

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #80
April 1984
Personalities

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Subs: 10 for \$4
Europe: 10/\$4.50 or 3/E1
Circulation: 115

Welcome to a late issue #80. According to Richard Walkerdine, only 4% of all British zines make it to #80. The US figure is probably similar, if not smaller. There may not be a May issue either --- the work on the basement hasn't even begun yet, so I've been operating at low efficiency, with a lot of stuff boxed away. Plus, this is the time of year the garden starts taking a lot of time. Not much to say, so lets have a look at some:



Fuedist Dan Wilson 215 Radiance Drive San Antonio TX 78218 (his spelling, not mine!)
Flame Simon Billenness Falkner/Eggington Courts Loughborough U. Leics LE11#HT England
Richard's Bull Run Richard Gee 9 Glanmean Shenfield Brentwood Essex CM15 8ER England
StabBack Howard Christie Box 284 M.M.I. Marion Alabama 36756
Dolchstoss Richard Sharp 27 Elm Close Amersham, Bucks, England
School for Scandal Trevor Mendham 53 TownCourt Crescent Petts Wood Orpington Kent BR51PH
Sodder Bill Wright Boyland House Morningthorpe Norfolk England
Gaming Universal Bob McLain PO Box 437 Hawley PA 18428
G Courier Steve Doubleday 37 Farwell Rd Sidcup Kent DA14 4LQ England
Nothing whatsoever Jeff Noto 1507 NE 17th Ct Ocala FL 32670
Der Netzroller Konrad Dolta Hermann-Loens-Weg 34 D-5650 Solingen 11 West Germany
Frobazz Jeff Richmond 3313 Platt Road Ann Arbor MI 48104
Straight from the Dimmer's Mouth Jim Williams 2500 6th St S.W. Altoona Iowa 50009
Costaguana Conrad von Metzke P.O. Box 27273 San Diego CA 92128

Sure are a lot of British zines. SfS is designed as a newszine. Dolchstoss is a restart of the zine which folded in 1979. Flame will be an ordinary dipzine, as Simon has turned over 20 Years On (similar to our "Zine Register") to his brother. NW, which I have not seen, might be a put on; right after he announced it in VoD, Bruce talked about a "real snow job". G C is a restart of Gallimaufry, basically, which folded a little while back. GU, formerly PBM Universal is a prozine covering PBM gaming in genral and will deal with dippy to some extent. Fuedist is designed to be a letter-column zine where one can do the equivalent of "take this scrap out into the alley, boys, and settle it there. This here is a proper saloon". Costaguana is a cautious revival; Conrad is planning only one new game (sure, sure, and thats what Rod said, too). Still, the past 6 months or so has seen the return of three of the most Famous Dipzines of All Times, viz, Dolchstoss, Erehwon, and Co staguana, which is quite remarkable, and, I believe, an unparralleled event in hobby history. Now, if someone could entice, oh, say, Bob Lipton, John Boyer, and Charles Wells.....

**THE ZINE
COLUMN #72**

CHOP - CHOP ?

The one single feature I like most in a dipzine is a lively lettercolumn. My most favorite zines have nearly always had them; the lack of one may be one of DD's outstanding weaknesses. But how should letters which cover several topics be presented? Bruce Linsey, writing in Voice of Doom #93 expressed the views of many when he wrote:

"I dispise the currect trend toward presenting letters European style: chopped up into itsy bitsy pøces, usually by topic. ((That is, if, say, 4 letters discussed the same topic, those portions would be pulled out from the mainletters, and grouped together)) Gary Coughlan of the other-wise-excellent Europa Express was one of the leaders in the North American hobby, popularizing this unfortunate trend in American zines. My reasons for disliking it are simple: whatever style or continuity the author tried to impart to his letter are demolished by overcrediting. Sometimes a letter talks about many topics but the writer has given it an air of completeness that it loses when chopped up."

I don't agree. In a large letter column, such as one sees in e.g. Anduin, VOD, or EE, I would much prefer to see the written material grouped by topic than by writer. What Bruce says about losing continuity is certainly true, but the vast majority of letters don't have much, if any continuity. They usually just hop from topic to topic; an attempt to unify the comments with a central theme is quite rare. I don't see that much in the way of "style" would be lost by such a division, tho I suppose its possible.

But the reader gains a great deal with grouping by topic, especially in a zine with a very long letter column. If 5 people are discussing, say, Grenada or ByrneCon or badly written orders, I'd much prefer to see these comments all grouped together. The comments will have much more of an impact that way than if I see the first ones at, say 8 PM, the second one at 8:05, the next one a few minutes later. One loses the train of thought that way. Its even more dramatic if I'm then planning a response to the letters on one topic. Its much easier to respond to several people's comments if they are all together in one place. Its easier to see where they agree and disagree. If its a topic that I'm not the least bit interested in, its much easier for me to skip. EE, for example, is my second favorite lettercolumn. But the guess-whose-picture-this-is discussions (which are immensely popular) do nothing for me and I usually skip them entirely --- which is much easier to do when the dozen or so comments are gathered all in one place.

It might be said then that the writer gains something by having his letter unchopped, and the readers gain by having the letters chopped. So whose interests should come first? I tend to think its the reader. The letter column is there more for him to read, than it is to be a forum for the writer. I also think that if the reader gains, the writer does too. As a frequent letterwriter, I prefer the chopped style of EE over that of VOD.

There is of course a major practical barrier to the chopped style: its a lot of extra work. You have to be well organized. Also, it tends to push the typing up to the last minute. If you are printing the letters whole, you can just type them up as they come in, but chopping forces you to wait and see how things are going; what topics are getting enuf response to make a separate catogory out of it. On the other hand, when grouped by topic, its a lot easier for the editor to respond to letters colectively on a topic. Bruce is forever saying things like, "For my comments on his first topic, see what I said on page 22 in response to what XXXX wrote."

With the advent of wordprocessors, a lot of the problem with grouping by topics will disappear. Letters can be typed as they come in, topics labeled, and then at deadline time, the editor can see what topics have accumulated enuf material to have them dealt with separately. Those paragraphs can then be electronically pulled out, grouped together, and the editor can write a collective response. The number of editors using word processors is pretty small right now, but in time, it will increase, as people buy them or gain access to them at work. I hope they use them for this purpose, and I say that as both a writer and a reader.

((Without a doubt one of the most colorful personalities in the hobby was Charles Reinsel (nickname "Norm"). Our first item on him is his self-introduction in Impassable #13, 11-24-72. Comments in triple parens are by the editor, John Boyer))

First, I want to thank you for the nice letter you sent, welcoming me back to the world of Postal Diplomacy! Second, I am probably the most traveled of the of the Diplomacy players and have been to more countries, all of the states, and have personally visited, or have them visit me ... most all of the old-timers in Postal Diplomacy. I met all of these: Beshara, Prosnitz, Konig, Birsan, Smythe, Wells, Tretick, McCallum, Taudiker (((I'm not ~~sure~~ sure of the spelling))) Brannan, Calhamer, Swenson, Turner, Dugert, Bailey, Von Metzke, Peery, Walker, Cline, Smith, Castoria, Germagine, Dunigan, Alderson, Buchanan, and many, many more!(I apologize for the misspelled names)

Third, I think the feuds are, were, and always will be stupid. Fourth, I ask a|| of you new additions and "late comers" not to sell yourselves short! Any hobby needs young blood! You are the future of postal Diplomacy! We need you all to carry on. It is as simple as that.

Fifth, I was the first "Ombudsman" in postal diplomacy. I joined the I.D.A. and I expect to be active! I will not run against my good friend Edi Birsan to get my title ((ombudsman)) back. So, I guess if someone will nominate me, I'll run for an "At-large Council Mmember" as I understand there is a vacancy...

Sixth, I guess you know I invented the very first, some say the best, Postal Diplomacy rating system! (The Big Brother ratings). Most do not know it was first published in ... Graustark and second in Wells' Lonely Mountains and in Konig's STab. In other words, the "Big Brother" ratings are older than the Big Brother Fanzines.(((Fanzines are the oldtime nomenclature for gamezines as many of the oldtimers were SciFi readers and fans.)))

Seventh, I do not want to get involved with the pap~~er~~work of trades; so, I ask you, John Boyer, and others such as Walt Buchanan to play in Big Brother (((Already arranged))).. There are still plety of openings in the six games ... yet to be started in my "World Series" set! The seven winners will play a final game in Big Brother. (((He has done this before....))) My gamefee is high at \$7 till 12-31-72. But, you get what you pay for! (((Very true, Norm has the reputation for exceedingly well run games!)))

Last, but not least, sure we had fun in the old days and we were a closer society, but don't be afraid to try something new. Cause some waves! Jump in, the water's fine! In closing, I have no enemies with friends like Conrad von Metzke ~~who~~ who needs enemies! (Ha!)((The last statements were in answer to questions in my letter to him. Charles Reinsel's return to the hobby will do much to offset the loss of Rod Walker, and we couldn't have done any better with Norm. If you want a well run game, then join up with his BB games...If you want to play against me, ask for the variant game, United States)))

((Some people sure do like to toot their own horn, eh? And now, for a completely different view of Reinsel, we turn to Walt Buchanan, writing in Hoosier Archives #113, May 12, 1973))

It is my sad duty to retract earlier statements I have made about recommending players to games GMed by Charles Reinsel. I have always thought highly of GMs who publish on a dependable schedule, but this is of little avail if the GM starts arbitrarily throwing players out of his games for purely personal reasons. Charles has recently done this to Conrad von Metzke and after reading what both parties have to say on the subject, there is no doubt in my mind that Charles was most unjust in his action. In fact, to give you an idea of the sentiment involved, of the 13 GMs who are themselves players in Charles' games, I know of 6 who have already resigned in protest, and 4 of the 6 felt so strongly that they wrote to all of the players in all of Charles' games stating ~~their~~ reasons why they had resigned in protest.

While I strongly urge everyone not to enter future Big Brother games unless Cha-

bles is willing to reinstate Conrad in the game he was thrown out of, I would not presume to ask players already playing in Big Brother to resign from a game they paid good money for, unless they felt a moral obligation to do so. However, I feel that a grave injustice has occurred here and something should be done to rectify the situation. For the good of the hobby, a precedent of a GM kicking a player out of his game for personal reasons can't be allowed to stand. I feel that dissatisfied players should have an alternative other than resigning from their game. Therefore, if the players in present Big Brother games are unhappy with the situation at present and would like to find a new home for their games, I would be willing to personally guarantee a place with a reliable GM who will run the game on a strict schedule. Maybe I am sticking my neck out, but if necessary, I'm willing to GM the games myself, free of charge. Please let me know what you think.))

((In its time, the Reinsel-von Metzke conflict was truly spectacular. For additional comments on Reinsel, DD #9 has a laudatory piece by Hal Naus, and #7/8 has a critical piece by von Metzke. I do not know if Reinsel is still around. In his later years he became a showdow y figure. As recently as the early 80s, he was running a postal game, but with no contact with the rest of the hobby. Charles had a unique way of running his games. The game would be adjudicated once the deadline passed, or all sets of orders came in, whichever came first. That is, you could not be sure that a move correction would be accepted, because it might arrive after all orders were received. This is certainly not the standard, usual way of running games --- he was the only GM ever to use such a floating deadline. None of his games were considered variants; all got BNs when he asked for them.))

((Our next item is a curiosity. Its not really a reprint, since it did not actually appear in a zine, so far as I know (tho who knows, it may have been). It was a mimeod form letter sent to players in his 8 games, so it must have had a pretty decent circulation. It is dated July 29, 1974 and is from Duane Linstrom.))

Dear Friends,

I have come to the conclusion that I cannot segment my life & be the person I want to be. The temptation in Diplomacy's might-makes-right world is too much for me. Diplomacy, as played by me, with my style of dishonest propositions to unsuspecting players, is not really any different to me personally than Watergate or the Gulf of Tonkin resolution is/was to the perpetrators of those crimes. In all these situations someone was trying to immorally twist the truth to for their own personal preference.

I don't beleive that I can continue to lie to people, even in a game, and not be adversely affected by it. I've been very successful in Diplomacy because I like to write letters, I like people, & I like to play games. Time & again, I've made friends with persons via the mail, then ruthlessly stabbed them. Almost none of the stabbed have remained friendly, or even in the game for that matter, after the stab. In a certain sense, all this is to be expected and is great sport. As a matter of fact, the sport was so great that in all the games listed in the left hand column above ((5 of them)), those are the games in which I was a starting player, I had the dominant position & fully expected to win, either with an ally in a dual win, or alone. And since I'm addicted to winning games, I'm sure it would have been mostly as solo wins.

I tried to change my ways and go straight with words to friends and acquaintences. But I just got finished writing ip a batch of letters for 74AX. Like an alcoholic exposed to the sauce, I couldn't walk the straight and narrow. Lies. Lies. The letters were full of lies. The only person I told the truth to was the GM. So I'd best do what is right for me and just chuck the whole scene. I therefore hereby tender my resignation in all the games listed above and in any others I might be playing in, but because of the long interval between moves, have forgotten about.

Two exceptions might be 72DH & 72DL because I would leave allies in such untenable positions. In 72DH I would accept the offered win by concession with T coming in second. Or, if Ron Kelly would agree to it, I would just take two more centers the next move & finish the game. If this isn't to Ron's liking &/or Doug and Eric withdraw

Lets not forget the other hobby tasks Richard has carried out in the past: the Boardman Numbers, The Finishing Touch ((a British Everything)), the mastermind behind IDA/UK ((a generally unsuccessful attempt to establish a branch of the IDA in England)), and so on. The annual zine poll, too, is a permanent addition to the fabric of the hobby.

Richard gives as his reason for departure the fact that he's spending more time on interests outside Diplomacy. Fair enuf, I suppose - one couldn't expect him to keep up such a high level of hobby related activity forever. But I hope Richard will still wander around the fringes of the hobby for many years yet; for, among all the in-fighting and feuding that goes on, Richard is one of the few people who could find something nice to say about anybody --- and would, frequently.

"Well, Alter-ego, what do you think?"

"The old guard are going, Piggott, you mark my words. Bullock, Walkerdine, Pete Birks --- I think we'll soon be back to the levels of inexperience we had 5 years ago."

"You mean when Ethil the Frog had published more issues than the average zine?"

"Right, Piggott."

"Who will be the next editor to fold, in your opinion?"

"Greg Hawes. There hasn't been a Turn of the Screw for about three months now, and when we got drunk with him a month ago he admitted he didn't know when he would resume publishing."

"But, Alter, didn't he say he was hard at work in a Schweppes' bottling plant for 10 hours a day?"

"He found time to lose some money in Tony Holden's poker game, Piggott. And there's weekends as well. No, Hawes is just thinking of excuses. You had better cancel our trade agreement with him."

"Check, Alter."

((Well, they do things different in England. As it happened, Piggott himself folded 15 issues later, tho he later returned as a player, and has recently become a subber here. Walkerdine did indeed fold his zine, but restarted publication in 1983. Birks didn't really fold at all, and resumed publication after a delay of a few months. As for Hawes, he did indeed fold then.



((North American zines run surveys from time to time, but from what I can tell, British zines do so much less often. This one appeared in Ode #21, June 1980. I have excerpted rather heavily. 47 people responded))

Age Ignoring the silly answer .. the youngest are 16 and the oldest 48 (a decent spread that). An inevitable bunching between 20 and 30, but with 8 readers above 35 Ode clearly has some appeal to the more mature games player! The mean was 27.3 years.

Zines currently receivedI excluded other editors from this, for obvious reasons, and fully expect the masochists who receive 15 and 20 zines to start publishing soon. 4 respondents receive none other, and 6 only one other (what excellent taste you have, gentlemen)....Mean: 6.2

Number of Diplomacy Games. Mostly in the sensible range of 2-5 (32 out of 47). The two who don't play Diplomacy at all balance out the nutcases in 15 or 17 for a mean of 4½ ((that's probably lower than the typical US gamezine))

Occupation ((These included)) Trade Mark Agent, HGV Driver, metallurgist, helicopter pilot, Music Librarian, Hostel Warden and "wood nymph"

Marital Status Less one sided than I expected - 31 single, 15 married and one separated

Favorite Postal game Diplomacy was mentioned by 35 of the 47. For the rest, Mercator ((a British variant)) came up 6 times and other variants 0 times.....

((Well, thats just a small glimpse. I'm not sure this reprint turned out too well))

JOHN NORRIS

((The following exchange of views comes from Fall of Eagles #69, May 1982. First up is John Norris, and then the editor))

JOHN NORRIS: You know very well that I am not giving up postal Diplomacy "because He (I) cannot find sufficient novices to play against" as you put it. I've won and lost against some of the best players around. I'm retiring now because I can no longer find gamestarts where I am likely to enjoy, which is why I play. Too many players are prejudiced by my much overblown reputation; as one good player put it in a recent letter to me, "it's your reputation that's done it, everyone is so afraid of you". For confirmation you only have to compare my performances as a novice in 1980 games with current disasters like 1981DZ. There's not much fun in playing as Aunt Sally! ((??)) So, I shall not be starting any more postal diplomacy games, and I'll stop playing when the last of my current games ends.

Your request that I make an exception for an FOE winner's game is very flattering but I'm going to decline the invitation. The winner's games that I've seen suffer from three things that I dislike. The first is that they tend to be very slow and drawish. If every player starts as a good one, it's highly unlikely that anyone will get anywhere near winning. The thought of spending a year or two in inconclusive manoeuvres until everyone accepts a draw out of sheer frustration is not my idea of fun. I prefer games with a range of abilities among the players, which opens up more possibilities. That is my main objection; the other two are subsidiary. In winners' games, you allocate countries at random; my concern is not that I might get a weaker one, but that I might get a boring one, which I wouldn't enjoy playing, like Italy. And in winners' games you also indulge in more GM comments; you know what I think about them!

You must be a fine player, if your ability to bait hooks for me is anything to go by.

Richard Hucknall: A letter I can get my teeth into! And a letter I angled for! My comment in last issue was intended to needle John into setting out his case, and it has been rather successful.

Before I start my reply, let me say that I have always been on very good terms with John and I hope that this affair will not change that. Furthermore, I rate John as a most excellent postal Diplomacy player.

In John's first paragraph he makes it quite clear that he can no longer find gamestarts "which he is likely to enjoy", mainly because of the reputation he has gained as a result of many fine wins over the last couple of years. In other words he is finding out that once one becomes successful at something then others are likely to make more effort than usual when in competition. All postal dip. players who have won 2 or 3 games have come across this problem, but John is the first I have known who has deliberately tried to get into games where his reputation is not so well known -- even to the extent of foning up GMs to ask who is on their waiting lists.

Now, on to the second paragraph. I don't know where John has been looking to deduce that Winners games are "slow and drawish". This certainly has not been my experience..... Still, it helps John develop his argument that playing against players of more varying ability gives him more enjoyment. That, of course, means simply that John has more chance of winning because he is playing against players some of whom are poorer in their ability... John's two subsidiary objections to FOE winners games are rather weak. OK, he might not like playing Italy - but what if he and 6 other players got together one evening to play Dip and none of them liked playing Italy. I suppose they would end up playing ludo! As for my comments on winner's games, I hardly feel that in such company my remarks influence the game.

Perhaps it is unfair but I think I should mention that John once told me in a phone call that he would not play in FOE with John Marks because the two of them had a rather heated discussion on certain game strategy, and that he felt that conflict with John Marks would be unavoidable. Personally, I feel that such an attitude rather underestimates the attitude of John Marks..... 7

PEOPLE

((Now, lets have a gentler and more direct look at some of the people in the hobby. Children are always arriving; John Daly and Don Sigwalt are two of the more recent fathers in the hobby. For this birth announcement, we go back to Bushwacker Vol II, #4, April 1973:))

A BUILD PERIOD IS ANNOUNCED

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Davis, Jr., announce the building of a new Unit at the Supply Center known as 5307 Carriage Ct. Said unit arrived on the board on March 1, 1973, wieghing in at 7 lbs., 8 oz., and is desgnated by the name Kevin Alexander Davis. Unit is being heavily supported in place by both Fred and Inge. The full characteristics of te the new unit have not yet been ascertained, but judging from the sound effects, the lungs must be at least double-strength, and an increase in liquidity tends to cause us to beleive that we may have a fleet on our hands. Papa Fred immediately placed a Conference Map on the side of the crib so that no time would be lost in acquainting Kevin with the more important facts of life. We have already received a solicitation from Albion about taking out a subscription ofr his own copy of that Zine, but we' ve decided that any kid of ours should pay for any subs out of his own pocket. So you'll just have to wait a few months, Don, until Kevin opens his own checking account.

((Kevin is now 11, and I've had a couple of opportunities to meet him at cons. Next, a look at one of the few GMS to cross the Atlantic. Flashpoint was one of the first British subzines, and it was sometimes larger than the parent zine (Der Krieg). This is Peter Swanson, writing in Der Krieg #36 October 1974:))

I was born in New Jersey, USA on Oct 18, 1957. Between theages of 5 and 13, I travelled between the states and England with my parents, getting the best of both worlds. Finally, we settled down in England about 5 years ago. I was accepted at King's College in Wimbledon, studied for "O" lev ls, got those, and I am now studying for "A" Levels in Pure Maths, Applied Maths, and Physics....Jesus College is being considered as a matter of tradition. My interests include war-gaming (board - I can't stand the idea of pushing toy soldiers along with rulers), fencing (I'm on the school team), and printing, the school is equipped with archaic hand-and-foot-operated presses.

I started Diplomacy about 2 yeasago when I got vaguely curious about all those scraps of paper Graham Jeffery ((pubber of DK)) started getting thru the post and reading during Latin periods. He organized a FTF game at school, which I really enjoyed, altho I messed it up completely. So, I started a game in Der Krieg, and never looked back.

((Next up is Len Lakofka, writing in Impassable, #6-21-72))

I am Mr. and Mrs. Lakofka's gift to the world, Lenard. An aged overworked Biochemist, working as a Department Store supervisor, after working 9 years obtaining an MS in Bio and a BS in Chemistry ((normally, going to school full time this would take about 6 years)). My 28 summers have been consumed in Model Railroading, Folk Music, Wargaming, and other reverie I'm not permitted to disclose. I've played this silly game for 3 years, currently playing in over 20 games and GMing 14. That's enuf poop of this sort I suppose --- I hate biographical lies, they catch up with you and make you pensive, winsome and maudline.

((From Impassable #46 Feb 1975 comes someone still in the hobby Lee Kendter, Sr))

Age 34, married, Wife Sandra, 2 children. Professional musician, guitar teacher till 1966. Now manager of the largest music store chain in this area. Have played chess since 1955. Started playing AH type wargames in 1961, have over 50 titles in my collection. Have spent last year designing a simulation of the first battle of Bull Run. Hope to be able to market it in the near future. Also have a Chickamaugua game in the works (Civil War is my favorite period).

((I guess we should include that of Impassable's editor, John Boyer, from #47:))

Born in 1947 in Elizabeth N.J. Lived in Linden and Cranford NJ, Philadelphia PA, and now in Carlisle, PA. Was born quite premature (before they perfected techniques to handle preemies) and born with club feet (which they corrected, but I didn't walk before I was 2½ years old) and poor hearing. Found out about my deafness in second grade and started carrying around in my two hands my hearing aid. Fortunately, they got smaller each time I got a new one and now its behind my ear. A Johnny-come-lately on account of my hearing. Struggled thru school with barely passing grades. Did better in college at Shippensburg State. Took a few post graduate courses, but lost interest when Nixon was elected. My major in college was political science with a concentration in Government Administration. Tried to get into government but found that I wasn't: female, black, or a vet. So, I got a job with a fast foods chain here locally. Quit when assigned to manage for two weeks straight without a day off. Finally found a job with ... Penna. Blue Cross. Am currently a statistician with the company--my third job with the company. Hope to continue being promoted.

In fantasy and gaming, I was a square until I entered college. With the grades being slightly easier to make, I was able to start thinking of other things. Thought of chess. Entered the college club only to lose all of my first 20 games to the only girl player. Finally I beat her and she quit the club. I went on to become their third board that year (freshman) and next year became their champ. Led frustrating years as club leader but leading a losing chess team -- we never won while I was there.... Bought AH Gettysburg game because I was interested in the civil war. Eventually became a wargamer. But, my career in gaming didn't really start in full swing until after I graduated from college. I entered a few professional chess tournaments. Won a few, but lost interest in them because they seemed too blood thirsty, and enuf people weren't interested in playing for fun. Besides, there wasn't any local chess club to sustain my interests.

But, at one local tournament I ran into the infamous Big Brother: Charles Rein- sel. He was also playing chess in the tournament... He afterwards told us all (brag- ged) about a game called Diplomacy, a game I had never heard of ... I was interested and so one day ... came across the game and bought it. That ended part one of my life.

The second part of my life began soon after the purchase of the game. I played for a year and after that became a publisher. By association with Diplomacy, I picked up more wargames, eventually getting S&T games to go with my Avalon Hill games.

My other interests in life included piano which was my first hobby as such. The second was chess, the third was fish hobbyist. I still maintain all 3 ... I studied piano as late as 1973, but gave up the lessons when Diplomacy began to take its toll of my free time. I had other interests, such as tennis... golf... bowling... softball... bicy- cling (do this a lot). I simply hate watching sports. But, Diplomacy eventually had me sitting after work, so now I'm virtually doing nothing but Diplomacy.

I have talents in music and the arts, have painted and drawn tho I have never really tried for Diplomacy publications.... Read a hell of a lot too much for the good of my eyes. Read SF and try to write, but don't have the patience to write a book. Also am in deeply on Civil War history and am an amateur history buff on the subject.

I am supposed to be very bright and they told me high I.Q. which simply made me a brat. Took awhile to realize I wasn't the only bright guy around.

Oh well, Diplomacy has taken over my life, which is mostly bad, but enuf fun has kept me going. But I am at that point in my life where I realize the extent it has ruled my life. So, a 3-year plan is being put into effect to straighten out my life again! After that, you guys won't have me to kick around anymore.

((That was quite long, but John was one of the most important figures in the hobby in the mid-70s, thru the several zines he edited, his work with the IDA and on their Handbooks, and finally with his role as TD at DipCon 1979. The above history has many elements which are common in careers of publishers -- an early involvement with chess, meeting someone from the postal hobby, dippy crowding everything else out, etc. John did indeed fold Impassable zine per se 2 years later with issue #75, with a flyer going a bit later to finish up the games, and has been totally out of the hobby for 4 years. Impassable is a zine from which I have reprinted often, and the hobby was diminished by its departure and his.))

THE DIPLOMANIAC

you know the chap.
the one who always has a map
of europe lying in his lap,
and stares at it with sweating brow
with concentrated thoughts of how
the hell he's able to survive
the onslaught of the bther five
or six left in the game.
the man's insane.
the drops of sweat fall on the page
as desperately he tries to guage
the ifs and whens and whats and hows
inherent in the colored dots
and oblongs that portray his fate;
the colors seem to coruscate
and dazzle in his eyes.
his face belies
the turmoils pounding in his brain;
that blue dot there: will it remain
in paris? will it try to move
to burgundy to try to prove
the strategy he makes as france?
he shuts his eyes and takes
a chance

you know the man
the archduke of the fiendish plan
ensuring that the others can
but order just what he requires.
he writes his notes, and lights the fires
of foul contention in his foes
and, smiling to himself, he goes,
sublimely on his way.
oh, happy day!
he writes to england "be my friend
and may relations never end."
to germany: "well lets consort,
and to the north sea I'll support
your fleet. and then, all in good time
you'll make sure liverpool is mine
(and maybe london too)."
what else to do?
to austria: "you know i've heard
that russia's screwing turkey's bird?"
and italy, oh easy prey,
"i've heard that austria straightway
will move on venice in full force.
the only hope for you of course:
ally yourself with me".
with chuckiling glee
he'll organize the whims and wiles
of those around him, full of smiles
they'll think they're doing their own thing
(just puppets hanging on a string).
do what he says - it costs the same.
(until you find you've lost
the game)

you know the bloke,
the dagger hid beneath the cloak,
his fingers stretching out to choke
the very living from your throat
and, one more down, he'll sit and gloat.
("of course, the whole thing's turkey's
fault!")

he smiles and plans anew.
with careful screw
the stab goes in; the biter bit
recoils in horror, as he's hit
below the belt. "that isn't fair!
your army hit me unaware!"
"sorry!" hear the stabber say,
'i thought you'd go the other way;
'twas just an accident".
his mind is bent
on treason, trechery and lies.
the poor unfortunante who cries
"hey, help me, look what's being done"
will get no peace. "i'm having fun"
he'll say, and come right to be
the diplomaniac
that's me.

((I hope you enjoyed that as much as I did.
It was reprinted from Fall of Eagles #75.
The notation there said that it first appeared
in Pete Calcraft's Spirit of the Age #15, but
Hucknall (FoE's editor) said that he did not
think that Pete had written it.))

* From Carbon 13 #32, Oct 1972 comes the fol-
* lowing from T.M. Worthington:

* "My membership in the International Diploma-
* cy Association ((I.D.A.)) has come in handy.
* I was scheduled to go into the army the 25th
* of Sept, but I'm due to enlist in the Army
* Security Agency (the spy organization) and
* on the list of "organizations belonged to,"
* I put I.D.A., so they're checking it out to
* make sure its not a communist front organiza-
* tion. So I get a two week reprieve, plus
* the added bonus of wasting consierable army
* time."
* I doubt: (why did my typer just drop ½ line,
* would you say?) they would have round IDA to
* be communist, but anarchist might have been
* another story. At any rate, it helped not
* only T.M. to delay his start, but also
* Berch to fill out the page.

THE ZINE COLUMN #73

From John Caruso comes the nooze that that MDG has finally coughed up the \$300 proceeds from DipCon 1983. This represents a disgraceful delay. Thank go to Ben Schilling who managed to get the \$\$ sprung loose.

You may now vote in the 1984 North American zine Poll, provided you've seen more than 2 issues since April 1, 1983. Rate the zine as a whole, not individual issues, and not your opinion of the person who edits the zine. Use a scale of 0 lowest, 10 highest, with no fractions. If you want to vote for subzines, include them in a separate list. Don't rate your own zine, and try to alphabetize the zines. Sign your ballot, and include a role you have in the hobby (e.g. name a zine you sub to). The GM poll operates similarly --- you must have played under that GM during the year beginning April 1, 1983. You must vote for GM by name, not zine, and for Ron Brown, state which one. North American zines and GMs only. Get your ballots to Randolph Smyth 212 Aberdeen St. SE Medicine Hat Alberta Canada T1a 0R1 by June 29, and figure 3 weeks transit time. He will be presenting the results both in the traditional format (highest average score) and also in preference system, which I consider to be superior, in which the question is how many zines were rated ahead of, and behind, a given zine on each ballot. More on this when the results come in. Please take the time to vote. These are the most longstanding polls in North America, and this is your only opportunity to express, collectively, your views on the entire range of zines you get and GMs you play under.

OK, now to the nooze in short. The influence of computers in the hobby takes another tiny step forward, as Lone Star Diplomat is now under computerized production (he's using a WordStar software for word processing).....John Caruso 160-02 43rd Ave Flushing NY 11358 has published "DIP", a free publication designed to introduce new people to the hobby, to be distributed at FTF gatherings.....with the folding of Irksome, the Freshman Zine Poll will be taken over by Steve Langeley.....the new inductees into the Internation Diplomacy Hall of Fame are John Boardman, Allan Calhamer, Fred Davis, and Rod Walker...Mark Frueh has won the Nixon Award, given for conspicuous dishonesty in a game of postal Diplomacy....Whitestonia #84 has a good account of a French win, by Steve Wilcox....Europa Express #32 has an article on the Nuclear Freeze by Mark Larzelere which would compare favorably with stuff you'd read in the newspaper by a professional columnist or writer.

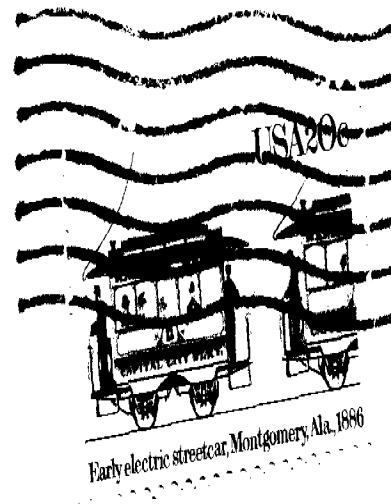
Votes are now solicited for the Don Miller Memorial Award. This is a positive award, a chance to say who you think has provided the most outstanding service to the hobby during the past year or so --- a chance to honor people while they are still around. Nominees are: Lee Kendter, Sr (Miller Number Custodian), Ron Brown of Canada (work with the canadian hobby, Mensa Diplomacy Sig), Gary Coughlan (GM and publisher, with special efforts at bridging the Atlantic and thereby unifying the hobby), Roy Henricks (putting out the Zine Register, and providing a variety of games in his zine) and Mike Mills (running an auction, which raised several hundred dollars for hobby services). Vote for one, to Larry Peery Box 8416 San Diego CA 92102. The committee has selected some fine nominees, and you can't go wrong no matter how you vote--So do it!

VoD #93 featured 32 pages of press for RIGEL (1983K), including an extremely entertaining "PRESS WARS" piece by Steve Knight. Easily the best comic/epic press release I've ever seen --- check it out even if you don't ordinarily read press Don Williams has suggested an "IAGO AWARD", to be given for "someone who manages, despite the nasty nature of the Dip beast, to stay on the good side of almost everyone...this person may disagree with someone or something, but somehow manages to let negative sentiments be known without causing hostilities and/or bad feelings on the other side" Does anyone qualify? Its an interesting, and positive idea, tho it might just recognize blandness if not handled properly. Send your response to Don at 217-B Craig Ct Redlands CA 92374The April 1984 Xenogogic checked in at a stupifying 208 pages, tho as a quaterly, its not quite comparable. A tremendous amount of variety, tho....In last issue, I should have credited the estimate of \$181 (for the costs of equipment for PBEM dippy) to Brad Chase, who also says, yes, used equipment would cut the cost greatly.....

Mark L Berch
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Alexandria VA 22304

Frightening Thought of the Month:

Very solid evidence has been presented recently that Iraq has been using poison gas in its recent war with Iran. Iraq's response has been mostly to say that it will use whatever weapons are at its disposal. Now, what if Israel had not trashed the Iraqi nuclear reactor a few years back? If they were, as Israelis and others alleged, working on a nuclear bomb there, there's a good chance they could have made one by now. And that, to me is a very frightening thought.



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