

July 14, 1979

This is the bimonthly newsletter of the American Mensa Postal Diplomacy Special Interest Group, bringing hobby and SIG news to Mensans interested in playing the game, Diplomacy, and its variants by mail. Dues are \$2.00 per year. Non-Mensans may also subscribe 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, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21214.

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REPORT ON DIPCON XII

You missed a good show if you didn't attend DipCon in Chester, Pa. over the weekend of June 22-24. Despite the gas crunch, 110 people showed up for the Diplomacy Tournament. This gave us 16 boards for the first round (more on that last board later). An unusual scoring system designed by Mark Berch, with input from John Boyer, gave 60 points for a win, with the points being split up equally in 2 to 6-way draws. Supply Centers counted for only .01 points each, and were used essentially to break ties. The games could proceed only through 1907 because of time limitations, so you saw some pretty unusual play as time ran out. As someone wisely put it: "There are three different games called Diplomacy. One is FTF. One is Postal. And one is Tournament play." A "Win" was defined as ownership of 12 or more Centers at the end of Fall 1907.

The First Place winner was Ben Zablocki of New York, with a win and a 2-way draw for a total of 90+ points. Peter Stassum finished second, and Matt Rostrum third. Awards were also given for the best single finish for any country. The highest totals reached by anyone was 13 Centers for France and Germany.

There weren't enough SIG members present to hold a meeting. However, I did see Roy Smith, former SIG member Karl Schuetz, and future M Dan Mathias there. Roy informed me that his zine, BREW & REEFER, would cease publishing with the June issue. This reduces the ranks of M publishers to three (Horton, Baumeister and me), with Craig Reges' AGAINST THE ODDS an unknown quantity. What's the story, Craig? Are you folding ATO?

It was interesting trying to match up faces with names. Many people looked completely different from how I had pictured them. Robert Sergeant, for example, looked much younger than anyone named "Sergeant" ought to look, while Mark Berch turned out to be only half a generation younger than me, although I'd pictured him as being around 22/23. All of the Old Timers, including myself, are getting older, alas. John Boardman didn't even recognize Rod Walker when Rod went up to him and shook his hand. The one person who looked pretty much as I'd expected him to (healthy, dynamic, Middle American) was Steve McLendon of Texas. John Boyer has lost a lot of weight, and looked very good. Herb Barents has shaved off his beard and looked 100% better.

There was an interesting Diplomacy Seminar held on Friday night. Mark Berch gave a talk on opening moves for France. Mark and I agree that France has more alternate possibilities than any other Power. (Therefore, it's my favorite country to play). Rod Walker spoke on the "Psychology of Diplomacy." He divided all players into three categories: Reliable, Untrustworthy, and Erratic. You can play a good game against the first two; it's the third type who is hard to beat, since you never know what he's going to do. He recommended using the "Briar patch technique" to get someone to do something you want him to do. "Please don't move to the English Channel this turn!"

(more)

There were meetings of the IDA Council, the DipCon Site Society, and the IDA Annual Business Meeting. For an allegedly postal hobby, it's ironic that more was accomplished FTF in two days than had been done by mail in the previous six months.

The IDA Council reaffirmed support for the Orphan Games rescue project, and subsidies for both the Boardman No. and Miller No. Custodians. A call ^{was made} for a volunteer to take over the Novice Player Project. The Dues structure was revised. Eventually, IDA dues will be increased to \$3.00 per year, with all dues coming due on January 1st of each year. However, anyone joining right now will pay only \$3.00 for membership through 12/31/80. The Council also set up a Committee to revise the IDA/NA Constitution, and prepare any amendments it wishes to recommend to the membership.

It was informally determined that the 1980 IDA Special Project would be the preparation of a revised Publisher's Handbook, based upon the 1976 Publisher's Handbook prepared under the editorship of Len Lakofka. Jerry Jones had begun work on this project, and will hand his work over to his successor.

Jerry Jones resigned from the IDA Council following the end of DipCon, to devote full time to the publication of DIPLOMACY WORLD. Victor Ricci was appointed by unanimous vote of the Council to serve the remainder of his term as Special Projects Editor. The Council, by a vote of 5-0, also removed Elmer Hinton from his post as Editor of DIPLOMACY REVIEW. As this goes to press, a new permanent Editor has not yet been selected, although an emergency issue of D.R. is being sent to all members by Rod Walker. (If you are an IDA member and don't receive an issue of D.R. within the next week, please send your name and address to Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, Calif. 92024, and ask for a copy).

Nominations were also opened for IDA President, /, required under the Constitution to fill a vacancy. I appreciated being asked by several people to stay on as Acting President, but I am wearing too many hats already, and had to defer. The deadline for submitting nominations will be about July 31st, or possibly slightly later. If you want to nominate someone for IDA President, first make sure that he's willing to serve, and then send your nominations to me, since, as Ombudsman, I'm required to handle this matter.

(If you feel that this is the time to reestablish IDA as a rational service organization, send your \$3.00 to Bill Young, IDA's Treasurer. His address is on the masthead. Then you can participate in the upcoming bye-election for President, and in the regular elections for all offices which will come up in October/November.)

THE DIPCON SOCIETY APPROVED A NEW CHARTER. The original draft of the DipCon Society Charter was written by Greg Costikyan in 1976. Rod Walker has revised it, with additional amendments and suggestions made by Robert Sacks and myself. This Charter provides the method by which future DipCon sites are to be selected, and does so in such a way as to guarantee that the site will be rotated from State to State and region to region. (Years ago, DipCon was held in Chicago four consecutive years (1972-1975), which was felt to be unfair to other parts of the country). Under the Charter, all persons registered at one year's DipCon may vote on the location of next year's Con.

Before the Society meeting had been called to order, a "rump" session had held a mock vote, and decided to send next year's DipCon to Managua, Nicaragua. However, we felt that they played Diplomacy just a little bit too seriously down there.

Region II (the Old Northwest Territory States) was eligible to hold DipCon in 1980. Bids were received from two groups; the Chicago Wargamers Assn., and from MichiCon, which will probably hold its 1980 convention in Pontiac. The MichiCon site was selected by a show-of-hands vote. This is a very large and well-run wargaming tournament. The location will be convenient for everyone heading there from New York to Illinois, from Ontario to Virginia. We hope to see you there. (Cont. on Pg. 4)

SIG ELECTION TIME A-COMIN'

The time has come again to announce an election for the post of Junior Commissioner of our SIG, for a two-year term beginning November 1, 1979. People may nominate others, or may nominate themselves. I would also like to have someone volunteer to serve as Election Commissioner.

Please send all nominations for Junior Commissioner directly to me, until or unless you're instructed otherwise. As soon as an Election Commissioner is appointed, that person will take over. Volunteers should contact me immediately, as I'm going to be out of town from July 21st through the 30th. The DEADLINE for nominations for Jr. Commissioner will be MONDAY, August 27, 1979. If more than one candidate is nominated, the Election Commissioner will prepare and mail out ballots to the membership, and they will have 30 days from the date of that mailing to mark and return said ballots to him. The Commissioner will then count the ballots and announce the results. If only one person is nominated, the Commissioner will declare him elected by acclamation. (This is as provided for under our By-Laws).

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NEW MEMBERS

John Giordano, 214 Rhode Island St., Buffalo, N.Y. 14213
Frank Steo, 4149 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, Fla. 32807. (305) 277-0015

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Lincoln Beaumont, 5718 S. 141 Plz., Apt. 1, Omaha, Neb. 68137

Linc advises me that while his own Dippy set is a GRI model, his long-time opponent who introduced him to the game in 1960-61 does indeed own one of the original Calhamer sets. I think I was once told that only 500 such sets were produced, and most have long since disappeared, so tell your friend, Linc, that he has a very valuable antique on his hands. If my memory serves me right, Walt Buchanan has such a set, which can be identified by having numbers from "1" to "8" printed on the fleet and army pieces in gold lettering. Does anyone else own such a set?

Incidentally, the contrast between the clean, crisp GRI boards and the lackluster A-H boards was very noticeable at DipCon. Everybody I spoke with felt that there was just no comparison between the two. It is my opinion that the Diplomacy hobby would have never gotten anywhere if we had had to depend on the current map and ridiculous game box from the start. The box implies that the contents are a children's game, and the map says "Blah!" Too bad we can't get Avalon Hill to give us a good map and box.

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ANOTHER SIG PLUG

Fellow Mensans may be interested in the SPACE SCIENCES SIG, coordinated by George Day, 6843 Laurel St., Portage, Indiana 46368. Membership is \$2.50 per year, which includes receipt of a very well printed quarterly newsletter. The current issue commemorates the 10th anniversary of the Apollo 11 landing, contains an excellent article on Lunar Science, an announcement of the formation of a stockholding corporation for space industries, and a reprint of a letter from ASTRONOMY magazine.

Interesting quotes: "The Moon landings may be the only event of the 20th century that will be accorded more than passing notice" - Clifford D. Simak. "The current NASA budget is less than the welfare payments made in either New York or California in a single year....Who says we can't afford space?" - Julie Woodman.

REPORT ON DIPCON XII (Continued from Pg. 2)

The DipCon Society Charter will be printed in DIPLOMACY WORLD in a few months. If you'd like to have an advance copy, please send me a SASE.

It was also announced at DipCon that Robert Sacks has stepped down as Miller No. Custodian. The new MNC is Greg Costikyan, 1675 York Ave., New York, N.Y. 10028. (MNC issues designators in Variant postal games).

ABOUT THAT TOURNAMENT AGAIN. Bill Young and I had decided that as IDA officers we had so much to do that we wouldn't participate in the Tournament, but we agreed to serve as stand-by players for Round #1 if needed to fill a board. It so happened that there were 5 people left over for the 16th board when all was said and done, so Bill and I, much to our surprise, found ourselves assigned at Turkey and Austria, respectively, in the same game. We had a ball. At first, the other players didn't realize that Bill and I were old friends. Normally, Austria and Turkey don't work together too well, but in this case we enjoyed marvelous cooperation. The best diplomat in the game was a fellow named Scott Walker, who was playing Russia. It was obvious that we had to stop him, or he would have had a 12-Center victory. We will never go to heaven after some of the things we did to him. For example, Bill promised to return Sevastopol to Russia, and got Russia to convoy his A back to Ankara, but, while that was happening, I took Sev with my A Rumania! I am a lousy FTF player, and yet, with Bill's help, I brought Austria up to 9 Centers after Fall '03. Italy was eliminated in 1904. Because time was running out, 1905 had to be our last game year. England was wiped out to get a 5-way draw for the rest of the players. Dues to a gentleman's agreement, there was a coin toss between France and Germany for the last English Center, which France won. As a result, fellow Marylander Randy Meyers technically finished first, with 10 Centers, with my Austria second with 9, and Bill's Turkey third with 6. Scott Walker's Russia had only 5, but he went on in the Tournament to win the Best France award with a 13-Center win in a later round. There is a gentleman who should go far in this hobby. I didn't play in any of the later rounds, being busy writing things up and otherwise preparing for the other meetings.

The attempts to hold serious seminars and meetings were disrupted, in part, by the behavior of two Dead End Kids from New York City, who barged in with squirt guns. In any adult society, they would have had their money refunded, and shown out the door. Unfortunately, Diplomacy is a long way from reaching the standards of a chess or bridge club, or even of a Mensa meeting. Fortunately, one of these clowns announced that he will have completely left the hobby within the next year. Great! Perhaps, next year, we can appoint a Sgt.-at-Arms to keep the children under control.

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RECOMMENDED READING: WHY CIVILIZATIONS SELF-DESTRUCT, by Elmer Pendell, Noontide Press, c/o H. Allen Enterprises, Cape Canaveral, Fla. (\$5.50). All Diplomats interested in the Rise and Fall of Empires (including our own) will be interested in this book, which adds the practical consideration of the varying birthrates for the various portions of the I.Q. spectrum to the foundations laid down by Spengler and Toynbee. "Average intelligence is on the downgrade at an increasing rate. Human failures are outbreeding human successes, and the educated are producing only a fraction as many children per couple as the uneducated." To which I'd like to add: Anyone for an L-5 "Ark" to escape the Earth "before the fall of night."?

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CAREER ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, by Robert Stimmel, SIG member

One interesting position (I presume) is "Trustee in Bankruptcy" for a bankrupt railroad. I guess one would get this job by being a lawyer rather than a railroader. I've never heard of anyone with this ambition. This has nothing to do with Diplomacy - but should interest those members who specified interest in "Rail Baron."

SWISS DIPLOMACY II (Mensa Variant Game #2)

FALL 1903

EVERYBODY GANGS UP ON GERMANY. KIEL-HAULING SUCCEEDS, BUT NORTH SEA IS A STAND-OFF. SWISS DRIVE WESTWARD AS FRENCH SNOOZE, BUT ITALIANS MOVE IN BEHIND THEM. AUSTRIANS STYMIED, AS TURKS RECAPTURE CONSTANTINOPE AND FORCE HAPSBURGS TO SWIM IN AEGEAN.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Frank Kenesson (ENGLAND) to: P.O. Box 17, Highland, Md. 20777. (This is near Columbia, about halfway between the Baltimore and Washington metro areas).

- AUSTRIA (Baumeister): A Bulgaria-Rumania. A Budapest (S) A Bulgaria-Rumania.
 (6)(5 units) A Zara-Serbia. A Vienna-Galicia. F Const-Smyrna (dislodged),
(R) to Aegean Sea (only space open).
- ENGLAND (Kenesson): A Norway embarks on F North Sea, A/F North Sea-Helgoland, A dis-
 (6) embarks Kiel. F Sweden (H). F Belgium (H). F English Channel
(S) F Belgium. F Edinburgh-North Sea.
- FRANCE (Morrill): NMR. F Brest and A Paris (H). A Castile (H) (Dislodged),
 (3) Annihilated.
- GERMANY (Young): A Ruhr-Belgium. F Holland (S) A Ruhr-Belgium. F Yorkshire-
 (5) North Sea. A Denmark (S) RUSSIAN F Gulf of Bothnia-Sweden (NSO).
F Baltic Sea (S) F Denmark.
- ITALY (Montgomery): A Croatia-Tyrol. A Venice (H). F Tyrr. Sea-Sardinia.
 (4) A Tunis (H).
- RUSSIA (Turtledove): A Moscow-Ukraine. A Galicia-Budapest. A Rumania (S) A Galicia-
 (5) Budapest. F Sev (S) A Rumania. F Gulf of Bothnia-Baltic Sea.
- SWITZ. (Funkenbusch): A Andalucia-Portugal. A Gascony-Castile. A Marseille (S)
 (6) A Gascony-Castile. F Gulf of Lions-Andalucia. F Western Med.-
South Atlantic. A Lombardy-Geneva.
- TURKEY (Bapple): F Sinope-Const. F Black Sea (S) F Sinope-Const. A Syria-
 (3) Smyrna.

NO PRESS RELEASES THIS MONTH

SUPPLY CENTER CHART, WINTER 1903: GAINS, ~~LOSSES~~

- AUSTRIA: Vienna, Zara, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, (6, Build 1)(Was 1 short)
 BUDAPEST, ~~CONST.~~
- ENGLAND: 3 Home, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, KIEL (7, Build 1)
- FRANCE: Paris, Brest, ~~CASTILE~~ (2, No change)(1 annihilated)
- GERMANY: Berlin, Munich, Denmark, Holland, ~~KIEL~~ (4, Remove 1)
- ITALY: 3 Home, Tunis, SARDINIA (5, Build 1)
- RUSSIA: 4 Home, RUMANIA, ~~BUDAPEST~~ (5, No change)
- SWITZ.: 3 Home, Andalucia, Marseilles, CASTILE, (7, Build 1)
 PORTUGAL, ~~SARDINIA~~
- TURKEY: Sinope, Smyrna, CONST., ~~RUMANIA~~ (3, No change)

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 1903 Adjustments is WEDNESDAY, August 15, 1979. Telephone dead- line will be Tuesday, August 14th, at 9:00 p.m., Eastern Time. Nobody wanted to com- bine the Fall and Winter seasons, so we will procede at all deliberate speed. (For the benefit of those who didn't receive the game report last month, a clerical error by the GM involving a mislaid order prevented the Fall report from being printed that month).

Players are reminded that Konrad Baumeister (AUSTRIA) will be back from Germany and at his usual Wisconsin address on August 1st.

FRANCE has no adjustments to make, but Steve Morrill is requested to send me a post- card to assure me that he's still in the game.

THE IRISH POSTAL STRIKE HAS ENDED. Therefore, I hope to be in touch shortly with the World Variant Archivist, Der Garvey, in order to finish up the project of the re-classification of the variants. Perhaps we'll have more on that subject here next month

ON THE OTHER HAND, I've just heard that there is now a postal strike going on in ENGLAND! You win some; you lose some. (That strike was short-lived)

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MARTIN JANTA-POLCZYNSKI ON VARIANTS (Address: Ave. Montana 32, B-1180, Brussels, Belgium.)

I'd wondered what I was going to do with all this extra space, when, today, I received a letter and some variant maps & rules from Martin Janta of Belgium, one of the Continent's leading lights in the field of Diplomacy variants. I thought I'd reprint a few of his comments here:

Postal Play: I find that postal play too slavishly imitates face-to-face play. I like neither prophetic builds nor a special Winter season, which slows the pace of the game and slackens the interest of the reader. The best solution would be to design special rules for postal play, like I tried in my new edition of the Persian Variant rules. (In Persian Variant II, there is no special build season. New units to which a player is entitled after a Fall season appear automatically, in a special place called Reserve, and he may move them from there to any province in which he could ordinarily build during a subsequent season (i.e. the following Spring move), subject to the usual rules of movement and any special rules of the variant.)

On Dual Space Diplomacy (a new Davis design): The idea of "Overlapping Seas" is absolutely fantastic. I made a few sea spaces overlap on the Classical (Standard) board at our Diplomacy club. Now, no one wants to play without the overlapping seas any more. (I thank Martin for playtesting this variant. After such response, I think I may print the rules and maps for Dual Space Dip here in two months. Is anyone curious?)

Methodology of Variant Design: There are a number of guidelines in variant design that could be formulated and adhered to, to make the variant easier to understand and more agreeable for players to use. One would be to mention as little as possible particular features (e.g. special spaces, Moses crossings) except as examples. The locations of such features should be visible on the map, and, therefore, should not have to be listed in detail in the rules. Map clarifications in the rules give the impression that the map is not clear enough by itself, which is a pity. (Unfortunately, Martin, there are some players who won't catch on unless you spell everything out for them).

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

DIPLOMAG - SWISS DIPLOMACY II GAME REPORT

Number 30.1

August 16, 1979

Published by Fred C. Davis, Jr., 1427 Clairidge Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21207.
Phone: (301) 747-7248.

NOTICE: The Election Commissioner for the SIG's Jr. Commissioner Election will be Steve Greenberg, 38 Alder St., #11, Portland, Maine 04101. (That's also a c/a for Steve). Any further nominations for that post should be sent to him by the August 27th deadline. Two people have been nominated to date: Roy Smith, and Bill Young.

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SWISS DIPLOMACY II (Mensa Variant Game #2)

WINTER 1903

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: Edward C. Bapple (TURKEY), 7008 Sheridan Rd., Chicago, Ill. 60626
(Effective 8-30-79)

Paul Funkenbusch (SWITZERLAND), will return to his former address as of 9-1-79, to wit:
110 W. South Ave., Houghton, Mich. 49931. (906) 482-1491.

AUSTRIANS AT FULL STRENGTH AS THEIR KAISER RETURNS FROM GERMANY

		<u>CURRENT STRENGTH</u>
AUSTRIA (Baumeister):	Build A Zara	6 (n.c.) (was 1 unit short)
ENGLAND (Kenesson):	Build A London	7 (+1)
FRANCE (Morrill?):	No change	2 (-1) (1 annihilated)
GERMANY (Young):	Remove F Yorkshire	4 (-1)
ITALY (Montgomery):	Build F Naples	5 (+1)
RUSSIA (Turtledove):	No change	5 (n.c.)
SWITZ. (Funkenbusch):	Build F Lombardy	7 (+1)
TURKEY (Bapple):	No change	3 (n.c.)

PRESS

BERLIN: Following its defeat by England in Fall 1903, the German high command has been dismissed and the Kaiser has fled into exile in the Alps. The caretaker regime anticipates little help from Switzerland, which built too many armies when it needed fleets to divide its forces between England and Italy. Consequently, Germany seeks peace terms from and a subservient role to England. May the English Navy force peace terms upon all our neighbors.

Konrad Baumeister (AUSTRIA) is now back home in Wisconsin.

DEADLINE for SPRING 1904 orders is ~~WEDNESDAY~~, September 19, 1979. Telephone deadline will be Tuesday, Sept. 18th, at 9 p.m., Eastern Time. The reason for this slight delay is that I've found it necessary to move the production date for DIPLOMAG back to the 20th of the month, to avoid conflicts with our monthly Maryland Mensa meetings. I have provisional orders on hand for Austria and Italy, which will be used unless amended.

Steve Greenberg, our No. 1 stand-by player, is asked to send in back-up orders for France, which will be used only if no orders are received from Steve Morrill. (Greenberg's address is shown above under Election Commissioner).

IDA NEWS: Three candidates have been nominated for IDA President in that bye-election. They are Edi Birsan, W. Elmer Hinton, and Robert Sacks.