

DIPLMAG - MENSA DIPLOMACY NEWS

NUMBER 19

September 15, 1977

A bimonthly newsletter of the American Postal Diplomacy SIG. Diplomacy is a registered trademark for a game Copyright by the Avalon Hill Game Co., Baltimore, Md. 21214. Annual Dues of \$1.00 required for SIG membership. Non-Mensans may receive this newsletter for \$1.50 per year, but may not join the SIG. Send all funds to the Chairman.

Chairman & Publisher: Fred C. Davis, Jr., 1427 Clairidge Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21207  
Senior Committeeman: Don Horton, 16 Jordan Ct., Sacramento, Calif. 95826  
Junior Committeeman: William Young, P.O. Box 907, Clearfield, Pa. 16830

\* \* \* \* \*

ELECTION RESULTS. Bill Young was the only person nominated for the office of Junior Committeeman, so he is declared elected by acclamation, to a two-year term beginning November 1, 1977. Bill is currently filling out the unexpired term of the previous Committeeman. Our thanks to Chris Pike, the Election Commissioner, on this matter.

THE DIPLOMACY SIG has been given space at the Washington Regional Gathering, for 9 a.m. on Saturday, September 17th. I'm sorry that I wasn't able to give our Maryland and Virginia members any more advance notice of this, but I was out of town on vacation until Sept. 8th, and the notice arrived while I was away. All Maryland and Metropolitan Washington M's should have noticed this in their copy of CAPITAL M/M-ANATION anyway. If any SIG members can drag themselves to the Stouffer Hotel in Crystal City, Arlington, Va., by that ghastly hour, we can have a get-together, and try to corrupt some innocent passers-by who may accidentally wander into the Montincello Room into becoming Diplomacy addicts. I'm supposed to explain everything there is to know about Postal Diplomacy in one hour. To which I reply, "Help!" (There might be a game that evening).

GAME-OPENING. Don Horton announces the opening of a list for a new Mensa Regular game in his zine, CLAW & FANG. Game Fee is \$2.00 plus a subscription (10 issues for \$3.00). You may receive a sample copy for 25¢. Write to Don at the address shown above.

My own BUSHWACKER has no openings for an all-Mensa game, but does have openings left for a new variant called "Rail & Sea Diplomacy". In this variant, all Home Armies can move to any space in the Homeland in one move, by "rail". Also, Fleets can move more than one space in certain high seas areas and along their own coastlines. My flat fee of \$7.00 includes a subscription to BUSH. A sample copy may be had for 25¢.

\* \* \* \* \*

The New National Groups (i.e. SIG) Officer is Paul Victor, 3460 w. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90005. Phone: (213) 384-4444. Paul is also Regional Vice-Chairman for the Los Angeles Region. Anyone wishing to establish a new SIG, or wishing to appeal something to a higher court, should contact him. Paul has started printing SIGNAL, a newsletter for all American SIG Coordinators. I'm sending photocopies of the first two issues to our other two officers. I do not know whether anyone but Coordinators may receive SIGNAL. If you're interested, I suggest that you might try writing to Paul to see whether you could subscribe.

In his first issue, Paul points out that the number of SIGs in American Mensa grew from 15 to nearly 100 over the past couple of years, under the aegis of Virginia Hourigan. SIGs have now become almost as important as Local Groups within the Mensa framework. There has been a considerable decrease in membership lapses since more SIGs became active. Many people who are not active in their Local Groups for one reason or another have become enthusiastic members of one or more SIGs, and remained in Mensa.

(more)

Each SIG will be given a plug in Paul Victor's column in the BULLETIN about once every 4th issue. You probably noted that Diplomacy received a plug in the September issue, which has already resulted in the receipt of several inquiries. There will also be a complete listing of all SIGs twice a year in the BULLETIN. (This listing is also sent to all new members, which is why we receive so many inquiries from brand-new M's).

In the second issue of SIGNAL, Paul advises that the 1978-79 Mensa Register will include a listing of the members' hobbies and interests. 675 numerical categories have been set up to cover these. The Coordinators of already existing SIGs will receive a complete listing of those M's expressing interest in the categories assigned to their respective SIGs. Thus, we will receive a listing of M's expressing interest in Diplomacy or other board wargames, and we will then send them a flyer asking if they'd care to join. This could result in a considerable increase in the size of our SIG.

Paul also points out that Local SIGs with interests similar to National SIGs will be asked whether they wish to join the National SIG (probably as an independent chapter). For example, there is a FTF Diplomacy SIG in Northern New Jersey. Their members were invited to join our SIG back in January 1976, but they weren't interested in the postal game. However, it is possible that we may pick up some new members via this route.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### GUEST EDITORIAL - The "No Move Received" Problem

If we could eliminate two common problems - the defaulting Gamesmaster (discussed next issue) and the NMR - I would prefer mail play to FTF play in Diplomacy. Mail play offers a more leisurely pace and opportunity to enjoy spare time at a pleasant, educational hobby.

The disruptive effect of NMR's upon a game could be reduced if publishers would encourage players already participating in that game to find substitutes to send in stand-by orders. Of course, the idea would be for the player losing interest to find his own substitutes before any NMR occurs.

A second alternative, just as good, would be for a player losing interest in a game to so advise his ally, and let the ally find a sub before any NMR occurs.

The present practice of selecting substitute players from a roster is not adequate. The substitution is too slow. Worse, many subs fail to follow the policies of the defaulter. This disruption of the game, while it may promote temporary interest, is unnatural. Most of us view Diplomacy as a simulation of international diplomacy. Regardless of some noteworthy exceptions, a change of heads of state seldom leads to radical alteration of international relations.

In Diplomacy, we should encourage participants in a game to find sub players for a defaulting ally. Thus we may gain quicker substitutions, more logical continuity of the flow of the game, less unnatural switching of allegiances and a better simulation of actual international affairs. GAMESMASTERS PLEASE NOTE.

- Bill Young

((I think Bill has a very good idea in proposing that all players be made partially responsible for finding replacement players, instead of leaving it all up to the GM. The House Rules of most publishers make provision for a player to provide his own substitute, but this is rarely done. A person losing interest in a game, or swamped with other work, usually no longer cares enough to request a replacement. It's a rare player who even has the courtesy to submit a formal resignation.

(more)

((In Regular games, those GM's who permit stand-bys usually maintain a single stand-by pool for all their games, and take players' names from the top as they are needed. In variant games, such as I run in BUEHWACKER, each variant must have its own list of stand-bys, since the rules and maps differ, and stand-bys must be furnished with copies of same. Some British pubbers will not allow replacements after Spring 1901, and require playerless countries to sit in anarchy for the duration of the game. I find that this spoils a game much more than allowing in a stand-by who may follow a different course of action than his predecessor.

((I disagree with Bill's thesis that a substitute player should continue to follow the policies of his predecessor. The name of the game is diplomacy, and one of the really interesting things about the game is how to persuade "the new kid on the block" to join your side. Bill's error is in equating the game, Diplomacy, to modern, or post-Napoleonic real-world diplomatic behavior. If we go back to any period before 1815, we find that switching sides was common during the course of a long war, or series of wars, or internal civil strife. Even in World War I, we have the phenomenon of Italy changing sides. Perhaps the fault lies with the game starting in 1901, when it really ought to begin with 1801! Or maybe 1618.))

\* \* \* \* \*

THUMBNAIL BIOGRAPHIES, MENSA DIPLOMACY SIG MEMBERS (Cont.)

KEY: 2. Address. 3. Date of Birth. 4. Marital Status. 5. Occupation or School. 6. Year joined Mensa. 7. Are you Active in Local Group? 8. Isolated M? 9. Mensa Office held? 10a. Year began playing Diplomacy. 10b. Playing Postal Diplomacy. 11. No. of Postal games you're currently in. 12. How did you learn about Diplomacy? 13. Other favorite games. 14. Other major interests. 15. Other comments or remarks.

THOMAS A. FARRIER. 2. Box 4308, USAF Academy, Colo. 80841. 3. June 16, 1956. 4. Unwilling bachelor. 5. Senior year at Air Force Academy. 6. 1977. 7. No. 8. In a manner of speaking. 9. None. 10. New player (as of May '77). 11. None yet. 12. SIG List. 13. Chess, Risk. 14. Ham radio. 15. I don't make strafing runs.

STEVEN RALSTON. 2. 10026 Hyla Brook Rd., Columbia, Md. 21044. 3. May 24, 1954. 4. Single. 5. Author. 6. 1977. 7. No. 8. No. 9. No. 10a. 1972. 10b. 1977. 11. None. 12. In college. 13. Star Lord. 14. Horse racing, Third Reich, Travelling.

PHILIP G. WIK. 2. 657 Jacksonville Rd., Ivyland, Pa. 18974. 3. March 9, 1955. 4. Single. 5. Political science major. 6. 1977. 7. Yes. 8. No. 9. No. 10a. 1977. 10b. Never played before. 11. None. 12. Through Mensa. 13. Chess, volleyball, Risk. 14. International economics, commodities exchange, books, cats, writing of poetry and essays, leap-of-imagination puzzles, etc.

JEFF WINSOR. 2. Apt. 25, 6010 S. 27th St., Milwaukee, Wisc. 53221. 3. Oct. 12, 1945. 4. Married. 5. MATC-Accounting. 6. 1975. 7. No. 8. No. 9. No. 10a. 1977. 10b. 1977. 11. One. 12. Thru Mensa BULLETIN. 13. Chess, tennis. 14. Reading.

NEW MEMBER: Roy Smith, 64 Addicks Rd., Westwood, N.J. 07675. (201) 666-2887.

At least 6 other SIG inquiries are currently outstanding, but none have yet come back with a positive statement that they're joining. Anyone else interested in furnishing a biographical sketch of themselves is invited to ask me for a survey form.

I think it would be a good idea to update all our biographies as of April 1, 1978. A lot of our members have changed their status since January 1976, when most of them were written. I will mail out new forms to everyone about next March. Back with another issue in November.

# # # # #