



# 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  
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## HOBBY CRISIS?

In case you're wondering why this issue is late, just as I was about to sit down to put it together, I received word that Kathy Byrne, the NADF Orphan's Placement Officer, had declared our chairman's zine, JIHAD!, folded. Apparently she was ready to begin rehousing its games. Fred Davis and I had to act quickly to avoid having the two SIG games (Mensa #14 and Mensa #15) rehoused outside the SIG. So, I've spent the last few days working on that.

Ed Bapple, who is running Mensa #11, has ~~agreed to take over GMing these two games~~, bless his heart. Things have been so rushed and hectic, I neglected to ask Ed what he would like from players by way of compensation for his expenses. I would like to go out on a limb here and suggest that some of the funds in the SIG treasury should be used for this, but it would be a nice gesture on the part of players if they sent Ed a dollar or two, or perhaps some stamps.

In order that all concerned should be informed, I am sending copies of this issue to all players in those two games, whether they are current SIG members or not. Some addresses I have are quite old, so it might help if players spread the news among themselves as well. This is one of those situations where keeping up your SIG membership would pay off. (Hint.)

Ed's address is: 4531 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Il. 60630.

If you are involved in any other games in JIHAD! you may wish to write Kathy Byrne if you don't hear from a new GM soon. Her address is: 160-02, 43 Ave., 2nd Floor, Flushing, NY 11358. I understand that Robert Sacks is anxious to take over some of these games, so if you don't want him as your new GM, write her soon as possible and voice your protest (politely). In fact I sent Kathy a list of people who I feel are totally unreliable and unacceptable to me. They are: Robert Sacks, Bernie Oaklyn, Curt Gibson, and François Guerrier. Players do have the right to some say in who their GM will be.

Please don't ask me to take on any of these

games. Since I picked up five orphaned games from the folds of the TORONTO TELEGRAM and from INFIDEL! last spring and summer, I have been quite overwhelmed and am anxious to reduce the game load I am carrying. I am managing now, but just, and am looking forward to a time in the hobby when I will not have six dozen things to be done yesterday.

Publisher burn out is a serious problem in the hobby. It seems to occur when someone takes on the maximum load he can handle and then faces some personal crisis or changed circumstances in his life. There is no way to avoid it, really. All we can do is continue to warn publishers to limit themselves to less than their maximum load. And what that load is will vary from one individual to the next. For myself, I feel I would be comfortable with 7 or 8 games (I am running 12), but what am I to do when a zine folds, dumping a dozen games on the market and every zine is already overloaded? (I'm thinking of the CDO situation here.) Okay, I say, I'll tough it out for a few months. But, because everyone is overloaded, another zine bites the dust, and then?

And who can predict the future? What if I lost my job? If I got into a situation where I had to choose between feeding my wife and child and buying postage stamps, well, there wouldn't be any decision to make. I may be stubborn and consciencious, but there are limits to what one can do. However, if I couldn't carry on, I would be honest about it and try to ease the situation for the players somehow.

I say this, because every time someone folds he gets dumped on self-righteously. Yes, he should have done this, and not done that, etc., but hindsight would be much more effective if it could be turned into foresight. Glenn was simply carrying too much for anyone. He was running over 21 games, many of them complex variants, conducting a hobby census, and chairing the SIG, as well as other hobby activities. He works long hours and is taking courses, as well as being involved in other time consuming activities. The JIHAD! situation is tragic, but let's use it as an object lesson and carry on.

I don't know what Glenn's intentions are regarding his SIG position and responsibilities at this date. If something comes up which needs to be communicated to the membership, I'll move up the date of the next issue.

Regarding this issue, by now you've likely noticed I'm using a different format. Quite simply, it's because I had a lot of material that I wanted to cram into a small space. So, the miracle of modern technology comes to the rescue in the form of cheap photo reduction. Hope it'll work out okay. If it doesn't turn out, it's because this is the first time I've tried using columns. I have to use arithmetic to plan the issue and I was never very good at that.

Fred Davis suggested I report on Mensa Variant #3. Sorry, it simply hadn't occurred to me before. And Ed Bapple answered my appeal to SIG GMs to write their own summaries of the games. That's why the Mensa #11 game summary is in quotations. Thanks Ed. My problem in reporting on some of these games is that I am also playing in them, so I stick to a straight factual account to avoid any possible conflict of interest--and that makes dull reading.

Oh well, I've gone on far too long.

END-GAME STATEMENT: 1980 AC (Mensa #10)

by Charles Byrne (Italy)

I really don't know why I'm writing this letter. I am growing ever more disillusioned with the hobby, for between the seemingly numberless friends and the fact that one can't seem to play in a game that doesn't have four or more people dropping out by the end of the game, the game has lost its joy. So what am I doing? I'm writing a letter supporting dropping out of games (under some circumstances) that will get people mad at me. Real smart!

What set me off were your kind comments about Don Horton and CLAW & PANG in Vol. II, No. 9 of DIPLOMAG while you were discussing the end of Mensa #10 (1980 AC).. Let me say ahead of time that I don't begrudge you your win at all. You played a fine game, and I think it's very probable that you would win even if the game had been managed properly. But the fact is, it was not. Mr. Horton completely ruined the game in CDing two powers, one with 9 centers and one with 8 centers. A completely indefensible act. Destroying a game that several people had invested more than two years in. The only argument I can see him making in his own defense is that he was weary of the hobby, had folded his zine, and just wanted out. Fine. If the pain of finishing the game he started (of his own free will I assume) was too great, he should have orphaned the game and let somebody else finish it.

It is funny that you complemented me earlier for staying in this foul-up to the finish. I think I was quite mistaken to do so.

Let me break my harangue off for a minute in order to say that I really hate a quitter. Many people dropped out of 1980 AC and I hope they are barred from future play. If I decide to stay

in the hobby, I'll certainly not start a game if it has a previous drop out in it. This is not to say that if something comes up that makes it impossible for a person to continue a game he has started, he is a bad person for that. But how much trouble is it to write the last season's orders, and at the same time explain to the GM that you must quit, and that a standby should be named.

(Ed. note: Charles here breaks off to discuss his experience in another game, 1979 AA, which was run by a guest GM for Don Horton. The GGM violated one of Horton's house rules, damaging Charles' position. Charles wrote Don to appeal the decision and received no satisfaction. He then resigned from the game, explaining his reasons to the other players. After resigning, Charles sent copies of all relevant correspondence and a copy of Horton's house rules to the then current Boardman Number Custodian and asked that the game be declared irregular. His request was denied.)

Looking back, I feel I should have done the same in Mensa #10. If ever a game was irregular, this was it. It's too bad, for the hobby, that there is no place to turn for justice....

With that kind of response behind me, I'll not bother to try again. However, based on my admittedly little experience, I think the hobby could be in trouble. I base this solely on the basis of the two games I've finished, one of which had 7 people quit by 1904, and the other, Mensa #10, which had 5 people quit by 1908, and me wishing I had.

If this is not the standard, but an aberration, those with influence in the hobby, such as yourself, should not praise the bad apples, but speak out against their practices. You might save other rookies from thinking that all the apples are full of worms and dropping out of the hobby.

Here's hoping the publication of this letter does more good than harm.

(Hi! 'Tis me again. The main reason I was interested in publishing this letter was to use it as an object lesson on what to do if you're not satisfied with the way your GM is running your game. I say "your game" intentionally, as it's a basic premise in the hobby that the games belong to the players, not the GMs. There are ways of dealing with the situations Charles outlined. Unfortunately, he appealed to the wrong people.

The Boardman Number Custodian (currently Don Ditter, 910 Hope St. #12A, Stamford, CT 06907) will not interfere in a player-GM dispute. He looks after the gross irregularities (like a father and son playing in the same game or someone playing two countries in one game by using pseudonyms). Your first approach should be to appeal to the GM. If you don't meet with satisfaction, you should then send copies of the game report and any correspondence with a covering letter to the Ombudsman. (Currently this is Randolph Smyth, 212 Aberdeen St. SE, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada T1A 0R1.) You should also send a copy of your letter to the GM. Hopfully he will suspend play of the game until the appeal is heard.

If, for some reason, you do not wish to use the current Ombudsman (eg. the dispute is with him), then you can select a "hobby figure" agreeable to both you and the GM. (Mark Berch is sometimes called upon.)

In the case of a SIG game, some cases can be handled by the chairman--and I think we all prefer it that way. If your dispute is with the chairman, then you can appeal to either, preferably both, of the committeemen, who are empowered to over-rule the chairman under certain conditions.

In retrospect, Don should have written to Fred Davis (then chairman) to ask him to find another GM for Mensa #10. Failing that, we, as the players could have done the same thing. I would like to add that if any player in a Canadian zine has a serious complaint about his GM, he is free to write to me, in my capacity as Co-ordinator of the CDO, and, if I am satisfied that the complaint is serious enough and that the majority of players in the game are agreeable, I will transfer to game to another GM. I am not sure who to appeal to in such cases in the USA, but I would try Kathy Byrne (160-02 43 Ave., 2nd Floor, Flushing, NY 11358) in her capacity as Orphans' Placement Officer. She'll tell you (likely in no uncertain terms) who you should appeal to.

Regarding players who drop out of games without resigning with a final set of orders, I agree with Charles' sentiments. That is why I maintain a "Blacklist" in SNAPU! and support Paul Rauterberg's "Slightly Blackish List" project. But, we cannot prevent drop outs from occurring. Every single game I have begun in SNAPU! has had a drop out early in the game. But you can be sure that those guys are never going to play in SNAPU! again (though I can't prevent them from playing in other zines.)

Regarding Don Horton, I was thinking of his contribution to the hobby and the SIG over many years when I thanked him. True things seemed to be falling apart towards the end, but that does not deny all he had done in the past. We probably wouldn't have a Postal Diplomacy SIG if it weren't for Don (and Fred Davis).

Lastly, I am sorry to see such a fine player feel so bitterly about the hobby. After all your experience in the hobby you have had time to follow other zines and GMs and decide which ones you would like to play under. You must agree, if you think about it, we're not all "bad apples."

Thank you for writing Charles. You've given us all something to think about--and provided me with an opportunity to spout off.)

THOSE SIG GAMES

Mensa #11 (1980 II) GM: Ed Bapple

Winter, 1907: "Both England and Austria were eliminated in a very active season. Rick Young's Germany has a strong lead with 15 centers, controlling the entire north half of Europe, except Warsaw. Lanny Meyer's second place Italy, with 9, and Bruce Ponne's third place Russia, with 6, resolved the Balkan impasse; the former taking Trieste and Serbia, the latter Budapest and Vienna. This could be the start of effective resistance to Germany, if it's

not too late. Meanwhile, Scott Hanson's fourth place Turkey, with four, has been sitting in a quiet corner."

Mensa #12 (1980 IC) GM: Ron Brown; SNAPU!

In Winter, 1907 we are waiting for the results of a vote on a four-way draw. An English-German alliance has held firm against a combined Austrian, Turkish, Italian effort for the past few years. Only a few centres have changed hands, most notably Munich which was regained by Germany. Charles Byrne's England has 9, Rick Young's Germany and Dan Wilson's Turkey each have 8. Sharon Poppe's Austria has 6 and Darryl Phillips' Italy, 3.

Mensa #13 (1980 KY) GM: Chip Charnley

We reported on Winter, 1903 last issue. Since then, that season has been played and the Spring, 1904 deadline has not yet arrived. Players voted on 6 week deadlines. Standbys are still needed for this game. It's free. Write Chip at: 723 Alser Ct., Virginia Beach, VA 23462.

Mensa #14 (1981 AQ) and Mensa #15 (1981 HR)

Both of these games are caught up in the JIHAD! fold. M #14 has not been played since last October. M #15 has played only the Winter 1901 builds since then, so there is nothing to report on.

Mensa #16 (1982 I) GM: Ron Brown, SNAPU!

The first game year has ended with Steve Geislinger, who did not submit any orders, being replaced. So Mike Mazzer took over the English position. Dave Lincoln's Russia was caught by an NMR and so he got no builds. Only Windy Windblad's Germany and Keith Sesler's Italy got 2 builds. Walter Compton's Austria, Robert Young's France, and Paula-Marie Dodge's Turkey all got one build.

Mensa #17

Last I heard four people had signed up for this game to be run by Allen Wells in his zine DOT HAPPY.

Mensa Variant #3 ("Gusher", 1980 Mij)

GM: Fred Davis; BUSHWACKER

	00	01	02	03	04	05	
ENG	4	7	4	4	6	6	Chip Charnley
FRA	3	8	7	8	6	8	Dan Wilson
GER	3	5	7	6	4	2	Scott Hanson
ITA	4	7	10	10	11	11	Rick Young
AUS	3	6	8	9	10	12	Ralph Baty
RUS	3	4	6	7	8	9	Ed Bapple
TUR	3	3	3	0			Joe Marshal

(Dro, S'02); Steve Greenburg

I don't seem to have a copy of the rules for this variant, but it's played on a modified Diplomacy map. The kicker is that supply centres change value (from being able to support no units all the way up to furnishing support for 3 units). These values change randomly, so you never know whether a supply centre will turn out to be a "gusher" or a "dry hole." (I haven't listed all the times players played short--just listed the number of units they were entitled to. That is not the same as the number of centres each has.)

SIG MEMBERS' BIOGRAPHIES

FRED C. DAVIS, JR. (whose picture that is) is a disabilities claims examiner with the U.S. Social Security Administration in Baltimore, MD. He has been president of the Maryland Chapter of Mensa and founded and chaired the Postal Diplomacy SIG from its inception until last June. An officer in his neighborhood civic association, he is a member of the National Association of Rail Passengers.

He publishes BUSHWACKER, a monthly zine devoted entirely to variant games, many designed by himself. He has also edited SSA-DHEWINGS, newsletter of the Chicago Social Security Employees Union. He and his wife, Inge Kerlein Davis, have one son, Kevin.

He says, "My college career was interrupted by a three-year sojourn in the Army during the Korean War. Fortunately, I was stationed in West Germany, where I met my future wife. I have lived in Baltimore since 1961. We still miss Chicago, and try to get back from time to time."



EDWARD C. BAPPLE is 43 and a native of Chicago. By trade, he is a contract computer programmer. He is married and says, "I've had much practice at that, getting married that is." His interests include History,

wine, good music and "bad women. The latter has provided a measure of excitement in what otherwise would have been a drab existence. I try to experience as much of life as is permitted an individual who must work for a living. As the song says, 'Is that all there is?'"

Ed has been a committeeman for the SIG for the past two years and GMs Mensa #11 by flyer.

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I invite all SIG members to send me their biographies for inclusion in DIPLOMAG. If you're more comfortable

writing in the first person, that's okay. I'll make the necessary changes. You can also send a small black and white photo if you're willing to let everyone see what you look like.

M-WINNERS, UPDATE

Last issue I listed the winners of all M games I could find. Fred Davis sent along a few more.

Mensa #1 (1974 M) ended with a three-way draw between Gary Bruce (Germany), Russ Nekorchuck (England), and Steve Hall (Turkey). Mensa #3 (1975 AA) was won by Bill Young as Austria. Neither Fred nor I know who won Mensa #2.

You may be interested to know that the Boardman Number of Mensa #1 was deliberate. The "M" had been saved for the SIG.

CLOSING REMARKS

Hum! Despite all the material in this issue, it looks as though I'm going to have some space left over. So, the following is an editorial I had intended for SNAPU! but cut because of lack of space.

Some are curious about what I teach. Besides composition and dozens of short stories and poems (mainly by Canadian authors), I teach Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet, Golding's Lord of the Flies, Orwell's 1984 and Animal Farm, and Wyndham's The Midwich Cuckoos. What these books have in common (with the possible exception of Wyndham) is that they are banned for school use somewhere in North America.

The "Moral Majority" has taken upon itself the right to determine that our children shall not be exposed to these "obscene" works. It is really unfortunate that they don't direct their energies towards fighting some of the true obscenities of our times (poverty, nuclear weapons, police states, to name a few).

The "morality" I teach is that intellectual truth owes allegiance to no political system, though there are precious few governments left who would allow a "state employee" (ie., teacher) to teach such subversion. When students ask why we study the works we do, I am tempted to answer, "To celebrate what little freedom we have left."

The world is sliding into a new "Dark Ages" and the Moral Majority is leading the way--unless those who are still capable of thought will stand up and fight the bankrupt idiocies: book banning, astrology, "Bermuda Triangles," creationism, and doom and gloom writers. The human mind is a wonderful tool capable of taking us to the stars if we can learn to say no to nonsense.

I have never had a student who was upset by the references to incest in Hamlet. Some do get upset to discover that they are required to think about difficult problems. Some times I wonder if that's what the Moral Majority is really fighting against--thought itself.

MEMBERSHIP LIST, MARCH, 1982

Ed Bapple, 4531 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60630  
H.D. Bassett, Rt. 3, Lake Rd., Newton, CT 06470  
Ralph Baty, USAFSB Box 9804, APO New York, NY 09742  
Konrad Baumeister, Henle Hall, Box 6050, Georgetown U., Washington,  
DC 20057 (home: 11416 Parkview Ln., Hales Corners, Wis. 53114)\*  
Lincoln Beaumont, 5718 South 141 Plaza, Apt. 1, Omaha, Nebr. 68137  
Richard Benjamin, 4591 Liberty Rd., South Euclid, Ohio 44121  
Garvin Boyle, #6, 1432 Coldrey Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 7P9  
Ronald J. Brown, RR#1, Low, Québec JOX 2C0\*  
Charles Byrne, 3712 Lockwood Ln., Annandale, VA 22003  
WO-2 Michael Casucci, 4784 Onondaga Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
Chip Charnley, 723 Alser Ct., Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
Walter Compton, Apartado 2940, Caracas 101 Venezuela  
Fred C. Davis, 1427 Clairidge Rd., Baltimore, MD 21207\*  
Paula-Marie Dodge, c/o IBM Corp. 002A814, Owego, NY 13827  
Stanley Dunn, 2009 Evansdale Dr., Adelphi, MD 20783  
Steve Geislinger, 4345 Lamar St. Wheatridge, CO 80033  
Scott Hanson, 701 - 15th Ave., SE, Minneapolis, Minn. 55414\*  
Dean Hess, 721 Forneyville Rd., Lebanon, PA 17042  
Don Horton, 16 Jordan Ct., Sacramento, CA 95826  
Steve Hutton, 704 Brant Ct., London, Ontario N5Y 3N1  
Michael Keller, 9 Chadman Ct., Baltimore, MD 21207  
Charles Letcher, 2022 N. Lobdell, Apt. 86, Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
Dave Lincoln, 25 Sun Valley Dr. Cumberland, RI 02864 (effective May 1)  
Larry McCloud, 520 Geary, San Francisco, CA 94102  
Glenn Overby, 23096 Tawas, Hazel Park, MI 48030  
Darryl Phillips, PEA Box 759, Exeter, NH 03833  
Errol Platt, 3270 Havenwood Dr., Mississauga, Ontario L4X 2M1  
Sharon & Bruce Poppe, 324 Penwyllt Ct., Exton, PA 19341  
Ted Reed, 685 San Fernando Dr., Smyrna, GA 30080  
Larry Rystrom, 8021 S. Lake Ridge Dr., Seattle, WA 98178  
Keith Sesler, 400 Bidwell, Albion, Mich 49224  
Roy Smith, 64 Addicks Rd., Westwood, NJ 07675  
Allen K. Wells, 1450 Worcester Rd., #8109, Farmingham, Mass 01701\*  
Dan R. Wilson, PO Box 18826, San Antonio, TX 78218  
Loring (Windy) Windblad, PO Box 43816, Florence, AZ 85232  
Richard Young, 1789 Kirkway Ln., Lapeer, Mich. 48446  
Robert Young, 49 - 16 Annandale Ln., Little Neck, NY 11362  
William Young, 618 Indian Rd., Clearfield, PA 16830

TOTAL: 39

NOTES: This represents a drop of 23 members since October, 1981. The Washington area (VA, MD) seems to produce more members than any other area, in contrast with the hobby in general where CA dominates. There are four Canadians and only two members reside outside of North America. Five publish dip zines (they are marked with an \*).

I have learned that some have not renewed their Mensa memberships. Please take care of that soon and be prepared to submit proof of Mensa membership to the Chairman.

Please send any changes of address to both the Chairman and me (publisher). That way I can keep up with you.

NEWS FLASH! BULLETIN! LAST MINUTE WORD! IMPORTANT! CORRECTION!

Just as I was about to mail the master copies of this issue to Bruce Poppe for photocopying and distribution to US members, Glenn Overby phoned to say JIHAD! had been granted a reprieve. Originally Kathy Byrne had given Glenn until the beginning of April to produce an issue. My actions and announcement were based on the fact that he missed that deadline. Now, however, she has extended that deadline until April 16.

The situation is this: if Glenn does not have an issue of JIHAD! in the mails on the 16th of April, Kathy will proceed with the rehousing of his games.

Meanwhile, what of Mensa #14 and #15? Frankly, I haven't a clue. I am exhausted and confused by the entire situation. I was told they had to be rehoused quickly to avoid having them rehoused outside the SIG, so Ed Bapple and I proceeded according to the SIG by-laws and with the best of intentions. All I can suggest at this point is that players should send copies of their orders to both Glenn and Ed until this is straightened out. I will put out the next issue of DIPLOMAG early, as soon as light is shed upon this whole murky situation.

We also have some late renewals. They are:

Wm Brad Anderson, 1158 Harriet Ave., Campbell, CA 95008

Craig A. Reges, 16 W. 761 White Pines Rd., Bensenville, IL 60106

Robert Stimmel, 2500 Q St., Apt. 10, Sacramento, CA 95816

Cornelius Van Den Handel, 1500 Royal Crest, #123, Austin, TX 78741

Sure glad I had a spare page! See ya!

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IF UNDELIVERABLE, RETURN TO:

Glenn Overby,  
23096 Tawas  
Hazel Park, MI 48030

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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