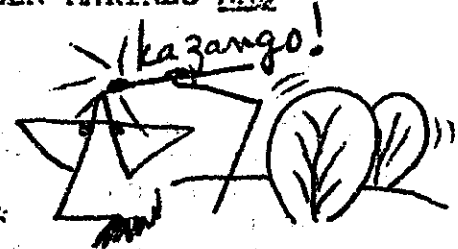
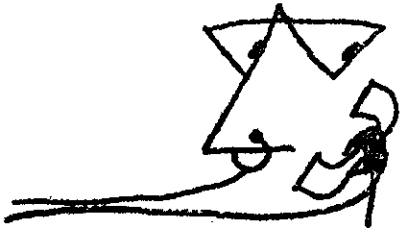


"BOSH, BESH," SAID THE GOOD FAIRY OF POSTAL DIPLOMACY, "TWO AT ONCE IS NOTHING. WHY, IN ONE NIGHT I CAN HANDLE HALF A DOZEN MARINES AND

EREHWON 92

722 November 1975





Hello? Mr. Beshara, sir? This is Bobby Lipton. Yes, sir. ... Well, you haven't pulled on my strings for almost a week and I wondered if you were mad at me...? ...You're having a party and you can use me? Oh, goody! ...Apron? Yes, sir. ... Hands and knees? Yes, sir....

Crew of the U.S.S. Erehwon



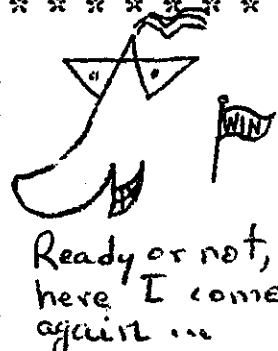
Big
BUTT
OPEC
is
watching
you...

Captain.	Rod Walker
Chaplain	Pope Joan II
First Mate	Senile Quiverlips
Cabin Boy.	John Beshara
Ship's Cook.	Don Horton
Ship's Cat	Pussy Galore
Ship's Rat	Gordon Anderson
Billy Budd	Eric Verheiden
Mr. Smee	Chris Schleicher
Mr. Roberts.	Nicky Ulanov
Queegqueeg	Len Lakofka
Senta.	Peggy Gemignani
Dick Deadeye	John Boardman
Mr. Christian.	Walt Buchanan

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Adolf is
proud of
you!

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IDA's annual general election is under way. Unique among postal Diplomacy organizations, IDA actually offers its members a chance to vote on their officers. The schismatic dictatorships masquerading as "associations" do not even give their members the sop of a rigged election, although that is certainly not beneath them. Why waste your money on a special interest group whose sole purpose is catering to someone's ego? Put it where it will do you and the hobby some good. Membership in the International Diplomacy Association is \$2 to Walt Buchanan, R.R. #3, Box 324, Lebanon IN 46052.

EREHWON recommends...for Vice President of the IDA, Len Lakofka; for Ombudsman, John Leeder; for Editor, Scott Rosenberg.

Note - My new phone # - (714) 753-7657.

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 * No portion of this issue may be reproduced without prior written per- *
 * mission of the Editor. Such permission is herewith extended to all *
 * postal Diplomacy Editors and publishers except John Boardman, John *
 * Beshara, Richard Miller, Richard Kovalcik, John Brenner, Eric Verhei- *
 * den, Chris Schleicher, Robert Lipton, and Gordon Anderson. This per- *
 * mission is subject to two conditions: the original author and source *
 * must be properly credited and a copy sent to the Editor. *

 EREHWON 92 page 2

ERHWON is a monthly [ha!] journal of postal Diplomacy and other car-
 cinogenic substances. Subscriptions are 5/\$1 (but 8/\$1 to any Editor of a
 postal Dippy 'zine which qualifies as follows: I have refused a trade agree-
 ment with him and he is not a member of "TDA").

Back issues are available for 10¢ each. In stock: 40, 41, 45, 50-91.
 All rates quoted are in \$U.S. only (check, money order, or U.S. stamps).

All material submitted for publication is subject to editing at the
 sole discretion of the Editor. This includes reprints.

This is Alcala Publication #633, edited and published by Rod Walker,
 "Alcala", 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas CA 92024.

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 NO DOUBT YOU'RE WONDERING...

Why you haven't seen EREHWON for a long while. There have been
 any number of reasons. I have a rather large reference work I've been
 writing for some years. There is suddenly a possibility of seling it but
 that entails a complete revision (reorganizing it, dividing it into 5 vol-
 umes, rewriting the text, redoing the maps...). I've been working most of
 September and October just on the reorganization. One very small section
 (24 typed pages) has been rewritten. I'm also in the process of writing
 a very long short story. And the Press Game is being held up by the Cana-
 dian postal strike.

Most of you have been patient, for which my thanks. I would guess
 that this issue and the next one or two will appear in rather rapid-fire
 order...assuming I want to devote the time for that sort of thing. I hope
 you will all recall that Diplomacy is not one of the most earth-shaking
 things in my life. But I will try to be more regular.

 A LITTLE CONTEST

Please examine the following list of words (in alphabetical order):
 Amber, Apr, Arc, Bar, Bray, Condom, Crest, Die, Dole, Gap, Gray, Guise,
 Ham, Lens, Lot, Lure, Nay, Nice, Oust, Rue, Sore, Tarn. These words all
 have something in common (aside from all being in the same language). What
 is it? Two of the words are, in a sense, "ringers" (they fit with the
 others, but not exactly). Which are they, and why?

Every correct answer I receive before 15 December 1975 will receive
 the prize: a subscription to Peter Berggren's new EVEREST, the complete
 new ratings 'zine.

Hint: you are not going to find the answer in a dictionary (cackle...).

JOIN THE "ANDERSON POOL". Several of us have got up a pool on how many votes Gordon Anderson will get for IDA Editor. I believe 2, 5, 6, and some other likely numbers are taken (I opted for 5 [or was it 6?] because I felt there were a few fools in the organization. Anyway, bets are \$1 per number, and may be sent to Edi Birsan, 35-35 75th St., #302, Jackson Heights NY 11372. Better yet, call Edi and make sure the number you want is still available. The probable winner, 1, is untaken; would you believe it?

GIL NEIGER DUDS BESH. I guess everyone knows that Gil has dumped on Besh, exposing the ways he has tried to screw New York fans, steal games from THE POUCH, and so on.

PETER BERGGREN DUDS BESH. The large, and growing, chorus is critics of Besh's tactics now includes the Editor of TURNABOUT. Peter's complaint, as it is with most of us, is that "TDA" is merely a Besh ego-boo. I trust everybody has read what he has had to say by now. Considering that this has come from a fan who has not only bent over backwards to be fair to everyone but who has also tried very hard to be more than fair to Besh, it is a very important--and revealing--statement.

ANOTHER PHONEY "TDA" "SERVICE". "TDA" is now offering, under the aegis of outspoken Beshpuppet Richard Kovalcik, to "help" publishers who are quitting the hobby and to "recompense" players who are left out in the cold by defaulting publishers. I have one contact in the "TDA" apparatus, and when I asked him about this, his reply was:

"John is bankrolling this. It therefore obviously has built-in limitations. Publishers and players who have been critical of TDA [sic] will be ignored. A publisher who asks Richard [Kovalcik] to help him will have to agree to turn over his games to John's control, effectively. People who are actively friendly to John will get help more readily than those who are merely neutral."

NEW GAMES. I am still running THE DIPLOMAT. Two new games have opened, but at this writing, they appear to have filled. One is a regular game and the other is my new variant, "2001". The maps/rules for the latter will be produced within a week or so, and will run \$1. I will need stand-by players. Subscriptions are 10/\$1 (sent in batches of 2 or more) or 5/\$1 (sent individually). A stand-by who becomes a replacement player will then pay the usual fee of 20¢ per season if he is in one of the games and 25¢ per season if he is in both. If he has bought a set of the "2001" maps/rules, the \$1 purchase price will be remitted and applied toward his game fees. ("2001" is a game for 9 [or 10] players beginning in that year. The great powers are: USA, USSR, China, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Australia, Brazil, & Western Europe. Special optional rules may allow for nuclear weapons, weather control, biological warfare, and/or a player for the United Nations Command. The board is a sphere; specifically, a polar projection of the globe on 1? 8½"x11" sheets.

Anyone who is interested in subscribing and/or standing by should contact me. Prices and fees are, of course, in U.S. currency or stamps only.

Playtests of "2001" indicate it should be a fast-paced and interesting game, especially if the players elect to use the "Balance of Terror" rules for nuclear weapons.

"PRESS GAME" DELAYED. This is due partly to the Canadian postal strike. I also need to replace the Italian player, who has resigned. If anyone wants to stand by for this game, please contact me. You must like to write press, since that is a requirement of the game.

OUTBACK ROMANCE
Jan Arnold

[Ed. note: Ms. Arnold is not a Diplomacy player, but judging from how she writes, she ought to be. Although this tender and revealing letter to a friend was not intended for publication, I have prevailed upon Jan to let me share it with you. I am sure it will move you to tears....]

Dear Paul:

I believe that you will agree that I have been more than patient with you where your insensitivity toward my problems and your vilification of my character are concerned. Indeed, my forbearance has been exemplary. However, when you fall prey to your own cynicism to the extent that you, albeit unknowingly, offer insult to my family, then I must protest. You have been so close to me, such a dear and well-loved friend, that I cannot without offering you a chance to apologize, simply turn my back upon you forever, and to demand an apology without due explanation is hardly fair. I am nothing if not fair. Here then is the story, which up to this time none but family members have known, and which I trust that you will keep in the strictest confidence as a matter of both my honor and of yours.

This morning, for the second or third time, you twitted me about my inability to swallow pills without tilting my head backwards. How cruel, how very cruel! But you could not have known. It all started four or five generations ago with my great-great-grandfather. (On which side of my family hardly matters; the problem is mine now--and my children's.) Grandpa Oswald was an Australian, a magnificent, tall, imposing native-born creature. In fact, Grandpa Oswald was an ostrich.

How beautiful he was, strutting about out in the outback, galloping over the plains, leaning over to admire himself in occasional water holes! His one true failing is akin to that of many handsome male creatures. He found that, although he had great success in wooing the lovely ladies of his lofty tribe, they were too much competition for his taste when it came to parading before the others. He was used to remarks from the honorable matrons, noticing how handsome was his profile, how plamorous his legs, how classic his beak! When forced to share this attention he went into a veritable pet! So it was that, failing to find a nubile female in all ostrichdom that was homely enough to suite his pervasive vanity, he turned his search in other, less acceptable, directions.

One day when Oswald was strutting his lonely but lovely path from his own favorite sand-pile-bed to his own favorite looking-glass-water-hold, he chanced upon what he would soon determine to be the homeliest female ostrich of them all. She was only half as tall as any other ostrichness he had ever seen. Her beak was blunt, her eyes small and dull, her feathers almost muddy in color. Oswald was delighted.

"Hey, there," he said, cleverly.

"Hey, there, yourself," she answered, being no fool.

"You're about the homeliest damn broad I've ever seen," he chortled. Oswald always was a great diplomat. At that juncture, Emma, for that was her name, rapped Oswald smartly upon the ankle of his shapely right drumstick three times, causing a slight compound fracture, and initiated a dignified retreat, rump twitching, into the nearest mautindoe bush.

"Yee-ouch!!" replied Oswald. "Don't go, treacle face. I like 'em ugly. Besides, you and I could make beautiful music together." Emma was somewhat mollified, not to mention curious, for she had seen this pulchritudinous partridge from afar and oft admired him. Also she was having a little trouble affecting a viable relationship with someone of the opposite sex herself, though not for the reasons you may be thinking. You see, Emma was a great beauty, too, so luscious in fact that others of her kind

were inclined either to exploit her as a mere pretty face and a plaything or else to back shyly into corners and gape. Yes, Emma, far from being an ugly ostrich, was in reality an eminently eye-filling, elegant, exquisite emu.

The relationship proceeded apace. Oswald was not even taken slightly aback when he discovered the true nature of his inamorata, for by then--he being rather slow to become cognizant of such matters--his heart was well and truly given to her, not just his sense of expediency. In short order he proposed, she accepted, and they each went to their families to announce the joyous tidings.

"Miscegenation!" shrieked Mr. Ostrich.

"Bestiality!" yowled Mr. Emru.

"We'll be utterly and totally disgraced!" sobbed Mrs. Ostrich and Mrs. Emru from their respective nests.

In short order the heart-rending situation was made cruelly, devastatingly clear. The overs were star-crossed. Should they ever dare to meet again, their families would kick, rend, tear, spindle, and mutilate them, veer, verily, even unto death.

The poor dears did manage to meet surreptitiously from time to time, however. One evening, when they were standing together with their heads buried beak-to-beak in a passing sand dune, the event that was to give them their very own chance at wedded bliss occurred.

Just that very day, the tribe of the Shubambubongu ("we of the Malodorous Earlobes" in English) had run out--quite prematurely and without warning--of lox and bagles. Naturally the Witch Doctor was blamed for the catastrophe, and when it was found that he was too drunk to wave his magic boomerang and whomp up some more, the chief summoned him to the palatial White Hut. "Kupruphicpow," (meaning "Face-Made-Hideous-by-Innumerable-Acne-Pits") "son of Minsisapre," (meaning "Pimple-Puss"), roared the Chief, "you have failed your people. For shame. You are hereby banished and I, effective upon your departure, appoint as Witch Doctor in your place my good-for-nothing son-in-law, Mindirguru" (meaning "Good-for-nothing-Son-in-Law").

At that the tribe all pattered around to wish Kupruphicpow the traditional good-bye, which consisted of each member sticking a pin into his back in the area of his kidneys and beating him soundly about the head and shoulders with palm fronds while chanting to the rhythm of "When the Saints Come Marching In". As Kupruphicpow ran shrieking from his ex-village, the happy adieus of the little kiddies of the group wafted after him. "Good-bye, good-bye, good luck," they called.

As the pitiabile ex-shaman sobbed his way down the path, he turned his thoughts toward plans for vengeance. "They'd be sorry if I dropped an atom bomb on 'em, I betcha," he connived. When he had sobered up a bit more and remembered that the atom bomb hadn't been invented yet, it being only 1862, and that he didn't have an airplane to drop it from anyway, his thoughts turned to more practical planning. "I'll cast a spell on the whole tribe so that every kid born from now on will have six toes on each foot, or even less," but the indecency of the thought made him blush, and he stumbled onward.

Suddenly he came upon a sight you just don't see every day. That is, you don't see it every day, because you live in Fullerton, California, and the occasion just doesn't often arise. For Kupruphicpow, however, such things, while certainly not common-place, were not as devastatingly traumatic. Still, his curiosity was aroused; for there, rumps in the wind, heads buried in the sand, stood a male ostrich and a female emu, bodies obviously torn by sobs. Ku could scarcely help but wonder, for it was

well known to all and sundry that emus and ostriches simply do not run in the same social circles. Quickly he muttered a twenty-nine syllable magic word and gully rapped himself on the scone with his magic boomerang. Instantly he was turned into a mole, whereupon he tunneled into the sand dune and was soon beak to jowl with the trysting lovers.

"Sprechen Sie Aborigine?" queried the shaman-mole.

Oswald was utterly incensed. "Damn right! Now beat it, you voyeuristic prevert," quoth he.

"You'd best watch your tongue around me, you feather-duster on stilts. I am the great shaman Kupruphicpow, late of the Shubambubongu, and I am in no mood for any of your sass."

"Sounds pretty phoney to me. I've never known a mole yet who didn't like like a limp rag and have delusions of grandeur," said Emma, who was something of a zoologist--as an avocation, of course.

"I am too a shaman," said the shaman. "Have you ever known a mole who had acne pits?"

The logic of that was irrefutable, so the two unhappy lovers apologized to the mole and fell into conversation with him. Soon enough did their tale of sorrow get told, and soon to did Kupru confide in them his late disaster.

"I wish I could help you," said Kup.

"We wish we could help you," said the birds.

"We all wish we could help each other," they all said, and began to cry and sob over their own and each other's misfortune until the noise was something awful. It was old Kupruphicpow who finally came up with the solution. "Hev!" he said, "I've got it!:" And after listening to his plan, the others agreed that he certainly had.

And so it was that Oswald and Emma were turned into visiting American tourists by the wily old shaman. The two of them followed him to the village in their new human form and mingled very, ve-r-r-y closely with the unsuspecting natives whilst their partner in crime watched gleefully from under a rock. He was a lizard at the time. When he felt the mingling had surely done its job, he leapt from under his vantage point crying, "Aha! Now I've got you. Try and get out of that one!" And with that he transported both himself and the two freshly-minted humans to Fetid Tooth, Indiana, where he was soon in business as the area's first owner-manager of a do-it-yourself psychiatry parlor and turkish bath.

As for the tribe, they all laughed off his cryptic threat. After all, who listens to lizards? I mean, seriously? But they were all dead of measles three weeks later anyhow, and it certainly taught them a good lesson.

Grandpa Oswald and Grandma Em lived in marital ennui from that day forth. They had 18 children in all, only one of whom lived. Old Em had an unfortunate habit of sitting on them.

So, now, you see, my dear Harbitz, why one should not laugh at the misfortunes of others. My inability to swallow properly is inherited from my Ostrich ancestors. They left a few other interesting anomalies in the gene pool, most of which have since been bred out of my line of the family, but --well, do you remember how the Germans used to march without bending their knees?

I am waiting for your apology.

Love,

Jan.

SPECIAL NOTICE: A couple of people, Len Lakofka among them, have expressed doubts that "Slime Squire", which appeared last issue, was really written by John Beshara. I will agree that it is certainly the best thing of his which has ever appeared in print, and was actually interesting for a change, but you have my word that he did write it. As I said before, the original text and cover letter are on deposit with Walt Buchanan. I assume Walt will verify its genuineness to anyone who is interested.

THE DUD RATING SYSTEM

As you may know, I'm one of the Dudders for the Dud Rating System, run by the estimable Jeremy Paulson of IMLADRS. The results of the first nominations and votes are in. The maximum a nominee could receive was 100 points. Our hobby's duds include:

Double-Dud	62.5	Nick Ulanov	44.2	Peggy Gemignani
100.0 John Beshara	56.7	Rod Walker	35.5	John Weewig
True Duds	55.8	Gil Neiger	33.0	Dave Kadlecik
78.2 Richard Kovaleik	55.0	Gary Peterson	31.0	Ray Heuer
76.0 John Mirassou	54.3	Gene Prosnitz	Quarter-Dud	
73.0 Evan Jones	54.2	Lew Pulsipher	27.5	Matt Diller
68.3 Robert Sacks	49.0	Russell Fox		
Moderate Duds		Semi-Duds		
62.5 Edi Birsan	44.3	Scott Rosenberg		

AC/DC

Here there be plugges

ATLANTIS, Chris Schleicher, P.O. Box 907F, Wheeling IL 60090. This is a rather neat, dry, sterile sort of 'zine, and is in addition a "TDA" puppetpub. It is well-printed, but dull. Subscription info was not in the latest issue, but hardly worth the bother, anyway.

BOOK OF STAB, Randolph Bart, 9950 Reseda Blvd., #13, Northridge CA 91324. Subs 10/\$2. Offering an Anarchy game with a \$10 prize to the winner; fee is \$1 plus sub for the duration. A light, breezy, clever 'zine with one good PR series (Owl with the White Sideburns). Generally cute and interesting.

BUSHWACKER, Fred Davis, Jr., 3012 Oak Green Ct., Ellicott City MD 21043. Subs are 12/\$2.50. A variant 'zine with many interesting side features, comments, &c. Usually interesting; always very neatly printed.

CARN DUM, Raymond Heuer, 102-42 Jamaica Ave., Richmond Hill NY 11418. Subs are 8/\$2. A variant 'zine with lots of games and a considerable amount of press, news items, comment, and interesting stuff. The sub rate is a little high, but the return is pretty good. Recommended.

CENTURION, Russell Fox, 5160 Donna Ave., Tarzana CA 91356. Subs are 8/\$2...but that includes a regular game as well. Extra games or a Youngstown Variant are \$1 extra (YV also has a 50¢ deposit). There is a lot to this 'zine in terms of articles, comment, and the like. It also has a buncha games...! Very enjoyable.

CLAW & FANG, Don Horton, 16 Jordan Ct., Sacramento CA 95826. Subs are 12/\$3 (11/\$3 after 31 Dec 75). Formerly biweekly, now monthly. Lotsa games but more than that, good articles, a cooking column, and God knows what-all. A good return for the money. Recommended. Highly, even. I have never been disappointed in a single issue.

DIMAN, Brad Hessel, 15 Oak Ave., Tarrytown NY 10591. Subs are 15¢ an issue (until #11...end December?), then 20¢ an issue. This plump 'zine always has interesting material, especially press. Also has letters, reviews, and other material. Highly recommended!

DIPLOMACY WORLD, Walt Buchanan, R.R. #3, Box 324, Lebanon IN 46052. Subs are \$4/year (4 issues), with a \$1 discount to IDA members who specifically request it. Highest possible recommendation. If you don't know what this 'zine is, you're missing the cream of the hobby.

EN PASSANT, Greg Warden, 804 S. 48th St., Philadelphia PA 19143. Subs are 8/\$2. Not really a good price. There is occasional material here, and this is the home of the Orphan Game Project, but....

EVERYTHING, John Weswig, 2115 NW Elder St., Corvallis OR 97330. Subs are 10/\$4. This is a listing of completed games, mostly, invaluable for people who like statistics.

EVEREST, Peter Berggren, Davistown Schoolhouse Rd, Oxford NJ 03777. Subs are...well, I'm not sure. 4 or 5 for \$1, I would guess. Anyway, this 'zine is the 'zine on ratings, a centralized center for publishing hopefully all of this continent's rating systems, plus the composite TOPS system, designed by Peter and myself, and computed by Peter. Beautifully printed and a wealth of information. Highly recommended.

IMLADRIS (The Son of POUCH), Jeremy Paulson, 63-60 98th St., #C-19, Rego Park NY 11374. Subs are...hmm...well, send a buck and see what happens. Pays 4 issues for each article used. Still small but interesting, and pretty well printed. Home of the Dud Rating System. Interesting articles and whatnot. Recommended.

IMPASSABLE, John Boyer, 117 Garland Br., Carlisle PA 17013. Subs are 12/\$2, an absolute bargain. Always has a news column, lists of game openings, and commentary, and frequently articles and letters. Well-printed, very well managed, highly recommended.

INFAMOUS, Steve Solomon, 17240 Lake View Dr., Morgan Hill CA 95037. Subs are 8/\$1.50, a bargain. I haven't seen it since September, but he hasn't seen EREHWON since August, so maybe... Anyway, articles, variants, and other material appear here. Recommended.

JANUS, John Gross, 32 Gordon Rd., Willowdale, Ontario, CANADA M2P 1E1. Subs are ... no info. I think John wants to trade with me. Held up now by the strike, of course. The 'zine is new, but looks good, with articles, cartoons, and the like.

LIAISONS DANGEREUSES, Len Lakofka, 644 W. Briar Pl., Chicago IL 60657. Subs are \$2 for \$10. Lots of material here on ratings, D&D, and so on. One of the most delightfully outrageous 'zines in the hobby...always stealing something from EREHWON. Recommended, of course.

THE MASTER MACHIAVELLIAN, Michael Homeier, 238 N. Bowling Green Way, Los Angeles CA 90049. Subs are 10/\$2, and worth it. The cover essay by Niccolò himself is always worth reading. Many other features, including good press. The anniversary issue (#13) is not to be missed! Altogether a worthy 'zine. Recommended.

PAROXYSM, Robert Correll (et al.), 44 Rawlinson Ave., Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M4P 2M9. Subs are 8/\$2, a trifle high, but the return is good. Articles and other extras abound. The printing is good, generally, and there is good use of color (um...colour). Recommended.

THE POCKET ARMENIAN, Scott Rosenberg, 182-31 Radnor Rd., Jamaica NY 11432. Subs are 8/\$2. High in a way, but the return is high. Always well printed, this 'zine is a wealth of reading entertainment, with PR series, articles, satire, and whatnot. Also occasionally (when I remember to get the material to him) the demonstration game, 1974CL; analysis by Wade Hampton Johnson. The last was really clever! Very much recommended!

POICTESME [say "ptocey"], Bruce Schlickbernd, 6194 E. 6th St., Long Beach CA 90803. Subs are 10/\$2. Good 'zine... letters, articles, press, good printing. Recommended. I have seen nothing since #20, where I was asked for s/b orders, which I forgot. That might have something to do with it.

PREDAWN LEFTIST, Ben Grossman, 29 E. 9th St., #9, New York NY 10003. Subs are 8/\$2. I've not seen enough of PDL to make a judgement (Ben wants to trade, and I will now, but kept putting it off through procrastination). The look is good, but the sub fee does seem a trifle high.

RURITANIA, Tony Watson, 201 Minnesota St., Las Vegas NV 89107. Subs are 4/\$1, but that includes a regular game. Printing is spotty (sometimes good, sometimes fair). Content is good, but on only one side of the page. Articles, reviews, some poetry. Not bad at all...but you'd never believe this production came from the sin capital of America.

SPECULUM, Dave Kadlecak, Box 802, U. of Sta. Clara, Sta. Clara CA 95053. Subs are 10.\$2. Definitely one to get. The best column of 'zine reviews in the country, commentary, articles, and all the usual goodies. Highly recommended.

TURNABOUT, Peter Berggren (see under EVEREST). Subs are 8/\$2. This half-size 'zine is beautifully printed, with photographs and all sorts of goodies. Games, letters, articles, and lots to interest the reader. It is one of the best 'zines in the hobby and is highly recommended.

URF DUREAL, Greg Costikyan, 1675 York Ave., New York NY 10028. Subs are at cost (postage plus cost of materials). A variant 'zine with extra features. Recommended. Also recommended is Greg's fanzine, GIGO, which is 50¢ an issue or 6/\$1.50. Irregular, alas; highly interesting.

VALINOR, Michael Muchnik, 2520 Hyacinth Ct., Westbury NY 11590. Subs are 10/\$1.50...inexpensive! The first 2 issues give promise of a 'zine concentrating on press, letters, and other goodies. Tentatively, recommended. Mike must want to trade; he keeps sending me issues. OK....

I believe I have plugged John Leeter's RUNESTONE and Dick Vedder's QUO VADIS elsewhere. They are both fine 'zines. I'm in a game in each of them, so they're filed differently, and that's why I don't know where my back issues are at the moment. Sigh....

THE GOOD FAIRY AT DINKICON II

DinkIcon is apparently going to be an annual affair in California, around Labor Day, in Los Angeles. I naturally went to the second one, having been to the first. Here is how it happened.

"Surprise," I said to Jim, "we're going to DinkIcon."

"Is that more Diplomacy shit?" he growled. My other half is remarkably perceptive at times.

"Yes. Won't it be fun?"

"You gotta be out of your tree. You couldn't take me there on a stretcher. I'd sooner go to a cat show." He is also kind and sweet-tempered. "Tell you what: I'll let you go by yourself," he added, giving me

an affectionate poke with an electric cattle prod which we normally carry at night if we go out, in case of coyote attacks. I was appropriately thankful and remembered not to burn his toast for at least the next four mornings.

The day of DinkiCon II dawned. I was already up, would you believe? When the alarm went off, I thought about ignoring it. Then this very cold foot (he always has them outside the covers) hit the middle of my back and I decided I'd get up.

Once up, I surveyed the situation. Only 9 dogs, and only 8 of them were snarling and showing teeth. I checked outside. Four coyotes, three bobcats, two rattlesnakes, and a condor in our California pepper. I turned the dogs loose and hoped the noise wouldn't wake the neighbors. In about five minutes I took them some water, put them in their runs, and cleaned up the few remaining bones and patches of fur. It's a good thing, I thought, that we keep the poodles hungry.

The Con was supposed to start at 10, so I left for L.A. at 6...thus leaving enough time for breaking through the smog barrier and getting through the light Saturday-morning traffic (light traffic in L.A. is traffic that doesn't stop completely, but only slows down to a 10 mph crawl).

The trip was uneventful, if you don't count the hitchhiker who wanted to hijack me to Havana. He lost interest when I tickled him on the kneecap, smiled very broadly, and told him, "I'd love to, sweetie." I was only going 50 when he got out of the car.

I hit the smog barrier at about 7:30, and the vibrations were pretty bad. Several cars nearby broke up before they got through: six Chevrolets and a Chrysler. After that, traffic slowed down to 15 mph: a very light day. In one car nearby, I could hear the woman driver screaming that she thought her tires were on fire. "L.A. always smells like that," I yelled encouragingly back to her. Nonetheless, she unwisely stopped to check on the situation and got out of her car. The last I saw of her she was being assaulted by several off-duty motorcycle cops. She'll enjoy it, I thought (I'd seen a couple of them in a film at the Paris Theatre in Hollywood).

The DinkiCon was in Holmby Park, in the ritzy Westwood district of LA. I'd been there before, but on a lark decided to ask directions anyway. The Angelinos were as helpful as always. At three different locations, I received directions for going to, respectively, Tujunga, Griffith Observatory, and Laguna Beach. How nice....

I recognized the site of the DinkiCon instantly: there was quite a bit of blood and a couple of bodies already. Must be a pretty busy intersection, I thought, as I parked and went to search for the Diplomacy games. Almost immediately I ran into Don Horton. He went for my neck. I pulled out some garlic and a crucifix. "Awww, I was just funnin'," he said, closing his eyes and holding his nose.

The usual crowd was there. Bruce Schlickbernd and Dave Lagerson were noisily threatening to stab each other...but somehow they always managed to miss and bury their knives to the hilts in other backs. Funny.... Randolph Bart and the rest of the BoS crowd were there, more or less out of focus, as usual. Dave Davies hadn't shaved since the last DinkiCon.

I was crossing over to meet someone when I tripped over several strings trailing along the ground toward the east. "Eric's here!" I exclaimed. The other end of the strings, Eric Verheiden, appeared a few moments later. He said a couple of words, then one of the strings jerked and he wandered away toward the head. "Just got permission," he said, with a tone of urgency.

Shortly after that a small child toddled up to me...obviously lost and looking for his mother. "Hi," he said, "I'm Russell Fox." (They're looking younger every year, I thought.) "Will you tie my shoe?" (They're actually younger every year, I thought.)

Before lunch was Round I. The afternoon "Master's Game" would include the recognized "good" players plus the best players from the various Round I games. I watched the bloodshed and mayhem at a safe distance, although one knife did graze my ear....

Lunch last year had been hot dogs and potato salad. Lunch this year was...surprise...hot dogs and potato salad. There was, of course, no mustard, but Pete Shamray took off for some. The fire was too hot, so we heated Russell Fox's bottle by chafing it. When Pete got back with the mustard, I still had some salad left, so I put it on that. Eric was going to have hot dogs, but one of his strings jerked and he decided he'd go somewhere else.

After lunch we started the Master's Game. We had an all-star cast, including Lagerson, Schlickbernd, Horton, Verheiden, Schlindwein, Killian, and ...Calderon? Alex Calderon always managed to get his orders in on time...which would have been all right except that everyone else had his in early. Lagerson and Schlickbernd got the same countries they got last year and promptly decided to bury the hatchet in everyone else, while pretending to bury it in each other. After they had won the game, everyone claimed not to be taken in by this ruse, but....

As the Spring 1901 deadline approached, Eric Verheiden started to give me his orders. Then one of his strings jerked, so he took them back and rewrote them. Just as he handed them to me, another string jerked, so he took them back and rewrote them again. He was giving them to me again when a third string jerked. "Tell Stromboli the time limit is up," I said, and read everybody's orders. Luckily for Eric, he was eliminated in 1902; those strings never stopped jerking the whole time.

You can read the report on the Master's Game in THE MASTER MACHIAVELLIAN #13. I shan't bore you with it here. Lagerson and Schlickbernd won last year with France and Germany. Lagerson and Schlickbernd won this year with France and Germany. Sheeeesh....

The Master's Game finished, it was time to break things up. It was getting dark and the park was already starting to fill up with vice cops.

The freeway was jammed. There had been an accident. A jet airliner had broken up trying to get through the smog barrier, and there were pieces of the First Class Lounge all over 405 South. I finally made it to a Denny's. I heard later that a couple of off-duty vice cops were molesting every guy who walked in the head there, but alas, I stayed out front, ate, and left. Good old L.A.; it never changes.

The trip home was uneventful, if you don't count getting lost in the fog north of Oceanside, nearly running off one of the "scenic view" cliffs, and driving around in a circle for half an hour on the flight line at Camp Pendleton. But finally I got home. Our driveway was underpopulated due to the unseasonal cold and damp, so I ran over only two rattlesnakes, one scorpion, a coyote, and a foot-long tarantula. I accidentally brained another coyote when I threw open my car door.

Jim was still up. "We had another burglary today," he said. I asked for details. "Just like the last one. Poor guy got in while the dogs were still loose. The police say a dentist may be able to make identification from the jawbone." Thank God, I thought, we only have poodles. I'd hate it if they were something really bad, like German shepherds. "Oh," Jim added, "we have some business coming in tomorrow. Fifteen German shepherds. They'll be boarding for a month." Outside, three skunks, annoyed by a hungry coyote, let loose simultaneously. Bobcats yowled from the roof. Several snakes slithered into the cesspool and plugged the outlet. The dogs began a howling contest with the coyotes. Both phones were ringing, and something large, shaggy, and vaguely manlike was pounding on the front door. It was so good to be home....

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