



DIPLOMAG

This is the bimonthly newsletter of the American Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG, bringing hobby and SIG news to Mensans interested in playing Postal Diplomacy, the board game produced in the USA by Avalon Hill. Membership dues are \$4.00 per year for members living in the Continental USA and \$5.00 a year for those living elsewhere, due on January 1st. Please send all dues and enquiries to the Chairman. Edited by Ronald Brown.

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DIPLOMAG FINDS NEW MASTER

Beginning next issue DIPLOMAG will be under the care of Bruce Poppe. Bruce is among those people I met early in my Diplomacy career and his friendliness and willingness to help out has always been appreciated. When we realized last winter that it would break the SIG's budget to have me pay for photocopying and mailing from Canada, Bruce immediately came forward with a plan whereby he could print and mail it. I'm sure he'll be a fine editor and, as he isn't putting out another zine with 10 - 12 games like I am, he'll have much more energy to put into this zine. I feel it's bound to improve under his care.

As Bruce can no longer avail himself of free photocopying (yes, he's unemployed again—so am I, actually—the latest fad), Roy Smith has come forward with his own offer to keep the SIG's printing costs down. So, super thanks to Roy. Roy is the only one who offered to take part in a SIG standby pool I was pushing a while ago. Another one who can be counted on to help out.

Now that I have the "floor" a vote of appreciation to Ed who leapt into the breach during the SIG's darkest hour. He has since put a tremendous amount of energy into keeping the SIG operating. And there's Fred. A week doesn't go by without contributions in the form of suggestions, news, and just plain support from him.

Despite the lack of response there are a few things I would still like to see the SIG do. A SIG winner's game is becoming more possible as games are ending with new winners to add to the list. Off the top of my head I believe we have five or six players still around who qualify, so maybe we can get this one going by the end of 1983. Once I've passed all the DIPLOMAG material over to Bruce, maybe this is a project I can work on.

The other is the SIG standby pool. In the old CLAW & FANG days, when all SIG games were carried in one zine, finding SIG members to act as standbys in M games was no problem. We need more volunteers if this is going to work, now that SIG games are spread throughout many zines.

In summary, I'm happy with the changing of the guard. It frees me to get involved in other ways. (Our local secretary asked me to set up face to face games for the local group, for example.) To everyone out there: happy stabbing!

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

Sharon Poppe (Austria) and Charles Byrne (England) shared a draw in Winter, 1909. Congratulations to both of them. The stats printed last issue stand. The passing of this draw caught all of us off-guard and there is a protest from a player who overlooked the original proposal for the draw. So players were polled to get their reactions. At this date it looks certain that the draw will stand. Thanks to Sharon, Charles, Pete Gaughan, Rick Young, Darryl Phillips, Charles Letcher, and Dan Wilson. A fine group of players.

Mensa #13 (1980 KY) GM: Chip Charnley

No change since last issue. Only Winter, 05 has been played and the Spring, 06 deadline has just passed.

Mensa #14 (1981 AQ) GM: Ed Bapple zine: MIGRAINE

"Winter, 1904: Only Austria is out and there are no clear leaders in this contest. Whitty's Russia and Strand's France each have 7 centers, followed by Young's Italy and Larsen's Turkey with 6. Still within reach is Platt's Germany with 5 and Gaughan's England with 3."

Mensa #15 (1981 HR) GM: Ed Bapple zine: MIGRAINE

"Winter, 1903: The two superpowers are Brown's Russia, with 9, and Douglas' France with 8. Everybody else is in or contesting third place, with 3 or 4 centers. This match could set a record as the longest short game ever played."

Mensa #16 (1982 I) GM: Ron Brown zine: SNAFU!

No change since last report as only Spring, 04 has been played and the Fall deadline hasn't been reached yet. The Bourse players are betting on Russia (Dave Lincoln) and Italy (Keith Sesler), with Paula Dodge's Turkey close behind.

Mensa #17 GM: Steve Hutton zine: NO FIXED ADDRESS

Apologies to the players in this game. Originally it was to be GMed by Allen Wells, but he dropped from the SIG and has virtually disappeared from the hobby. Then it was to go to Chip Charnley, but his circumstances have changed and he didn't feel prepared to do justice to another game. I thought it would go to Scott Hanson then as he had agreed to take #18, but when Scott says #13 that's what he means. Whew! A quick phone call to Steve solved the problem. Players ought to be hearing from Steve before too long. Meanwhile, no reason why you can't take out a sub now. (\$6.00 US for 10)

His current address is: 11 Nealon Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4K 1Y8.

I'm sure all will agree that NFA is a fine zine well worth the price. It wouldn't surprise me if it beat out SNAFU! in the next NAZP. Steve needs M subscribers to solve his puzzles.

Mensa #18 is filling and will be GMed by Scott Hanson. (Right, Scott?) Another of those enthusiastic publishers who fills the mails with delightful surprises.

Mensa Variant #3: Gusher (1980 Mjj) GM: Fred Davis zine: BUSHWACKER

No changes since last report when Rick Young (Italy) had the lead, followed closely by Ralph Baty (Austria) and Chip Charnley (England).

THE SUCKER MOVE AND ITS DEFENCES

by Ronald Brown

The ideal attack in Diplomacy is one in which you do not have to lie and which you can break off gracefully if you are attacked from another direction. In other words, your enemy should not realize you are attacking him. The sucker move is well suited to these purposes.

The sucker move is simple in execution. In the spring you move into a neutral area adjacent to an enemy's supply centre which he has left vacant. In the fall you order your unit to hold.

Consider the situation from his point of view. He sees you poised to enter his centre, you keep reassuring him your move was purely defensive, and so he has no choice but to scramble back to protect his centre. What have you gained? Let's take an example:

In Spring, 1901 Italy opens to Piedmont. In almost every case France will have opened A Mar - Spa. It is so unfashionable for Italy to open anti-France that most French players don't even consider that possibility any more. Or, if they do, they figure they can cover Marseilles from Spain. Which is exactly what you, as Italy, want. You reassure France over and over that you will not attack Marseilles, so he is left with no choice but to order A Spa - Mar in the fall. With you holding he loses Spain and is unable to build a southern fleet. You, of course, will build a F Rome, thus having two fleets and an army to attack France's south with.

Of course, Italy can, justifiably, argue that his move to Piedmont was defensive in nature and his failure to carry through to Marseilles in the fall adds weight to his argument. So, if Austria or Turkey appear threatening the attack can readily be broken off. Another benefit to Italy is that he did not lie about his fall orders. I used this opening once as Italy and the French player was so relieved that I had told the truth he supported me into as many of his centres as he could rather than let them fall into the hands of that lying bastard playing Germany. He never knew that I was the one who had engineered his downfall to begin with and I had trouble hiding the smirk.

The defense to the sucker move is to have two units adjacent to the threatened area so you can use a self-standoff. For France, this means opening A Mar - Spa, A Par - Bur. Italy should, of course, be working on Germany to convince him to open to Burgundy. But all is not lost to Italy if France does get Burgundy in the opening move. Instead of holding in the fall, he should order A Pie (S) French A Spa - Mar so that the self-standoff will be defeated. Of course this is a bit more aggressive than merely holding, but Italy could probably come up with some sort of explanation if he needs to.

What can France do if Germany does bounce him in Burgundy in the spring? My solution to the sucker move is to ignore it—apparently. As France, in the fall I would order F MAO - Spa (sc); A Spa - Por; A Par - Gas. If Italy took Marseilles, I'd still get one build and be in a position to retake Marseilles. If he suckered me, I'd get two builds and Italy would be dead. If Germany pressed and took Burgundy in the fall it wouldn't matter so much, as the build would be A Par so I could hold him off until Italy was straightened out.

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Of course, if England joins in the initial attack on France, all the French can do is sign up for another game.

There are other positions on the board where you can utilize this move. You should be aware of its possibilities and how to defend against it. And if you find your country falling apart in the early game, look at the fellow who just made a defensive move and then held. If he's having trouble supressing a smile, you know you've been had.

HOBBY SERVICES

In the USA, the North American Diplomacy Federation (NADF) helps solve most hobby-related problems. Not all custodians are members of the NADF as membership is voluntary.

- President: Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024
- Orphan Rescue Service: John Daly, Rt 2, Box 136-M5, Rockwell, NC 28138
- Novice Packet Coordinator: Bruce Linsey, 24A Quarry Dr., Albany, NY 12205
- Boardman Number Custodian: Don Ditter, 63 S Main St., Florida, NY 10935
- Miller Number Custodian: Lee Kendter, 4347 Benner, Philadelphia, PA 19135
- Ombudsman: Randolph Smyth, 212 Aberdeen, SE, Medicine Hat, Alta T1A CR1
- Ombudsman Services: John Caruso, 160 - 02 43 Ave., Flushing, NY 11358

In Canada, the Canadian Diplomacy Organization (CDO) provides services for subscribers of Canadian zines. Custodians, with the exception of the ombudsman, are appointed by the coordinator.

- Coordinator: Ronald Brown, 1200 Summerville, Ottawa, Ont K1Z 8G4
 - Novices (French): Pierre Touchette, 1, rue George, Masson, PQ JOX 2H0
 - Orphan Placement: Andy Lischett, 3025 N. Devlin Ct., Chicago, IL 60618
- Traditionally, the CDO shares the BNC and MNC with the NADF. Currently, the ombudsman and Novice Services (English) are shared with the NADF.

Disputes involving the Postal Diplomacy SIG should first attempt resolution within the SIG, though the services of the NADF or CDO can be utilized if a solution cannot be found by appealing the the SIG executive.