

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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8 YEARS

old, and still sssssssteamin' down the track! As with all Potpourri issues, this one will be used as a sample. So let me take some lines to tell what this zine is all about.

DIPLOMACY DIGEST is the zine for the reader. No postal games have ever, or will ever be run. Moreover, you will not see coverage of other wargames here. I also don't do movie reviews, international politics, beer evaluations, etc, altho I do enjoy reading such materials in other zines. I rarely even mention my personal life either.

However, when it comes to the game and hobby of Diplomacy, I cover everything. The mainstay of the zine is the reprints. I have extensive files of well over 7000 dipzines, going back 22 years to the very beginnings of the postal hobby. This includes extensive holdings of British and European zines.. Most issues, unlike this one, are organized around a theme. These include hobby history, play of particular countries, ethics, gamsmastering, press, variants, face to face, losing, stalemate lines, personalities, stabbing, publishing, and much much more. In addition to the reprints, there is a range of original materials as well. I often include commentary on the essays that have been reprinted. "The Zine Column" appears every issue, and is a mixture of news and commentary on what I've seen in the various zines. There is often, but not always, a letter column. I do write some original essays (there's one in this issue), and Con reports. And there's the front page item, which is usually devoted to something other than telling my subbers what they already know.

The zine is published approximately monthly, and is printed via offset. All back issues are kept in stock, and subscribers may order any ones they like (Non-subbers can get the "Lexicon of Diplomacy" and "Son of Lexicon"). Outside of North America, issues are sent by surface mail, tho air-mail can be arranged at much higher rates if you ask (I don't reccomend this, however). I will accept British currency (mailed at your risk, alas, tho there's never been a problem), but I do recommend your using the International Subscription Exchange (address on page 11). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

DIPCON 1986 will be hosted by MaryCon, the first weekend in June. This is very good news, as the past three MaryCons have been great successes. The Administrative Committee is Ed Wrobel, Ken Peel, and Greg Ellis....In the last issue, a letter made passing reference to me as a "patent lawyer"; I am in fact, not a lawyer.

S. Gaughan

((Our first item is actually a carry-over. The last two issues have dealt with "ethically questionable practices". This item got bumped for lack of space, so I'll run it here. It appeared in Fall of Eagles #59, July 1981. The writer is Richard Mucknall, editor and GM for the zine))

FOE 6 (1977DZ) REVISITED

Some 2½ years after this game ended I'm afraid it's necessary to exhume it and conduct a post mortem. Those of you with long memories may recall that the game ended as a win for Richard Scott as England with 18 centres, over Tom Jackson as Russia with 16 centres. All other countries were eliminated. The reason for 'revisiting' this game was as a result of Richard Scott returning his questionnaire and replying to question 23 (What would you consider to be the greatest coup or achievement in a game of postal Diplomacy?) with "To win a game and come second in the same game as I did in FOE 6! I asked Richard for an explanation and received the following (slightly edited) letter:-

"Well you see I got married and therefore moved from my parents home 'Desscot'. Some evil mind planted the idea that with two addresses available to me I could possibly pull some stunt or other. (The evil one in question was either Richard Sharp or Gus Ferguson - I forget). Now since I work at the Desscot address I was in a position to run an alias from the Old Kennels address ((Richard's new home)) and play in a game with myself. I'm not sure if it's been done before in this country although it was certainly used in America with similar results! So it was just a bit of fun. I had considered developing Tom Jackson a little further but just hadn't the time. There were moments of hilarity during the game but it did turn out a little easier than I expected. The trouble came when I realised I had got involved in another game because I wasn't sure how you'd react if I confessed to my crime. I guess it has to be claimed as deception of the GM but does it say anywhere that you can only play one country? I'm sorry if it has upset you. If it had happened in Fifth Column ((Richard's excellent zine of many years ago)) well I think I would have looked on it as just another prank similar to many that have been pulled over the years. I can't see that any good is served by getting hot under the collar about it. It has happened now, looking back perhaps it was a mistake but once embarked upon it was difficult to put down."

I have replied to Richard and I think I should make my opinion known generally. There are many points I wish to make but firstly I would like to say that I am not against pranks & hoaxes, in fact I enjoy them on the whole. However I do draw the line at a hoax such as this. Entering a game as two different people is hardly a magnificent achievement. Anyone could arrange such a thing with ease and I fail to see what enjoyment could be gained by such a ruse. No doubt it would be easier to win a game, but victory under these conditions is totally worthless and I feel you would need to be pretty desperate to descend to such a trick in order to win a game. Not that Richard's intentions were purely to win the game.

Richard refers to another game and his involvement, and my possible reaction. This puzzles me! Richard played in FOE 5 which ended well before FOE 6 so that couldn't be the game. The only other game was the recently ended FOE 23 which did not start until some six months after FOE 6 ended, six months during which Richard could have revealed his deception. So why did he not do so?

I'm treating this as deception of the GM and Richard is not welcome to play in any more FOE games. To accept him in another game is tantamount to condoning the whole episode and this could mean that other players could try the same ruse. I would like to make it clear that anyone trying it will be slung out of all FOE games they are playing in and will not be welcome in any others. The other five players in FOE 6 thought they were playing a standard game of postal Diplomacy; sadly they were not. They put in effort and incurred expense in gamefees and postage to play a game which they had every reason to believe was a regular

game. They played for nearly two years. They have been deceived. Richard has not replied to my suggestion that he make some recompense to them.

Of those five players, three still receive FOE. Dave Pratt & Dave Perkins will find their zine credit increased by 50p and Keith Loveys will find a cheque for 50p enclosed. This is the least I can do - and it is all I can do. Even so, it is more than Richard Scott is prepared to do.

Finally I would ask Pete Calcraft to declare 1977DZ irregular and to delete it from the records of completed regular games.

((This stunt is remarkably similar to the "Eric Blake" hoax done many years earlier by John Boardman; even the same countries were involved. An account and discussion of that one appears in DD #53, 35p. Anyhow, in the next issue of FOE, Richard ran letters by Tom Tweedy and Richard Bass, both of whom agreed with him. The discussion the concluded with the following:))

PAUL SIMPKINS : There have been other instances of people playing two countries. I was 'in the know' about one until a chance conversation in a pub was overheard by Mick Bullock and the calumny revealed. I still know of instances in current games which have bogus players in. I'm not sure what attitude I'd take if I was a GM in such a situation - Walkerdine used to play in many Bourses I know and I'm sure that he played more than one character - Selena King was one of them I reckon. I think I'd adopt your approach if it came to it.

RICHARD SCOTT : I enclose a cheque for the game fees for FOE 6. I'm not sure I want to get involved with further argument about it now.

((And there I think we'll leave the whole sorry episode.))

((There are two types of deceptions involved here: One of the GM, and one of the other players. In the way the game is played in Britian, these need not go hand-in-hand. Many, if not most, British GMs will permit a player to sign over control of one or more of his units to another player in the game. This transfer can be revoked at any time, and occasionally is, but is usually used by a player who has lost interest in the game. The remaining players are usually not informed of this, unless it suits the interest of the player who is controlling both countries. The fact often comes out in the end-game statement. In such a situation, however, a player controls two countries, and the other players don't know that, tho the GM does. Such a player would have the same edge that Richard Scott did in 77DZ, only for a shorter period of time. But suppose that a player signed himself and an alais up for two countries, and then, very early on, arraigned for such a transfer. If the countries were far apart, say, England and Austria, and the transfer took place in 1901 or 1902, the player might never reap any real advantage from playing both countries prior to the transfer. He could then legitimately argue that his post-transfer success is just as legitimate as that of any other player who was able to control two countries by such a transfer mechanism. Or, if the countries were close together, he could have them engage in a fruitless war, to the benefit of neither party, to buy enuf time to make a legitimate transfer in, say, Spring 1903. Its something to think about, anyhow))



((So far as I know, the IDA (International Diplomacy Association) was the only hobby outfit to operate on both sides of the Atlantic. As part of an editorial compering the "Diplomacy Federation" with the IDA/UK (the British Branch) Richard Walkerdine listed the latter's accomplishments in Mad Policy #60, Sept 1976))

In the past 2 years the accomplishments of IDA/UK have been as follows: financial support for the maintenance of the Boardman Numbers for regular games and the Miller Numbers for variants, publication of a discussion zine (Queen Victoria's Funeral from

Pete Swanson) for IDA/UK members and anyone else interested, production of a Novice Publisher's handbook (O Temporal! O Mores! from me), production of a player's Hnadbook (The Tangled Web We Weave, from Swanson), financial help in rescuing more than 20 Orphan games (regular games by me, variants by Jeremy Maiden), attempts to establish a common zine collection and distribution service and a universal blacklist (by Bill Orr), putting the UK view on the Diplomacy Variants Commission and UK liason with the ~~World~~ Variant Bank (both by Jemermy Maiden), organization of the UK end of the Calhamer Awards ((8 names; these were writing awards in various catagories)) and most recently, Bill Orr's attempt to produce a UK Diplomacy Player's List for non-NGC ((National Games Club, Britians largest gaming outfit)) members. That's quite a long list for two year's work, and as you'll see, it involved quite a lot of different people, showing not only the wide variety of services, but also a large-scale involvement by members of the hobby. It's worth pointing out that all those projects have been for the benefit of the whole of the hobby; there's nothing hobby-divisive about IDA/UK! ((Alas, that was about the high water mark for IDA/UK. I don't think that JVC ever got beyond 14 issues, and I beleive that by 1978, IDA/UK was dead.))

((What comes next is one of the shortest essays I' ve ever seen on overall game strategy, but it is definately worth reprinting. It is by John Beshara, and appeared in Hoosier Archives #10, March, 1971))

AN OVERLY DEFENSIVE STRATEGY LEADS TO STAGNATION

While in these times it's hip to play it cool, on the crap table of Diplomacy you either lay your money on the line or make room for a high roller. Sitting around protecting your goodies usually results in a neighbor growing too strong for you to take on later.

The fact is that once a couple of your neighbors get together in a fighting alliance that swings, you are not likely to break up a good thing when there are enemies around to fight. In the ultimate, while you are watching their action, you are going to be their next prey.

Examine first the position of Germany in a French/Russian alliance against England: Germany is squeezed. With a French/German alliance against England, if Russia doodles in Scandinavia, he will shortly be pounced on by Germany while France moves east against Italy. The result is similar when Russia and Germany blast England, or an E/R alliance against Germany: France is vulnerable.

Maintaining an equality of power with your neighbors requires you to jump when you see two of them about to axe a third. Your choices of action are one or a combination of the following:

1. Break-up the detente
2. Gobble a goodly piece of the victim
3. Help the Victim
4. Make gains elsewhere

These maneuvers may be delicate. For example, you may appear to be helping the victim, but only to the point where he is indefensible against you. Then give him the coup de grace.

Beware of attacking a good ally unless you have an equally good one to move with afterwards. And don't just lunge out against an ally, create some provocation so you are not totally without justification -- later you may need his help, and lubricating the shaft facilitates relations in Diplomacy, too.

((The advice may seem "obvious", but it isn't; John has succinctly pointed to one of the most common strategic oversights. If two of your neighbors are involved (as enemies or allies) in a war which does not include you, you cannot afford to just garrison your holdings and await further developments. Any response will entail risks, but the biggest risk is to just sit on your hands, and yet that is what players so often

do --- they get overly defensive. All of the choices that John lists should be seriously considered, and more often than not, you'll want to do two of them. Propping up the victim alone will just get you a stalemate of a different sort. Unless that's all you're strong enuf to accomplish, look to one of the other three as well. Similarly, snatching some of the spoils may work out for the first year, but unless you've been working on breaking up the alliance, you're probably going to be next. And many players, especially when they get into that 7-9 SC range, become almost obsessed with safeguarding what they've worked so hard to get. They really have no excuse, in most cases for an overly defensive strategy (by contrast, a player with 3-4 centers may have, in mid-game, no reasonable offensive possibilities). Yet all too often, a player who was willing to take risks in 1902 because it's the only way he could grow, will become more and more unwilling to do so later, as he has "more to lose". Such a player all too often finds himself settling for a draw, or second place, when he should have been a top contender for a win))

((At the top of my List of Zines I'd Like to See Revived is The Mixumaxu Gazette, put out by Robert Lipton. This was the most literate North American dipzine I ever subscribed to. He had a dour view of a lot of tactics writing (including some of mine), as he felt it belabored the obvious and was unduly padded. This item comes from #40, October, 1975))

THE TUNISIAN OPENING

Being a gamesmaster offers one many chances to gain insights into the minds of players. One of the things that astounded me recently was a player's confession of his real reason for playing Diplomacy. It was simple, yet revealing, and I want to share this bit of useful knowledge with you.

He said he played because he liked to win.

This information struck me with the force of a piledriver and set off many conjectures. This player played to win. Could it be other players also played to win? This is always the crucial portion of a piece of reasoning, to jump from the particular to the general. For many days I struggled with this important question. I analysed it to see if this desire to win was peculiar to this one player. I even asked other players. Slowly a pattern emerged. Some people do play Diplomacy to win.

As a noted man of good taste and ingenuity, I decided to write an article to help people win. This is one of them.

Let us suppose that you play Diplomacy to win and you are playing Italy in a particular game. Are these two statements mutually exclusive? No, for Italy has won games of Diplomacy. Some simple analysis shows all players who have won playing Italy have one thing in common: either they control eighteen supply centers, or the other players have agreed Italy would soon control eighteen supply centers. Could this be mere coincidence? I think not, for the 1971 Rulebook states in Section II that control of eighteen centers means victory for that player.

For the purpose of winning, we can make several statements about Italy. We will all agree, I am sure, that Italy has several advantages over, say, Albania in any attempt to win. Whereas Albania has no supply centers under its control at the beginning of a game, Italy has three. This means Italy need gain three less supply centers than Albania to be victorious. Italy also starts out with three more units than Albania, and since one can gain additional supply centers only by having one's units in those new centers following a fall move (Section XIII.1 if you don't believe me), it becomes obvious to anyone with any tactical skill that Italy's chances are vastly superior to Albania. So great is this advantage that Albania has never won a game, overwhelmed from the beginning by Italy's advantage. This may seem unfair, but the only way to have any certainty of not playing Albania is to put it at the bottom of your preference list.

Moving back to the subject of Italy's winning, we should next ask the question "Are there any other factors which all or most victorious Italys have in common?" The answer is an unqualified yes. All victorious Italies control Venice, Rome and Naples at one point or another in a game. However this is not an assured way of winning. A check of over fifty games reveals the Italies control those three centers at some point in all

those games, but only six Italies won in those games. While this is a helpful guide to the victory-seeking Italian player - make sure you control Venice, Rome and Naples at some point in the game- it would be preferable to find some other factor which has a higher correlation with an Italian victory. Is there one?

Yes. In 46 of 49 games to which I dedicated greater research, the Italian player controlled Tunis at some point. Thus correlation has increased from less than 12% for Italies who control Venice, Rome and Naples to better than 13% for the control of Tunis with victory. This is a significant increase.

I therefore submit the Italian player who seeks victory should try to take Tunis.

It is, however, very easy to say something should be done, but it is often very difficult to state how it can be done. Many hours spent over a gameboard have yielded an answer.

First, Italy should try to take Tunis in 1901. This may be greeted with guffaws of astonishment. "A unit," these doubting Thomases will gasp between chortles, "can move only to adjacent spaces. It says so in Section VII.1 of the rules. Italy starts out with units in Venice, Rome and Naples. None of these border on Tunis. What you say is impossible!"

The superficial tacticians, thoughtless creatures, do not think of a brilliant (no, I am not being vain. This statement is made from observation of other players' movements) series of moves which can place Tunis in the grasp of the crafty Italian player.

To take Tunis in 1901, the Italian player should consider the unit in Naples. Section VI.3 of the rulebook states unequivocally it is a fleet.

Let us assume Italy makes the following move in Spring 1901:

Fleet Naples to Tyrrhemian Sea

A check of the gameboard will reveal the fact this fleet, previously not adjacent to Tunis, now is adjacent to it! I am sure any decent tactician with the skill of, say, Doug Beyerlein, can tell you this fleet can now move to Tunis, simply by writing the order;

Fleet Tyrrhemian Sea to Tunis,

which move may be made in the Fall move.

Italy, having made these moves, will find he now controls Tunis, assuming no other country also moves to Tunis at that time, and of the 49 investigated games, not one country has ever successfully opposed this move! (a check of the possible moves, or a significant portion of them, makes it statistically unlikely such opposition is possible). By the previously-cited section VII.1 of the rulebook, Italy now controls Tunis. The chances of an Italian victory have now been increased by more than 1%!

Careful study of the literature of Diplomacy has failed to turn up any article which names this strong- nay, powerful- opening. I trust my readers will therefore not take it amiss if, in return for imparting this tactical information to them, I assume the privilege of naming this gambit.

To name an opening, one should choose a name which is concise and descriptive. I therefore urge that in the future, this shall be known as The Tunisian Opening. Not "Robert Bryan Lipton's Tunisian Opening"; I am, as my friends know, a modest person, and seek not the laurels for doing good to all who seek the goal of guiding Italy to victory. The satisfaction of a good deed is enough for me.

IMPERSONATION OF THE GM

((This topic does come up from time to time. The following discussion took place in the pages of Ode. We begin with John Marsden in #21, June, 1981))

The DMC 4 1/2 Affair. Some of the Mercator ((a variant of Diplomacy)) players will have been in receipt of a sheet of paper entitled Dead Man's Chest #4 1/2 ((DMC was a zine)), claiming that I was in London job-hunting and that the DMC deadline was therefore being put back by more than a week. It was signed with a passable imitation of my signature (altho my name is misspelt).

I have spoken with the perpetrator on the telephone, and expressed my displeasure at

this. In my view impersonation of the GM is tantamount to GM deception - and beyond the pale; however, I accept that the HRs are not clear on the point, and it doesn't seem to have generated any NMRs (altho I had to hold on for some people) , so I have taken no action. Speaking to a couple of people about this I find some degree of dissention. Frankly, this episode has annoyed and embarrassed me, and I do feel strongly that GM impersonation should not be permitted. If you disagree, tho, I'd be interested in your comments. ((These then appeared in Ode #22)).

Brian Douglas: I would like to comments on the DMC 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ affair. I tota lly disagree with you, John, about GM impersonation. Clearly this is not the same as GM deception. Impersonation of the GM is deception of the other players, and hence legal. Providing there is no impersonation of other players to the GM, e.g. when foning orders, there is nothing wrong. You say the episode (about which I confess I have little knowledge) has annoyed and embarrassed you. Well, thats not a definition of illegality. Your job as a GM is to adj u dicate the orders according to the rules, and as fairly as is humanly possible. How the orders get to you, providing they are from the people they purport to be from, and what the players have said or done to each other is none of your concern even if your name has featured prominently in their negotiations.

Doug Wakefield:I feel bound to record my total disagreement with you over this affair...impersonation of the GM to the other players deceived those players, the players and not the GM being the direct object of the impersonation. That you might have been deceived by the manoevre is tot ally immaterial, since this deception would be indirect and caused by a spate of NMRs, which could equally have arisen thru impersonation of other players to players which would surely have been accepted by you. You have of course perfect liberty to write what you will into the House Rules, but any ploy which is not excluded by those rules or by questions of Law or decency should be permitted irrespective of whether you, as an individual or a GM, like it or not. (I mention decency because I once had ocassion, as GM, to disallow an NMR provoked by a forged letter pretending family bereavement.) To conclude the defense, I maint~~ain~~ that a main attraction of the game is the "anything goes" aspect. You, apparently, are not of the same mind, as is witnessed by the fac that you are embarrassed and annoyed. The fact of this embarrassment (witness your self-confessed introversion) caused an error of judgement. The "expression of displeasure" is, I'm afraid to say, frankly laughable. It smacks of Victorian prissyness and an incapacity to reconcile triviality, however enjoyable, from reality. The game is not a raison d'etre, neither should be the running of games.

John Marsden:Actually, I think I got carried away in my objections last time, so I'll back off a bit. What I really objected to was not the fact of my being impersonated, but the fact that I wasn't told about it. Thus, when players foned me to query the veracity of it, or mentioned in telephoning other orders that "the Mercator deadline's next week, isn't it?", I was drawn willy-nilly into deadlings between players because I had no other information. If you had foned me, Doug, and said "this is what I intend to do" I would have said "OK, go ahead". It was the fact that I was kept in the dark that seemed to me to be the deception, not the fact that my name was taken in vain! I accept that I wasn't directly deceived, but I think I was indirectly, because my ability to "adjudicate the orders according to the rules, as fairly as is humanly possible" (thank you, Brian) was impared. Other players keep me informed when they're trying something underhanded. ((The discussion then concluded in #23))

Chris Tringham:Players should always treat missives such as the one involved here with caution, just to be safe. I don't think you have been deceived, incidently, so if you want to outlaw this practice you must expressly forbid it.

Tom Goff:Diplomacy itself is strongly based on the ability of various players to deceive one another. One of the advantages of postal play is that the physical restrictions are very much relaxed, offering more scope for covert negotiations and double-dea ling. This offers room for impersonating the GM and this was often done in the early days and only dies away because players began to expect it and took precautions. Fake letters have a long and honorable (?) history in the hobby and DMC 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ is firmly in that

tradition. The only regrets I personally have about this episode are that I was neither a perpetrator nor a victim of the letter! No deception of the GM was involved, which, to my mind made it a perfectly legitimate ploy. I would go further to say that you were wrong to hold on for late orders. By doing so, you directly interfered with the play and may possibly have given some advantage to players who did not write orders until after the formal deadline had passed. Of course, there are often circumstances in which a GM is right to accept late orders but I would suggest that disapproval of an individual player's legitimate - if personally distasteful - deception of other players is not one of them.

John Marsden: Urrgh. This is where I crawl. I have to admit it, I was quite wrong. I am rather sensitive to what might be called "mocking the afflicted". Making fun of my present predicament, as Doug did ... I find unpleasant. But, it shouldn't affect my GMing, it did, and I'm sorry. In fact, I didn't affect the game significantly. Two, possibly three players were fooled. One I NMRed anyway. A possible second posted his orders on deadline day, but they arrived before I would have had a chance to adjudicate so I would have accepted them anyway, as per my HRs. ((Such a practice would be extremely rare in North America, but, as I understand it, its not uncommon in U.K.)). The third telephoned me on deadline day with his orders for other games, and, after taking them, I said "what about the Mercator". I'd have said that anyway. My mistake was, when he realized he'd been duped, in agreeing to wait a couple of days for his orders. That was wrong, and I know it. As it happened, that player NMRed the following season!

So, my apologies to Doug (and Tom, who was supposed to have been the main beneficiary!) Anyone else who wants to try it is welcome, but, as a matter of pure courtesy, warn me if you're taking my name in vain. OK?

I notice that someone did try it in Voice Game 6 recently! ((I agree that this stunt is not deception of the GM. Thus, it should be permitted unless it is barred by the House Rules ---- which is exactly what the GM, in my opinion, ought to do. Ordinarily, I favor letting the player have as much scope as possible. I thus favor permitting such things as proxy orders, codewords, and the like. But this is different. Brian says, "Your job as a GM is to adjudicate the orders....." But thats only half of it. The GM must also communicate the adjudication. The player pays for both the adjudication itself, and the communication of these results. This tactic undermines the GM's ability to do his job, viz, to present adjudications that the players can rely on. If such tactics are permitted, anything out of the ordinary ---- a change of adjudication, deadline, GM's address, player lineup, houserules, etc will automatically be suspect. Even an ordinary adjudication done on a different typewriter, etc, could be a problem. Any of these could necessitate a special call or letter to the GM to verify the communication. In short, the player can't rely on what looks like, and is, a legitimate communication from the GM. But that is what he is paying to receive, and I think thats what he's entitled to get -- communications from the GM that he can rely on. I think viewing the GM solely as an adjudicator (and thus barring actions, such as impersonation of another player when sending in orders) is too narrow a reading of his responsibilities. Anything which interferes with either function ought to be barred. And this should go in the HRs (either way), so that players who get something that looks suspicious will know where they stand. For those further interested in the subject, DD #38 reprints a similar kind of stunt, and discussion thereof (35p)).

INDICATIONS OF *INSINCERITY*

by Mark L. Berch

Everyone who has played in person Diplomacy knows the situation: you'd like to believe what he's telling you, but is it the truth? You watch him intently, looking for....for....just what is it you're supposed to look for?

To begin with, you have to accept the fact that not every lie will be detected. And some things you "detect" as lies will be the truth. The best you can hope to do is to improve your chances of spotting the lie. Here are some things to look for:

1. Incomplete facial expressions A smile should affect not just the mouth, but also should crinkle the eyes to some degree. Similarly, a frown usually appears both at the mouth and the forehead. If you see only the mouth part of these, the expression may well be faked.
2. Prolonged facial expressions Except under unusual situations which should not arise in a dippy game, emotions that sit on the face for more than a few seconds are suspect because genuine ones just don't last longer than 5 seconds or so.
3. Assymetric or crooked expression If its a little stronger on one side than the other, it may be deceptive, since facial expressions are usually symmetric unless the person has had a stroke.
4. Undue hesitation If the person ought to be able to answer right away, and he doesn't, then something may be wrong. This includes hesitations before starting the answer, stalling tactics such as repeating oneself, and gaps between sentences, and signs that the person is giving the question more thought than it should take. Unfortunately, this one is very easy avoid, since the person may be able to mentally rehearse his answer. You may be able to overcome this by asking something a little different than what he expected you to ask, or by asking a followup question that he might not have anticipated. But you'll still have to stick to questions that, if he were telling the truth, he should be able to answer immediately.
5. Rise in tone of voice This is not a dramatic effect, so you'll have to listen carefully. Unfortunately, ordinary stress can do this too, but if you've noticed that earlier, stress didn't do it, you've probably got a valuable clue.
6. Failure to maintain eye contact I mention this one mostly because its such a commonly mentioned notion. But this one is very easy to fake, and some people naturally break off eye contact. If you're in that latter category, this is a good habit to break, because many people set store by this one.

This gives you a lot to watch and listen for, especially since you shouldn't rely on one of these alone. If you do notice something, make a mental note of whether the person really was telling the truth, because you may see this again. This is a tactic commonly done by skilled poker players, who are always looking for physical clues that someone is (or is not) bluffing. If they see some sort of idiosyncrasy, they will check to see if the person was bluffing or not, so that if it appears again, they can draw the appropriate inference. Of course, this can be run at the level of a con, too. That is to say, you scratch your cheek, and you tell the truth. If you do this a few times, you'll be ready to mask a lie with a cheek scratch.

I probably shouldn't give away one of my real tricks-of-the-trade, but I will tell you a stunt I have pulled on a handful of occasions. This is done only when someone is telling me something that's a little hard to believe, but quite possibly is true ---- generally, an explanation for a suspicious move just made. At an unexpected point (usually, I interrupt the guy), I blurt out, "Are you telling me the truth?". And then I watch him very carefully. Generally, I've been reassured or gotten no real information. Two occasions were different. In one, the guy burst into laughter. I scowled at him, and when he stopped laughing, he admitted that it was all hogwash. At that point, we were able to get down to the nitty gritty and have a more honest discussion. In the other, the guy was completely undone, and left tongue-tied for at least 5 seconds before he was able to stammer out that of course it was the truth. I smoothed it over, and told him I believed him, but I didn't, and he was indeed lying. I asked him about it afterwards, and he told me that he had been telling me a well-rehearsed lie, but that my blunt question had been totally unexpected. This was the first time I had ever tried this stunt, and I was amazed at the result!

Finally, if you ever get into a game with me, keep in mind that all of these clues are 100% reliable with me. So if you see my eyes sparkle when my mouth smiles, if you notice that my voice tone is steady, if I keep good eye contact and only have brief facial expressions, and all the rest, then you'll know, uh, that, uh, that you you'll be sure and you can, lets see, have confidence that I'm telling you the (blush) truth.

THE ZINE COLUMN # 86

Lets start with some superlatives collected recently:

Highest Stakes Dip Game. Don Williams is running a game with a \$150 prize for the winner, which I'm pretty sure is a record for a PBM game of Diplomacy. It will run in his "Son of Fiat Bellum!" subzine to Europa Express, and features Tallman, Spitzer, Minshall, Holley, Graessle, and J.R. Baker. I figure all that game needs now is a Bourse attached played with real money.

Largest Payment For a Diplomacy Essay. Larry Peery Box 8416 San Diego CA 92102 is soliciting essays for his 20th anniversary issue of Xenogogic. First prize will be \$100, second is \$50, and third is \$25, plus other goodies as well. The topic must relate to the game of Diplomacy, and your submission is limited to 4000 words. I've already come up with a topic for mine. For full details, contact Larry.

Most Interesting Adjudication Question I've Seen Recently. Suppose a player's entire orders consist of the following: A Pic S F Eng-Bel. Many GMs (but certainly not all), especially those of the "lenient" bent, would accept that as a valid order for both pieces. The reasoning is that the player has clearly written "F Eng-Bel", altho its embedded in another order, and so there's no need for him to write it twice. Now, suppose a GM with that philosophy (and preferrably with House Rules to that effect) is faced with A Pic S F Eng-Bel, F Eng-Bre. Is F Eng double ordered? After all, if F Eng-Bel is seen in the first set as F Eng's orders, then it would appear to be. Oddly enough, Richard Sharp, the GM of Dolchstoss had this happen in D #87 and again in #89, but he ruled that "the individual order takes priority", so that the unit was not double ordered. I'm not so sure I buy that reasoning. The notion of one order taking "priority" over another seems in conflict with the prohibition against being double ordered. That prohibition says, in effect, that orders don't priority over each other, that one cancels the other. Would any of you, who share the above mentioned "philosophy" care to comment?

Longest Introduction to a Con Writeup. Bruce McIntyre wrote an article on MinnCon in his zine Excelsior #5. The "pre-arrival" part of the essay covered 5½ pages, and started with events that were related but ocured 6 years prior! This is the most impressive new zine I have seen for several years. McIntyre clearly believes its his responsibility to do a significant amount of writing for each issue, and he is a very engaging writer when he gets going. The only cloud on the horizon is that there are an awfully large number of games being run in the zine, but that hasn't caused a problem so far. I strongly recommend that you have a look at this one (and try to order whatever back issues are available). (6191 Winch Street Burnaby B.C. Canada V5B 2L4. Subs are 10/US\$6.00)

Most Schizophrenic FO1 Moves of the Year. Pierre Touchette in 85AB ordered F Rum S Austrian A Ser-Bul, which would have succeeded if there had been A Ser-Bul. At the same time, Russia coasted into Vienna. Shake yer hand, pick yer pocket.....

Most Belligerent Opening Seen Recently By Me This is "WP15" (games have been slow to get Boardman Numbers in Britian recently) in War and Peace. Spring 1901 had 6 countries in standoffs (and the 7th was no slouch with A Hun-Tyo) In Fall 1901, there were 11 unsuccessful moves, seasoned also with such aggressive tactics as Turkey sailing into Bul, Gre, and Bla, and Italy moving to Iyo. In fact, players were so busy attacking each other than three neutrals had no one even trying to take them. Tho this game is obviously an extreme case, its been my unscientific observation over many years that British postal games feature a significantly higher level of 1901 conflict than do North American games. I wonder why.

In looking at a recent issue of 20 Years On (which is approximately the British equivalent of our Zine Directory), I was struck by some differences between North American and British zines, in terms of their game-running function. The vast majority of British zines which run Diplomacy or its variants also run other types of games (usually FRP games, but not always). Here, this is definately not true. Also startling is the number of zines which run a lot of regular Diplomacy. Dolchstoss, Ode and Mach Die Spuhl all run 13, War and Peace, 12; two zines run 11, and 5 of them

run 10 games. That's 123 games in just 11 zines. There is a much wider choice of variants played as well. I count, for example, 7 zines which run at least 4 different dipvariants! Another difference is the existence of mega-gamezines, zines which run at least 20 games (an arbitrary definition). I count 9 of these, including 2 (Boojum and Rostherne Games Review) which have 34 each!! I know of only one North American zine (the infrequently published Envoy) in that category. Alas, this heavy level of gaming certainly can push other things aside. One example of this is Ode. The latest issue I have is #67, which runs an impressive 20 pages. Unfortunately, that includes 30 games, which leaves almost nothing else for that issue, tho #66 was a good one.

Last issue I reported on the results of the Runestone Poll, and in general, I was quite pleased with the very high turnout that it engendered. In TNFH #3, Bob Olsen prints "A Dissenting View", in which he goes on for pages and pages trying to tear the Poll down. As part of his discussion of "The Voters", he estimates that 37% are "well-known postal players, publishers and GMs", that 11% are "former hobbyists (burnouts)", that 20% are "marginal players", and that a whopping 32% are "unknowns". Gosh, it sure is great to have Bob Olsen as the (self-appointed) arbiter of just who is an "unknown", who is a "burnout," etc. I'd have thought that anyone who voted was, ipso facto in the hobby, at least at the time s/he voted, but no, Bob has apparently ditched those people. Bob wisely does not list those 65 or so "unknowns"; I wonder how many of you all are in that category? Why Bob feels the need to shove people into categories is a mystery to me.

OK, lets do some short takes here....The "Influential Player Rankings" list has recently been compiled by Dan Stafford. At the top of the list, and by a substantial margin, is Dan Stafford.....Those interested in Face to Face dippy in the Toronto area should contact Chris Greaves H-(416)-694-2711 or W-(416)-364-5361.....Liberterrean will be folding after over 200 issues, tho another pubber may take it over.... but Murd'ring Ministers hasn't folded, but instead will be published very infrequently. An August issue appeared; the next will be in December....the former poetry editor for DW, and subber here, Scott Marley, joins the staff of the pro-zine "Games" as a contributing editor....Bob Olsen has won the Nixon Award, given each year for conspicuous dishonesty in a game of postal diplomacy....The International Subscription Exchange run by Steve Knight 11905 Winterthur Ln #103 Reston VA 22091 and Doug Rowling 228 Kinnell Ave Cardonald, Glasgow, G52 3RU facilitates transatlantic subbing. Just send your sub money, in local currency, to one of those two. In just under 1 year of operation, the financial volume has been over \$450, with 8 zines getting in excess of \$25 each. The service is clearly meeting a need....The best writeup of MaryCon 85, including some great fotos, was in Bohemian Rhapsody, a Belgian zine!...Ed Wrobel has said that he is "going to defer publishing Feudesse for the present"

THE MAIL

Most of the Mail concerned my editorial on Bob Olsen's new novice packet, Masters of Deceit. I had three complaints, in summary:

1. Three publications of longstanding value for novices were not plugged: "Supernova" (the other novice packet), "The Lexicon of Diplomacy", and Diplomacy Digest.
2. One of the articles stated that "Mark comes in for a lot of criticism for only running reprints of old Dip articles" in DD. This characterization is false; every issue of DD has significant amounts of original material. And a novice publication is no place to be discussing zines being criticized (DD was the only zine so "honored".)
3. Ed Wrobel's essay had an entire paragraph on "Mind-Rasslin' ". It was described in unflattering terms, and altho my name did not appear, it was quite clear that this was a reference to me. Again, I was the only person whose writing style was criticized in NoD.

Ed did write me, but I've been unable to find out if he actually wants his letter published. He did confirm, however, that he most certainly was talking about me when he wrote about "Mind-Rasslin' "

I also heard from Bob Olsen. He didn't mention why "Supernova" and "The Lexicon of Diplomacy" had been snubbed, but he was quite eloquent on the many iniquities of DD. Here's a sample --- and one of the milder ones at that: "My one stipulation ((in

possibly rewriting MoD)) is that since the people you habitually dump on in your zine just happen to be--not at all coincidentally--precisely the people a novice will be meeting in his games, and since many of the contributors to MoD are, likewise, people you've attacked, I am not going to betray either group by directing novices unquestioningly to drink in your endless attacks on the very people who make the hobby worthwhile in the first place." Now, mind you, its not criticism per se thats the problem here. Most large, well established zines in this hobby do that. Terry Tallman, for example has over the past couple of years published far more criticism than I have (as is his right). But his NSWG got a nice plug in MoD. No, the problem here is that, unlike Terry, I've actually criticized actions taken by some of Bob's pals. So I can forget about DD getting plugged in MoD.

Turning to the Wrobel essay, Bob says, "Someone whose opinion I respect had already told me that Wrobel's press article was too bashy. I plan to tone it down, some...." That would be a step in the right direction, but only a step. The problem isn't that its "too bashy", it's that its bashy, period. The point that Bob doesn't seem to want to grasp is that a novice publication is supposed to show novices just what the hobby has to offer; its not supposed to be a vehicle for bashing. You won't find any bashing in "Supernova". Bob sees it differently: "My aim in MoD is to provide something useful to novices--it is not a one-lick-per-hinie vanity-press vehicle in the Junta manner." Moreover, he says that the term "Mind-Rasslin' " definately will stay, but that "I plan to mold "Mind-Rasslin' " into a generic term for any hypocritical word-game, regardless of authorship." Gosh, it must be great to have such raw hobby power that you can singlehandedly alter the meaning of a term just to suit your own wishes, Bob.

And hobby political power seems to be Bob's frame of reference, as he seems to view the whole thing in political terms. Thus, his letter talks of "this phony little political scam of yours" and "turning him into a pawn in your little game." and references to "Junta" and "Hobby Big Shot" and all that. So while Bob is fine-tuning how bashy an article is here, and laying plans to mold a meaning there, he has completely lost sight of what a novice publication is supposed to do.

I also got several letters of support, but this is all the space I want to devote to the matter. When the new edition of MoD comes out, I'll have another look, but in the meantime, I'll reccomend only "Supernova", available from Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St #3 Dalton MA. 01226.

Steve Swigger: I'd much rather have a zine that specializes in strategy, tactics, philosophy and psychology of play and the finer points of the game than one that looks good but other than the games its running has little else to say about Diplomacy itself. ((Alas, there are very few zines in the hobby that run such items on anything more than an occasional basis. DW and DD you already get. I'd also suggest Fol Si Fie (Randolph Smyth 70 Maryland St #119, Winnipeg, MAN Canada R3G1K7). Its a small zine which appears only every 6 weeks. It usually has something on the play of the game,

and when it comes to negotiation and the "human" aspects of the game, you will not find a better writer than Randolph. I'd also suggest War and Peace (Derek Caws 57 Gordon Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight, UK) which presents material on play of the game by a variety of writers, on a very regular basis. FSF is 60¢/issue, W&P is 35¢/issue but you'd be better off using the ISE))

Konrad Baumeister: I am one who reads the zine for your own writing, and editorials on current matters. Frankly, I should say that DD, even when you have printed (percentage wise) far more reprints than current items, still had your personal mark on it. You're the kind of person who can't resist throwing his opinion in on virtually any issue, and so even if we had an all reprint issue covering, say, Russia, by the end of the issue I'd have a pretty good idea of exactly how you'd play Russia. I like that; others may not....((A good letter to close this issue out on. Konrad has published at least 4 zines over the years, and he knows how much work that can be. I reprint an old article for a new audience. At the end, I can agree or disagree; I can amplify, distinguish, or exemplify. I can add a caveat or emphasize a point made in passing. I can challenge a premise, or see where a conclusion will take us next. And a dozen other things --- and a reader can do the same, either on the original essay or on my commentary. And thats a part, a big part, of why there is this zine called DIPLOMACY DIGEST.))