

Well, here we go again...

I have finally sat my GMAT exam. It seemed pretty tough and I'm too superstitious to make any predictions. Let's change the subject before I spook myself.

We had the pleasure of Richard Clyne's company for a couple of days last week. For those interested in cadging crash space with us sometime, this is how it is done. First, call us two weeks before you plan to come over. Secondly, fly Virgin Airways to Newark Airport so that we have an opportunity to pick you up on arrival. Preferred gifts are such unobtainables as a box of flakes and a large bottle of Woodpecker cider, however a copy of Hare & Tortoise and a bottle of Bushmills are acceptable. You are required to be nice to our cats and take us out to a restaurant of our choice before you leave. So now you know.

Some letters are held over this issue. Brad Wilson and Mark Berch may despair of ever seeing their letters on vegetarianism in print, but I have to be in a certain mood to defend my lifestyle. Next issue I promise.

Speaking of despair, there's always the subject of the Presidential election. Never mind, it's too painful... The only highlight of the whole mess was watching a bunch of anti-abortion nutters get roughed up when they tried to disrupt a Dukakis rally.

Back to the hobby, I was somewhat taken aback by a comment appended to a Rusty Bolts ballot. Next to the section on vote buying, one voter (who shall remain nameless) wrote, "This is a lousy idea. It could mean that just a few people will dictate the outcome." Good grief, what does it really matter!? I thought it was blatantly obvious that the Bolts were designed to be a complete farce. I still can't believe I read that. Really!

A late-breaking news item is that Chris Carrier has decided not to take over the International Subscription Exchange in January. I am still looking for a possible replacement. Even if I find somebody-ideal, I don't intend to hand over the service until January. I thought I made this quite clear last issue, but several people asked me if I was "still" running the service. Yes!

This issue is slightly late because I've been suffering from a touch of burnout recently. Unless my attitude improves, I may just throw in the towel in 1989. On that happy note I'll leave you with my playlist because my inspiration ran out.

PLAYLIST: New Order, Substance; Joy Division, Unknown Pleasures, Closer; REM, Document, Murrur; Michelle Shocked, Short Sharp Shock; Momus, The Poison Boyfriend, Tender Pervert; The Fall, Assorted Peel Sessions 1980-1982; Jesus & Mary Chain, Darklands

EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED is, well, this. It is published by Simon Billenness & Barbara Passoff of 630 Victory Blvd. Apt. 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA. ECU costs you 75¢ if you live in the Americas and \$1 if you reside elsewhere.

Washington Up Against The Wall

THE GAMES

WILLIAM RUFUS DEVANE KING

SPRING 1912

Correction time again, I'm afraid. Last season's adjustments were incorrect. Barbary should have been credited with Spain for 7 centres. Germany should not have been credited Venice for 20 centres. Italy should have been credited Venice but not Spain though the centre total was correct. Fortunately Mike and Jake noticed the error and so no holdover is necessary. Thanks, guys.

Builds

Barbary builds f mor
Germany builds f kie, a mun
Italy builds a nap

Retreats

Barbary f lpl dies (no retreat ordered)
German a kaz-mos
German f eng-lon

Barbary Jake Walters

f mor-sao, f por-mao, a alg-lib, a spa-gas, f wms-spasc, f bre s a spa-gas,
f eng-nth

Germany Mike Pustilnik

f cly-nao, f lpl-iri, f nth-eng, f lon s f nth-eng, f bel s f nth-eng,
f kie-hol, a gas-bre, a par s a gas-bre, a bur-mar, a mos-stp, a geo-mos
a sev s a rum, a gal s a rum, a rum holds, a ukr s a sev, a tri holds,
a bud a a tri, a vie s a tri, a tyr s a tri, a mun s a tyr

Italy Robert Acheson

a ven-tyr, a pie s a ven-tyr, f tus-gol, a rom-ven, f adr s a rom-ven,
a nap-apu

Persia John Crosby

f gol-mar, a arm s a irq-irn, a irq-irn, f bla s a arm, a kaz-mos,
a afq-irn, f egy-sms, f irnsc-ind, f con s Russian a bul

Russia Bob Gossage

a ser s Italian a ven-tri, a alb s a ser, a bul s a ser

Retreats Barbary f eng-wal/pic/otb

Barbary f bre-pic/otb

PRESS

Germany-GM Can fleets move across moses crossings? ((Yes))

GAMENOTES

Both endgame proposals were defeated. No new proposals were introduced.

DEADLINE: Saturday, November 26, 1988

ATROCITYEXHIBITIONISOLATIONPASSOVERCOLONYMEANSTOANENDHEARTANDSOUL24HOURSTHEETER

INDEPENDENT DEADLINE GAMES

artichoke hearts: Cline 9 Person Diplomacy (International), Autumn 1903

braised celery: Downfall of the Lord of the Rings (Def.), Afteryule 3019-II

spectreman: Railway Rivals, Map K. Round 6

attack of the killer tomatoes: Railway Rivals, Map N. Round 2

carnivore: International Diplomacy. Started.

Apparently John Piggott suggested the above game name. That figures.

THE WORLD FAMOUS UNFILLABLE WAITING LISTS...

Stab: Derwood Bowen, Glenn Petroski, Brad Wilson, Tom Nash, Jake Walters

Stab is an interesting hidden movement version of Diplomacy. Only contested moves are reported. Players have to keep track of their own units and guess about the whereabouts of their opponents'. This is not a game for paranoids! Player identities are common knowledge, though, unlike Gunboat. No gamefee. Rules available on request. Two wanted.

Railway Rivals: Andrew England, Paul Gardner, Conrad von Metzke
Map T (Middle Earth), GM Brian Longstaff, 2 wanted

Railway Rushes: Paul Gardner, Doug Brown, Theo Clarke?
Map I (Ireland) GM Brian Longstaff 2-3 wanted

Railway Rivals is a (semi)commercial game based on building railways. It is available in selected game stores, if you look carefully. The Map T game is back on the drawing board because Mark Nelson dropped off the list and Theo Clarke never replied to the gamestart notice. I'm also not too sure about Andrew England who has NMRed in other games.

International Diplomacy: Mark Weidmark (Canada), Mike Gonsalves (USA)

No gamefee is required for this one either. I'm especially looking for players from Europe and Australia.

Standbys

All Purpose: Doug Brown, Mark Lilleleht, Mike Pustilnik

Cline 9: Paul Gardner, Mike Gonsalves

International Dip: Bill Young, Martin Kloosterman, Robert Acheson, Mike
Mike Gonsalves, Brad Wilson, Ian Whitchurch

Downfall: John Dods, Ian Whitchurch, Jason Bergmann, Brad Wilson,
Pete Gaughan, Mark Nelson

Railway Rivals: Paul Gardner

Overall I especially need standbys for Cline 9 and players for the international Diplomacy game form abroad.

I'll probably open another variant list just so there is one game in the zine proper when King ends (which should be soon). Anybody for Excalibur?

DARKLANDSDEEPONEPERFECTMORNINGHAPPYWHENITRAINSDOWNONMENINEMILLIONRAINYDAYSAPRIL

Quote of the Month

"While trading zines is an imperfect solution, on the whole it's the best one we know of. Mutual subscriptions are for publishers who insist on 'getting their money's worth' out of every trade, and misses the point of exchanging publications in the first place. The point of trading is to broaden one's horizons, see zines one would not otherwise see, and generally participate in the community of Dipdom. On some trades you 'win' by putting out what you feel to be a better, more frequent, or more costly zine. Sometimes you lose (or let the other guy win, if you will). That's the breaks, and it's best not to worry about them too much."

Dick Martin in a letter to Passchendaele 66

This sums up my own position perfectly. Well said, Dick.

Dwarves Doug Rowling

A Fcl-CDm, A Esg S Elves A OFR-RRu, A Crn S Elves A OFR-RRu

Elves Cathy Ozog

A HPa-Gla, A Lor S A HPa-Gla, A OFR-RRu, F Fld holds

Gandalf Paul Gardner

Gandalf SMI-DGu, Fe Bra-Min, R

Gondor Iain Bowen

A/Faramir Ano-Osg, A Leb S A Bel, A Bel S A Leb, A Anf-Dru

Mordor Rod Walker

2A Kha holds, 2A NIt-Osg, 2A SIt S 2A NIt-Osg, 2A Oro-Udu, Sauron Oro-MMo,

A DGu- And, A NRh-RRu, A SRh-Dag, A off-NRh, A Wil S A NRh-RRu, Naz

Rohan Doug Brown

A HDe-WEEm, C Fan-Wol, HC EEm S C Fan-Wol

Saruman Richard Biddle

A Ise hold, A Hol hold, A Aza-Cel, Saruman

Umbar Mark Lilleleht

A SGo-Por, A HdW-SGo, AF SOU-Min

Adjustments

D: 5 : Ere, Iro, Blu, +CDm +Esg

E: 7 : Iml, Lor, EKH, GHa, +Fld, +Gla, +RRu

Ga:3 : Bre, Shi, +DGu

Go:6 : MTi, Bel, Lam, Leb, +Dru, +Ano

M: 12: 3 x off, Bar, MMo, Udu, Nur, ~~ØGd~~, SRh, +And, +Osg, +SIt, +Kha

R: 5 : HDe, Edo, EEm, +Wol, +Eem

S: 4 : Ise, Dun, KDu, +Hol

U: 5 : Hrd, Hav, Cit, +SGo, +Min

BuildsDwarves A Iro, A BluElves A EKH, A GHa, one shortGandalf A ShiGondor A Mti, A LamMordor A SRh, A MMo, A Bar (note: Mordor still has one unit off-board)Rohan A Hde, A EdoSaruman A DunUmbar AF Cit, A HrdPRESSElves Hall: "Dwarves? What do you mean trust them?"

"Yes, that's what the queen says - trust them."

"Hmm - next thing she'll have us crawling around in dirty holes and expect us to grow beards!"

"Well, we don't have much choice, you know. The Dark Lord will overrun the South. If we are to save our forest from clear cutting, we must ally with the ugly creatures."

"But I thought Dwarves were related to orcs or goblins or something."

"Something is right, but if they betray our Queen Arlogas I swear they will know what an Elven bow can do."

"I'll drink to that!"

Rohan-Saruman: Send me Wormtongue. At least he'll talk to me!

Umbar-Elves Now don't go getting paranoid on me, Cathy. I told you, peace is the operative word. Throw a couple luscious elven women my way and you may be able to take advantage of me.

GM-Umbar Wait a minute. Does Heidi know about this? Just imagine if...

Dear Ms Heidi Brown, ^{know}

You don't ^{know} (and probably wouldn't want to...) However I must inform you about a disturbing situation concerning your ~~son~~ boyfriend, Mark...

Bowenmir-Sauron No press this time due to UK postal strike. Apologies are due to you. However, Mutant Press Workshops are preparing a special for next issue - Hunter S Thompson meets Catullus and Kathy Acker to play ring around the Nazgul.

Gondor-Umbar If we stood off in Pru, I'm sorry but I hope my letter got to you in time.

Gandalf-Gondor & other non-believers Fear not, oh faithless friends for Gandalf has indeed been abroad in the land searching for the tree of Mordor's evil. We need only be strong allies to chop him down to size. Trust me!

Saruman-Elves You are cordially invited to tea and cucumber sandwiches at Khazad-dûm. I am hoping for a large turnout and you can be assured that you will be served ~~as~~ well ~~done~~.

PRESS

BARAD-DUR (29 Maggotmash [or Afteryule in most Prime Target Areas] 3019):

Sauron, forgetting himself, blinked all his eyes. "Why, Slimeon, I had no idea! You really had a father, Peter Bilgenest?"

"Uh, Potter, Your Absolute Absoluteness."

"Well, whatever. Damned tinkerbellish name, if you ask me."

"Does that truly surprise you, Your Toadmasterish Terribleness?"

"Mm? That? The name? No. The fact that you had a father; that surprises me. I thought you sort of just migrated in -- oh, like that Gullam thing that was messing around with Shelob a few years back."

"Uh, Gollum, Your Shadowy Supremacy."

"Bilgenest, if you keep correcting me, I might be reminded that the Pit Monsters need a snack. Or ..." Sauron added, smiling that particular smile that not even Morgoth had liked, "... worse."

"Gulp."

"Don't count on it. You know they like to ... play ... with their food, there in the pit." He let that sink in. [Get it? Pit ... sink ... Hmph! Damn tinkerbells.] "Well, Slimeon, how is our campaign against the tinkerbells going?"

"Oh, great, Your Demonic Destructiveness. We sent the Nazgul over to Minas Trashy, and they howled around over the city for a fortnight. I daresay that there isn't a greep in town that'll crottle properly for at least a couple of months."

"Ha! Longer; have you ever tried to crottle a two-month-old greep? It goes all flimflarmish on you."

"Golly wow, Your Humongous Horridness, that was a pretty belgium thing to do."

"Why, Bilgenest; I'm surprised at your language -- whoops! Old Bowenmir's just turned his palantir to Mordor TV. Hang on; it's time for a commercial -- er, an 'important' announcement." Sauron picked up his own palantir, which was a bit scorched from evil power surges, but otherwise in pretty good shape, and stared into it. "We pause now for an important announcement," he said, in a soothingly insincere voice. "You are getting sleepy sleepy ... sleepy ... you are asleep. ... Well, so far so good ... er, bad. Bowenmirrrr ... this is the voice of your kindly old daddy, Sleazomir, speaking. Bewarrrrre the ideoes of ... er, the treachery of Eodoug of Rohan. Send your arrrrrmies easssst. Yesssss, easssst, my preciousssss ... er, well, you get the idea, my boy. Get in there and fight those treacherous Rohanners before they get you from the rear. Don't worry about dear old Uncle Sauron. Remember when he used to dandle you on his hoof -- er, knee when you were a wee tad? How can anybody that nice be a threat? Go get them Rohanners, boy, while there's still time. Besides, son, they're a much easier target, eh? Eh? Nod when you're being spoken to, boy! That's better. Eodoug's a-fixin' ta stab ya, boy, he shore-fire is."

"Gee all get-out, Your Masterful Machonicity, that was pure slimeballitude." Bilgenest genuflected and kissed the Lord of the Rings' hand several times, making sure he smooched all the rings on it.

"Yes, it was pretty superb, wasn't it? Well, Bilgenest, speaking of rings ..."

"I didn't mention them, Your Incredible Ickiness."

"No, but the narrative did ... see, on the last page?"

"Oh, yes, Your Indefinite Indestructibility."

"Anyway, there is one tiny bijou I need to locate."

"Oh, that, Your Sorcerous Supremacy. I'd wondered what happened to that one."

"So I've decided--"

"And, Your Definitive Deformity, the finger that went with it."

"Keep it up and I might slip a little treat to the Pit Monsters."

"You're always so ... uh ... oh. Yes, Your Malignant Mendaciousness."

"As I was saying, I've made up a little ad for the local papers. See to it that it gets printed in every classified section from here to ... to, uh ... well, wherever. Someplace really far away."

"Really far away? Like that little country -- what is it? -- don't they call it 'Shire', Your Bodacious Blasphemousness?"

"Yeah, like that. No, not there. Let's not get ridiculous."

LOST

One itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny yellow polka ... er, gold ring. Very plain and no jewels or anything valuable like that. Hardly worth much. Lost near the River Anduin in a traffic accident. Mostly sentimental value to the owner, who got it from his little old grandmother who only wore it to Pasadena on Sundays. Virtually no value at all, really. Huge reward and half of somebody's kingdom. Apply to Occupant, #1 Iron Tower, Barad-dûr, Mordor 00666-0666. Or call Area Code 666, 666-0666 and ask for Mr. Nazgûl. Give him your address and he'll come right over with the reward and some really nice surprises. Beware of imposters. Owner does not dress in robes made from old grey gymsuits and does not have hairy feet. Does not exactly have feet, as a matter of fact. Look for the sign of the Eye to guarantee authenticity. Remember, big big big reward. BIG. Your dream house, Vanna White, three wishes, whatever. Call or write today!

BYRIVER-BY-THE-RIVER, THE SHORE, Afteryule, 3019. Gonegoose the Wizard slipped quietly and, he hoped, unobserved up to the front door of a typical Hoppit hovel. He knocked softly on the round door (cleverly set into a square doorway). After a while he knocked again. ... Again. ... Again. Finally he wrenched the door off its one half-good hinge and went in. "Bob! Flop! Bobsey and Flopsey Barfins! You in there?"

After a bit, the two Hoppits came out, obviously the worse for much overindulgence in the beer of The Shore -- which contains, obviously, a lot of hops but also considerable quantities of wormwood and various types of leaves which are on the proscribed list even in Colombia. "Hey, man, keep yer pants on," said Bobsey, the larger of the twins (who in fact didn't look much alike, other than both were rather ugly in a gross and nauseating sort of way).

"Yeah," agreed Flopsey, "keep yer pants on. The girls ain't here. Don' be in such a damn hurry; it ain't easy to get right up when ya only got one leg, ya know." "The girls" were the Barfin sisters, Mopsey and Cottentail (who really had one). The line about "one leg" is not to elicit your sympathy, either. All Hoppits have only one leg. This ends in a very large, flat, hairy, and smelly object which can be called a "foot" mostly by virtue of its location at the far end of a leg. Hoppits were understandably very good at such Olympic sports as 12-meter hopscotch, but had never in all history won a game of rugby.

"Well?" asked Gonegoose after they had settled down to tall wax beakers of the local brew. "Have you still got the dingus?"

"Dingus?" asked Bobsey innocently.

"Yeah, dingus?" added Flopsey, with particularly aggressive innocence.

"You know what I mean. That ring you found in the river, or were given by a travelling fairy, or got in a box of Jacker Crack, or whatever story you're making up now. It just so happens that I've learned that you got it off the recumbant form of a certain slimeball named Gollywog."

"He tripped," admitted Bobsey.

"Yeah, tripped," added Flopsey.

"You really need to carpet this hole," Gonegoose said. "The echo in it is terrible. Anyway -- sure he tripped. Like Red Ridinghood's grandmother just jumped inside the wolf. I don't care how you creeps got it; do you still have it?"

"Maybe. So what?" said Bobsey.

"Yeah, m--"

"Shut up Flopsey," Gonegoose snarled. "Let me see it or you're both toads. Now."

There was no denying the wizard's sincerity. Nor the menacing static discharges from his magic wand. The twins got the ring and gave it to him. Gonegoose looked at the ring carefully. He weighed it carefully in the palm of his hand. He thoughtfully bit down on it -- crack! -- too hard. He did a bit with the wand to fix his tooth. Finally, he began to subject the ring to complex and intricate manipulations. After a while he had to pause while the Barfit twins helped untie his fingers. After a few more manipulations, he succeeded in opening a secret compartment and extracting a piece of paper. As he read it, he turned several shades paler than something that has spent its entire life under a damp rock.

"What does it say?" asked Bobsey.

"Yeah, what --"

He showed it to them. It read:

The Nazgûl-General of Mordor has determined that keeping this Ring can be hazardous to your health. Very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very hazardous. Extremely hazardous. More hazardous than you could possibly imagine. Just return It to the Owner and you will be spared. If you haven't figured out Who the Owner is by now, it is likely you need professional help. However, just leave this Ring by a dish of puswort root floating in rancid lard at midnight and It will be gone by morning. Failure to do so will result in things which you won't like very much but which we will enjoy immensely. Watch your local papers for instructions. You will obey zem to ze letter, jawohl! Heil Sauron!

"I was afraid of this," Gonegoose said in a sepulchral and despondent tone of voice. "This, boys, is The Dingus; Sauron's Ring."

Bobsey was flabbergasted. "He wears that?"

Flopsey was amazed. "Yeah, that?"

Bonegoose shrugged. "Well, ... yeah."

Bobsey sniggered. "Boy, he must sure have a tiny--"

"It's not that kind of ring, you flat-footed twit." Bonegoose rolled his eyes toward the ceiling. It was going to be a long, long quest.

GAMENOTES

Firstly, I'd like to congratulate Doug and Iain for getting their orders to me despite the British postal strike. Doug called me while Iain spent £1.97 to send his orders by Swiftair. Keep it up, guys!

Rules Queries

Rod Walker asked me to define what the rules mean when they say that personality units (and the Nazgul) add to the attack strength of units they "move with". After chatting with Glover Rogerson, I discovered the intention of the rule was to allow personalities and the Nazgul to add to the attack strength only if the personality or Nazgul started in the same province and ended up in the same province as the augmented unit.

Rod's second question was, is the Sea of Rhun, a barrier like the mountains. If it is, then the Nazgul, who can cross mountains, could, conceivably, fly direct from South Rhun to River Running. However my ruling is that it is more than just a barrier so the Nazgul will have to fly round it.

Rod asks also if personality units can cross mountains. Looking at the rules, it seems clear that only the Nazgul and Gandalf can cross mountains. This is true to the book anyhow.

Rod also has some lengthy comments on prophetic builds which I'll print in full.

I had always been under the impression that the English were, generally, sensible chaps who were not given to gross foolishness. I fear the adoption of "prophetics" seriously shattered that illusion. I have from the beginning been of the considered opinion that a "regular" game so conducted is a variant. Not irregular; a variant.

Well, O, so this is a variant already. However, "prophetics" are not only too great a departure from the Rules to be thought "regular", they are also a great disservice to, and imposition on, the players -- especially in this particular game.

The Rules do not require a player to guess what has just happened before he or she writes her or his next orders. The players see the results of each season (including the now-conventional "summer", "autumn", and "winter"). Most GMs in the States do combine seasons, as you know; however, nearly all of them automatically separate seasons when the situation is obviously pretty complex, or allow separation on player request, or both. The reason is clear: it is much more fair to the players to do this than to force them to guess what might happen (and perhaps overlook the one contingency that actually occurs). It is not a good service to your players to force them to contemplate every possibility which might occur on the board.

The situation is bad enough in the regular game. In this one, it's impossible. For one thing, we have a lot more units on the board, and many of them have quirky capabilities. Worse, some of them are often invisible. I do not believe it is right to expect me to make builds (much less removals or retreats) and have to consider my options if Gandalf shows up with the Ring on my right flank every season, or if Saruman puts it on, or any of numerous other possibilities. It's a lot of useless and wasteful effort -- and every player will have to go through it every season.

This sort of procedure is, moreover, an open invitation to a spoilt game (do I get sympathy points for Anglophile spellings? I thought not). On one hand, a position can be easily ruined by inaccurate guessing. On the other, players rapidly lose interest in games where they're being screwed by the rules. I think, for instance, that it might make a big difference to the Elves to know (as they are likely to find out this time) that the Nazgûl are presently in _____ and might affect any build they make (and yet, what are their chances of guessing that as one of their options?).

I wouldn't mind if we combined seasons the other way, although not in complex situations (as the upcoming adjustments will be). I realize this will lengthen the game somewhat, but who's in a hurry? It seems to me that a well-played game is far more important than a quick one. It also seems grossly unfair for the players to have to guess every possible position for an invisible unit which is important to them.

If nothing else, this ought to be put to a vote of the players (after suitable discussion, of course).

Thanks for the feedback, Rod. I don't agree that the "prophetic" system of builds and retreats is a departure from the rules. In fact the rulebook states: "As with retreats, builds and removals (adjustments) are written and exposed simultaneously, without any preceding diplomacy." (my underlining) The American system, by combining the winter and spring moves, breaks the rules by allowing players to negotiate prior to making their adjustments. The British "prophetic" system does force players to guess what has happened in the Autumn season. However the American system forces players to guess what has happened in the Winter season before they write their Spring moves. I think it's really six of one and half a dozen of the other. Personally I think your contention that all British games are irregular is, well, um bullshit. By that reasoning, all games which combine seasons are irregular, both British and American.

I prefer the British method. Don't forget that this is a British variant. I'd say over ten games have been played already with prophetic builds so it is clearly not "impossible".

Anyhow I agree that the matter should be up to the players. I propose that we stick with the prophetic system but allow a separation of seasons on player request. Could everyone let me know their opinions on this by next time?

I have another request to make (and this applies to anyone who submits material to ECU pretyped). If you send in anything pretyped, please could you leave one inch margins all round. So that my typeface doesn't appear too small, I only reduce the pages to 74% instead of the usual 64%. If the margins are too large, then it is extremely difficult to paste up. For example, Rod's piece on prophetic builds was reduced to 74%, leaving my typeface eyestrainingly small whereas the rest of the issue is at 64%.

Change of Address: Paul Gardner, 20 Spruce Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301

DEADLINE: Saturday, 26 November 1988

Note that the deadline has been extended due to the bad GMing error I made. The game report printed in ECU 14 (yeah, this issue) includes all the corrections made in the readjudication. My thanks go to Doug Rowling, Iain Bowen and Rod Walker for promptly bringing the mistake to my notice.

Or even promptly. Why can I never spell that word?

Mark Nelson suggested I start a second game using all the players from the standby list. I had nightmares for weeks...

DISORDERDAYOFTHELORDSCANDIDATEINSIGHTHNEWDAWNFADESSHESLOSTCONTROLSHADOWPLAYWILDE

There you go - a list of Bob Olsen's subzines.

Feud Update

Better make that "Disagreement Update". I don't want to excite Chris Carrier too much...

Typical. No sooner than I mention in the letter column that Julie Martin wished Pete Gaughan good luck with the Marco Poll in the last House of Lords, a brand new House of Lords appears in my mailbox. The front page news includes the item that Pete is going to do the Marco Poll but that Julie is "not encouraging him to do it". So now you know.

Hot Gossip

Two drastically slimmed down issues of War & Peace show that Derek really is serious about scaling down his hobby involvement. A good friend of Derek's, Paul Donley, fresh from the rugby terraces, offers the following assessment:

"I've a feeling his new woman is a lot of the reason. I met her a few months ago and she's pretty horny and obviously keeping him away from little games."

Silly Polls

I was going to spend several pages analysing the Runestone Poll results at length but, sadly, I don't have time. The Cream Shall Rise from that ubiquitous Bruce Linsey bloke is worth the \$5 he's charging. The actual results are beautifully and comprehensively presented. There are several interesting analytical articles (Comet Zines & Rising Stars, Top Ten Hobby News Stories) but some mush (Hobby Health Index, The Runestone Awards and three pages of generally vapid comments about the Poll itself). A fine read overall though take the results with a pinch of salt. A few fine zines did badly: Vertigo, Nutmeg and The Scribblerist to name three glaring examples.

Bruce Linsey, PO Box 1334, Albany, NY 12201, USA

LETTUCE

Julie Martin I don't know how you could have read my remarks about the Marco Poll as encouraging... Perhaps I wasn't discouraging enough? OK, "Bleah, bleah, what a terrible idea, don't waste your time! And that goes for you, too, Mr Rusty Bolt!" Does that sound more like me?

((Well, you did wish Pete Gaughan good luck with the Marco Poll in the last House of Lords..))

Brian Longstaff The Charity Appeal: I still cannot see why people have this problem with AIDS, especially since it now affects those who need blood transfusions: heterosexuals - in fact, everyone. It's our problem. //

I remember when Brian Dolton (remember him, Simon?) did the British Hobby Charity Fund for Ethiopia. He got a lot of undeserved flack for that, the main comment of which went something like, "he's only doing it to bring attention to himself." Anyone who'd ever met Brian knew that just wasn't true, but enough of those comments got through to him so that he soured of the hobby and all but vanished from it.

But, of course, you know this. My main point here is that too many people who honestly want to help others with such activities as fundraising for charity are so often given bad press and bad mouthed. If people do not want to give to help AIDS research, fair enough. But why don't they go out and give to a charity they do approve of?

((Actually I had Brian Dolton's Charity Appeal very firmly in mind when I volunteered to run this year's Runestone Poll Pledge Drive. To be blunt, Brian did not run the drive very well and, as a result, I was determined to avoid some of the pitfalls which Brian encountered.

Overall, Brian's Appeal was successful; it took in a lot of money but it was also very contentious. The main problem was that Brian attempted too much. As well as raising money, he tried to raise people's consciousness about the problems of the Third World. Unfortunately, his lack of knowledge about the Third World combined with his rather irritating guilt-ridden promotion, did not help his project. It was painful to watch how the criticism filtered through his thin skin and hurt him.

My objective with the Diplomacy Alliance Against AIDS was simply to raise as much money as possible. Barbara and I just don't have the time to educate people about AIDS. Besides there are numerous groups and agencies which can do a far better job of it. There will always be people who object to charity appeals being conducted within the hobby or charity as a concept. We even received a letter from a hobby member who argued that AIDS was a scam perpetrated by medical researchers to swindle grants from the government! However, rather than argue with such people, we preferred to concentrate on reaching those who wanted to give anyway. Our time is limited so we'd rather use it in the most cost-effective manner.

Barring unforeseen circumstances, Barbara and I will run next year's Runestone Poll Pledge Drive. The tradition of choosing a different charity each year seems to be a good one, so we plan to donate the money to research into heart disease next time. I'd be interested to hear people's comments on the Pledge Drive, though bear in mind that I don't think that anything really needs to be changed, with the exception of making sure that we name the charity before announcing the Drive.))

((My comments on World Dip Con last issue certainly stirred up some interest.))

Robert Sacks Regarding a North American site for a World Dip Con, I would sooner see a committee of Davis, Hyatt, Martin, and Sacks, in their capacities as the MN combatants, decide the site than let the DipCon Society or Committee decide.

Having the DipCon Society (which doesn't hold hobby meetings) any say in the matter pretty much excludes the Diplomatic Congress from consideration, so I'm not going to expend any effort on the matter. If someone has a proposal I'll listen, but I've been screwed over too many times to take seriously any "cooperative" approach.

((Despite Robert's rather negative tone, he does raise the pertinent point that it is going to be very difficult to find a forum, agreeable to all, in which to decide upon the site for World Dip Con.

My impression is that the overall consensus is that the decision should be made at the next Dipcon in San Diego. However there are several Americans, like Robert Sacks, who don't care much for Dipcon and who might feel disenfranchised by this arrangement.

There are other possibilities which could be explored. For instance, there could be meeting at each of next years' cons (Dipcon, Dixiecon, Cancon, the Diplomatic Congress etc.) and the votes at each meeting could be tallied together to reach a final total. I suppose, to minimise possible ballot-stuffing, the votes could be weighted according to the number of players in the respective Diplomacy tournaments. However this method would be very cumbersome and would require independent verification of votes cast and the size of the tournament. I suspect it simply would not be workable.

The idea of leaving the decision to a committee is an interesting one. However, who chooses the committee members? I don't think that a committee made up of custodians, for example, would work because there's no real consensus on what constitutes a custodianship or which offices are currently occupied by whom. How about a committee composed of all zine editors? Again there would be the problem of determining which people are actually publishing and what constitutes a zine.

I'd be interested to hear what people think of the above suggestions. As you can tell, I'm a little sceptical and I suspect the best idea would be to leave the decision to the next Dipcon in San Diego despite the fact that this method would not have universal approval.))

David Hood It is true that we in Chapel Hill will bid to host DipCon '90.

In fact, we have been preparing to do so for two years. The World Dip Con angle is something I had not thought about until I received a letter from Fred Davis over the summer urging us to bid for both events. Let me tell you what I think about this.

North Carolina would be, I think, an excellent place to hold DipCon. We have lots of local players here eager to compete in a national-level tournament, having had few chances to do so. Our club is one of the most highly organized ones in the Hobby as far as I can tell, so we would easily be able to pull off DipCon; especially since we will likely get help from DC-area "Warthogs".

We also have an established Con already in Chapel Hill, DIXIECON, which will be in its fourth year in 1990. Although the principle draw is still from N.C., there is no geographical reason why we cannot expand greatly (and from early reports, we will get a more expansive draw of players in the 1989 event.) We are only four-five hours from D.C., and our nearby airport

airport services all major U.S. cities. Indeed, we have had players from five states involved in the prior two tournaments.

Prices in North Carolina are quite low in comparison to other potential East Coast sites as well.

As far as World DipCon goes, I frankly do not know what potential participants from other countries are looking for in a Con. If they want the chance to see "the Big City", then they will not really be satisfied. But if they are interested in the most colorful area of the country, namely Dixie, then they will have come to the right place. I doubt the attendance will be much bigger at other East Coast Cons - and the proposed Dip Congress in Philadelphia is still an unknown quantity. While Sacks et al. will likely put on an acceptable event, it necessarily comes with some feuding baggage that Dixiecon would not.

Which is not to say that I think their proposed Congress is a bad idea. After all, I am serving on Sacks' working group myself. But as an N.C. partisan and president of the Carolina Amateur Diplomats forgive me if I err on the side of a Con which at the present time I am fairly confident could function well as the host Con.

One more thing. I was not aware that there was a Hobby consensus in favor of holding both DipCon and World Dip Con at the same place. If I remember correctly, there was some argument to the effect that DipCon would lose its own identity in such an arrangement. I wonder what ECU readers have to say about that.

((I thought a DipCon/World Dip Con made sense as a way of ensuring a decent turnout. I have this fear that I'll work hard to attract 15 overseas visitors, only to discover that, on the day, only 40 North Americans bother to turn up...))

Actually, I think that a DipCon/World Dip Con combo was just an assumption of my own. If I gave the impression that it was already a Hobby consensus, then I obviously erred. However with the current very low turnouts at Hobby cons, I don't think that it would be practical to run separate events. Again I would be interested to hear other people's opinion.))

Randy Grigsby If we can double our turnout next summer at Cancon, then, maybe, the World Dip Con could feasibly be held in Toronto. All we need is the Toronto hobby to pull together since our poor turnout this year is because of them.

((It sounds like you would have your work cut out to establish a firm local base for Cancon by 1989. The problem is that if Dipcon in San Diego takes place before Cancon '89, how will people know how successful you've been when it comes time to decide?

Mind you, I hear Toronto is a lovely city...))

Ken Peel As you can see from the enclosed, Avalon Hill is considering starting a new "Avalon Hill Championships" tournament in Baltimore. The first would be summer 1989, and Rex Martin has asked if I would be interested in heading up the Diplomacy tournament. I wrote back saying that I would be happy to do so, and that in fact Woody, Dick and I had already decided to offer our services for the annual Atlanticon tourney now that Robert Sacks has decided to start his own gaming convention (this from a guy who couldn't organise himself out of a paper bag, but not from want of trying...).

Anyway, so we are on if AH decides to go ahead with the thing. My thought is that if it comes off, this would be the perfect host convention for Dipcon/World Dip Con in 1990. It would be on firm footing, would be well promoted outside of the postal community, and would be officially sponsored by Avalon Hill. I am sure that Dixiecon and Sackscon will both lust after that dynamic duo, but each have their own weaknesses. Sackscon because, well, because of Sacks. And Dixiecon because I just don't think it would draw sufficiently. Last summer Dixiecon had barely over 20 participants, and most of them were members of the Carolina Diplomats (the Univ. of N.C. Diplomacy club). David Hood is a serious-minded guy and great for the game, but I think it is time that Dipcon reconnected itself with the larger FTF gaming community.

Your suggestion for building a large convention on the informal basis that works in Britain simply won't work in the much vaster, much more diverse environment of North America. It might work if we had a postal hobby four to five times the size as Britain's (commensurate with the differences in population), but from my brief and disheartening experience with the census I think we have only three-quarters the postal hobbyists that exist in much less populous, more physically compact Britain.

In short, I think that connecting up with the new Avalon Hill-sponsored tourney would be the best way to go, and if AH is interested I'm all set to lead the charge, or (preferable for someone as lazy as me) get someone else to join me in carrying the banner. So, here's the scoop: how about you and me, kid? Me, because I am such an all round great guy (well, that and my connections with AH and this supposed new tourney), and you because of your connections with the British hobby and credibility among what some would call the Dark Side of the American hobby.

((You mean I'm not an all round great guy too?

I must admit I'm quite hopeful about the proposed Avalon Hill Championships. Count me in! Convention organising is one of the few hobby activities I haven't tried yet. Really tried that is: I don't think the publicity I did for World Dip Con '88 really counts as nuts and bolts convention organisation.

In any case, I would be willing to coordinate the international publicity for whichever con finally wins the right to World Dip Con '90. I'm sure this sounds big-headed (ah, what the hell) but I do have the most extensive overseas contacts of anyone in the American hobby.

Here's a brief summary of the debate so far.

- 1) How do we pick the site? Do we leave the choice to Dipcon '89 or try something more elaborate?
- 2) Should Dipcon and World Dip Con be combined?
- 3) Of the four current choices (Dixiecon, Cancon, the Diplomatic Congress and the Avalon Hill Championships), which would be the most suitable?
- 4) Once the site is chosen, what needs to be done ensure that the con is a success?

Needless to say, input from prospective attendees from abroad would be very useful. After all, meeting foreign hobbyists is what World Dip Con is all about. To start off, here's some comments from Iain Bowen.))

Iain Bowen Re: World Dip Con '90, despite my paranoid fear of flying and my limited ration of holidays - I will be there (assuming I can get a visa, hem, hem). But a few comments on location: UK people will really want an East Coast location fairly near a major scheduled airroute. I suspect plenty of people would balk at travelling an extra 250 miles to the Con from point of arrival. I personally wouldn't mind a small con as the 300+ Manorcons are getting a tad daunting. I hereby beg the Billinness/Passoff couch for the pre-Con recovery from the nervous tension of the flight. I promise not to smoke in the apartment, or at least not tobacco.

((How small is right for a convention? There's no chance of any American con hitting the 300 mark and, on the other hand, a turnout of less than 50 would, I strongly suspect, be regarded as disappointing and dismal. Would you agree with me that around 100 would be the right number?

People are always welcome to stay with us provided we receive notice well in advance. A year and a half's is a little excessive though... We do have strict rules. Basically, no smoking (of all kinds - you'd be pretty stupid to bring anything into the country these days, especially considering the heavy penalties for mere users in the latest drug bill) no meat and general good behaviour is a must. Ability to get on with cats is heavily recommended. If you fly into Newark in the evening (presumably on Virgin airlines) we may (stress the may) be able to pick you up although we generally extract a meal as payment for our trouble...))

Richard Biddle I enjoyed your ECU 12 report of ((World)) Dip Con. John Cain wrote a very similar piece in Victoriana 13 in that he also steered clear of the Diplomacy games and was disappointed at the lack of a large number of non-British participants, but still thoroughly enjoyed it. The worst thing about John's report is that he described you as a "slightly shorter version of Michael Gibson" which, to say the least, is not a compliment.//((Do I detect an Australian feud here?))

((John Cain)) seems very intent on holding a World Con in Australia in 1992, but says he would only be willing if at least a few overseas players turned up. Do you think that the Sun, Sea and Sand of Sydney in Summer (how poetic) would attract US players or is the idea implausible? The hobby here at the moment would only include about 100 enthusiasts, hardly enough for such a "world" event but you can be certain we'll be working on it.

((The Australian hobby may be small but you have a lot going for you. I get the impression that your hobby is concentrated in the Sydney/Melbourne/Adelaide area unlike the American hobby which is polarised between the East and West coasts with only Bob Olsen in the middle. Also your enthusiasts are, well, enthusiastic. Since your hobby is too new to include much deadwood, I could imagine 50 Australians turning up to your first World Dip Con.

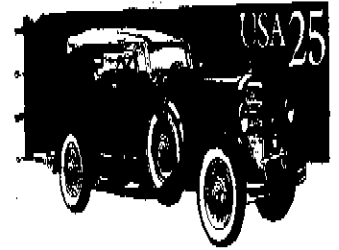
I think it's important for hosts not to have unrealistic expectations for World Dip Con. The name tag alone will not result in a significant increase in attendance unless you work at it (and hard!). No matter what you do, you cannot expect more than 20 people from abroad. For the foreseeable future World Dip Con, at its best, will just be a larger than usual domestic con with a handful of foreigners thrown in to add extra spice.))

SIMON BILLENNESS & BARBARA PASSOFF

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An escaped convict shot and slightly wounded Prime Minister Turgut Ozal today as he addressed a convention of Turkey's governing party, the police said. Twenty-one other people, including the suspected gunman, were hurt when the police opened fire and the crowd stampeded.

Mr. Ozal, 61 years old, was shot in the right hand as he gave the opening speech at the convention of the Motherland Party, which he leads. The shooting came as he urged Turks to reject violence.

"We have a more civilized atmosphere now; people of different views can now talk to each other instead of fighting or drawing their guns," Mr. Ozal said before the first shot struck the microphone.

Come on, send me a letter FOR PRINT...

DEADLINE: Saturday, November 26, 1988

Larry Peery

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