



# DIPLOMAG

NUMBER 36

July 19, 1980

This is the bimonthly newsletter of the American Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG, bringing hobby and SIG news to Mensans interested in playing the game, Diplomacy, and its many variants, by mail. Dues are \$2.00 per year. Send all funds to the Chairman.

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## DIPLOMAG GAME REPORTS AND HOBBY NEWS TO BE MERGED WITH BUSHWACKER

We have a considerable overlap in readership between BUSHWACKER and DIPLOMAG, especially among the players. Therefore, after due consultation with the Executive Committee, it has been decided that all game reports will be carried in BUSHWACKER, beginning with the month of August 1980. This also means that I will not have to prepare two separate reports of general hobby news, one for each publication, and can eliminate the need for double mailings each month. (With postage going up to 20¢ an oz., this is important). All SIG members will receive DIPLOMAG as a supplement to BUSH in alternate months, beginning in September. The people playing in the All-Mensa variant games in DIPLOMAG will receive BUSHWACKER every month, instead of those skinny single-page game reports in alternate months. By getting rid of the donkey work, I will have time to offer some new games to both BUSH and DIPLOMAG readers.

The DIPLOMAG supplement will contain only news directly relating to the SIG, such as elections and the progress of other All-M games, plus occasional comments on news and events within American Mensa. Because of this new format, and because the National SIG Officer has requested that SIG publications contain Volume as well as Issue numbers, the next issue of DIPLOMAG will be called Vol. II, No. 1. But, it will still have the cross-eyed Ellie's Owl on the masthead!

There will be no change in DIPLOMAG's monthly deadlines for games, as both BUSH and DIPLOMAG will adopt the same deadline schedule. The only difference will be that the deadlines will eventually be on the last day of each month, to set up a regular schedule which everyone can remember. (The only exception will be in February, when I'll probably give you a March 1st deadline). The next deadline, for example, will be on Thursday, August 28th, and the following one will be on Tuesday, September 30th.

See the insert labelled "BUSHWACKER, Page 2" for the list of variant game openings being offered to readers of both DIPLOMAG and BUSH. Deduct \$2.00 from the fees quoted therein, as this represents your SIG dues. We will try to make one of these games an All-M game.

WE HAD A GOOD TIME AT THE SAN FRANCISCO AG. Saw only two other SIG members there, Joe Marshall and Dave Rolfe. (Dave rejoined the SIG on the spot, upon seeing me. I don't know whether it was my charming personality or the Colt. .45). Several of the SIG Coordinators met with Groups Officer Marcia Shuman for a seminar on how the SIGs can be better organized. We Old Timers gave helpful hints to the newcomers. There was a full-time games room, where many people were playing D & D, Scrabble, etc. We left several copies of DIPLOMAG about. Someone had brought a Dippy set, but only one person expressed interest in learning the game, so no game was played.

San Francisco is a beautiful city. I was there for 9 days, and got a chance to see many of the sights, such as Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf and the ferry to Sausalito. Although it was cold during most of my stay, the cool air keeps one's brain functioning. It warmed up for Mensa's benefit on Friday & Saturday, overwhelming the hotel's A/C system in a couple of packed rooms, such as the one in which Mell Lazarus told us about his comic strip, "Momma." The Regency-Hyatt House hotel is a fabulous place to visit, but I couldn't afford to stay there. There is a 17-story atrium inside, with a hanging garden. With such overwhelming luxury, the Decline & Fall of the American Empire can't be far behind. The minimum rate was \$75./night for a single. Fortunately, Mensa provided we ordinary people with a list of economy hotels. I stayed at the Mark Twain, which is only half-a-block from the Airport Bus Terminal, thereby saving me the cost of a taxi. I can strongly recommend the Mark Twain if you want a clean and reasonably priced hotel in the heart of the city. I rode BART back-and-forth two stations to the Embarcadero station next to the Hyatt House. The BART rapid transit system is fabulous. Once you've seen BART, the New York and Chicago subways look like something out of the Middle Ages. 71 miles of the system are now in operation. Hopefully, an extension to the Airport will be built within the next five years.

I went up to Sacramento to stay with Don and Rosanna Horton for two days. Much warmer up there. We took a tour of the State Capitol and of Old Sacramento, a revitalized historical area rebuilt to look about like it did in 1880. I then returned to Frisco for a railfan convention. This included a ride in a chartered Light Rail Vehicle via the streetcar tunnels and open trackage of the city. We also went to the California Railway Museum in Rio Vista to ride all types of electric vehicles, including a Second Ave. El car from New York (one of a fleet of 70 sent to Oakland in 1942 to provide mass transit for shipyard workers in Richmond. Only two survive.) After my California excursions, I made a 36-hour stopover in Chicago, and got caught in their 102° heatwave!

SEE THE ATTACHED SUPPLEMENT for a report on DIPCON, held in Rochester, Michigan on June 6, 7, 8, 1980. I did not get to ORIGINS, so I can't tell you anything about it.

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### SIG MEMBERSHIP IS "CAPPED"

We have reached the point where something had to be done to prevent SIG growth from getting out of hand, and turning a hobby into work. We now have 65 members. It was concluded that we could not handle more than 75 members, especially since we have been sending out complimentary and trade copies to several sources. Accordingly, a ceiling of 70 has been set on our membership. When the figure reaches 70, we shall tell all inquirers that there is a waiting list. M's will be listed on the waiting list in order of receipt of inquiry, and they will then be invited to join as vacancies occur. If any M's reading this are not planning to renew their SIG memberships next year, please let me know now. I'd like to make it easier for new members to join, by knowing how many vacancies there are going to be.

Our new members for the current period are:

Sharon R. Lewis, 216 Huntley Rd., Upper Darby, Pa. 19082  
David Rolfe, Box 176, Ft. Ord., Calif. 93941. (Rejoined)  
Richard A. (Rick) Young, 1028 Fairview, Alma, Mich. 48801. (517) 463-6659

ELECTION NOTICE

Steve Greenberg, 38 Alder St., #11, Portland, Maine 04101, has been appointed Election Commissioner for our 1980 election. The posts of Chairman (SIG Coordinator) and one Committeeman are up for election, for two-year terms beginning November 1, 1980. My hat is in the ring for re-election. Don Horton has advised me that he does not choose to run again. Therefore, Bill Young will become the Senior Committeeman in the Fall, said title being based on seniority, as in the Senate, and the election will be for the purpose of electing a new Junior Committeeman.

The qualifications for SIG office are as follows (quoting Section 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. The DEADLINE for nominations is Thursday, August 21, 1980. A SIG member may nominate himself, or have someone else nominate him for office. Seconds are not required. If you nominate someone else, be sure to obtain his permission to do so. If only one person is nominated for an office, the Election Commissioner will declare him elected by acclamation.

If more than one person is nominated for either office, Steve will conduct an election by secret ballot. You will receive the results of the nomination process, and ballots (if necessary) directly from Steve. Members will have 30 days from the date of mailing to mark and return their ballots to him. If possible, we will print the results in the September DIPLOMAG. If this isn't possible, we will let you know the outcome in October.

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PROGRESS OF ALL-MENSA GAMES

MENSA #11 has begun under the auspices of Ed Bapple. Seven players and one stand-by have been assigned. The deadline for Spring 1901 has probably been reached as I type this. It is their first postal game for many of the players. Ed asks me to remind you that he can use more stand-bys. The stand-by fee is \$2.50. This is not a zine, being limited to reports on Mensa #11. However, if any of you wish to see a sample copy (to decide whether to sign up as a stand-by, or just out of curiosity), you may receive same by sending Ed a SASE. His address is: Edward C. Bapple, 4531 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60630.

I have five people signed up for the next All-M Regular game, which will be run by Ronald Brown of Quebec, Canada (not to be confused with the Ron Brown of Bakersfield, California). Com'on, you guys, let's get this game filled. Summer will soon be over, so start making plans for the long, cold winter. Send all entries to me.\*

1977CY (Mensa #7): AUSTRIA (Linc Beaumont) crept closer to victory, with 16 Centers, as a 3-way draw was rejected. ITALY (H.D. Bassett) controls 14, with Paul Funkenbusch's FRANCE holding what could be the key in the remaining four, as the game enters Spring 1917.

1978W (Mensa #9): Austria and Italy have disappeared, but there's still no one with a big lead. FRANCE (Bassett) controls 9 Centers, and ENGLAND (Len Johnson) has climbed to 8, as 1909 draws to a close. TURKEY (Hodgdon) is master of the other end of the Board with 7 Centers, as RUSSIA (Reynolds) drops to 5.

1980AC (Mensa #10, the last game ever started in CLAW & FANG): As of Fall 1902, ITALY (Charles Byrne) has 6 Centers to lead the pack, but England, France and Germany all have 5, so it's anybody's game.

\*C/A for Ron Brown: R.R. 2, Maniwaki, P.Q., CANADA J9E 3A9. (819) 449-5315.  
Ron was married on July 5th. Congratulations!

SWISS DIPLOMACY II (Mensa Variant Game #2)

WINTER 1907

ENGLISH CREEPING CLOSE TO CONTROL OF EUROPE

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Frank Kenesson (ENGLAND): 10007 Woodkey Lane, Apt. #11, Owings Mills, Md. 21117. Phone: (301) 356-5916. Frank may only be there for about two months, but he assures me that his mail will be forwarded, and that he'll be sending in his orders from wherever he may be.

CURRENT STRENGTH

AUSTRIA (Baumeister)	No change (was one short)	6 (-1)
ENGLAND (Kenesson):	Build A Edinburgh, A Liverpool, F London (No room for other builds)	19 (+6) (3 units short)
ITALY (Montgomery):	Remove A Algeria, A Tunis	6 (-2)
RUSSIA (Hanson):	Remove F Courland	3 (-1)
SWITZ. (Funkenbusch):	Remove A Burgundy, A Savoy, F Ligurian Sea	2 (-3)
TURKEY (Bapple):	Build F Smyrna	3 (+1)

DEADLINE for Spring 1908 orders is THURSDAY, August 28, 1980. Telephone deadline will be Wednesday, August 27th, at 9 p.m., Eastern Time. Note that this game report will be carried in BUSHWACKER, rather than as a separate report. Ain't you guys lucky!

Scott Hanson, you expressed interest in one of the new variant games being offered. Please let me know which one(s). Other players may also wish to sign up for a new game, as this one may end rather soon.

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The Postal Diplomacy SIG is not listed in the List appearing in the July/August issue of the Mensa BULLETIN. This is no cause for alarm. We are still alive and well. This occurred because of a mix-up in the large volume of mail received by National Groups Officer Marcia Shuman. Marcia apologized to me for this mishap at the AG, and assures me that we will again be listed in January.

"And that's the way it is today."

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DIPLOMAG - News of the Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG  
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U.S.A.

REPORT ON DIPCON XIII

Flying to DipCon on June 6th, I noticed that our plane was violating Canadian airspace in order to reach Detroit's Metropolitan Airport from the proper angle. Fortunately, Capt. Ralph Morton must have been on duty in Ottawa, as no Canadian jets flew up to intercept us. Harley Jordan met me in the airport, and drove me to Oakland University. Harley is a very easy person to spot. He is the only person in Detroit wearing a derby hat, which is his trademark at all wargame conventions.

The Diplomacy Tournament was GM'd by Herb Barents, publisher of BOAST. Allan Calhmer himself was Ratingmaster, using a new Tournament scoring system which he had helped to develop. Harley and I served as Assistant GM's. That way, we each had a chance to go and eat, or make other visits, while two officials were always present on the floor. We were given the entire 3rd floor of South Foundation Hall for the tourney. We had eight classrooms, with at least two tables set up in each room. As it turned out, there was only one game going in each classroom, so the environment was one of the best I've ever seen for such a tournament. We were very pleased with the MichiCon facilities, and with all of the advance work which Harley had done to get everything set up properly.

I was appointed Timekeeper. Seasons were strictly limited to 15 minutes each. (It was later suggested that 20 minutes should have been allotted to Spring 1901). I had the pleasure of ringing the gong (dubbed the "Iron Triangle") with a vengeance. Some people complained that I rang it too long; others said it wasn't rung long enough. You can't please everyone.

I was surprised to see Allan pull out a Rulebook on one occasion, when he was asked to resolve a dispute. He turned to me and said, "Just because I invented this game doesn't mean I can remember all the rules." This made me feel better, as I've had to do the same thing in adjudicating some of my own variant games.

It should be noted that only 67 people signed up for the Diplomacy Tournament, and only eight boards (56 players) were filled for Round One. There were seven boards (49 players) for the Second Round. This was an unusually high percentage of people sticking around for the final round, and shows one of the advantages to holding both rounds on the same day.

By contrast, the halls of Oakland Center and outlying buildings were literally filled with people playing Dungeons & Dragons, and other roleplaying games. It may be that the casual Dippy player is disappearing, leaving the hobby to the "hard core," as it was in the "good old days."

The early date of MichiCon may have had something to do with the small Dip turnout. Very few high school people came, as most secondary schools were still in session. It is also possible that some college students were still in the midst of final exams. The high cost of gasoline and airline tickets may have also cut attendance. The players who came seemed to be more mature than the turnouts for Diplomacy tourneys I can remember in the 70's. Also, I hardly ever saw anybody smoking — anything. (Proves Diplomacy players are intelligent).

The second round of the Tournament was a thriller. Many people expected the Championship to be decided at the First Board, where the 7 highest scorers from Round One were placed. At one point, Cal White had an enormous Germany, which would have given him the crown if he could have held onto it. However, he was eventually

stabbed and brought down by England. Tedd Trimboth and Russ Blau teamed up to reduce Germany to the third-largest Power on the First Board, and they finished up only one point apart. In the meanwhile, however, Carl Eichelberger proceeded to win his game on the Second Board, to get the highest overall score and the grand prize. Trimboth and Blau finished second and third, respectively. There was a tie for 3rd place between Blau and James Yerke, whom I believe was also playing on the Second Board. Other leaders, in order, were Bill Becker, Matt Rosvum, Bill Yeaton, Jack Brawner, David Brent, Lowell White, Cal White and Robert Sergeant.

Everyone felt that the scoring system used this year was much better than the one used in 1979. People actually played Diplomacy instead of "playing the system." Another thing that helped was that the Best Country awards went only to the players participating in the Second Round, so even if a person had done poorly on Round One, he had a chance for a prize on Round Two.

At 1:28 p.m., just as we were finishing Fall 1906, we had a Tornado Alert, which required that we all go to the basement for 15 minutes. This led to talk of a "Tornado Variant." The First Round schedule was pushed back 15 minutes by this event, leaving very little time between rounds.

Jack Brawner, publisher of FLYING DUTCHMAN, was awarded the furthest-travelling attendee prize, coming up from St. Petersburg, Fla. (The award was only a round of applause. Perhaps there ought to be a real prize next year.) The second-furthest traveller may have been Bill Yeaton, who came from Wichita, Kansas. Most of the people attending DipCon came from the Michigan-Ohio-Illinois area. One ex-Californian now living in Michigan, Dave Kadlecak, came. Even the New York attendance was low. Those who came from the Big Apple were friendly. I must state that Greg Costikyan and I had a couple of useful and friendly talks. The only person at DipCon with a chip on his shoulder came from Boston.

Not too many Big Names in the Postal hobby showed up. Herb Barents, Mark Berch, Jack Brawner, Costikyan, Richard Kovalcik, Robert Sergeant and I were the only publishers I recognized. Cal White was the only IDA officer to attend. On the other hand, none of the people who cause disruptions showed up either, so no novices were frightened or driven away.

The DipCon Society could not agree on a site for DipCon XIV in 1981. A bid from the Chicago Wargamers Assn. was rejected because their Con is to be held in non-air-conditioned buildings on the DuPage County fairgrounds in July, and no dorm spaces will be available. Nearby motels will charge about \$35 a night for singles. The fairgrounds are about 25 miles from the Chicago Loop. Commuter rail service is available from downtown to Glen Ellyn, with free shuttle bus service from the station to the con site, plus shuttle service to two nearby motels. However, a car would still be needed to get to any off-campus restaurants, or other motels.

A bid from New York City for their 1981 Conspiracy Con was also rejected, because it will be held in October, a bad month for students. Also, because no cheap housing will be available. This Con will be held at the Prince George Hotel at 28th St. and Madison Ave. The room rate at the hotel will be about \$45 a night, but only \$2.00 more for each additional person in the same room.

These were the only bids received. "None of the above" was also on the ballot, and he got the most votes (shades of Reagan and Carter). Accordingly, the Committee of 1/2/3 of the DipCon Society was authorized to try to make better arrangements. The people present expressed the wish that DipCon be held on a college campus, with dorm space and air-conditioned gaming rooms, to be held sometime between June 10th and the middle of August. The next DipCon should be held west of the Mississippi, per the provisions of the DipCon Charter. It was pointed out that most Postal Dip player live either in the Bos-Wash corridor, The Chi-Det-Mil. triangle, or California.

BUSHWACKER, JULY 1980, Page 2

VARIANT GAMES WHICH WILL BE OFFERED TO BUSHWACKER/DIPLOMAG READERS

These games will be offered jointly, and you may sign up for more than one. If I can set one up on an All-Mensa game I will do so. This will depend on how many people are interested in which games. Games will be started in order of filling.

1885 II: This is a 9-player game, adding Spain and Sweden as Great Powers. This ran once before in BUSHWACKER, and two of the old players have asked for it again. The year 1885 was the first year that the European map looked somewhat like that used in the Regular game, so only minimum changes are required in the map. Germany and Austria start with one extra unit apiece (in Dresden and Cluj) to overcome their central position disadvantage, while England gets a F Liverpool. Italy and Russia both get the advantage of not having to disclose the nature of one unit (A or F) until the recording of the Spring 1901 move. These modifications serve to balance the strengths of the Powers. There are 46 Supply Centers. The single winner Victory Criterion is 24. An Alliance Victory is possible for two players jointly holding 34 Centers, with no Power owning less than 12.

Gusher Diplomacy: This is a fun game which I very much want to run. New S.C.'s are added in Ireland, Catalonia, Morocco, Switzerland and Archangel, for a total of 39. However, except for the initial starting spaces, which are always the capitals (Moscow is the capital of Russia), no one knows the value of any SC until it is captured. Each SC can support anywhere from 0 to 3 units. Each time a Center changes hands, its value changes! You could wind up with a fat Zero, or hit the jackpot with a Triple. All units are single strength, and units can be built in any Home SC, even if it's Zero strength. (SC's can be considered mobilization points, rather than factories and shipyards). On the average, there will be sufficient supply sources on the board to warrant the raising of 45 units. Therefore, the Victory Criterion will be ownership of 23 supply sources, rather than any flat number of Centers, except for a minimum of 15 Centers requirement. The rules will explain in detail how the Centers change value. I hope enough of you are adventurous enough to sign up for what ought to be a wild game.

Small World II-R: Players in this 8-man global variant will recall discussion of China being too strong and Russia being too weak. Minor modifications have added a new Russ S.C. in Irkutsk, the placement of an ordinary space between Vladivostok and the first Chinese Home S.C. (now "Mukden" instead of Manchuria), and the addition of a neutral space between Mexico and Colombia called Central America. The Panama Canal now runs between Colombia and C. America, making it much easier to use. The fourth Western European unit, instead of being located in Europe, is represented by a F in Burma! That should lead to some interesting diplomacy. If any of you gluttons for punishment want to try it again, I stand ready to GM. Conquer the world; not just Europe!

Abstraction II: The old favorite. Described by Richard Sharp in his book, The Game of Diplomacy, as "perhaps the only variant which improves upon the original." (Blush). Everyone starts with 4 Home Centers (Russia 5), and stalemate lines are almost impossible. The map for "II" is identical to "I". Only real difference is elimination of the optional negotiations on where to build your units in Winter (e.g. "June 1914").

You may sign up in descending order of preference. I'll award 4 points for first choice, 3 for second, etc. Send no money now. Game Fee will be a flat \$7.00, as postage rates are going to 20¢/oz. First Class in January. Stand-by Fee will stay at \$3.50. If you can't play and simply must sub, it will be 12 issues for \$3.00, but I really discourage subs. No decisions on games will be made before August 15th at the earliest.

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INFORMATION PLEASE ANSWERS. Turns out there was more than one correct answer. The answer I had in mind were the aircraft carriers CV 13, Franklin, and CV 31, Bon Homme Richard.

(more)