

DIPLOMAG - MENSA DIPLOMACY SIG NEWS

NUMBER 24

July 14, 1978

This is the bimonthly newsletter of the American Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG. Dues are \$2.00 per year. Non-Mensans may receive this paper for \$2.00 per year, but may not join the SIG. Send all funds to the Chairman. Diplomacy is a registered trademark for a game Copyright by the Avalon Hill Game Co., Baltimore, Md. 21214.

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

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ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT

This is the official call for nominations for the Offices of Chairman and one Committeeman in the Diplomacy SIG. Terms of office are for two years, beginning November 1, 1978. The expiring terms are those of your Chairman, Fred Davis, and Committeeman Don Horton. Qualifications for office are as follows (Item 7 of our By-Laws): "All officers must be current members of American or Canadian Mensa. Candidates for Chairman must have been members of the SIG for at least six months prior to the election."

Please send all nominations to the Election Commissioner, Craig A. Reges, 16 W 761 White Pines Rd., Bensenville, Ill. 60106. The DEADLINE for nominations is Thursday, August 24, 1978. If more than one person is nominated for either office, Craig will conduct an election by secret ballot. You will receive the results of the nominations and ballots (if necessary) directly from Craig Reges. Members will have 30 days from the date of mailing to mark and return their ballots to him.

A SIG member may nominate himself, or have someone else nominate him for office. Seconds are not required. If only one person is nominated, the Commissioner will declare him elected by acclamation, and this will be reported in the September issue of DIPLOMAG.

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THERE WAS NO DIPLOMACY GAME AT THE AG. Although SIG members Dave Blank, Gary Smith, Bill Young and myself showed up, we were unable to lure more than two other people at the same time into our hotel room to play a face-to-face game. We got as far as drawing for countries in the afternoon, but when the time came at 9:15 to start the game, only five people showed up. It seems that we had some competition from free wine, singing sessions, and attractive Fem's. Can't understand why these factors would keep anyone from playing Diplomacy, but we've concluded from the evidence that an AG is just not the place for a Dippy tournament. Dave Blank tried his best to get a game going so he could give up his title, but I decided that since he'd held it for three consecutive AG's, he had earned lifetime possession of the crown.

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DIPLOMAG TO RUN SIG GAMES

Beginning with the next issue, we will be running the United States Diplomacy III variant game in these pages, assuming that it has not ended by that time. We will operate by sending out the moves in alternate months by Xerox to the players and stand-bys. Then, in DIPLOMAG, we'll reprint the previous month's moves as well as the current moves, so other members can follow the game. Press will be acceptable, within reasonable limits, in the same manner as in BUSHWACKER. No black press, press must show  
(more)

a dateline of a province controlled by the writer, preference shown for short and humorous pieces, and I reserve the right to edit copy for brevity, clarity, good grammar, and to eliminate offensive material.

Since the U.S. Dippy game is approaching its conclusion, I would like to get the next game stated in the near future. I have the following people expressing interest in playing the following variants:

Swiss Diplomacy II (8 person game): Konrad Baumeister, Paul Funkenbusch, Gary Schmidt, Bill Young, "Mr. X" (5 players)  
Small World (7 or 8 players needed): Tony Earl, Paul Funkenbusch, Gary Schmidt (3)

I would prefer to run Swiss Diplomacy. If at least 7 people will submit a game fee of \$3.00, I think I could get this game started in November, as you'll note that I have a "reserve" player (temporarily anonymous) who has agreed to fill up the game. So, please send me your money if you're willing to play Swiss Dip. There are normally no preference choices, but if you have a particularly good reason for wanting to play Switzerland or some other Power, send me a brief statement, and I'll take this into consideration. Let me know if you need a set of the rules and map.

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NEW MENSA DIPLOMACY ZINE: BREW & REEFER, published by Roy Smith, 64 Addicks Rd., Westwood, N.J. 07675. The third issue of this zine has now come out. Roy offers subscriptions @ 1½¢ per page, plus postage. (Send a minimum of \$2.00. Roy says that when he returns to school in September, he'll have the aid of a computer to keep the records straight.) There is no game fee, but he requires a deposit of \$2.00 for all Dippy games. If you don't drop out, this will be refunded to you either at game's end, or when you're eliminated.

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MENSA WARGAMERS. H. D. Bassett, Walter Compton and Paul Funkenbusch announce that they plan to run some PBM wargames. The first game for which the rules are worked out is "Wooden Ships and Iron Men." For more information, contact H. D. Bassett at: Rt. 3, Lake Rd., Newton, Ct. 06470. Phone: (203) 426-0460.

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Have just learned that the 1979 DIPCON will not be held in Baltimore. It will be held in conjunction with the Origins V convention, if that Con is held in the East. Otherwise, it will be held at MichiCon, which will be held somewhere near Detroit.

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#### NEW MEMBERS

Konrad Baumeister, 11416 Parkview Ln., Hales Corners, Wis. 53130.  
Gary Schmidt, Parkview Dr., California, Mo. 65018. (314) 796-2888.

#### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Walter Compton, Casilla 211A, Quito, ECUADOR  
Steve Greenberg, 519 Cumberland Ave., Portland, Maine 04101. (207) 774-9007

We will start our SIG biographies on the next page, and complete them in the next issue. It's still not too late, if you want to submit one on yourself.

DIPLOMACY SIG BIOGRAPHIES (Second Edition) (Written March/April 1978)

KEY: 2. Address. 3. Date of Birth. 4. Marital Status. 5. Occupation or School. 6. Year joined Mensa. 7. Active in Local Group? 8. Isolated M? 9. Any Mensa office held. 9a. Participated in any Mensa FTF Diplomacy games? 10a. Year began playing Diplomacy. 10b. Began 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. Remarks.

WILLIAM M. AHLENIUS. 2. 1130 W. Multiflora La., Peoria, Ill. 61614. 3. July 26, 1934. 4. Married. 5. Attorney at Law. 6. 1964. 7. Yes. 8. Yes. 9. No. 9a. NO. 10a. 1977. 10b. Haven't begun yet. 11. None. 12. In Mensa BULLETIN. 13. All kinds, especially Avalon Hill and 3-M games. 14. Winemaking, History, Photography.

KONRAD BAUMEISTER. 2. 11416 Parkview La., Hales Corners, Wis. 53130. 3. Jan. 5, 1963. 4. Single. 5. Student, H.S. senior. 6. 1978. 7. Just joined. 8. No. 9. No. 9a. No. 10a. 1970 (at age 7!). 10b. 1975. 11. Varies from 12-20. 12. From European History teacher, in class. 13. Virtually all wargames, Go, Chess, word games. 14. Politics, history, stamp collecting, ancient Roman coins, psychology, the occult, Lost Continents.

JOHN L. BELL. 2. 8222 Burnley Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21204. 3. Oct. 18, 1952. 4. Div'd. 5. Private tutor, etc. 6. 1974. 7. Yes. 8. No. 9. LocSec & Proctor, Md. Mensa. 9a. Yes, at tea tasting at my home. 10a. 1977. 10b, 11. None; too swamped with other activities. 12. From Fred Davis' Diplomacy SIG. 13. Engaged in employment selection game with Civil Service Commission (Chess is more fun). 14. Baroque music, Esperanto, linguistics, Comparative religion, Calligraphy, Intelligence testing, political science, Egyptian art. 15. Active in Baha'i community work. Erstwhile Elian (try as I may).

TONY EARL. 2. 1020 High St., #B1, Bellingham, Wash. 98204. 3. August 28, 1957. 4. Single. 5. Student, Western Wash. Univ., Economics major. 6. 1978. 7. No. 8. No. 9. No. 9a. No. 10a. 1977. 10b. 1978. 11. Just starting. 12. By buying the game. 13. Risk, Go, Stockmarket & similar games. 14. Language, Ann Rand, Practical Philosophy, Piano, Games of all sort.

PAUL FUNKENBUSCH. 2. 110 W. South Ave., Houghton, Mich. 49931. 3. October 20, 1958. 4. Single. 5. Student, Michigan Technological U. - Metallurgical Engineering. 6. 1975. 7. No. 8. In effect, yes. 9. No. 9a. Yes. 10a. 1972(?). 10b. 1976. 11. Six. 12. Saw a friend's copy. 13. Mart simulations, Monopoly, Rail Baron, etc. 14. Fencing, Tennis, X-Country skiing, Science & Science fiction, History, Current Affairs.

STEVE GREENBERG. 2. 519 Cumberland Ave., Portland, Maine 04101. 3. Jan. 31, 1951. 4. Single. 5. Employment interviewer for Maine Job Service (anyone out there looking for a job in Maine?). 6. 1974. 7. No. 8. No. 9. No. 9a. No. 10a. 1977. 10b. 1978. 11. Three. 12. Former roommate had a set he'd constructed himself, from memory. 13. Risk, Monopoly, Cribbage, bridge, spades. 14. Reading, cooking, hiking/camping, sleeping, eating (not necessarily in that order).

JOHN E. HAMMOND. 2. 16 Webster Manor Dr., #1, Webster, N.Y. 14580. 3. July 27, 1942. 4. Married. 5. Journalist. 6. 1972. 7. No. 9. No. 9a. No. 10a. 1960. 10b. None yet. 11. Just starting first game. 12. At M.I.T. in 1960; hadn't played since. 13. Cards (variety), Rail Baron, Risk. 14. Model Railroads, Trains, Table Tennis, Jazz.

SIDNEY J. JOLLY. 2. 7604 El Cajon Blvd., #5, La Mesa, Calif. 92041. 3. Aug. 22, 1946. 4. Single. 5. Electronics technician. 6. 1966. 7. Yes. 8. No. 9. No. 9a. No. 10a. About 1967. 10b. 1967. 11. One. 12. Ad in STRATEGY & TACTICS. 13. Scrabble, Panzerblitz, ATH, several other wargames. 14. Money, electronics, girls, science fiction. 15. Diplomacy keeps my paranoia in peak operational condition.

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ALAIN MELOCHE. 2. 323 Labrosse Blvd., Gatineau, Quebec, CANADA J8P 4P7. 3. Apr. 9, 1953. 4. Single. 5. Scientific advisor, Atomic Energy Control Board. 6. 1976. 7. Not particularly. 8. No. 9. No. 10a. 1969. 10b. None yet. 11. None. 12. Through a friend. 13. Military games, such as those produced by SPI. 14. Amateur astronomy, history, music, science fiction.

STEPHEN MORRILL. 2. P.O. Box 2696, Tampa, Fla. 33601. 3. Feb. 25, 1945. 4. Single. 5. Steamship agent. 6. 1975. 7. Yes. 8. No. 9. Yes - Editor, Local Group Newsletter (TAMPA BAY SOUNDING). 9a. Yes. 10a. 1975. 10b. 1975. 11. None. 12. Through Mensa. 13. Scrabble, various military games, Chess, Dungeons & Dragons. 14. ACLU, local environment group, Big Brothers, Scuba diving, outdoor activities, Writing, Reading - approx. 100 books/year.

CRAIG A. RECHES. 2. 16W761 White Pines Rd., Bensenville, Ill. 60106. 3. August 1, 1956. 4. Single. 5. Univ. of Illinois at Chicago (Biological sciences, Senior). 6. 1976. 7. No. 8. No. 9. No. 9a. No. 10a. 1976. 10b. 1977. 11. Ten. 12. Thru Mensa Dip SIG. 13. Chess, Hearts, Pinochle, Backgammon, Scrabble. 14. Toxicology, Science fiction, European history, bowling, pinball, getting rich.

(Looks like we could start up a Risk & Rail Baron SIG. Incidentally, they're now playing Rail Baron by mail in some English zines. Also note the high interest in science fiction - some ~~(thing which is)~~ true throughout Mensa. Continued next issue.)

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I have an interesting article on the talk Dr. Isaac Asimov made at the New York Mensa Regional Gathering in May 1978. We saw a videotape of the talk at the Cleveland AG. The title is: "Is There Intelligent Life in Space? (And, if so, where is everybody?)" It's too long to fit in here. If you'd like a copy of my review of this talk, please send me a SASE (business size).

More information on a new Variant organization in the next issue. Events have occurred too late to make this issue.

POTENTIAL PLAYERS are reminded that they should contact Don Horton for information on the next All-Mensa Regular Diplomacy game in CLAW & FANG.

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DIPLMAG - MENSA DIPLOMACY SIG NEWS  
c/o Fred C. Davis, Jr.  
1427 Clairidge Rd.  
Baltimore, Md. 21207  
U.S.A.

(Group Form 1000)

FIRST CLASS MAIL

DR. ASIMOV SPEAKS

Isaac Asimov made a talk to the New York Mensa Regional Gathering in May 1978. The subject was, "Is There Intelligent Life in Space, and, if so, where is everybody?" We had a chance to see a videotape of this speech at the Mensa Convention in Cleveland in June.

Asimov pointed out several reasons why there might not be as many planets with intelligent life as were previously deducted by analogy. One of the most important is the existence of our Moon, which is 1/81st the mass of the Earth. This is a much closer ratio than that of any other satellite to its planet, making Earth/Moon, in effect, a double planet. The effect of the Moon on our tides made the task of evolving land life out of the sea that much easier. It is inconceivable that any intelligent life could evolve in the sea. (He reminded us that dolphins and whales were land animals which had returned to the sea).

This Earth/Moon configuration is probably extremely rare in the Galaxy. For every such combination, there could be a thousand earthlike planets out there without a large enough satellite to generate the necessary tides to lure amphibious life onto the land. Such earthlike planets might make good colonies, but they are less than likely to have any forms of land life at the present time.

((One point the Good Doctor did not bring up in his talk is the fantastic coincidence in the apparent sizes of the Sun and Moon, so the Moon can cause eclipses of the Sun. Without eclipses scaring the hell out of people, there might not have been any science of astronomy, and without astronomy, the mother of sciences, there probably could be no technological civilizations. So, there could be thousands of worlds with intelligent being on them, but living in a neolithic culture, because they had no Sun-Moon combination to stimulate their minds.))

The gloomy possibility was raised that perhaps all technological civilizations destroy themselves with nuclear weapons, pollution, etc. before they can develop interstellar space travel. Asimov felt it highly likely that many civilizations have destroyed themselves. No civilization could continue to develop at the energy levels required for space travel unless it had solved its inner conflicts regarding such matters as war and killing. He felt that we had about a one-in-ten chance of overcoming our obstacles to reaching a stable level at which the existence of our civilization would not be threatened. If most such civilizations fail, this could account for a lack of visits in this part of the Galaxy.

The Good Doctor proposed several other reasons why we haven't been physically contacted by other civilizations, if they do, in fact, exist. One is the possibility that we are classified as an aboriginal reserve, and they won't contact us until we mature to a certain point on our own. Another is that we have been contacted from time to time through the ages. But on the subject of flying saucers, Asimov says that he would have been more convinced by the reported sighting of one or two UFO's than by the reports of thousands. It is his opinion that no intelligent race would bother to make hundreds or thousands of visits to our planet without contacting us. Accordingly, he does not believe that the UFO phenomenon, whatever it is, represents visits of little green men.

But the principal reason, Asimov says, why we haven't been physically contacted is probably because it is impossible to travel faster than the speed of light. If a faster-than-light drive were possible, the first civilization to develop it would have colonized the Galaxy before anyone else had gotten started. Since we are probably late arrivals on the scene, some other group would surely have discovered the FTL process millions of years

ago if it were physically possible. Asimov said that as a science fiction writer, he had been forced only with the greatest reluctance to conclude that FTL travel was impossible. Indeed, even travel anywhere near the speed of light would consume too much energy to make it practicable. This, plus the average distance between civilizations, currently estimated to be 350 light years in our part of the galaxy, has kept anyone from visiting us.

Asimov believes that after exploring their own solar systems, most technological civilizations would probably limit their interstellar travel to the nearest stars. This would be especially likely to be true if they had established from radio detection that there were no nearby intelligent races.

He pointed out that radio contact was the most likely method of locating other civilizations, and that we ourselves have been generating radio waves at the proper frequencies and intensities to be detected on other worlds only for about the last 30 years. Therefore, we are likely to be the newest technological civilization in our corner of the Galaxy. He urged the building of new listening devices as quickly as possible, saying that the cost would be far outweighed by the benefits, if the contact were successful.

Asimov concluded by saying that it is entirely possible that there are very important messages coming in from other stellar systems which could help us. An entire Encyclopedia could be being beamed to us by another civilization, so we'd better start listening!

- Fred Davis  
June 1978

N.B. This was originally written for the Mensa newsletter, DIPLOMAG. The term, "The Good Doctor," is an "in" reference to Dr. Asimov within Mensa, as he is an International Vice President of the society.