



DIPLOMAG

This is the bimonthly newsletter of the American Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG founded in 1973 by Don Horton and Fred Davis. We bring hobby and SIG news to Mensans interested in playing the game Diplomacy and its variants by mail. Dues are \$2.00 per year. Send all funds and inquiries to the chairman.

Chairman: Glenn Overby, 23096 Tawas, Hazel Park, Michigan, 48030
Sr Committeeman: Edward Bapple, 4531 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Il. 60630
Jr Committeeman & Publisher: Ronald J Brown, RR#1, Low, Québec, JOX 2C0

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SEASONS GREETINGS!

I reported in the last issue of SNAFU! that Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, his wife, their children and servants have been made saints by the Russian Orthodox Church. That means St. Nick is a real person. (The original St. Nick was "uncanonized" by the church recently.) I wonder if that will affect our mythology? True, the real St. Nick was bearded, but his was quite short and brown. He also lacks the belly of the original, being quite a thin fellow, though I think the leaner look may be more suited to our austere and health-conscious times.

On that subject, one used to hear young parents debating the topic of what one should tell his children about Santa Claus. One side debates that childhood fantasies are rewarding in their own right, while the other side feels one shouldn't fill kids' heads with nonsense. My feeling is that if you explain to kids from the beginning that it's all "make-believe," but that it's fun to play imaginary games, then you allow them to develop their imaginations while preventing the "disillusion" that comes later when they discover the "truth" for themselves. I've heard that this can be trying for kids, discovering that their parents have been "lying" to them, but, in my own case, I discovered the truth quite naturally without any trauma as soon as I learned to read and could see my mother signing "Santa" on package labels. I was about five at the time and accepted that very gracefully. My father, however, was upset to discover when I was twelve years old that I no longer "believed." He may have been living under an illusion for seven years, but I certainly wasn't. Kids have learned to humour their parents since the beginning of time.

Hanukkah also arrives in December (beginning Kislev 25 on the Jewish calendar), an eight day celebration of gift-giving and games. Originally this holiday was to mark the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem in 165 BC after the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes had destroyed it. A candle is lit each evening until all eight of the candelabrum are burning.

And, then there's New Years. I rather like the Chinese idea that one should pay all of one's debts to mark the beginning of a new year, so that one can start off with a fresh slate. After all the hectic rushing about of Christmas, I prefer a quiet evening at home with a toast to the year past and the year to come. 1982 is going to bring drastic changes for us, with the birth of our first child. I have never felt such a mixture of hope, love, soberness, and anxiety as I approached a New Year.

Our best to all of you.

TIME TO PAY 1982 DUES!

January will, as usual, mark the start of the SIG's annual bookkeeping period, and most of us will again go through the ritual of writing our yearly two dollar cheques.

We have no objection to Ms renewly early, of course. In fact, it's encouraged. When you renew, please make your cheques payable to Glenn E. Overby, II, NOT to the SIG.

If your name is listed below, you are either exempt from dues (Officers, Mensa Game GMs, Publishers who trade with DIPLOMAG, prison inmates, Election Commissioner), OR you've already paid for 1982.

Bapple, Bassett, Baumeister, Brown, Charnley, Davis, Dodge, Geislinger, Hanson, Horton, Hess, Lincoln, McCloud, Overby, Sesler, Smith, Wilson, Windblad, Robert Young, Bill Young.

BIOGRAPHY OF NEW SIG CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of the Postal Diplomacy SIG is Glenn Overby. He is a 24-year-old native of Michigan, unmarried "but looking." He is presently employed as night manager of a Detroit apartment hotel, while continuing part-time work toward a degree in computer science at Eastern Michigan University.

While Glenn has been a member of Mensa since late 1980, his background in Diplomacy stretches back to 1968 as a face-to-face player and to 1979 in the postal game. He is presently in about 10 regular and variant postal games.

Glenn is the publisher of the zine JIHAD!, presently the largest variant zine in North America. His zine has become known for its variety of games offered--perhaps the fact that he has a collection of over 300 boardgames (which he "loves" to play) has something to do with it.

His other admitted interests include aviation, musical performance and composition, miniature golf, Islamic history and culture, law, poetry, politics, and the fairer sex. He did not specify that this was in order of preference.

If any of you care to submit your biography, feel free. Try to keep it about the same length as Glenn's or mine (last month). Don't worry, I'll fix up the English. I'm sure there's lots of interesting people out there.

SIG GAME STANDINGS

Mensa #10 (1980 AC) GM: Don Horton

As of Winter, 1907, Ron Brown's Turkey leads with 14 centres. Next is Charles Byrne's Italy with 4, and Arnie Vagt's France with 2. Sound odd? All other powers are in Civil Disorder!

Mensa #11 (1980 II) GM: Ed Bapple

The only change from Winter, 1905, is that Germany gained Norway from Russia. Standings for Winter, 1906, are: Rick Young's Germany leads with 11 centres. Lanning Meyer's Italy has 8 and Bruce Poppe's Russia is at 7. Then there's Scott Hansen's Turkey at 5, Charles Letcher's Austria with 2, and Vincent Chiachio's England still with one.

Mensa #12 (1980 IC) GM: Ron Brown zine: SNAFU!

| | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|-----------------|
| A | 4 | 5 | 6* | 6 | 6 | Sharon Poppe | (* = one short) |
| E | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | Charles Byrne | |
| F | 2 | 0 | - | - | - | Pete Gaughan (Out F 02) | |
| G | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | Rick Young | |
| I | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | Darryl Phillips | |
| R | 6 | 5 | 3 | 0 | - | Joe Marshall (Dro F 02); Charles Letcher (Out | |
| T | 5 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 8 | Dan Wilson | / F 04) |

Germany has the Lowlands, Denmark, and all of France. England has Iberia and Scandinavia, while Turkey has Bulgaria, Rumania, Sevastopol, Moscow, and Tunis. Austria has Serbia, Greece, and Warsaw. Italy has its three home centres. That is as of Winter, 1905. Spring, 1906, has just been played and seen little change as an English-German alliance is fighting for position against an Austrian-Turkish-Italian alliance.

Mensa #13 (1980 KY) GM: Chip Charnley

| | 01 | 02 | |
|---|----|----|--|
| A | 3 | 3 | Joe Miller (Dro F 01); Ralph Baty |
| E | 4 | 5 | Michael Granatstein (Res S 02); Dan Wilson |
| F | 5 | 5 | Mike Mazzer (Dro? Res? W 00?); Len Johnson |
| G | 5 | 5 | Steve Greenburg (Dro S 02); Ron Brown |
| I | 5 | 5 | Joe Marshall (Dro S 01); Bruce Poppe |
| R | 5 | 4 | Brad Anderson |
| T | 5 | 6 | Walter Compton |

As of Winter, 1902, Turkey leads with Bulgaria, Sevastopol, and Serbia. England has Norway and St. Petersburg. France has Iberia. Germany has the Lowlands and Denmark, but not Munich. Italy has Tunis and Rumania. Russia has Moscow, Warsaw, Munich, and Sweden, while Austria has its home centres.

Mensa #14 (1981 AQ) GM: Glenn Overby zine: JIHAD!

The Fall, 1902, deadline has passed, but I haven't yet seen the results. This game has earned the title "The Press Game" in JIHAD! because of the reams of press generated each season--which is unusual for the M games I've seen. The first game year was unusual in another respect. Michael Casucci's France gained three centres (Spain, Portugal, and Munich), while Errol Platt's Germany gained two despite losing Munich (Denmark, Holland, and Belgium). Peter Simpson's Italy gained Triest and Greece, but not Tunis. The other powers made the usual 1901 gains. As a headline for this game read, "Curiouser and curiouser."

Mensa #15 (1981 HR) in Glenn Overby's JIHAD! has just passed its first game year.

Mensa #16 has filled and will be carried in SNAFU! as soon as I receive the list of players. Some are already subscribers and I've saved copies of last issue to mail to the rest as soon as I get their names. If you act quickly you can still subscribe at 50¢ an issue, but after January 1st new subscriptions will cost \$8. for 10, mainly due to astronomical Canadian postal rates. Game fees are \$4.00. Positions will be assigned by lot. Players will get a note from me when I get the list, and House Rules, if they don't already have them. SNAFU! is now running about 20 pages an issue and is carrying 9 games with 5 week deadlines. It's photocopied and has just gone to reduced type in a digest format to save costs.

page four...

Mensa #17 is open to applicants. Apply to Glenn Overby. It also needs a GM. This is a good opportunity for someone thinking of starting a zine, or who just wants GMing experience. That's how SNAFU! began (with Mensa #12). I used to think that getting out one game report was a big job, but now I find a single game adjudication a snap. To GM you need to thoroughly understand the Rule Book and to have a fairly good idea of what you'll be doing for two or three years. (If you're thinking of changing jobs, travelling, or having a pre-frontal lobotomy maybe you should hold off until that's settled.) You'll also need access to reproduction equipment, a steady source of income (so you can buy postal stamps during lean times), a sense of humour, and a few hours free time every month. Let Glenn know if you're interested. If you write me, I'll give you lots of free advice.

Mensa Variant #4: Any SIG members interested in another all-M variant? Contact Glenn with ideas for variants you'd like to play and we may try to organize another game.

SIG MEMBERS' ZINES

Besides the ones listed last month, we have the following:

DOT HAPPY by Allen Wells, 1450 Worcester Rd., Apt. 8106, Farmingham, Mass. 01701. 50¢ an issue, Game fees: \$5.00 with \$500 refundable NMR fee. Probably no game openings now, but it's an interesting zine. (It won #2 spot in the last Leader Poll.)

GIVE ME A WEAPON by Konrad Baumeister, Box 6050 Henle, Washington, DC 20057. 10/\$4. Openings is a subzine. Konrad has been publishing for several years (some of you may remember EGGNOG) and puts out interesting product.

OTHER SIGS

I belong to, perhaps, a dozen SIGs. Obviously the DIP SIG takes up most of my hobby time, but I also enjoy other activities. The Scrabble-by-Mail SIG provides me with pleasant diversions. If you enjoy Scrabble, you ought to give the postal version a try. The playing tiles are drawn at random and then printed with a copy of the playing board. You write in your play, scratch off the letters you draw and write them on your "rack" space. As everyone is playing the same game (ie., the same draw of letters), it is similar to Duplicate Bridge and this adds a real challenge. The coordinator is Ken Elrod at P.O. Box 2524, Oxnard CA 93034. SIG membership is \$3.00 for 8 issues of the newsletter. First game is \$1.00 and each additional game is 50¢. A SASE and address label is required for each game. I've usually got a few games going at any one time.

I'll mention other SIGs I belong to from time to time, as space permits. Unfortunately, they are not all as well organized as the DIP SIG and Scrabble SIG and some are ripoffs. But, you get the good with the bad anywhere. If any of you would like to plug a SIG send it along.

NEW SIG MEMBERS

Keith Sesler, 400 Bidwell, Albion, MI 49224
Dave Lincoln, 2216 Kings Forest Dr., Conyers, GA 30208
Dean Hess, 721 Forneyville Rd., Lebanon, PA 17042
Paula Marie Dodge, c/o IBM Corp. 002A814, Owego, NY 13827

NEXT ISSUE

The next DIPLOMAG will be out early in February. American members will receive their copies from Bruce Poppe while Canadian and overseas members will get it directly from me. Don't forget to renew!