Rochester MN 55901
Winseome Losesome Judy Winsome 749 21st Ave San Francisco, CA 94121 40¢/issue

The trend toward center-staple (digest) format continues, with Europa Express making the switch in December, and Scott Hanson's Irksome planning to do the same. Compared to ordinary Xerox/offset, printing costs are lower, and if the zine is over 12 pages, the mailing costs are lower too.... Snafu! has been faked, supposedly by the same person/crew which faked Infidel a year ago. Whoever did this may go back a ways, since the name of Mark Wiedmark appears.... The most commonly misspelled name in dippydom seems to be the inventor's first name which is Allan, not Alan.... One of the funniest Gary Coughlan parodies you will ever see is by Patrick Conlon in VOD #56, and it appears this will part of a series.... The last line in DD #54 just out, was pretty much wasted.....

Mark L Berch
492 Naylor Place
Alexandria VA 22304

THE RETURN OF MUSTARD MADDNESS:

The timelessness of belief in the power of mustard was recently reiterated in our newspapers. In Lansing, Mich., three women were convicted of indecent exposure and joyriding. Dressed only in thick slatherings of mustard and their shoes, witnesses said, they had climbed into a van and set out to be evangelists of the word of God. The defendants agreed that they had been seized by religious zeal, and left the court after conviction with no further word — not even one for the brand of mustard, which I, for one, would like to know.

Ellen Ferber in
The Washington Post

If "54" appears by your name, its time to renew your sub

Larry Peery (56)
Box 8416
San Diego CA 92102

