

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Potpourri

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If you're seeing this zine for the first time, or perhaps starting your sub, welcome to DIPLOMACY DIGEST --- the Diplomacy zine with no games; this is the place for the reader. And I stick to the game and the Hobby. You'll find little or no mention of music, politics, Science Fiction, or even other wargames. There's not even much mention of my personal life here. This is pretty much a zine for the dippy "purist".

But within that area, DD covers everything: Strategy and tactics, GMing, personalities, Hobby history, ratings, face-to-face play, humor, Houserules, stabbing, publishing, alliances, tournaments, cheating, stalemates, vilifications and tirades, and much, much more. Altho some material is original, most are reprints, drawn from my archive, which at over 8600 issues, is the second largest in North America, and has material going back to the beginnings of the postal hobby in the early 60's.

In addition, there is "The Zine Column", a regular feature of hobby news and my personal commentary on what is appearing in the hobby's zines. And there is the front page editorial on whatever --- normally not devoted to telling my readers what they already know, viz, what DD is all about. I print occasional letters, and I very much encourage response to what is in DD, but again, the letters, to be printed, must deal with what appears here. And that's about it. I've got no objection per se to discussions of films, politics, etc, and have contributed often to these, but there are plenty of other zines for that (For British Subbers: Pound notes are accepted; the zine will be mailed surface rates).

I hope to meet as many of you as possible at DipCon XV. I'll be the short guy whose hair has slid down to the sides of his head. I hope all of you will come to the panel discussion and Open Forum Saturday Morning, 10 AM to Noon. If there's anything you'd like to ask about the game itself, or the hobby, either as it is now, or as it might be in the future, please speak up! And please bring your dippy set if possible.

On the same weekend, Larry Peery will be hosting "Peericon II" with a variety of activities, including a dippy game to start in the USA, and continue in Mexico. aboard the Tijuana Trolley. Contact Larry at Box 8416 San Diego CA 92102.

Next issue will mark the 5th Anniversary of DIPLOMACY DIGEST, and I've got something very special for you. It will likely be a little late, tho, and will probably be a double issue. It will be unusual, that I guarentee you!

A late bit of news; Glen Taylor tells me that by the time he got the money to Atlanticon, they were "full up", and as a result there will be no Youngestown tournament Maybe next year.....

((Altho Postal Diplomacy began in the 60s, the vast majority of postal games took place in the 70s. Still, the 60s produced some interesting and historic games. For our history lesson, lets have a look at some of its more unusual games. What better place to start than 1963A, which was thought at the time to be the first 7-player postal game. This account comes from Jim Dygert In Brobdingnag #68, Sept 7, 1968, and deals with an unusual aspect of this game.))

...In the early fall of 1963, Dave McDaniel --- the same Dave McDaniel who now writes some of the "Man from U.N.C.L.E" stories ((A James Bondish television show of the late 60s. McDaniel is now dead)) - began publication of Ruritania to carry game 1963B. The player for Austria was Dian Girard, well known in Science Fiction circles in LA. The player for Russia was Adhemar Grauhugel, otherwise unknown. Some 4 months after the beginning of the game Bruce Pelz married Dian. The day following the wedding there was an issue of Ruritania; it announced news of the marriage and also stated that Adhemar was a pseudonym for Bruce Pelz. Well before that, in an anonymous Press Release in issue #2, there had been the statement, "There's fur in them that grey hills."

There are many parallels between game 63B and 64C. ((In 64C, John Boardman played England, and also played T under a pseudonym. The event and its aftermath are covered in DD #53)). The alliance between husband and wife in the former, and the alliance between Boardman and his alter ego in the latter both proved unbreakable...In both cases, the alliance was not exclusive --- both allies in each game making other temporary alliances with other powers. In both cases the alliance won, one of its members winning, the other being the only other major survivor. What is the difference between them...one thing, and one thing only. In 63B, the other players knew the facts, in 64C they didn't ((until after the game ended)).

From the time of the announcement of the marriage onward, it was open to the players to decide their strategy in the full knowledge that the alliance between A and R was more than an ordinary one. If they wanted to, they could treat it as an ordinary alliance and try to break it. But if they wanted to, they could have said that it will in fact prove to be unbreakable and act accordingly.(In fact I think they really had that information from #2 on. Th remark about Greyhills may sound rather cryptic but it should be pointed out that Bruce was a very well known fan. Nearly all the players in the game had some connection with fandom...)....

((This account by John McCallum in Serendip #61, Dec 16, 1970 shows how events in one game can entangle another game.))

1966BM. The completion of this game was indicated in Serendip #54. Since then a question has been raised concerning the propriety of listing it ... as far as rating lists are concerned. The problem arises out of a disagreement between Dan Brannan and Charles Reinsel about a game that the latter was running in Big Brother. Dan was in the game and objected to a ruling made by Reinsel altho he was not himself the player directly involved with the ruling. He withdrew from the game. Altho it seems somewhat childish to withdraw from a game because the GM did exactly what he said in his HRs that he would do, no one can object to the withdrawal itself.

At this time, however, Reinsel was playing Trukey in 66BM in Kalmar. He had by that time built his country up to a dozen units or so and had good prospects. Kalmar was published by Brannan's wife, Christina, but was probably pretty much a family affair. In any event, Brannan refused to accept any more orders from Reinsel and turned the position over to another player. This was inspite of the fact that the dispute had nothing whatever to do with the Kalmar game, in which Reinsel had played without a miss. Reinsel's replacement went on to the win.

The Question is: Should the game be recognized for Rating list purposes or not? On the one hand we must realize that with 70 games beginning every year, it is impossible for any Rating List to keep a continuous watch on every game. Consequently, it is usual to accept any game whose GM states that it is of the type recognized in that particular listing. The one game that has been universally disallowed, 64C, was rejected on the basis of its own GM's recommendation that it be dropped from the records. On the other hand, there is no question that Charles Reinsel was treated

alliance won and the result was valid for a great majority of the games. Mostly, it seemed to be east against west, and a case of which side could break thru the great divide first. Reputations were very important and nobodies quickly got the shaft unless they were with other nobodies or unless they quickly established themselves as reliable. The play was incredibly cautious.

In my first game...((he then gives an account))...Germany played by Bob Sergeant proved to be a very reliable and steady player and I was able to ally with him thru all 3 rounds of the tournament. 1908 was a comical ending because we were all so preoccupied with maintaining the status quo that alliances broke up and we all covered our vulnerable centers. The second round was much of the same....I ended up with 3 centers but the second best Russia. In the first game I had 8 or 9 centers but ended up 3rd I beleive.

The final round on Sunday went like a charm. Because we all wanted to do well in the standings A/G/I/R allied from the start (Bob Sergeant, myself, Steve McLendon and Don Rittel respectively)((all postal players)) I played a very crafty game...I was able to attack F right off the bat and I was still able to claim that I was honoring both the EG allianee and the big-4 power one. When I saw it was hopeless to prop up England any longer I announced my attack and eliminated him. Our game was over for all intents and purposes very early but the 4 of us kept the game alive and closely monitored the other boards. We were able to arraigne it so that we maximized our overall rating. I ended up with 9 centers and the Best Germany for that round. I don't think that anyone wanted to play this way, but the nature of the tournament and the method of scoring meant that big allainces would win and that center counts were important. I'd say this type of hanky panky went on at most of the tables for all 3 rounds. I was satisfied becasuse I did well according to the rules, but the rules should be altered. Each board should be secreted in one room and no players should be allowed to roam around to other rooms. Of course, that would take away much of the social aspects of the tournametsand I guess no one wants to be that deadly serious. There is no need for big prize money. Gordon Anderson put on a commendable show o why should he have to go more into the hole than he has to.....

((As it turns out, most or all of the monies were never paid to the winners. The scoring system used was the "Rocamora" system, in which you got one point for each SC held at game's end, plus one point for each person you beat that round with the same country. Thus, if you finished with 3 centers as Russia, and 7 other Russia's did even worse, you got 10 points. I have played a few times under this system, and it is my sincere hope that it is never used again. Your true competition is on other boards. Once you have gotten above the pack (or most of them), you become extremely cautious --- no sense in taking any risks. Instead, you keep track of the real competition, on the other boards. Supply centrs are everything. Draws are non-existent and wins are, well, just another SC or two. As for the comments about Bob Sergeant, its not a dig at him, but this is why DIPCON XV will not permit players in round 2 to play with someone they were with in round 1 --- it stabilizes an alliance too much if you think that you can reap advantages in a second game from trust built up in a first game. Incidentally, I think sealing off games is a very poor idea. People enjoy looking at other games, especially if they are doing poorly at their own, and their friends are in other games. The first time I ever saw a Diplomacy game I wasn't in was at DipCon IX. DIPCON XV this year will likely have its own problems, but I hope to avoid some of those of the past.))

((The next item comes from the 1975 IDA Diplomacy Handbook))

AN INTIMATE AFFAIR (The tale of a Scapegoat) by Peter Swanson

Nov 1973 to Nov 1974 saw a phenomenon in Postal Diplomacy which even now causes grown men to visibly weaken at the knees. Not since the fake Moeshoeshoe and Richard Sharp had such a wave of hysteria swept thru the hobby. The Europeans were ecstatic as they basked in the glory of this new awakening, and the Americans grew frantic as they desperately tried to find out what the hell was going on. What, in one short year could cause such passion, such fascination, such grief? Only one simple game. What,

you scream in disbelief? One game was the perpetrator of what amounts to an attempt at International Diplomacy? Yes, I reassure you, for this is the story of the rise and fall of Intimate Diplomacy, the Scourage of Diplomacy Variants.

It all actually started before that fateful November day in 1973. The idea for a Game of Diplomacy for only two people has plagued all players at least once, and Adrien Baird was no exception. While dusting his collection of antique trouser legs, he formulated the idea of a bidding system, used to gain control of the mercenary countries left over when the 2 players had picked their home countries. This was all well and good for Adrien; he was content to have a few games with some friends, and he kept this potential monster under lock and key ----- until....

One day, Steve Doubleday invited Adrien over to watch him eat. During a lull in the chewing, Adrien explained his idea of a two player game to Steve, who was actually impressed enough to push his plate aside long enough to have a game. When Adrien left, Steve resumed eating, but in the back of his brain cell, he was developing the game. Finally, he decided he could not keep this under his ~~hat~~ fork any longer, and wrote an article about the game, including the rules, in the NGC ((National Games Club)) organ, Dolchstoss #14, which came out on Nov 8, 1973.

Under ordinary conditions, as with most innovations of this nature, it would have been received with little enthusiasm from the player community. However, it is at this stage that Steve Wyatt, the true culprit, arrives on the scene. Wyatt has at least two black marks to his name, and when the day of judgement comes, he'll be the first to suffer at the hands of the great diplomat down below. The first unforgivable sin was to publicize Baird's unfortunate fetish, a cruel mock of an afflicted person. The second was to actually offer free games of postal Intimate Diplomacy!

Such a rash step was not taken without great preparation and thought by Wyatt. He had played a game against Richard Scott, organized thru Richard's zine Fifth Column, which until then had been the only other form of publicity about the game. A few of Wyatt's fellow dippy players received the first issue of a photocopied minizine, entitled Orion. Wyatt intended to run 3 or 4 informal games, and the first issue carried the start of 3 intimate games. The second started 4 more, the third had another six! You see, Diplomacy players had found the perfect, cheap outlet for their personal revenge. Challenges to Intimate flashed back and forth in the post, and once the game started, some of the best insulting press ever swamped Orion, the battle not confined to the board...Steve, on to a good thing, instituted the usual zine features: sub rates, House Rules, editorial, letter column, etc. Orion became one of the most interesting zines around. Many people submitted articles investigating the game, suggesting rules revisions, and even totally new games based on the original version. After much discussion, some rules were revised, mostly concerned with the problems of postal play. Everything was rosey.....

Steve Wyatt's rise to fame had some adverse consequences...Anyway, Steve dropped out.....It was about Nov 1974 that Orion #14 came out, carrying 24 games, and Steve's regretful decision to restrict publication; we never saw another issue. Of course, we still saw ID. The NGC started its very own zine for that purpose, Betelgeuse but with game fees and deposits, very few games got going. There were occasional challenges run in other zines as well, but after the ease and simplicity of Orion, well, the game fell into the inevitable chasm filled with other "boring variants." Orion's orphans lay abandoned.

But that's not the whole picture. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, during that same summer when ID was at its height, it won the Calhamer Award for the best variant, and Orion got the Variant Zine Award. Amidst the horror and confusion when the Americans heard how the "upstart" Europeans had won their awards, certain questions were of course asked. One of them was, "What the hell is ID?" Yes, that almighty puddle between the two great Dippy communities was too big a gulf for ID to cross. By the time the Americans had figured out where the damn thing came from, Orion was on its last legs, and we had pushed ID to the back of our minds. To this day, America is still not sure it even existed; could it be another Conrad von Metzke fake?

Of course, what with the CAs et al, America decided that those "nouveaux riches" across the water might actually have something, and the spate of communication that followed is Intimate Diplomacy's one and only redeeming feature

INTIMATE DIPLOMACY Rules by Adrien Baird & Steve Doubleday, revised by Steve Wyatt

At the start of the game, the two players write preference lists for home country. The countries are worth the following credits:
20 credits: E, F, R, and T; 22 credits: G; 24 credits: A, I

After each player has drawn his home country, he receives the credit due and puts in bids for "mercenary" nations ((the other 5)). The high bidder in each case secures control of that particular mercenary country for the following game year, including the build period. Where bids are equal, neither player controls that country, which is treated as tho in anarchy. Players are allowed to bid more than their credit will cover. However, if a player's successful bids amount to more than his credit balance, he shall forfeit all his credits, subsequently allowing his opponent to gain control of all the countries bid for at half price, rounded up. The next year the offending party starts his credit again from scratch. ((In a FTF game, this would not be necessary, as the countries could be auctioned one at a time. Or a GM could break up the countries into two groups of mercenaries)) All successful bids are deducted from the players' balances.

After the bidding season, moves are carried out as in normal Diplomacy for the next year. At the end of the year the number of SC controlled by each country's home country is totalled, and one credit for each of these is added to his credit balance. Bidding then starts afresh for the next year's moves. The game ends when one player occupies one of his opponent's home centers with one of his home country's units. If this happens to both players simultaneously, the one with the largest credit balance wins, SCs being counted in at one unit each.

"You cad sir!" denounced Sir Archibald Boodle-Watt, stripping his glove from his hand and lightly striking the cheeks of the offender.

Grimly, the Lieutenant accepted the challenge, and informed his challenger that his seconds would contact him: "Intimate Diplomacy at ten paces."

((Writing in Bumm 7/8, Aug/Sept 1975 Walter Haas noted that the rules were later altered to make the overbidding penalty the loss of only half of ones credits. He also pointed out that the variant combines well with other variants, such as the popular "Multiplicity", and this "MID" had been played extensively FTF. Writing in Impassable #43, Mick Bullock stated that over 30 postal games of this ID had been started. Finally, writing in Fall of Eagles #50, Oct 1980, John Sandell gives some advice, starting with the choice of country:))

...Germany, for example, offers a higher initial credit balance (22) than England (20) say, but then it has 4 countries around its borders to England's three Therefore if you choose one of the central countries as your home country, then you will have more potential enemies, and you will need continually to spend more credits to try and gain control of these enemies, than you would if you chose an outside country. Clearly, those two extra units at the start have got to go a long way, a very long way. ((On the other hand, your home country is the only one you can completely rely on, and central countries are better positioned for aggressive action.))

... You will now have to bid for control of the remaining 5 neutral countries. At first sight it would see that the best result would be to spend about 13 credits (for a 20 credit-start-country) and, assuming a good start, you will have 6 more credits at the end of the year to add to the 7 left unspent, giving you 13 credits to spend again.

In my opinion, however, you should spend as many credits in the first year as possible. I don't mean bid all 20 credits for Austria, say, but certainly bid all 20 credits spread among the 5 countries according to your opinion of their relative importance ... If you control 2 neutrals in the first year, you can order those units two provinces away from your home country and follow them up with two of your own units. If

your opponent then gains control of these neutral units next year he can't move them 2 provices back in your direction because your two units are in the way. In fact, he would need to control the two neutral countries for several seasons and supply them with help in order to return them to their start positions. One credit spent in the first year is worth three in any subsequent year. ((John is overstating the case here. The dynamics are correct, but you can only back up one neutral with two units of your own. Other countries you get can be pushed back in the next year by the enemy because you haven't back them up. And with treasuries depleted by the first year's spending, he'll get those countries much cheaper.))

Even if you've got a good start in the game, there are still problems ahead. You can't gain control of all surrounding countries every year and so must face an attack sooner or later along your borders. I understand that in real life it is better to have all your men along one front than it is to have them thinly spread over several fronts. The same is true of ID. If you have the strength to eliminate 4 opposing units then make sure that they are from the same country rather than 2 from one and 2 from another. When your opponent controls surrounding countries he can build only half as many units in one country as he can in two.

Even with these marvellous tips you may still find yourself in trouble, so it is important to be able to move to, and hold, a stalemate line. Its is surprisingly easy to realize too late that your units are wrongly placed to form a stalemate line. I would advise that even as early as the start of the game that you acquaint yourself with your "local" stalemate line and always ensure that you could move into it if necessary....but don't let it take your mind off the business at hand -- to win....((Richard Hucknall, editor of FOE has been running an ID single elimination tournament in England, with a prize of £ 56 to the winner. I suspect that such a tournament here would probably do quite well. It would involve a lot of GMing, especially in the first round (there would be only half as many games in the second), but these games would probably be much easier to GM, and probably don't last nearly as long as as regular games. I should think you'd have NO trouble finding 16 people to enter this, and with each contributing \$5 to a prize fund, thats a hefty \$80. If any experienced GM is interested in running such a tournament, let me know. Incidentally, ID is a excellent way to teach a newcomer (in a face to face situation) the mechanics and tactics of the game, and of course is a good way to kill time while waiting for the other players to show up for a game. A 3-player version of ID goes under the name of "Tadek Diplomacy"))

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((There have been dozens of Diplomacy Clubs, virtually all of them geographically based, or mass organizations which tried to unite the entire hobby. One exception was the Mensa Diplomacy Club, and herein lies a tale of how one person came to enter --- and in his own way --- change the hobby. By Mick Bullock in his 1901 and all that #61 3/76)

I've been a member of MENSAs ((An organization for those with IQ of 130+)) for about 5 years now and without a doubt in all that time I've definately been one of the silent majority. Were it not for the Diplomacy thing, then no one in that organization would even be aware of my existence. Yet it is to MENSAs that I am eternally beholden for leading me into this world gone mad, for it is within the pages of the Activities Bulletin that I first heard of the game Diplomacy and was tempted to go in search of it. And it was also in Mensa literature, some months later, with the dippy set lying untouched for lack of competition, that Graeme Levin came a-looking for readers for his new Games and Puzzles ((a professionally produced magazine)). And thus it was that I discovered within the pages of G & P the world of Albion ((The first British dipzine)) and the British Diplomacy Club and Don Turnbull's incredible and wonderful and hitherto undreamed of world of postal Diplomacy!

Even more incredible, before I'd ever played a single game of Diplomacy, some long dormant desire for notoriety and power asserted itself and I craved to become a Diplomacy Magazine Publisher! But how to start? Me, a little unknown fish in a sea of old salts. And inspiration of inspiration, I thought of those people whose names had ocassionally cropped up in the previous year of two's Activities Bulletin advertising face to face meetings (tho they didn't call them that). And so it was that after hours

of scovring back issues, I had gathered a list of some 18 names and addresses of people I knew to be interested in Diplomacy. And so it was that Messrs. Hardwick and Blewitt and Roth and Yare and Nuttall (5 of the original 7 to reply, who are still with us -- God bless you sirs!) first became apprised of a new concept in their gaming lives. Well, to cut a long (and pointless) story short, it took from June '72 to Nov '72 to get the first game going, but we finally did it, and lo and behold this is issue #61! ((The zine was founded as the "newsletter" of the Mensa Diplomacy Club, tho he later joined the mainstream of the British hobby and started non-Mensa games as well. Mick also handled the British Boardman Numbers, and did the stats for the British hobby. 1901aat later became just a warehouse zine to finish off the games, and its last issue was #102. I beleive that he is completely out of the hobby now))

((Our tactics article for this issue comes from The Arena #39 1-5-74))

The Italian Three Fleets Opening by Edi Birsan

In combining the basic idea of the Holy Alliances concept and the need for a strong early Italian Fleet the following opening may be tried. As w th many of the fancy Italian alliance openings this one must have full Austrian co-operation and trust to really work.

Diplomatically, the Austrians recognize that they must have a long term alliance with the Italians, or at least past 1905-6, and they are momentarily at peace with the Russians, tho hostilities may break out in the second year. F and T are the most direct victims of this opening and Austria must be convinced to take some kind of satisfaction from watching Italy committ himself and do well initially against both these targets. Italy must be convinced that France and Turkey must go for whatever reasons. Ideally, a French campaign must include Germany and/or England while against the Turks, Russia must be either pro-attack or neutral.

The technique is for Italy to move A Ven-Tri in Spring 1901 as the Austrians move to Alb, Serbia, and Budapest (or A Vie holds). Then in FO1, the Austrians move A Vie/Bud - Tri supported by A Ser, F Alb-Gre. The Italians refuse to retreat the dislodged army and thus, with Tunis, will get two builds: F Rom + F Nap thus giving Italy 3 fleets and one army by Winter 1901.

The Italians have the option of moving the army Rom to Tus or Ven in SO1 and then to Pie in FO1 as the fleet takes Tunis. In 1902, the Italians can move F Tun and F Rom west along with A Pie, as F Nap goes to Ion to bolster the Austrians on the Turkish front. OR, the Italians can go the Lepanto Route ((FO1: F Ion C A Apu-Tun; SO2: F Ion-Eas, F Nap-Ion, for a FO2 convoy to Smy or Syr)) with the difference being that rather than having a useless A Ven sitting around looking foolish, they will have F Rom to move to Tyh and stab into Wes or Lyo as they land in Syr. While this one piece attack on France isn't generally advisable, under the pressure of an EG attack the one piece may just crack open the French front long enough for the Italians to pick up an extra center. Or should the western alliance include France, the extra fleet can act as a safety valve to stand off the first impulses of a French stab and help convoy Tun back to the central homeland((e.g. FO2: F Tyh C A Tun-Tus))...before too much damage is done.

While this is not an overpowering opening it is an example of another possibility with Italy: A country that needs every option it can create. ((There are several other options here for Italy: 1) If Turkey is at war with Russia, Italy may apply all three fleets against France, i.e SO2: F Tun-Wes, F Nap-Tyh, F Rom-Tus, A Pie-Mar. This will be particularly useful if France has built F Mar, as F Tus can be supported into Lyo in FO2 by F Tyh and/or F Wes. If France is at war with either G or E, this attack should net Mar and Spa both by WO3 2) If EG is moving agresively against France, and Italy thinks that he will simply be England's next victim, it may pay him to try to prop up France, thus stalling EG while he gains in Turkey. For this task, a fleet is much more flexible than an army. Unless Germany has taken Bur in 1901, France's main weakness against EG is normally fleets, not armies; all an Italia* army can do is help guard Mar from a perch in Pie, or distract a German army from Tyo (and the latter Italy could do with his remining army in this opening anyhow).

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A Fleet, however, placed in Wes or NAF could easily determine who takes Mid in FO2. Indeed, Italy may well be able to insist that France support him into Mid rather than vice versa. And even if the French are doomed to be defeated by EG, a western fleet will be of much more value in slowing the EG attack than a western army by Italy (or, rather, a second western army). Tho the attack from Germany is possible, Austrian armies should be able to help there, as early as SO3 with Austria's build from the fall of Bul. Indeed, Italy should use the need to generate a fleet as a key selling point to Austria for this plan, as Austria cannot do a thing about the English fleet assault on the Medit in, say, 1904, and will need to rely on Italy's navy. 3) If Turkey is at peace with Russia, and well prepared, then a simple Lepanto attack on Turkey may not be enough. Italy may want to enter Eas in SO2, but then use that fleet and Aus F Gre to support a second fleet into Aeg, while Italy's third fleet move to Ion. Thus, in So3, Italy can have a supported convoy from Tun to Smy, and that army can then be used to support an attack on Con in FO3; or A Smy-Con/Ank in FO3 while he does e.g. F Eas S F Aeg-Smy. With fleets in Aeg, Eas, and Ion by WO he has these options 4) And there is no law saying Italy has to retreat off the board. He can retreat to Bud/Vie, and build his third fleet in Venice. If his other army is in Tyo, he'll have a very strong attack on Austria. So Birsan's opening gives the Italian player plenty of options, if he can talk the Austrian into it.))

(((One of the best press writers must be Bruce Schlickbernd. This item, press for 75R, appeared in Paroxysm #9, 6-15-75, for a game GMed by Harry Drews))

Conversations with a typewriter:

The man sat down at the table after plugging in his fuel-injected Adler Qubic Elite Satellite 2001 typewriter. Its supercharged engine roared to life and the return carriage snapped eagerly into place, ready for some blazing 140 wpm workouts. The man flexed his fingers sinuously, and with great flourish, began jabbing away ineffectually with his index fingers. The typewriter sighed.

"Well, what is it this time?" clacked the typewriter, hoping that it wasn't another of those sordid porno press releases that melted its keys.

"No, no," answered the man, smirking to himself, "those fools who put out paroxysm (the Adler, upon hearing this refused to even capitalize the name of the zine) actually want press." The typewriter backspaced itself with hilarity.

"Quantity or quality?" inquired the machine rhythmically.

"For Paroxysm?"

"Ah, another endurance test."

"Further," pecked the man, "they are even offering a reward for the best release: a record album."

"Not bad, not bad," snapped the machine. "Hey, wait! Who selects the record?"

"Oh, I don't know; Drews?"

The typewriter shuddered by flexing its shift key rapidly. "For God's sake, do you know what that man's taste is? Elvis Presley! He doesn't know a polka from Beethoven's ninth. He is sick, I tell you!"

"Uh, second prize is three free issues?" offered the man uncertainly.

"What! And have to read more of Drew's drivel? Don't make me double-space with naseau. Besides, you already trade; you'd get the issues anyhow."

The man crossed his myopic eyes in anger. "Well, if we don't submit something then we'll have to read Gody's newsletter...."

*p j:@% ,ldnHZ%#! #2+-KLXXXXX?/. The typewriter was going into convulsions. The man dashed over to the wall socket and jerked the cord from its connections. Sparks flew, but the machine's convulsions ceased, and the wild keys slowly subsided and stopped clattering. Satisfied that the fit was over, he replugged the Adler and switched on the power.

"Whew! That was close. Don't scare me like that."

"Sorry."

"Okay," gasped the typewriter, beginning to feel his electricity returning.

News, Nooze, and Gnuis

Getting things off to a light touch, I see in Whitestonia #17/18, that John Caruso is the Interim Ombudsman of the Galactic Diplomacy Federation: "If you don't have any problems, you can write him and he will cause a problem for you. Then when the official Ombudsman takes office, he can solve all the problems John has created"... The first all-women's game in about 9 years, "Mata Hari" has finally gotten underway in Fleming's zine (5000 22nd Ave NE #211 Seattle WA 98105)...Deaths in the news include Bruce's faithful dog Trouble and SF writer Phillip K Dick, who wrote novels often centered on the premise that not only were things not what they seemed, but that discovering that fact often brought you no closer to the "real truth"...Fairly new publisher Dave Carter writes in Anduin #10, "I don't know why veteran publishers go around telling new GMs not to get too involved and "Burnout". I don't know of a single new publisher who has paid attention to this." I do, but even if I didn't, I'd still give the advice. It may be unduly optimistic to ask a new publisher to be conscious of his own limits, but you gotta be an optimist to become a "veteran publisher"...The British equivalent of DIPCON is "MidCon", which will be held at Birmingham, England, Nov 12-14, 1982. If you think you might make it, write for details to Brian Williams 30 Rydding Lane, West Bromwich, West Midlands, England. Will the day come when the NA hobby will be rich enough to send its DIPCON champion to MidCon to challenge their best?...Also from England is 20 year's On, approximately the equivalent to our Zine Directory, available for 4 issues for £1 (about \$2) from Simon Billeenness 20 Winifred Road, Coulsdon, Surrey, CR3 3JA England...

I'm a bit late on this one, but Mike Mills has restarted his Irish-oriented Emhain Macha (47 Mayer Drive Suffern NY 10901). He will be running a complex variant called SPQR, set in the "corrupt society" of Imperial Rome. If you like to do things like get your self declared "above the law", exile a competitor, or the like, this one may be for you, tho I think GMing this extravaganza will cost Mike his sanity... Lazy Sod of the Month is Pete Birks, who complains (in all seriousness) in his Greatest Hits #96 that "... many's the time I've fancied a glass of wine with my meal and not had one because of the trouble of opening the bottle..."...John Leeder has extended to July 31 the deadline for his Zine and GM poll, so get those late votes in... Diplomacy by Moolight #41 had some fine accounts of KalCon III in Kalamazoo, Mich. The midwest seems to be having an extraordinary amount of FTF get togethers this year, and judging by the accounts, a great time was had by all..... Dippy players will have a stamp to call their own next year. The USP"S" will put out one honoring the Brooklyn Bridge, which has for many years been the symbol of swindles.....

This month's award for Incipient Bossiness goes to Gary Coughlan, who announced in #15, "Europa Express will no longer plug, publicize or print the results of any poll whose results are not available on an equal basis to all zines." Apparently, Gary doesn't feel that just because you do all the work of collating, calculating, etc you have the right to decide where the results will appear first. Specifically, he complains that Doug Beyerlein and John Leeder have decided to have their results first appear in Diplomacy World. I'm not sure why he picked on those two only. John Caruso and Mark Larzelere both run polls. My guess is (i.e. I'm not certain) that these two polls are arranged so that they first appear in Whitestonia and Apalling Greed. I have my own poll in preparation. It will appear some time this summer or early fall, and you better believe its results will appear first in Diplomacy Digest. So it won't be "available on an equal basis to all zines" until it appears here first.

The person who does the donkey-work, in my opinion, has the right to choose the zine where the results will first appear. Take McLendon's "Dragons Teeth Rating System" for example. I don't recall anyone complaining about his decision to have the results appear first in the zine of his choice (DW, as it turns out). Sure, Steve gets valuable, essential assistance from people in the hobby: The publishers in the hobby who publish the final box score of the game, and the Boardman Number Custodian, who pulls it all together. In the exact same way, Leeder and Beyerlein rely on those same

pubbers to publicize the poll, so that as many people as possible will vote. But I don't see that this assistance in any way diminishes the right of McLendon, Beyerlein or Leeder to choose where their results will first appear. I am aware that in the past, pubbers have competed with each other to be the first, or one of the very first, to give out Leeder's results. And Leeder has patiently given out the results over the phone to those who ask. But he's not obligated to do that, and I don't think that its a valid criticism of him that he doesn't.

Gary, if you think its unwise of him to send the results first to DW, fine, write him a letter and try to talk him out of it. But nothing is gained by depriving your readers of the results. Or are you trying to persuade them to sub to DW because they won't be able to read the results in Europa Express?

Alas, I've only made limited progress in finding out who did the 3 fakes of DD. Several of those listed lastish as claiming credit for the first ("Grandson") reiterated their claim. And Jack Fleming sent what purports to be a letter asking various people to take credit for this fake --- nearly all of whom did!. Steve Arnowoodian writes me that he, Kathy Byrne and Mark Larzelere did the "Digress" fake, saying they "were afraid to own up to it as we weren't sure how you'd react." Thats plausible, I suppose --- tho all 3 of these characters ought to know me well enough by now not to have been afraid. Oddly, it wasn't until several days later that he sent me a piece of one of the original pages. Another piece came from Kathy, along with a letter claiming credit for all 3 fakes. A third piece came in from Bruce Lindsey, not Mark. But it was postmarked in the DC area, and the writing style was not Bruce's. So: Either Kathy and Woody did do it, or whoever did the job is willing to let them have the credit. Kathy vigourously claimed some free issues for doing the fake, something I've never promised. But insisting something is true often makes it true in the game of Diplomacy, so be it! Three free issues for both Kathy and Woody. John Kador and Gary Coughlan were kind enuf to send me a copy of the "Swiss" fake. Despite the swiss postmark, I think this one was done by someone in the American hobby. There are references in there which could not have come from just reading DD --- e.g. to Al Giddings, Dick Martin, Dan Palter, Bob Osuch and Steve Duke. The fake has a very sharp tone to it. I see evidences for quite a few zines here, and I have no idea who did the job (no Kathy. it couldn't possibly have been you). Next: NEW DIPZINES!
Peregrindria Peter Gaughan 12024 Penford Dr, La Miranda CA 90638 (Subs 10/\$5)
Damn the Torpedos Greg and Daphne Fritz PO Box 512 York Me 03909 (formerly a subzine)
The Modern Patriot William Ridgefield 2012 Ridge Rd E., Rochester NY 14622 (pro-Reagan)
The Gamer's Zine Earl Whiskeyman 27 Mark St Milford CT 06460 (Biweekly deadline games)
Politburo John Packer 240 Kimberly Lane Los Alamos NM 87544 (Politics and Humor)
Empires Ralph Montonaro 2 Lookout Rd Greenville RI 02828

Of course, new zines are riskier than more established ones. But all zines were new at some point. And you often get more personalized service from new pubbers, as they are more anxious to please, and they have fewer subbers to look after.

As sure as new zines are born, other zines die. I am particularly saddened to have to report the demise of Dragon and the Lamb. President Reagan will announce on July 4 a plan to place a permanent space station in Orbit, and that's going to take up too much of Steve McLendon's time to permit him to publish. I'm pleased to see the President taking a more positive approach to space spending (tho a manned space station would not have been my first choice). D&L ran a lotta games in its time, and Steve and I did have our moments in its letter column from time to time. The hobby got some good reading in D&L, and reliable GMs are always in demand. Steve has placed his games but is looking for someone to take over the DragonsTeeth Rating system, and I beleive he will sell his computer program for adjudicating games, which he put an enormous amount of effort into. If interested, contact him at Box 57066 Webster TX 77598.

Diplomacy World #31 has just arrived, right on schedule. If you like DD, its the one zine you're most likely to enjoy, because it too is designed for the reader, with original material rather than the reprints you see here. My best play-of-the-Game material appears in DW (#31 has a comprehensive look at the Italian postal wins), and there are plenty of other writers there as well (\$6 per year for a 40-44 page quarterly zine from Rod Walker 1273 Crest Drive Encinitas CA 92024)