wish you were here....

the go·between

THE INFORMATION PAGE

THE GOBETWEEN

Is a postal games magazine published approximately every six weeks. It's primary function is to cater for people who play games by mail. The Go Between seeks to fulfill this function by:

1. Running postal versions of boardgames like DIPLOMACY, KINGMAKER, STARFLEET BATTLES and other board games or encouraging such games to be played by mail.

2. Presenting articles, reviews, information on commercial play by mail games such as those offered by the Missing Tiger and other moderating services.

3. Providing information on the Play by Mail field in general.

4. To help bring information, people and products related to the PBM field together.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

A year's subscription costs $20 for approximately 8 issues. To subscribe make out a cheque or money order to Go Between Publications for $20

HOW TO PLAY POSTAL DIPLOMACY ETC?

To enrol into one of our postal games just write to us at Go Between Publications telling us that you would like to play in a game and we will place you in the next game of your choice that is starting.

If you are interested in other games such as Postal Go, chess or other boardgames not normally played within the ambit of this magazine turn to our NOTICE BOARD for details or write to us and ask us for information.

I WOULD LIKE INFORMATION ON....??

If you would like to know more about a particular game,activity or where to get things like articles,rules etc then send your request to us with a stamped self addressed envelope and another stamp (to help defray our costs) and we will try and provide you with that information or tell you where and how to get it.

We will try and give you a reply as soon as possible but this service is subject to the resource constraints of our other activities.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADVERTISE

If you are starting up a new service, promoting a tested and proved product, maybe got a few hundred Dragons to offload etc then consider advertising in the Go Between. Currently our subscribers number over 150 from all over Australia and New Zealand. We have a number of special deals and can carry even the smallest ad. Just write to us for details.

Hönöur Röll:

Our thanks to the following people for submitting articles, art and letters.

IAN PLUMB
LUKE CLUTTERBUCK
GEORGE SMIRNOW
GREG LONG
PETER CLARK
MICHAEL PETERS
ALAN HOWARD
ADVENTURE SIMULATIONS
MURRAY GRELIS
STEVE GUNNELL
ROBBIE GATES
LINDON FLOOD
ERIC ROCHE
MARK LYCETTE
J. LYCETTE

The HONOUR ROLL is our small way of saying thanks to all those people who made some direct contribution to this issue.
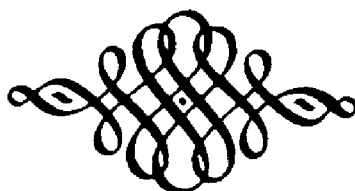
Rick's Turn In The Chair:

The silhouette above (borrowed from some ad in an accountancy magazine) does remind me of life around myself at times. I am a person of a 1001 activities of which I am lucky to see 2% through to their ultimate conclusion.

This issue is mostly the work of those people who appear on the honour roll and others who have passed comment, both praise and criticism, about the last issue and the Go Between in general. Without those people on the Honour Roll I would never have got this issue together as quickly as I did and it would certainly have been a much poorer one.

Esther has been tied up with Lance and keeping our home on an even keel. Certainly he has changed our lives, and certainly for the better. A certain wholeness has now descended upon our lives and activities.

As usual I will fail to include all that I wish to in this edition of the magazine but we are slowly getting there. Murray Grelis and the Lycette brothers are welcome additions to the art side of the magazine. Mark Dewis will give a little sigh of relief that he can take a little more time to develop his ideas and work free of my incessant demands for output

Ideally I would like to see us put out a "Double Issue" size magazine every time. The extra space gives room and scope for the development of ideas and the demonstration of various people's talents. If contributions keep coming in at the rate they have been the material base for such bumper issues is there. But until we can attract a few more advertisers we will have to continue at a slightly more sedate pace.

Since the Double Issue Kevin Flynn and I have exchanged several frank letters about combining the TGB and Wizard's Grimoire. The end result has been the two magazines continuing their seperate ways.

Thankyou to all the people who responded to pleas for standby players for Diplomacy games. As of late I have neglected badly the running and support of the postal games in the magazine. Rightly or wrongly I wanted to get the article/art etc part of the Go Between strongly established before moving onto game support and then onto seeking the ever elusive advertising dollar. Those have been my order of priorities. My goal over the next two issues is to give as much support and time as I can to the actual games themselves. More contact with the GMS, recruiting standby players, helping to get the Stab ratings up to date and so forth. During that time Esther should slowly be easing herself back in overall control and concentrating on the articles etc.

LETTERS

G'day Rick, Esther, and Lance.

The double issue has arrived, and I am most impressed. Enclosed you will find my reply to the comments made by John Van De Graaf, concerning Feudal Lords. I hope you find it suitable for publishing; I also hope he replies again.

Before looking at the recent issue, I would like to ask a favour, as author to editor. Could you please read my original Feudal Lords article, then read John's reply, then read my reply to his reply. What I would like to know concerns my writing -- do I write in an obscure fashion? I try to be direct and get to the point, saying what I want to say, then moving on. However, on both occasions now when game deigners have responded, they have not seemed to have read the same article that I wrote, if you know what I mean. They seem to miss the points I have made, and read things in that I have not written. Is this my fault? How can I fix this without assuming that the readers are idiots and need every detail explained to them?

Concerning the Feudal Lords sequence. The first article said "this is not a review, just some observations/suggestions put forward for public comment". Yet, the reply is an attempted putdown of the author, I think, and is very impersonal in its approach -- "Apparently Mr Plumb" kind of thing. Do you think my original article was an attack on Feudal Lords AND its designer? Why did it prompt the reply that it did? I never realised that being an author could attract such aggrovation! It's great fun though.

About the double issue. Excellent. From cover to cover, worthwhile reading. Good articles. Good letters (Thanks for the support re Chameleon Games letter!). Good layout. We$l done, a praiseworthy effort, considering Lances' continual attempts to put a spanner in the works!

I like the concept of the honor roll. Makes article writing worthwhile, though I doubt any of us do it just to get on the honor roll.

Concerning the price rise. Unbelievable -- you actually receive complaints. I gladly pay $20 a year for TGB. Three dollars an issue -- that is a meaningless amount. Each PBM turn costs more than that, and you get less entertainment out of the average turn. With the average PBM game costing $5 a turn, the best PBM magazine should cost the same! But no, it doesn't. It's a measily $3 an issue, and still they complain. Well done guys,

make the editors feel bad just because they don't want to loose money on each issue. Where's the thought behind the complaints?

The Diplomacy articles where good -- suitably low level for us non-players. The diplomacy letter was good, very apt for the age of wordprocessors.

Pleased to see my UII article in print -- I look forward to the response from Chameleon Games, saying how the game is still very popular. True, but how many players of UII enter their third year of the game?

The question of value for money is an interesting one, and I enjoyed your reply (forthright indeed!). I'm glad that at least one moderator worries about the value he provides his loyal players.

Lindon's article on time in PBM was good. Time and scale are tha two major areas in PBM design -- tough problems to solve, or so I have found. Scale affects time, and time affects scale.

Comics have never interested me, but I can appreciate the effort that went into all the comic articles that have appeared so far, and so I hope they continue to appear. Well done Brooke.

Your article entitled "The More the Merrier" was excellent, the best by far in this issue. I look forward to discussing the problems I will undoubtedly have with the running of Shadow of the Hawk in the coming months.

The RFS stuff is still more interesting than the diplomacy stuff, even though I play neither. Research Planets are brilliant and seem to inspire the players to imaginative heights.

Well, that's about it from me. Congratulations on another fine issue, and I hope that the future issues are just as entertaining.

Cheers,   Ian Plumb,
           915 Toorak Road,
           Camberwell, 3124,
           Victoria.

Rick's response

Although Ian's comments are welcomed I believe that we still have a long way to go in keeping up the standard. What I would like to see is the Go Between acting as an impetus to various areas of the Play By Mail field. I believe that various people or groups suchas the ENVOY, Kevin Flynn, Chameleons, Luke Clutterbuck, Andrew England et al are much more capable than myself or the Go Between in performing certain tasks. What I hope the Go Between can be is just that a "GO BETWEEN" between people that will keep people up to date with happenings and serve as a good forum for information and view exchanging.

6Th March 1987

Dear Rick,
        I feel that I must take exception to Richard Kleinbergs letter
in the FEB Go-Between. By what right does he feel he should be the
dispenser of all wisdom? The very premise of trading assumes the trader
has somthing unavailable to the buyer. Something as vital to efective
play as the structure of the playing space should be given to beginning
players straight off not left to the whims of 'older' and 'wiser' heads
to pass on.

        Mr Kleinbergs assertion that a major part of Return From Sirius
diplomacy will be destroyed is blatant nonsense. As the world numbers
and various portions of the map change from game to game there is likely
to be little slowdown in the trading. Also (as Rick pointed out) there
will always be people who will not understand such maps or will somehow
have avoided seeing one. In any case he would get few kudos attemting to
enlighten a player who already has a galactic map.

        A player with even a halfway reasonable map of the general
structure of the playing space has several immediate advantages;
        1.   Almost as soon a you start picking up C-ring planets you will
have information on where to concentrate a search for Research planets.
        2.   As soon as another player is contacted you will be able to
determine their player number. Nice in no credit victory games and vital
in normal games.
        3.   If you are in the planet collection business you can
concentrate your exploration efforts in directions that arent going to
lead you directly to someone elses home space.
        4.   If you are fighting a war knowledge of the possible assault
paths would allow you to defend critical planets or bypass heavily
defended fortresses.

        All this leads to the game being considerably loaded against new
players. Especially as they will not even be aware that these
capabilitys exist. This is neither fair or reasonable and probably
causes a number of first time players to not attempt a second game. I
consider the ethics of withholding such a map extremely doubtfull.
Especially when it is done on the advice of established players who have
a vested intrest in retaining a competitive edge.

        I also have a mapping scheme under development. When It started to
approach reliability I sent a copy to the Tigers. I have not yet
recieved any comment. When I consider the bugs ironed out I shall submit
it for publication. If Mr Kleinbergs sends his battleships (an offer
which displays the heights of bad gamesmanship) then so be it.

        Changing subjects I would like to add to the debate on scoring
systems. Having studied both Glen's scoring system and John's
modification I feel that neither is really suitable for no credit
victory games. Also at present the equations do not adequately reflect
victory conditions. If they are used the game should be modified so that
the present victory conditions only stop the game. The real winner is
then determined using the victory points equations. It would be nice if

Glen's equation could be applied to some of the games finishing now just to see what the results look like.

I have in mind a scoring system which still needs some development. The equation is divided into 3 parts:

1.
$$VPi = \frac{\text{Players Credits}}{\text{Winners Credits}} \times 100$$

2.
$$VPw = \frac{\text{Worlds Owned}}{\text{Total Worlds Owned}} \times 400$$

3. If Victory was by owning Earth then the winners VPe = 100 all other players get VPe = 0. If any other Kind of victory then

$$VPe = \frac{\text{Players Firepower}}{(\text{No of Earth PDUs} \times 3) + \text{Opponents Firepower}} \times 100$$

Firepower is the total number of shots available from all of a players ships that are within one jump of earth. Opponents Firepower is the sum of the eligible firepower of all other players.

These three values are added together for each player. If the winner does not have the highest points total he recieves bonuses of twice the points difference between his score and that of every player with a higher score.

I hope that I will provoke some discussion, Cheers

Steve Gunnell.

Steve Gunnell

Dear Steve,

I will leave comment on the benefits or otherwise of the hidden universe structure to others. In the meantime, I will try to hide it more effectively.

But the scoring system... Ah. It is in need of improvement and your suggestion seems a good one. I would like to copy (woops, I mean be influenced by) some of the other PBM games and list each players ranking in each of the three parts of the score.

Why are you encouraging the players to win with the lowest possible points score? Is it a general dislike of traders?

I like the firepower bit. It flattens out the effect of trying to take over Earth and would probably complicate that area of the game a little.

Thanks for your letter, and I would like some more discussion on this from other players.

John Campbell

Dear Rick and Esther,

I was disappointed not to see you at Cancon - I understand you ran into
difficulties which prevented your appearance. Frankly I don't think it
was as good as prievious years. Certainly the Diplomacy was less than
spectacular but then again I wasn't in the best of health at the time so
I probably had a depressed point of view. None of the South Australian
mob could make it over because of financial constraints which was a pity
too.

The bumper 'Go-between' was a good read though I am in two minds about your
'merger' article. A whimsical pom eh?! I am Australian born and bred. I
based Rumplestiltskin on other zines that I had seen - true most of these
were British but I've also seen an American zine called 'Cathy's Ramblings'.
Mind you the editor of that was recruited into the hobby during her study
year in Britain so you probably have a point. Is The Envoy really just
Austral View on speed? Insofar as my input is less than it should be, I
lay the blame on the fact that I am GMing too many games. I only have a
limited time to devote to the zine and after I've finished the games,
quiz and accounting there's rarely enough time for much else. The South
Australians are in a similar predicament I believe. In an effort to combat
this problem, we've taken the radical step of transferring the main editorial
base back to Sydney, begining with the next issue. Our new Editor-in-chief
is Marion Ashworth. Marion has some of the 'whimsy' in her too so I'm
looking forward to a renaissance in The Envoy. She is very friendly and
strongly in favour of building up the hobby so you should find your
relationship with The Envoy will improve with her at the helm.

Myself, I'm involved with a couple of things at the moment. Firstly, I've
taken over the organization of the Tin Soldier Diplomacy tournament from
Tom Drake-Brockman who's gone into well-earned retirement after I-don't-
know-how-many years in charge. The Tin Soldier wants to beef up the

competition and as a result it's been renamed the 'National Diplomacy
Championship'. I've enclosed my ad for the event and I was wondering if
you could run it in your next two issues please. The Tin Soldier will
be providing a trophy for the event and we're offering a six month's
subscription to The Envoy for the winner. I wonder if you'd be interested
in offering anything similar for The Go-Between? If you did the fact
would of course be publicised at the Convention. If you'd like to send me
a poster or something similar then I could of course put that up for you
and take names of anybody who's interested. I will be doing this for The
Envoy anyway so it's no problem.

The other thing I'm doing is a kind of 'Guide to Diplomacy' booklet which
is an attempt to summerize all the information about the hobby that you
only pick up after you've been in it for two or more years! I'm thinking
it will provide an easy route for bringing more people into the hobby which
is good for you, me and everyone producing zines and running conventions
etc. I concieved the idea because I keep running into people who play
Diplomacy but have no idea that an organized hobby exists. They are also
unaware of all the other computer-moderated play-by-mail games and I
think it's a shame that all this interest is going to waste due to a
lack of information.

One of the sections in the booklet will be devoted to a sort of 'zine
review' with contact addresses. I wonder if you could run offa shortish
piece about the <u>Go-Between</u> that I could draw on when writing the section.
Things like how it started, how long it's been running, what it offers etc
as well as how much you charge (or intend to charge by June 6th when I
intendto releasethe booklet) and what game openings you have. Like a
press release. Another section will be a hobby who's who so if you
could list a number of 'notables' involved with <u>The Go-Between</u> (editors
and leading subscribers) I'd be very grateful. Please include yourselves.
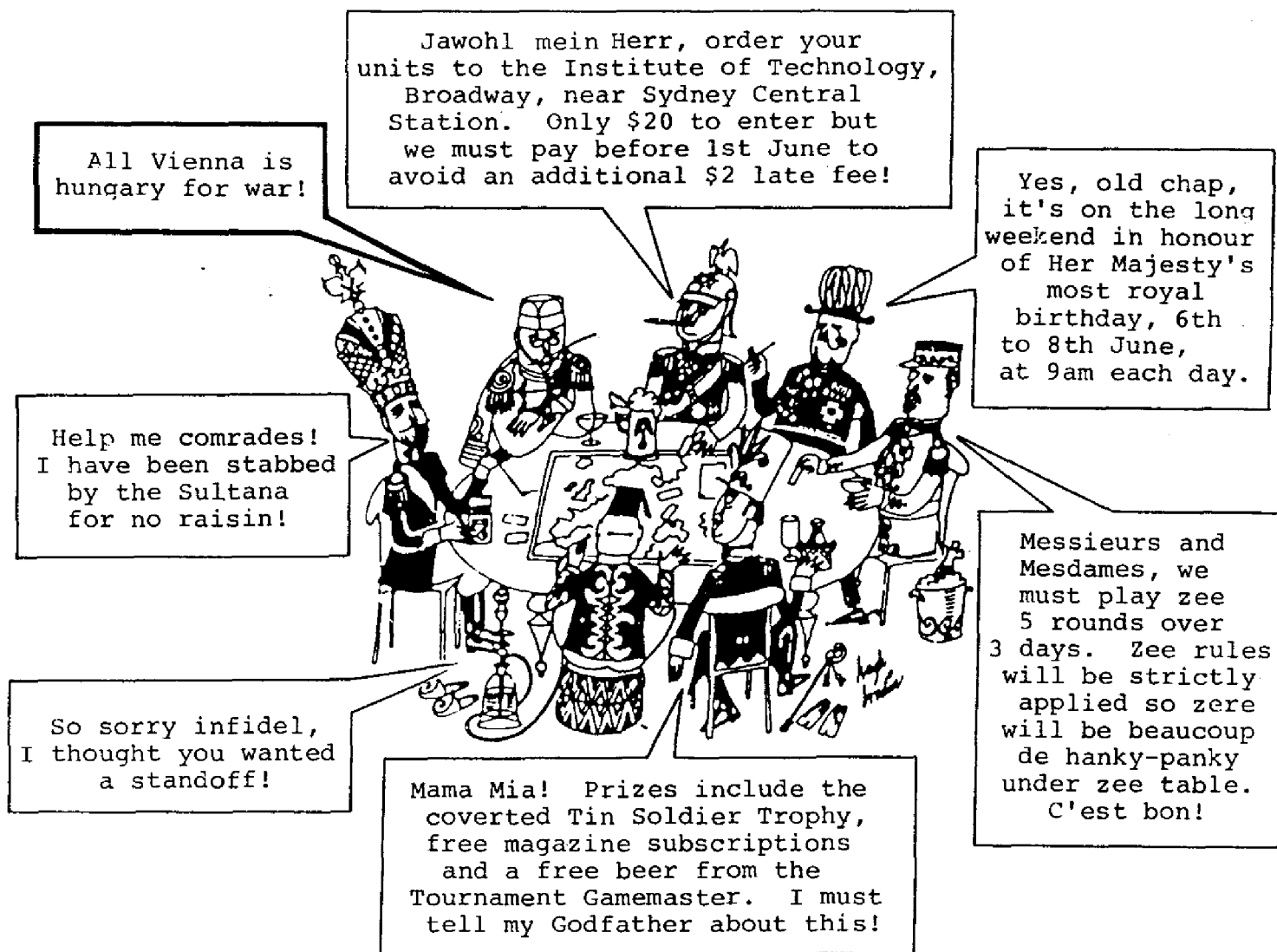   It's not meant to be too serious - just enough so new people
can quickly identify with the hobby and recognize names when they crop
up in magazines. A little piece about each person would be a great help,
something like "<u>Rick Snell</u>: Bearded <u>Go-Between</u> editor, founder of <u>The
Missing Tiger</u> play-by-mail company and leading guru of the 'one-of-these-
days' school, Rick is a leading vertebrae in the backbone of the hobby."
This is long entry by my standards. I mean, I am toying with the idea
of simply wrinting "Don't ask" for Darry Kibble but that's probably a
little mean!

Well I think I've rattled on for long enough now. Ooo, almost forgot.
I'm wondering about the feasability of listing all the known Diplomacy
players in the booklet with addresses to help people organize face-to-face
games. I can forsee two problems. Firstly I'm not sure how all the
editors will feel about releasing such information and secondly, and
more importantly, will people object to having their names printed?
I'd like your advice. What do you think? I'm too poor to get involved
in legal proceedings!

Hope the Tasmanian winter is not too arctic this year for you!

                              Luke Clutterbuck,
                              16/353A Old South Head Rd,
                              Bondi Beach, NSW, 2026.

1987 National Diplomacy Championship

Jawohl mein Herr, order your units to the Institute of Technology, Broadway, near Sydney Central Station. Only $20 to enter but we must pay before 1st June to avoid an additional $2 late fee!

All Vienna is hungary for war!

Yes, old chap, it's on the long weekend in honour of Her Majesty's most royal birthday, 6th to 8th June, at 9am each day.

Help me comrades! I have been stabbed by the Sultana for no raisin!

Messieurs and Mesdames, we must play zee 5 rounds over 3 days. Zee rules will be strictly applied so zere will be beaucoup de hanky-panky under zee table. C'est bon!

So sorry infidel, I thought you wanted a standoff!

Mama Mia! Prizes include the coverted Tin Soldier Trophy, free magazine subscriptions and a free beer from the Tournament Gamemaster. I must tell my Godfather about this!

Entry forms & enquiries to:

Luke Clutterbuck, Tournament Gamemaster, 16/353A Old South Head Road, · Bondi Beach, NSW, 2026. PH: (Home) 02-303972, (Work) 02-211 3400.
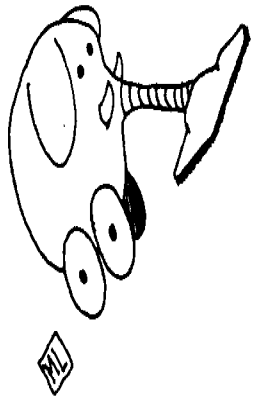
Conducted in conjunction with the Tin Soldier Games Convention sponsored by major games manufacturers, retailers, publications and clubs.

I will compete in the championship. I enclose $20/I will pay $22 at the door.

NAME: _____   PH: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Do you need information about accomodation? Yes/No.

NOTICE BOARD

FACE TO FACE.

FACE TO FACE
Steven Bagshaw
09-342 9552
78 Sherington Rd
Greenwood 6024

Co-ordinator:

WANTED ~ ALIVE
PBM opponent for
A.H.'s "Battle of the
Bulge"
Contact Dougal
4 Ivy St
Burwood 3125

Dougal McCulloch

PBM OPPONENT
FOR 'GO' & 'CHESS'
(Vegie level please)

ANYONE WITH INFO
ON HOW TO PLAY
PBM ADA D.
GAVIN BEGBIE
15' BOAM BEES
PT. MACQUARIE
NSW 2444

Co-ordinator:
Contact
John Cain
78 Banool Rd
Balwyn 3103
03-8362285

WANTED PLAYERS IN SYDNEY
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BATTLETECH
CAR WARS
N.A.T.O. vgames
& PANZER COMMAND vict.game
PAUL BRAUN 528-3778

Rick
LANCE

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Malcolm Owen
3721434 nights
Mon, Wed, Thur

For those interested in exchanging ideas and information
concerning Keys of Bled, Crasimoff's World, Epic or Magic, please
write to Ian Plumb, 915 Toorak Road, Camberwell, 3124, Victoria.

Wanted: Somebody to play the American PBM game Epic for me.
I pay the turn fees, I keep the turns, you get copies of the
turns, you generate the turn responses. The first three suitable
applicants will be accommodated. Experience in other PBM games
essential. Write to Ian Plumb, 915 Toorak Road, Camberwell, 3124.

diplomacy

84-A

SPRING 1911

DIPLOMACY 84-A   SPRING 1911

FRANCE (Brown)
    F BAR S F NOR - ST.P
    F NOR - ST.P
    F SWE - BAL
    F SKA - SWE
    F ENG - NTH
    (F TUN - ION)
    F LYO - TYR
    A DEN S F SKA - SWE
    A KIE S A BUR - MUN
    A RUH S A BUR - MUN
    A BUR - MUN
    A MUN - TYR
    A PIE S A MUN - TYR
    (A TUS - VEN)
    * A MAR S A PIE

GERMANY (Civil Disorder) NMR

    A BER hold

AUSTRIA (Davis) NMR
    F ION   hold
    F APU   hold   DISBAND
    F AEG   hold
    F ADR   hold
    A FIN   hold
    A MOS   hold
    A WAR   hold
    A SIL   hold
    A TYR   hold   DISBAND
    A BOH   hold
    A VEN   hold
    A TRI   hold
    A BUL   hold
    * A VIE   hold
    * A BUD   hold

ITALY (Smirnow)
    F NAP - APU
    F TYR - NAP
    A ROM S F NAP - APU

KEY:
    *   Builds
    ⬯   Failed moves
    NMR No Moves Received

THE GAMESMASTER

PAUL MELLOR

PUBLIC STATEMENT :

ROME: "Italian fleet bids farewell to Naples. Everybody is bidding
         farewell to everything but nobody is going nowhere. After
         four years plus of intense intrigue this game is still tense
         and exciting. It is the best game of all time.
         Congratulations all.   Signed : GARRIBALDI."

STAB RATINGS REVISITED
Peter Clark

Editor's Notes:

This article is in response to two questions raised by Paul Yovich in TGB Vol 4 Issue 6 about the rating system, STAB, currently used in most Australian Postal Diplomacy games to allow players to be ranked against some objective criteria. Paul's first question concerned a hitch about the maximum possible rating that could be achieved. His second question concerned the non-inclusion in the ratings of people who take on Drop Out positions in postal games.

QUESTION 1

On the face of it variable Victory Points "seem" a good idea as, according to the figures given the variation over the fifteen years is only 0.3. No figures have been given for highest survivor, second highest survivor, remaining survivors or draws, each having to be varied with the Victory Points.

However if one considers possible maximum scores for every year the situation becomes a bit more difficult using the following formula:

$$\frac{[\ 4 + (yrs \times 7)\ ]}{yrs + 1}$$

where 4 = initial points at 1901

yrs= No. of years played not including first year

7 = Maximum possible score for centres

Years Rated	Rating	Victory Points
1902	5.5	4.5
1903	6.0	4.0
1904	6.25	3.75
1905	6.4	3.60
1906	6.5	3.50
1907	6.571	3.423
1908	6.625	3.375
1909	6.667	3.333
1910	6.7	3.3
1911	6.727	3.273
1912	6.75	3.25
1913	6.769	3.231
1914	6.786	3.214
1915	6.8	3.2
1916	6.813	3.188
1917	6.824	3.176
1918	6.833	3.167
1919	6.842	3.158
1920	6.85	3.15

Whilst I may be accused of taking my figures to ridiculous lengths I wanted to demonstrate that the variation is 1.35 on Victory Points from 1902 to 1920. May I suggest that the figure of 3.25 was arrived as a fairly workable compromise based on average Victory Points over the average game durations not taking into account those few games that progress into total boredom.

If this answer is insufficient I would suggest that Paul or any others interested inquire further of those responsible for the perpetration of the ratings, Darryl Kibble and Andrew England.

QUESTION 2

Unfortunately rewards are something that Europeans tend to clamour for, whereas I tend more to an oriental philosophy, or at least to one where rewards are not our reason for existence.

Whilst I agree that it could be nice to be given some recognition for improving a position in a takeover game the criteria would be difficult if not impossible to set. The number of variable factors is I feel too large. Although there are basically only four factors it is their interaction that presents the real problem. As I see it the factors are:

1. No. of centres the standby player starts with
2. No. of new centres gained
3. No. of centres any competant player could reasonably be expected to have at that stage of the game.
4. The possibility of that country winning anyway.

Therefore taking over Russia in 1904 with two centres may be an easier task than taking over France in 1906 with 3 centres.

If someone wishes to work out a simple mathematical formula to cover all these factors plus variables like a friend taking over so you help the country you were previously slaughtering and make it so simple that it only takes a few seconds per game to calculate I'll be glad to use it.

Personally I tend to take a more alturistic approach and I am prepared to be a standby player so as to a) have a bash anyway. b) give the game some colour by my razor wit and repartee c) improve, or at least aid the game by putting something into it without expecting gain other than prehaps the friendship of those who appreciate my efforts to give them a worthwhile game even if the position I take over is hopeless.

Rather than rewards it may be better to drop people from the STAB ratings altogether, if, in their GMs opinion their reason to vacate a game position is not valid. I leave this suggestion for replies from GMs.

Editor's response to Question 2.
The encouragement of people to take on standby positions is close to my heart. Given the length of postal games it has to be accepted that most games will experience at least 2-3 dropouts over the course of a game, due to other commitments, travel, lost of interest or what ever. The simplest, but probably not the best, solution I can think of is to give each player a bonus of .010 or .005 onto their STAB ratings for each Dropout position they play. If they stop playing a dropout position they lose that bonus. If they stay in the game until their country is eliminated or until the end of a game they get that bonus permanently added onto their rating. What do others think?
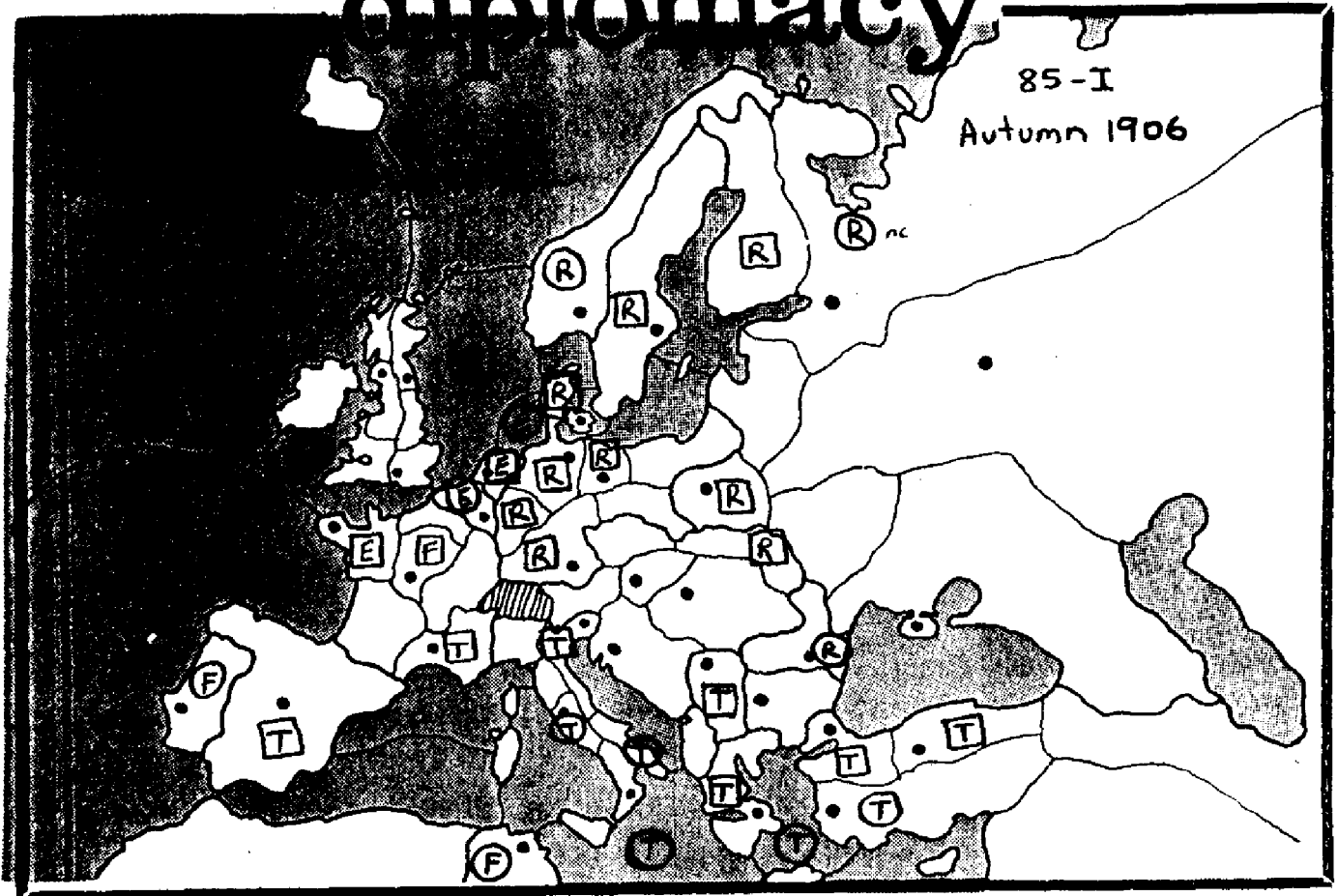
GM Eric Roche, 367 Argyle St, NORTH HOBART, 7000.

England: (Greg Long) F NTH - _DEN_, F HEL _S F NTH - DEN_, A Hol -
Kie, F ENG - Bel, A Bre - _Par_, F NAO - _NWG_.
France: (Cherry) NMR. Has A Par, A Bur, _F Spa(sc)_, F Tus, _A_
Rom, F Tun; F Spa(sc) r to Por, A Rom disbands.
Turkey: (Mellor) A Gas - Spa, A Mar S A Gas - Spa, F Nap - Rom,
A Ven S F Nap - Rom, F ION _- Tun_, F AEG _- ION_, F ADR - Apu, A Ser
- Vie (**NSO), A Bul - Gre.
Russia: (Closter) F Nwy S F BAR - NWG, F BAR - NWG, A Fin S A
Nwy, A Swe S F Den, A Den S A Kie, A Ber S A Kie, A Kie S A Mun -
Ruh, A Mun - Ruh, A Sil - Mun, A War - Gal, F Sev - Rum.

Russia; StP, Mos, Sev, War, Nwy, Swe, Den, Ber, Mun, Kie, Rum,
Vie, Bud = 13 builds A War, F StP(nc).
Turkey; Con, Smy, Ank, Bul, Ser, Gre, Tri, Ven, Rom, Nap, Mar,
Spa = 12 builds F Smy, A Con, A Ank.
France; Par, Por, Tun = 3 disbands F Tus, A Bur.
England; Edi, Lpl, Lon, Bel, Hol, Bre = 6 as is.

New English Player: Greg Long, 94 Hanson St, CORRYONG, 3707.
Apologies to the others who wanted it; Greg was first in.

Other players are: Paul Mellor, 149 Hurstville Rd, OATLEY, 2223.
                    Wayne Closter, 358 Burwood Hwy, BURWOOD, 3125
                    David Cherry, 94 Carlton St, CARLTON, 3053

diplomacy

Spring 1906.

TURKEY (D.Walsh)	:	A Bul Hold; F Con S A Bul; F Smy-Aeg; F Tun-Ion; F Arm-Sev.
AUSTRIA (T.Friedrich)	:	A Gal-Vie; A War-Gal; A Mos-War; A Sev-Arm; A Rum S A Ser; F Ion S F Alb-Gre; A Ser S F Alb-Gre; F Alb-Gre.
ENGLAND (A.Giessman)	:	F Mid S GERMAN A Pic-Bre; F Por-Spa(sc); F NAt Hold; A Nwy-Fin; F Nrg C A Edi-Nwy; A Edi-Nwy; F Lon-Nth.
GERMANY (B.Aveling)	:	F Eng S A Pic-Bre; A Pic-Bre; A Bur-Par; A Mun-Tyr; A Ber-Mun; F Bal-Ber; AR A Pie-Mar(No such piece).
FRANCE (J.Ball)	:	A Par S A Bre; A Bre S A Par(retreats to Gascony); A Mar S A Gas-Spa; A Gas-Spa.
ITALY NMR	:	F Tyr; A Apu; A Gre(destroyed).

Messages:- 'Don't forget what I said - I meant it', Sultan Walsh.
'The Italian Army's Greecian holiday is at an end. Sorry
Mark, but I have a schedule to keep', Clown Prince Friedrich.
'Attention all you nice megalomanics out there. In the
intrests of The Game I will return Venice to Italian control,
if there is a controling Italian by then. Otherwise I'll
take Rome & Naples. Apply now to the G.M.', Kaiser Aveling.

political upheaval, when every other leader is seeking to do the noble harm, he freely permits his heir (anything from a Baron to a Prince in his own right) to seek adventure. I will give five turns in any Australian PBM game to the first person who can nominate five instances (fact or fiction, quote your source) where a noble permits his heir to go off seeking adventure, in times when the noble himself is under threat. And remember, the adventure that the heir is seeking must be largely pointless, along the lines of slaying a harmless giant, or rounding up a few peasants. Any takers? Send your answers to Rick.

John then turned his attention towards the concept of missed moves, and the vital role of the Seneschal;

"...Missed moves. Good PBM'ers know that you should NEVER miss a move...For Feudal Lords, I provided a set of general instructions to simply maintain the fief...To do more requires that we presume what affirmative action a player would take..."

It is fairly obvious that John didn't quite grasp the suggestion I was putting forward. Simply put, I suggested a player could leave standing orders for his fief, to be utilised in the event of him missing a turn. I did not suggest coded changes to the seneschal program -- that would be dangerous. I believe that it should be possible to leave a set of standing orders with the moderators of the game (Chameleon Games, or whoever), which they could use to create a set of orders for your position at any stage when you miss a turn. As a players position changed, he could update his standing orders.

John next mentioned dropouts. I would like to relate my experience, based on Game #2.

Twelve people started the game. By turn six, three had dropped out, two had been eliminated. So, by turn six, nearly half the players had been knocked out. The game continued. And continued. And continued. At turn thirty, I controlled the largest fief in the game (3200+ knights, 4500+ peasants, 50000+ gold). It was at this point that I dropped out, as did another player. Why? Because there was no end in sight. Players had lost interest in the game, it seemed -- little correspondence, few campaigns. It had become almost impossible to win the game by conquest, and I was bored, and tired of paying $5 a turn for a stalemate situation. So five were left at turn thirty. They're probably still playing....

John then spent the remainder of his article, becoming increasingly derogatory in his comments as he went, endlessly reiterating the point that the twelve order limit is a vital one to the game of Feudal Lords.

Let me quote the passage from my article, to which he was responding;

Down In Flames.....

.....A Reply, by Ian Plumb

        Pleased as I was to see a Designer's Response to an article
in the latest edition of this fine magazine, the obvious lack of
attention paid by the author to the article he was responding to
made his commentary, long as it was, largely irrelevant.

        John, or Mr Van De Graaf as he may prefer to be known,
addressed five points in his article. I would like to take each
point in turn, and demonstrate to the readers where John has made
his mistakes.

        John's first attack concerned the champion;

        "...The champion would never stay at home while the army was
campaigning for glory and plunder!..."

        and,

        "...Did I miss the chapter in Mallory where Lancelot bravely
stays in Camelot while Arthur rode off to war?..."

        No, John didn't miss a chapter of Mallory, what he did miss
was the point I was trying to make. Feudal Lords is based on the
concept that when a noble rides off on campaign, he leaves his
home fief in the hands of a military cretin. His home fief, the
one he has probably built up painstakingly over a number of
years, is left in the hands of an incompetent.

        Why? I have no idea, ask the designer. I put forward the
suggestion that the champion, heir-apparent to the nobles lands,
is the logical choice for taking on the vital task of defending
the nobles home fief. In support of this statement, I mentioned
the passage in T.H. White's "The Once and Future King", where
Lancelot is left to defend Arthur's lands while Arthur is off
fighting in Europe.

        In reply, John says that no such event took place in
Mallory's "Morte d'Arthur", while ignoring the concept that
perhaps the heir would become regent in the noble's absence. I
have never read Mallory's book -- perhaps that was why I
mentioned White's book, eh John -- but I am reasonably certain
that it never mentions that Arthur left Camelot in the hands of
the pissboy (if you'll pardon the expression) while he went off
to war!

        John then went on to mention the concept of the champion
riding errant. What a brilliant concept. During a time of great

"...The final point that I would like to make concerns the order formats. Each turn, you only get twelve orders. As if that wasn't restrictive enough, most of the orders also have limits, so that later in the game when home fiefs are relatively wealthy, you are forced to use multiples of particular orders. For instance, orders 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, and 26 could well have their restrictions removed without affecting play balance drastically."

Can any of the readers see where I suggested that it would be a good idea to remove the twelve order limit? What do you mean you can't see where I made that point. Look carefully, it must be there. John Van De Graaf, designer of Feudal Lords, based half his article on the belief that I made that point. It has to be there, doesn't it?

True, I said that the twelve order limit is restrictive. It is meant to be, as John repeatedly said. Without that restriction, Feudal Lords would be the dullest game ever contemplated. With it, it is worth playing once, maybe even twice, depending on your tastes.

Based on reading John's article several times, I can't help getting the idea that he skimmed over my article, and then wrote a hurried reply. This is a sad event, when the designer of a game can't find the time to carefully read the suggestions of a player, and prefers instead to attempt to make him look foolish. Well John, I think it's backfired mate -- you've been shot down in flames, and you have only yourself to blame. Who looks foolish now?
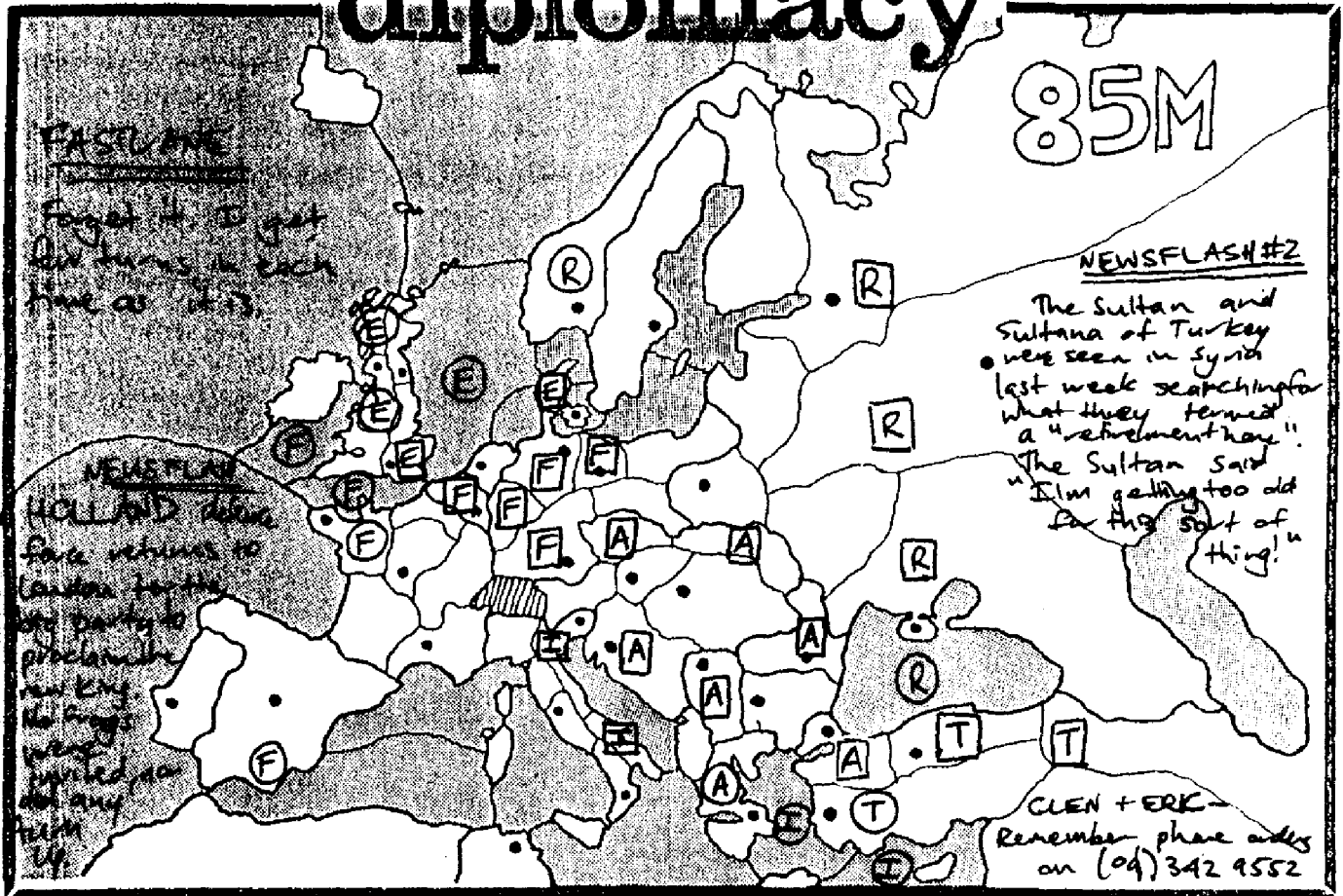

PSSST!

"THE UNION OF MODERATORS
SENT ME TO GET PLUMB
WHILE THEY STILL HAVE SOME
MEMBERS LEFT..."

diplomacy

NEWSFLASH#2

The Sultan and Sultana of Turkey were seen in Syria last week searching for what they termed a "retirement home". The Sultan said "I'm getting too old for this sort of thing!"

GLEN + ERIC — Remember phone orders on (09) 342 9552

DIPLOMACY 85M   **SPRING, 1907**   **GM: STEVEN BAGSHAW**

RUSSIA (M. Haughey) – F Nwy-Swe, A Mos-StP, A War-Mos, A Ukr-Sev, F Bla S (Aust) A Bul-Con

ITALY (J. Penman) – F Ion-Aeg, F EMS S F Ion-Aeg, A Ven H, A Apu H

AUSTRIA (T. Graham) – A Rum S (Russ) A Ukr-Sev, A Bul-Con, A Bud-Ser, A Vie-Gal, A Boh S A Vie-Gal, F Gre H, A Tri H

ENGLAND (D. Ward) – F Edi-Cly, F Liv S F Edi-Cly, A Hol-Lon, F Nth C A Hol-Lon, A Den-Swe

FRANCE (G. Northey) – NMR   F Spa(sc) H, F Bre H, F Eng H, F Ir H, A Bel H, A Ruh H, A Mun H, A Ber H, A Kie H

TURKEY (E. Roche) – NMR   F Aeg H, A Con H, F Sev H, A Arm H (F Aeg R→Smy; F Sev disb.) (A Con R→Ank)

PRESS: **FROM GM** – Two NMRs in three turns by the leading player! Is he merciful or forgetful?
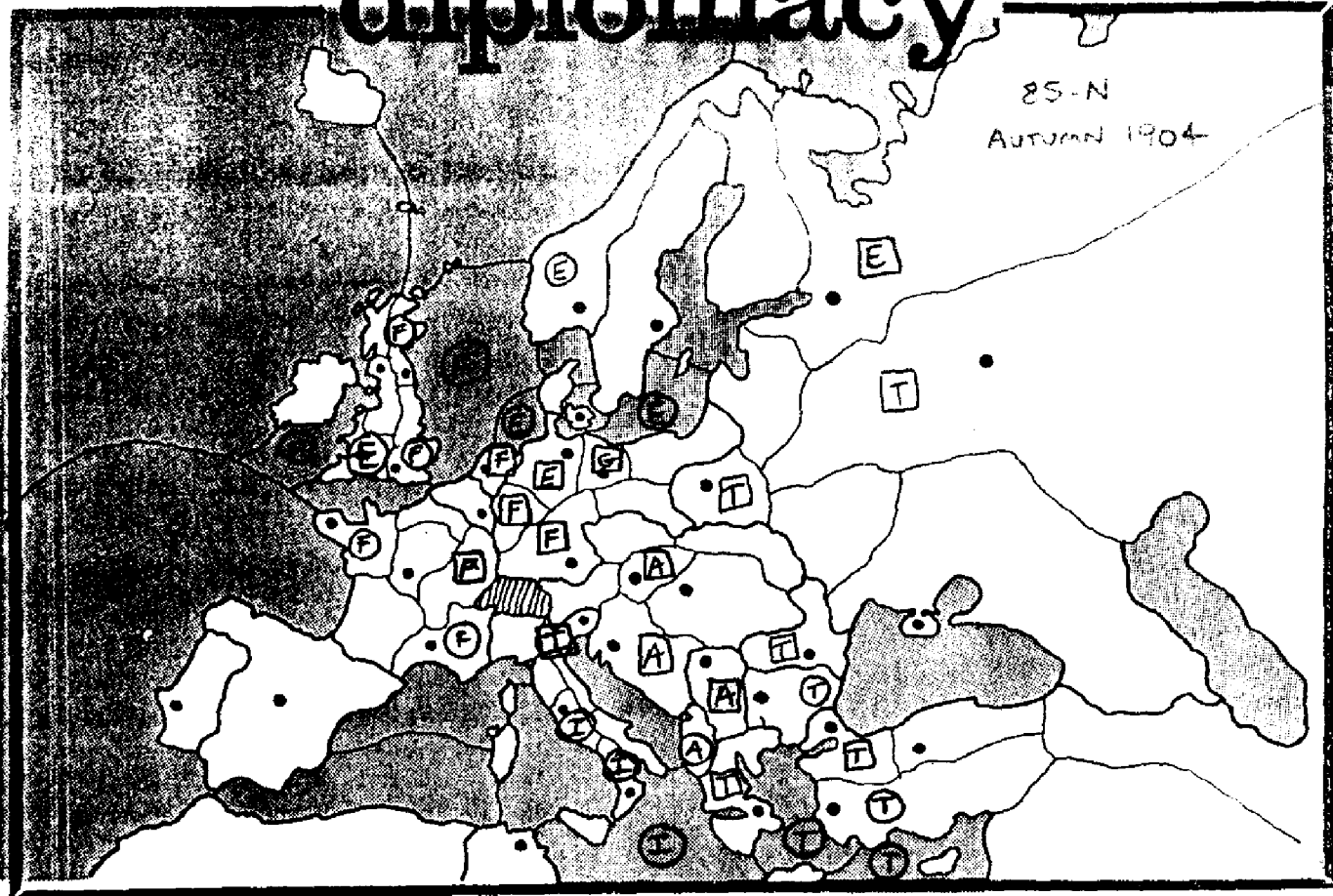
    NEW KING (?) OF ENGLAND –

PAUL WARD

5 SANDALWOOD DVE

GREENWOOD, WA, 6024

(09) 447 6804

20/3/1987

Austria plays indians and circles Budapest. Russia forms the thin white line. Germany hosts entire French population to a party. France likes this and decides to stay. Turkey goes out in a blaze of nothingness. Italy arrives just in time.

diplomacy

25·N
Autumn 1904

GM Eric Roche, 367 Argyle St, NORTH HOBART, 7000. (Phone 002 311932)

<u>Turkey:</u> (Sultan Gould) A Mos S A Ukr — War, A Ukr — War, F BLA —
Bul(ec), A Rum <u>- Ser</u>, A Bul - Gre, F AEG S A Bul - Gre, F EMS <u>- ION</u>.
<u>Austria:</u> ("The Small But Growing [Smaller] Kaiser" Yovich) <u>A War S</u>
<u>Turkish A Mos - Liv</u>, A Bud - Tri, A Ser <u>S</u> A Bud - Tri, A Vie S A Bud -
Tri, <u>F Gre S Turkish F EMS - ION</u>;   A War r to Sil, F Gre r to Alb.
<u>France:</u> (Frog Ashworth) F ENG - NTH, F Lon S F ENG - NTH, F IRI <u>- Lpl</u>,
F Cly - Edi, A Bel - Hol, A Gas — Bur, A Kie - Mun, A Ruh S A Kie -
Mun.
<u>Italy:</u> NMR.   Has <u>A Mun</u>, A Ven, <u>A Tri</u>, F Nap, F Rom, F ION.   A Mun and A
Tri disband.   This country is now vacant (civil disorder) and is open
to anyone out there who doesn't mind being stuck between frogs and
turkeys.
<u>England:</u> (Chris Smith) F BAR - Nwy, F Wal <u>- Lpl</u>, A Den - Kie, F HEL S A
Den - Kie, F BAL S A Den - Kie, A StP stands.
<u>Germany:</u> Still hanging in there with A Ber.

England; Den, StP, Nwy, Swe, Edi + Kie - Lon, Lpl = as is.
France; Par, Bre, Mar, Spa, Por, Bel, Hol - Kie + Mun, Lon, Edi = 10
builds F Bre, F Mar.
Turkey; Smy, Con, Ank, Bul, Rum, Sev, Mos + War, Gre = 9 builds A Con,
F Smy.
Italy; Ven, Rom, Nap, Tun - Tri, Mun = 4 as is.
Austria; Bud, Vie, Ser + Tri - War, Gre = 4 disbands A Sil.
Germany; A Ber = 1 as is.

P.S. The competition should be read as "France and Turkey first face
each other", not England, which faces Turkey across StP/Mos border
already! GM's guess is Sil/Mun border, anyone else?

P.O. Box 45 Mitcham 3132 VIC   **03 874 7475**

COME IN, I WAS *EXPECTING* YOU! FOR 1, IMAGE TELLER OF FORTUNES, WILL ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS YOU CARE TO *ASK*...

The original Australian Mail Order, since 1977.

Diplomacy 86B Fall 1903

Germany: F Holl — Belg, A Ruhr — Burg, A Mun S A Ruhr — Burg
(Penman)

France: A Gas — Bre, A Par — Pic NSO, F Spa (SC) — MAO,
(Myers)   F WMed S F Spa (SC) — MAO, F Mar — Spa (SC)
         A Bur R Par.

England: A Swe S F Nwy, F Nwy S F Nth — Ska, F Nth — Ska,
(Yovich)   F Eng S F Pic — Bre, F Pic — Bre, F Iri — MAO

Russia: F Ska S Ger A Den, A Ukr — War, F Sev — Rum, A StP — Nor,
(Whitchurch)   F Ska disbands — no possible retreat.

Austria (Smith):   NMR   **Italy (AVDH):** NMR. Civil Disorder.

Turkey (Wilson):   NMR. Civil Disorder.

Press: The British Government strongly protests the Austrian
annexation of Rumania, and advises that, unless Austria withdraws her
troops, a state of war will exist between us.

The Imperial Russian Government announces a change of address to 6/49
Mulgrave St, Sth Launceston, 7249.   P.S. Have all other rulers of
Europe been struck with illiteracy or what?

Please include retreats with orders.   Builds would prove useful also.
No-one wanted fast lane.   I may be slack, but you lot are proving
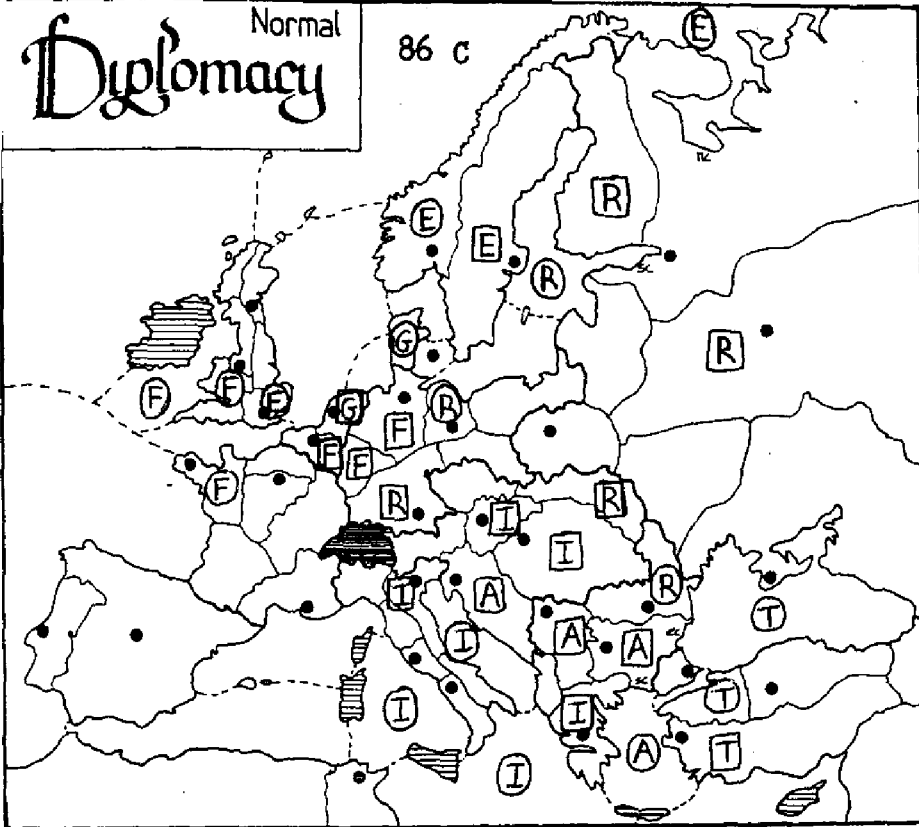slacker.   I'm lifting my game, see if you can do better too.

New players are requested for Italy and Turkey.   First orders received
for Spring 1904, for either country, gets the job.

Comment
Germany in tatters as France winds up to bash up England. Meanwhile Austria finds itself in a very tight situation.

Orders and Fall Adjustments

AUSTRIA: F Aeg-Gre, A Bul S F Aeg-Gre, A Bud-Tri, A Ser S A Bud-Tri.

ENGLAND: F Nth-Nwy, A Swe S F Nth-Nwy, F Bar-StP, F Lon-Eng,

FRANCE: A Ruh-Kie, A Bel-Hol, A Bur-Ruh, F MAO-Iri, F Bre-Eng, F Eng-Wal.

GERMANY: NMR.

ITALY: F Adr S A Tri (NSO), A Tri-Ser (ret Vie), F Ion S A Gre, F Nap-Tyn, vA Vie-Bud, A Gre-H, A Ven-H.

RUSSIA: A Mun S French A Ruh-Kie, F Ber S French A Ruh-Kie, A Mos-StP, F StP-GOB, A Nor-Swe (ret Fin), A War-Gal, F Sev-Rum.

TURKEY: A Arm-Smy, F Ank-Bla, F Con-Bul.

Glen Northey is back as Turkey. God knows where he is living now. The delay in this game was caused by confusion amongst both players and GM. Lets hope it becomes a bit more regular.

FROM EDITOR: GLEN NORTHEY
            CI- AVONDALE COLLEGE
                COORANBONG NSW 2265

Press Rome: "If there is anyone out there please communicate."

Choosing Between the Games:

                    Strategic Space Games

        Perhaps the most prolific genre of games, strategic space
games are one of the more attractive branches of the PBM hobby.
In this article I intend to compare three -- StarWeb, Return from
Sirius, and Capitol. As always, I can only draw upon personal
experience when commenting on games, and whatever conclusions I
draw upon the games are my opinion only.

        These three games are very similar in style (if you've
played one....). Though the terms used will vary, they have these
elements in common. The player commences the game with an empire
consisting of one world. The world is rated for its ability to
produce resources, and its ability to convert those resources
into usable items (starships, defense posts, industry increases,
amongst other things). The player also has a number of ships,
which he can use to explore/conquer nearby star systems.

        The player then spends the remainder of the game expanding
his empire. This is accomplished by performing a seemingly
endless cycle of exploration, resource production and
transportation, construction, and perhaps combat. The game ends
at a pre-determined point, when the games victory conditions are
met by a particular empire.

        Naturally, each game has its own variation on this theme
which makes it unique, and thus preferable to some players over
other similar games.

        Let's look at StarWeb. StarWeb is made unique by its
Character Types. At the beginning of the game, each player
selects a character type from the six available -- Empire
Builder, Merchant, Pirate, Berserker, Artifact Collector, and
Apostle. Each type has certain characteristics -- advantages,
disadvantages, and strategies for winning.

        StarWeb is a dated game. It is about ten years old now, and
it shows. Recently, the turn printout format was updated to make
it easier to read. Judging by the "new look" StarWeb -- cramped,
messy, and generally unfriendly -- the old StarWeb players must
have been really keen. A StarWeb printout is produced on the
minimum amount of paper possible, contains minimal spacing, and
requires the rulebook to decipher.

        StarWeb is entirely computer moderated. Once you've overcome
the initial excitement of playing the game, turns become quite
standard with a minimal amount of variation (and, dare I say it,
interest). This is a game which packs few surprises, and quickly
becomes an exercise in "number crunching" -- how to accomplish

your aims in as few turns/orders as possible. Of the three games, this is the worst, and at $5 a turn, represents poor value for money.

Return From Sirius has one major feature, and several minor ones, which make it a superior game to StarWeb. Firstly, the game is made unique (indeed, even famous) by its Research Planets. Research planets are a human moderated element in an otherwise computer moderated game. They offer the game endless variation, and provide continual interest for even the most experienced player. Limited only by what you can get away with (read, justify), research planets offer advantages to every player.
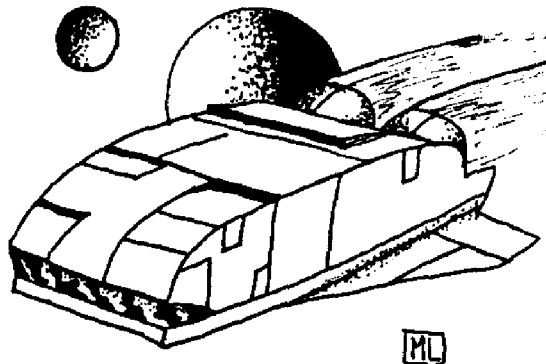

The Return From Sirius printout is well formatted, easy to read, and provides all the information the player requires in relatively plain English. Return From Sirius is also cheaper than StarWeb, plus it has the recently introduced system scanning rules, to add a touch of paranoia to the game.

Return From Sirius is very similar to StarWeb (beyond a coincidence?). However, as it had a model to base its structure around, it is the superior game. StarWeb might have been first, but that shouldn't count for much when a player is looking for features in a game he wants to play.

The best of the three games by far is Capitol. This game is the only game I've ever played which requires more player cooperation than Final Days. The game has the unique feature of the players being grouped into teams of four, each team of four constituting an alien race. Each race has certain abilities designed at the start of the game, which reflect the races ability to produce defense units, offense units, and cargo units. In the team of four, one player is nominated the Capitol player. He controls the races Emperor, and is a powerful player.

diplomacy
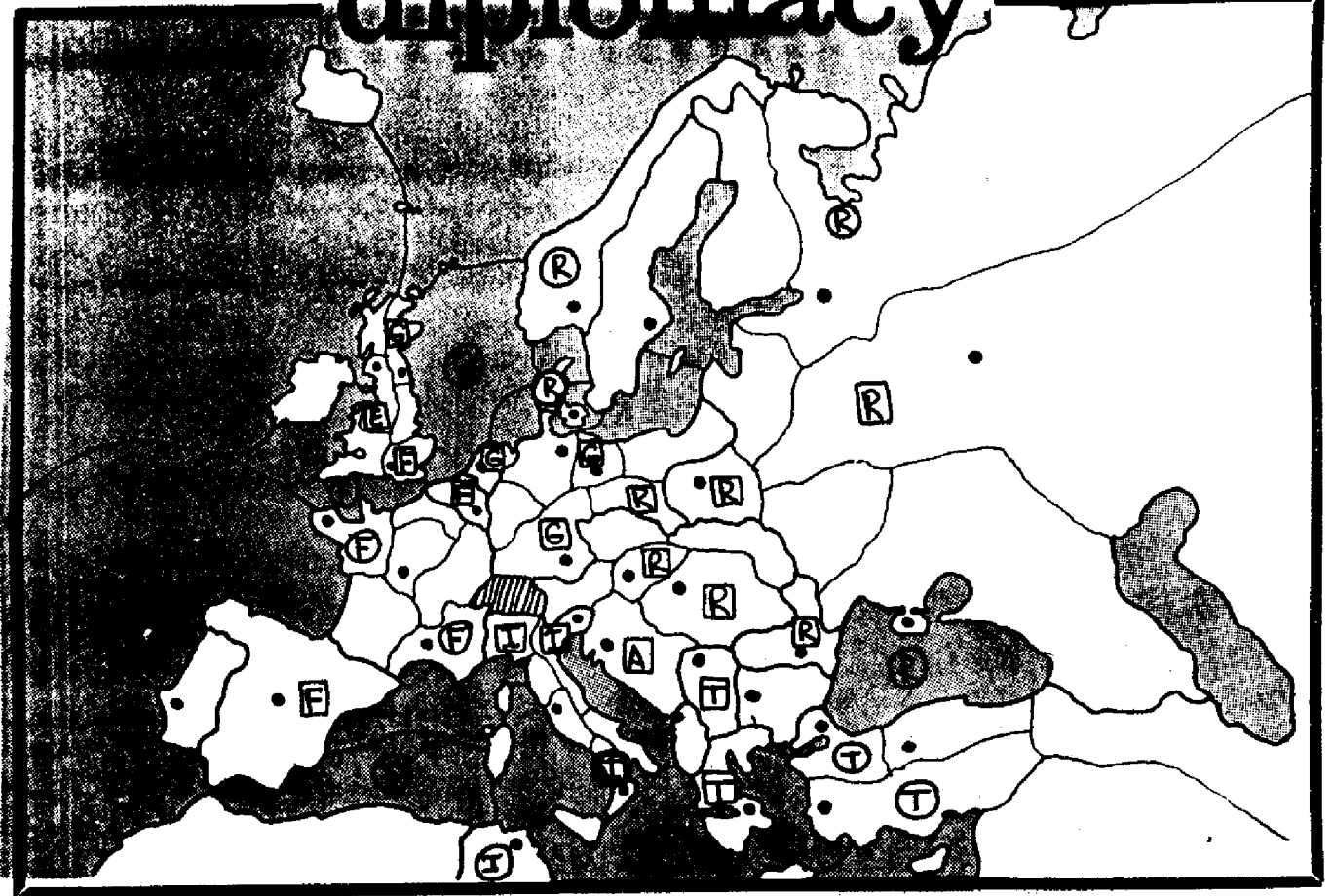
AUSTRIA:NMR (A Bud, A Ser disbands) ENGLAND:NMR (F Edi, F Lon disbands)
FRANCE (Winder):A Spa holds, A Wal-Lon, F Eng S A Wal-Lon, A Pic-Bel,
          F Mid-Wes.
GERMANY (Schacht):A Holl holds, A Mun holds, A Yor-Edi, F Nth S A Yor-Edi.
ITALY (Stocks):A Ven-Pie, A Apu-Ven, F Ion-Tun.
RUSSIA (Yovich):A Sev-Rum, A War-Sil, A Gal-Bud, A Vie S A Gal-Bud,
          F Rum-Bla, F Swe-Den, F Nwy holds.
TURKEY (Gibson):A Gre S A Bul-Ser, F Aeg S A Gre, F Eas-Ion, A Bul-Ser.

BUILDS:
AUSTRIA: disband F Alb
FRANCE (Por, Spa, Mar, Par, Bre, Bel, Lon):F Bre, F Mar.
GERMANY (Edi, Hol, Kie, Ber, Mun):A Ber.
ITALY (Ven, Rom, Nap, Tun):F Nap.
RUSSIA (StP, Mos, Sev, War, Bud, Den, Nor, Swe, Vie, Rum):F StP(nc),
        A War, A Mos.
TURKEY (Con, Ank, Smy, Ser, Bul, Gre):F Smy, F Con.

PRESS:
FRANCE:"If there is an Italy out there somewhere speak up now."
RUSSIA:"In retaliation for the unprovoked attack on her English ally,
        the Russian government has been forced to launch an attack on
        Germany. This action is regrettable but necessary."
TURKEY:"Wake up everyone. What? Uh? Oh yeah, I was just nodding off for
        a little bit."

GM: New Italian player: Philip Stocks, 19 Highland Tce, St. Lucia, Q.,
          4067.
    I was going to start looking around for a new Austrian player, but
    I don't think it's necessary anymore.

Bill McKinley
23/3/87.

While the game initially follows the   standard line, it soon develops into an intriguing contest. Each player can control 60 worlds and 60 starships. All   starships   after the first six have to be constructed by the player, based on his own modular design. A player soon finds that it is very easy to control sixty worlds. The key to the game is in controlling sixty useful worlds.

The game develops along two lines. Within a race, each player probably wants to be the Capitol player. Within the game, each race wants to win, by achieving the victory conditions first. If the players spend much of their time fighting each other for the Capitol position, they will be crushed by a more cooperative race.

Capitol has many excellent points. Combat between races is mandatory and automatic when contact is made! No cooperation is possible between races, beyond mutual avoidance treaties. The combat system allows for the experience of the ship captains involved. Defense and attack strategies rely heavily on ship

speed. On contacting another race, you can detect the position of their Capitol (homeworld)! Mapping and movement is interesting, with probes being used to generate maps for you (unlike StarWeb, which must be the most frustrating mapping experience I have ever undertaken). Each race has a blurb, which is transmitted to the other races who meet your race (generally 5 lines of abuse and threats...).

Of the three games, Capitol held my interest the longest, and is the only one of the three that I would recommend to everyone to play. Capitol has one major drawback, and that is price. At $6 a turn it is expensive, but what can you expect from a game moderated in America? Also, American moderation makes for a very long turnaround time -- six weeks is not unknown. This is a real pity, as Capitol is meant to be a fast paced, dynamic game. Unfortunately, we get the geriatric version. If this game where moderated in Australia, at $5 a turn, with a three week turnaround time (maximum), it would be amongst the best PBM games available here, and would deserve to be very popular. It is a unique game.

M. LYCETTE
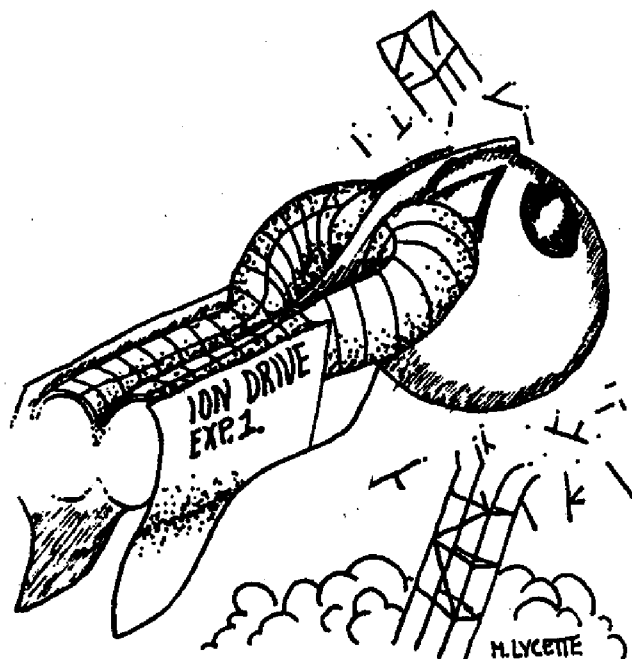
Choosing Between the Games:

Human Moderated PBM's.

The best PBM games are those which best accommodate the desires of the players, and the games which do this best are human moderated ones. Why? Because they are inherently more flexible than computer moderated games.

Of all the games I have played, four have been human moderated -- Keys of Bled, Shadow of the Hawk, Demonsland, and Crasimoff's World. Each game is completely different to the others, yet some comparison can still be made.

Demonsland was the smallest scale of the four games listed. You controlled one character in a solo campaign within the world of Demonsland. This game was a delight to play. Character design was totally up to the player, and could be done under any FRP system or freeform. The game itself was intriguing, with the characters being embroiled in plots within plots within plots.

The game depended on player-moderator interaction. If the player wouldn't put any effort into his turn, then it was difficult for the moderator not to do likewise. I found myself spending an average of about three hours pondering my characters possible courses of action before deciding on the course he would take. My responses averaged five pages.

This game was excellent to play in, but murderous to moderate. There was no practical way of limiting the amount of time required to process each turn without affecting the quality of the responses. This is why the game collapsed under its own weight. Nobody can afford to moderate for fifty cents an hour, when they are trying to run a business. The question of money for time is the one which will make or break a human moderated PBM game.

Crasimoff's World is the next scale up in the scheme of things. Each player controls a party of around ten characters, which he names and decides which character class (fighter, priest, wizard) they will be. Priests and wizards have spells, warriors are stereotyped grunts who can almost talk to each other (if they concentrate very hard). The game is played in a fantasy land where humans have only recently escaped the yoke of the astoff's, evil technocrats who once ruled the world.

This game is disappointing. It has great potential -- but that is all. The Australian version (the one I play) has only fifty players. As you can perhaps imagine, it is not difficult for fifty groups of people to avoid each other for years and years when they are using a world as their playing field. Hence,

if you are unlucky, player interaction is minimal, and player interaction is very important in this game. The UK version of the game has 1000+ players, according to their advertisement, and that is the version of the game that I look forward to playing.

The moderation of this game is also disappointing. Having come off the high of Demonsland, we have the low of Crasimoff's World. After more than a dozen turns in this game, I have come to the belief that the method the moderators of Crasimoff's World use to limit the amount of time they have to spend on a turn is a very arbitrary one — something along the lines of "read the players turn sheet, ponder the situation for half an hour, write for half an hour, and whatever results is the players turn".

My first four turns in this game averaged 26 lines of writing, barring answers to questions. My next four averaged 41 lines — this is about one full page of computer printout. My next five averaged 70 lines (I was determined to finally get some value for money!). My shortest turn was a mere 15 lines of writing — can you believe that? Actually paying $5 to receive a piece of paper with 15 lines of writing on it. My longest turn was an amazing 174 lines (four pages long) — the footnote to this turn contained the immortal words "please limit your turn length in future". You'd think I was ripping them off by actually making them work.

Crasimoff's World has the potential to be the best human moderated PBM in Australia, but, due to the few people who play, it will require work on the part of the moderators — more work than the moderators of the UK version put in, as the UK version relies on player input, where the Australian version cannot. The moderation is dry, and requires a lot of prompting before it becomes imaginative. The player plots appear to be somewhat universal (another time saving device) — having more than one player group involved in the same plot. I hope that Crasimoff's World goes someway to meeting its potential, but as the game now stands, it is unsatisfactory.

The next game I want to look at is Keys of Bled. This game, while moderated in England, currently has a quicker turnaround time than the Australian version of Crasimoff's World. The game has a huge number of players worldwide, and player interaction and alliances are a highlight of this tribal level game.

The concept behind Keys of Bled is an interesting one, and the goals of the game are many and varied. The game presupposes that you are the leader of a colony ship, heading to your brave new world. A distress signal is picked up, you investigate, and crash on the world of Bled. Many have gone before you, many will follow. You must now ensure the safety of your ill-equipped colony.

For most, Bled soon becomes a struggle for power. The desire to equip and train your people for war is an overpowering one.

spends ten minutes on your turn, $5 is outrageous as a fee. Why
not have the players say "Here's $10, I expect two hours work on
this turn." or "Here's a dollar, just let me know the current
status of my position."? Perhaps that sort of turn fee pricing
would help human moderated PBM's keep afloat -- by explaining how
long it takes to produce a turn, the players might just be
prepared to pay more.

However, Bled offers much more to its players, if only they are
prepared to look deeper. I have four groups at various stages of
development scattered around Bled, and believe me, the things
I've encountered, the plots I've stumbled upon, and the general
atmosphere of the game have always kept me entertained. I just
hope that there is never an Australian version of this game.

     The moderators of Keys of Bled limit turn length by making
it interesting, and difficult, for the players to develop their
positions. To achieve anything, you must describe exactly how you
are accomplishing it -- and it must be feasible. Generally, your
turnsheet can be five pages of details on how to construct a
siege engine, to which the moderators answer is a simple "OK" or
a "you've forgotten about the trajectory alignment problem", to
which you end up spending another three weeks redesigning the
thing. This is an acceptable method of limiting turn length, as
it keeps the players thinking and entertained.

Despite the game being moderated in England, turns currently cost $4.75 each, and the turnaround time is four to five weeks. The more people you know in the game, the more interesting it is, and the more you can accomplish, so this is a real diplomats game. The moderators are friendly, helpful, and cannot be bribed. My favourite of the four games listed.

The last game to be looked at is Shadow of the Hawk. In this game, the players play the part of leaders of a country, whose power and dominion they are trying to increase. The game system is SNEDCO's (sadly, now defunct), and is a good one. Actually, the game system has a touch of brilliance about it (in playability terms), despite some touches of illogic.

SNEDCO have answered the question of time against results very neatly. Each player has a certain amount of activity points which he can spend each turn. Everything which involves the moderator producing some output costs a certain amount of these activity points. When you're out of activity points, your turn is over. This is neatly explained away as "you can only accomplish so much in the time represented by a turn". Brilliant.

Shadow of the Hawk is an entertaining game to play. It combines all the aspects of role-playing with the strategy and tactics of a wargame, making for a very complete and satisfying game. The system is very flexible, and allows for almost anything. A highly recommended game, despite the six week turnaround generally experienced.

Personally, I will always prefer human moderated games to computer moderated ones. I also believe that the games shouldn't try to compete, price wise. It is obvious that it will take a person longer to moderate a turn than a computer. Therefor, the players should be paying for that privilege. How about variable price turns? If the moderator spends 8 hours on your turn, you can hardly expect to pay $5 for the service. However, if he only

CROSSWORD ANSWERS FROM LAST ISSUE

THEY GOT HE EVERY-
WHERE
EXCEPT
MY BACK!

diplomacy

86-E FALL 1902
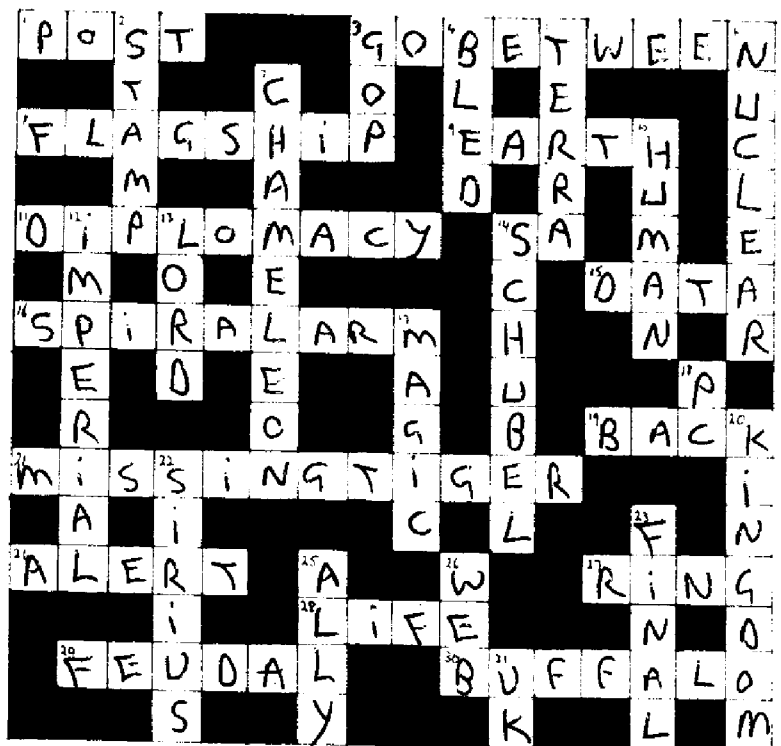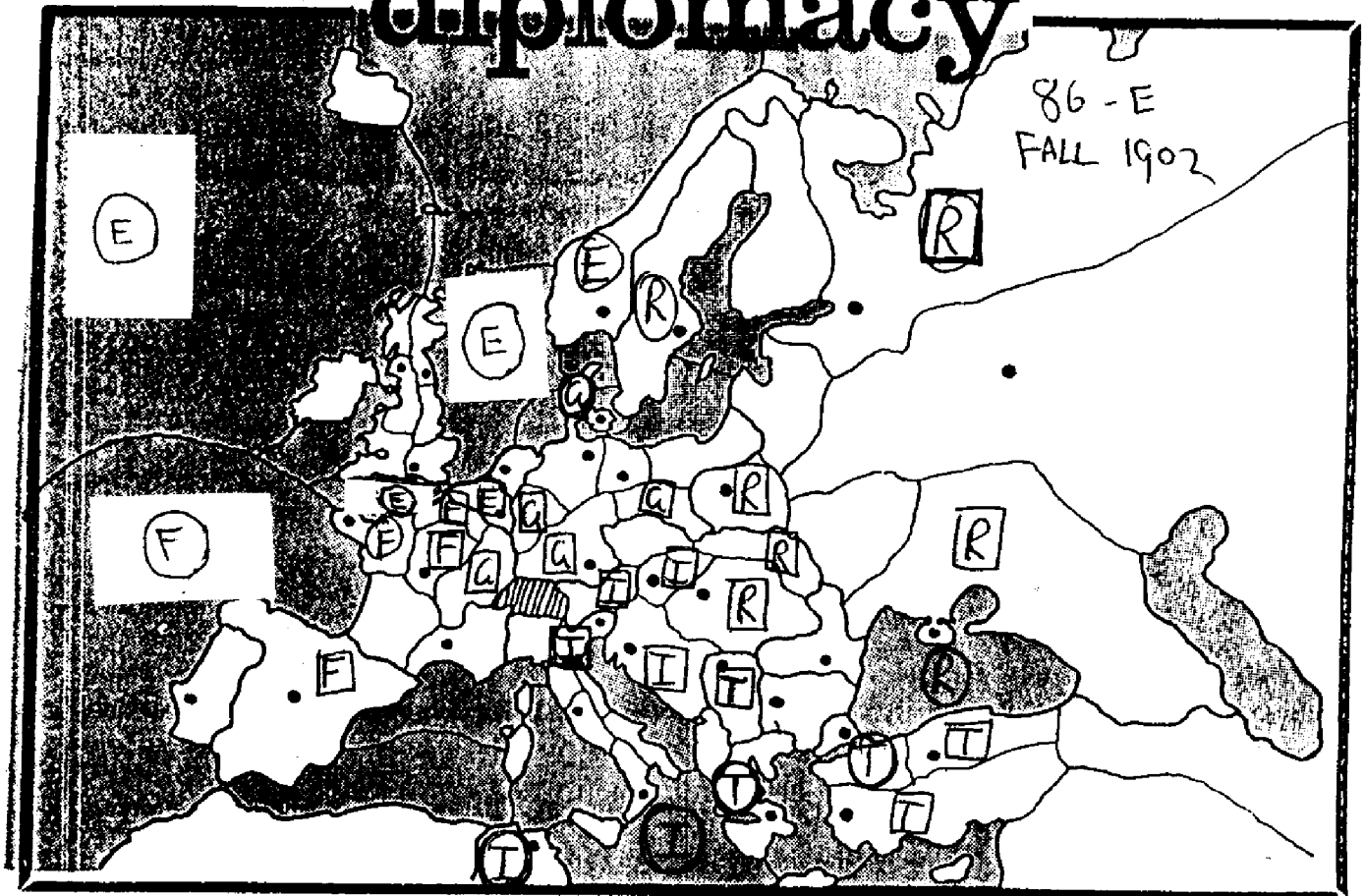
```
AUSTRIA  : N.M.R. (They found it was better to live on their knees.)
ENGLAND  : N.M.R. F NAt; F NorS; F EngC; A Bel; F Nwy.
FRANCE   : N.M.R. F MAO; A Spa; A Pic; A Par; F Bre.
GERMANY  : A Ruh-Bur; A Mun sup A Ruh-Bur; F Den eat pastries; A Ber-Sil;
           A Hol-Ruh.
ITALY    : A Tyr-Boh; A Tri sup Rus A Rum-Bud; A Vie sup Rus A Rum-Bud;
           F Ion-AEG; F Tun-Ion.
RUSSIA   : A Stp-Nor; F Swe sup Eng F NorS-Nor; A Ukr-Gal; A War sup A Ukr-Gal
           A Rum-Bud; F Sev-Black Sea.
TURKEY   : F AEG-Gre; F Con-AEG; A Smy-Con; A Ser sup F AEG-G.
```

Supply Centres, and Builds at the end of the turn.

AUS:	Not a sausage, bugger all.					Total=0
ENGLAND:	Lon,	Edi,	Liv,	Bel,	Nwy.	Total=5
FRANCE :	Par,	Bre,	Mar,	Spa,	Por.	Total=5
GERMANY:	Ber,	Mun,	Kie,	Den,	.	Total=5
ITALY :	Rom,	Nap,	Ven,	Vie,	Tri, Tun.	Total=6
RUSSIA :	Mos,	StP,	War,	Sev,	Swe, Bud, Rum.	Total=7
TURKEY :	Con.	Ank,	Smy,	Ser,	Bul, Gre.	Total=6

REUTER PRESS:
StP-Rasputin's favourite dish is Pigeon Stroganoff. All heads of Govt reques
to send more birds(+correspondance).

Ber-The German Govt has proof that the Spanish fishing boat 'Rainbow
Conquistador' was sunk by French frogmen. We believe that this threat should
be removed.

Con- The Turkish Naval Fleet Commander, Ahmed Gonad II, wishes to announce that
the TNF will be continuing to use the smaller, more mobile and agile round
ships as opposed to the steam powered, bulky and slow polygon ships used by
other less advanced nations.
Rom- We hereby declare it to be spaghetti week, but only in Austria. Free
samples of spaghetti with minced Austrian sauce to anyone who can make it to
Austria. All welcome.

Well there goes another month, I hope England and France can make it next time.
Oh, almost forgot, the build orders.
Italy: who get one for Vie. a brand new Army in Venice!!!!
Germany: who miss out, better luck next time.
Russia: who get one for Budapest, another Army in Sevastapol!!!!!
Turkey: who get TWO for Greece and Bulgaria, get an Army in Ankara and
~~Smyrna~~!!!!!! *SORRY, ONLY ONE AS ONLY ONE CENTRE OPEN*

     Is this the end for Austria? or will they carry on the struggle? What did
happen to England's and France's orders? What was Russia's fleet in Sweden up
to? Where was the Maginot Line when France needed it? What is the German fleet
in Denmark really doing? Is anybody reading this? Why am I writing it? Why am
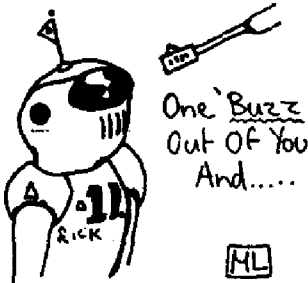I here? What is the meaning of all this? Does it have a meaning?
     Yes all these vital questions will be answered when you tune in, same
Dipgame, same Dippage, for the next thrilling episode of 86-E.

     See Ya all next issue, your friendly G.M.   Tim Friedrich signing off...

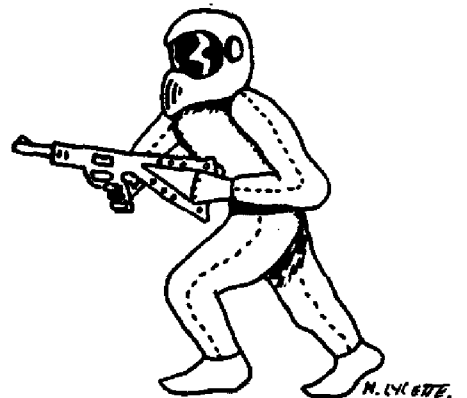★   ★

A SUB EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE AT THE GO BETWEEN

"THE EDITORIAL CONFERENCE"

"PRE HONOUR ROLL DAYS"

RICK HAVING TO "LIAISE"
WITH THE PRINTERS
TO TELL THEM ESTHER
WANTED IT PRINTED
YESTERDAY.

diplomacy

GAME 86F - FALL 1901

RUSSIA: F Bot - Swe, F Bla, A Ukr-Rum, A Ukr-Rum, A War-Gal

FRANCE: A Par - Bre, A Spa - Por, F MAO - Spa (south coast)

TURKEY: F Ank-Con, A Con-Bul, A Smy - Arm

GERMANY: F Hol stands, A Kie - Den, A Mun - Ruh.

ENGLAND: F Eng - Bel, F Nth - Nwy, A Yor Holds.

ITALY: A Ven - Holds, A Apu - Gre, F Ion C A Apu - Gre.

AUSTRIA: F Alb Holds, A Vie - Gal, A Ser - Bul

SUPPLY CENTRES:-   BUILDS:-
   RUSSIA: Mos, Sev, War, St.P, Rum, Swe (+2) = 6 ——— ① - No orders received
   FRANCE: Bre, Par, Mar, Spa, Por (+2) = 5 ——— A Par, F Mar
   TURKEY: Con, Smy, Ank   (+0) = 3 ——— N/A
   GERMANY: Ber, Mun, Kie, Den, Hol (+2) = 5 ——— A Kie, A Mun.
   ENGLAND: Lon, Liv, Edi, Bel, Nor (+2) = 5 ——— F Lon, F Edi.
   ITALY: Rom, Nap, Ven, Gre (+1) = 4 ——— F Nap.
   AUSTRIA: Tri, Vie, Bud, Ser (+1) = 4 ——— A Bud.

PRESS:-
   [Fleet St headlines read "Secret Service investigation Of Imposters Reveal
   Royal Family Ties with Kaiser a Fake!" and "Anti German Feeling Sweeps
   city"] — England o
   'RUSSIA HAS MOVED! New adress:- 35 Vena Ave, GOROUAN, 2263. - The GM.

NOTES:-
   ① Chris Jamieson has been having a lot of trouble getting hold of the Go-Between. Also
since this is the first Build turn, I will allow him To send his build orders next turn In
Future send Build AND DISBAND orders with each Fall move. I will try and remind everyone
in future. - The G.m.
   ② Sorry about the map last turn - All the sea areas were covered with a thick,
mysterious Blanket of fog. - The G.M.
   ③ Do Not send messages to me for other players - send them directly to the player.

diplomacy

Fall 1901

Wake up, O
hibernating Bear!

Beware the
Muslim hordes!!

AUSTRIA   (G. Begbie)   :   A Tri → Bud , A Ser Hold , F Alb → Tri

ENGLAND   (G. Long)   :   A Yor → Nwy , F NHh C A Yor → Nwy   F Eng → Bel

FRANCE   (New Player - S. Bagshaw) : A Mar → Spa , A Par → Bur , F Bre H

GERMANY   (P. Kahlbaum)   :   A Ruh → Bel ,   A Kie → Hol , F Den → Swe

ITALY   (W. Webber)   :   A Tyr → Pied , A Ven S A Tyr → Pied , F Ion → Gre

RUSSIA   (P. Szabo)   :   NMR   —   Naughty   Naughty !

TURKEY   (R. Wood)   :   A Bul → Gre , A Con → Bul . F Bla → Sev

BUILDS

Austria : +1 ; A Vie

England : +1 ; No build order

France : +1 ; A Mar

Germany : +2 ; F. Ber , A Kie

Italy : +1 ; No build order

Turkey : +3 ; A Ank , F Con , F Smy !!

Russia :   No change

Press : Germany to Someone. Please excuse the slight change in plans due to uncontrollable circumstances. We'll talk about it soon.

From the GM :

① Those who didn't send build orders may ~~send~~ them with next moves – but please send them with FALL moves in future.

② New French player is Steven Bagshaw:
78 Sherington Rd
Greenwood WA 6024

③ I wish I had room to comment on that really wild move : Szabo – Get it together !

diplomacy

87A

DIPLOMACY 87 A   SPRING, 1901   GM: STEVEN BAGSHAW

ENGLAND (G. Begbie) —   F Edi – NHL, F Lon – Eng, A Liv – Wal

GERMANY (P. Ward) —   A Mun – Bur, F Kie – Hol, A Ber – Kie

RUSSIA   (N. Smark) —   F StP – GOB, F Sev – Rum, A Mos – StP, A War – Gal

TURKEY (M. Kenseley) — A Con – Bul, A Smy – Arm, F Ank – Bla

AUSTRIA (J. Penman) —   F Tri – Ven, A Vie – Gal, A Bud – Ser

ITALY   (D. Davis) —   A Ven – Apu, F Nap – Ion, A Rom "Does Basic Training"

FRANCE (B. Aveling) —   F Bre – Eng, A Par – Bur, A Mar S A Par – Bur

NEW GERMAN PLAYER:— Paul Ward, 5 Sandalwood Dve, Greenwood, 6024.
           DOUG COWLING couldn't play.

PHONE ORDERS:— Fully accepted on (09) 342 9552.

                                                    20/3/1987

PRESS RELEASES:—   TO RUSSIA "Sweet!" FROM ENGLAND

                FROM ITALY "The Italian High Command has sent the
7th fleet to Tunis to quell a temporary local revolt. Such a move is not
intended to upset our peaceful neighbours and allies."

                FROM GM A very unusual turn, particularly by
Russia, France and, especially, England. Turkey and France look good (very) early
on, with Russia and Italy in trouble. NB: Two NMRs and you're out. Send a stamp and
              I'll post results early. Phone orders welcome.

BOARDGAME? 👉

TRY:

·TRIAL·OF·STRENGTH·

War on
the Eastern
Front,
1941-45

$40.00

Trial of Strength recreates this bitter struggle. As armed
forces commanders you must determine objectives, allocate
forces and execute operations designed to achieve victory over
your opponent.

ALL PRICES
INCLUDE POSTAGE!

Shanghai TRADER

$37.00

Shanghai Trader is a game of wheeling and dealing,
vice and corruption, set in Shanghai, the sin-city of the
early 20th century Orient. As an adventurous trading
baron of either American, British, French, German,
Japanese or White Russian persuasion, you must rip-
off the local economy for as much as you dare and get
out of the city, with the largest international bank
account, before civil disorder ends the game and your
life.

WARLORDS

China in Disarray, 1916 - 1950

$25.00

Warlords is a fun game of political diplomacy and
military expansionism. Set in China during the first half
of this century, players take control of the warlord
factions which vied for supremacy. With the ultimate
aim of re-unifying or controlling China, players must
wheel and deal, bribe, coerce, plot and fight their way
to political, military and economic victory.
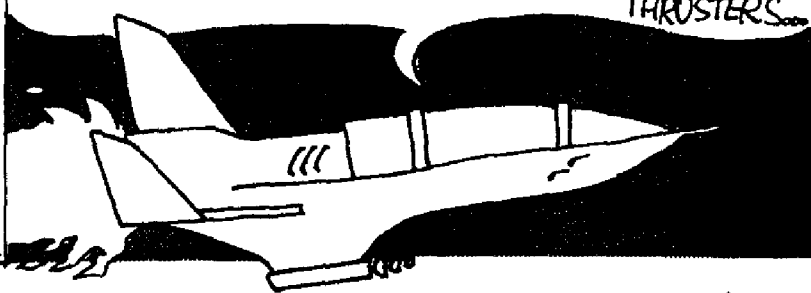
Rick Snell
GPO Box 286c
HOBART 7001

VISA

ACCEPTED

Games
from Panther Games

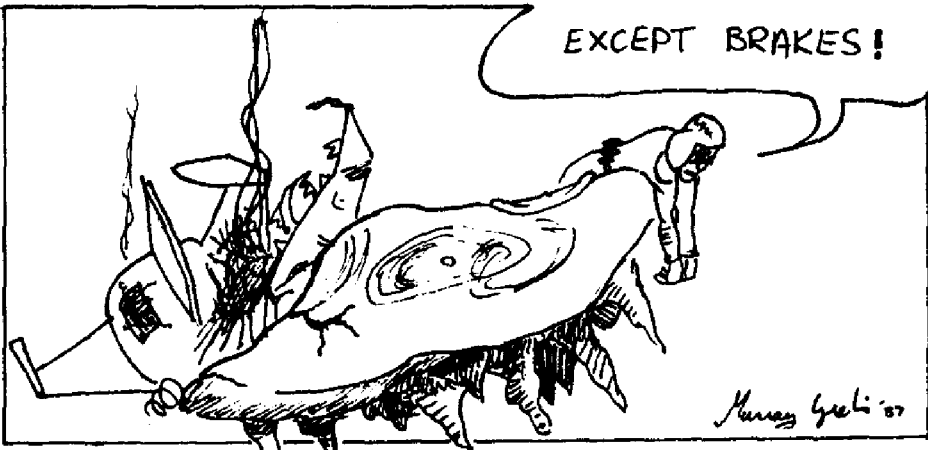* PRICES SHOWN ARE
AUSTRALIAN DOLLARS.

Spiral Arm Update

Spiral Arm 12 is up to turn 13. Most people (i.e. the ones not destroyed or overly hassled) now have two full colonies and another on the way. In the South it appears that peace is being negotiated after many turns of hard and bitter fighting between [9]Domain of Truth/[8] Tarrants Federation and [4] Avatar. It appears likely that [9] and [8] were the original aggressors, but thanks to the Hellyer School of Tactics (and a little help from his friends) Avatar survives! A little to the North it looks like [41]The Empire of Man has bitten the dust-a result of some large scale attacks by some players to his direct North. It is hoped that with his demise a peace can be derived between the Northern alliances and The Greater Hub Federation.

The G.H.F. has also reached a non-aggression alliance with the East-West alliance. It would seem sensible at this point for all the large alliances to pick on the smaller non-aligned players, as a large scale war would prove unfortunate for all concerned (unless of course one could remain neutral while the others blast each other to bits!). The G.H.F. currently consists of players [27],[49],[45],[17],[6],[4],[7] and [34] (with possibly a couple of anonymous parties).

From C.Smith: - SA9 > Tassi team is in trouble, being attacked from two sides and losing players fast (i.e. will not last long)
SA201 > In game 10 there is the F'hargz Convention. In this Convention's tradition another alliance is being formed (details next issue - sorry Clinton).

Ian Whitchurch has proposed a "Grand Alliance of Empires", as a sort of exclusive club of interested parties (i.e. Go-Between subscribers/Missing Tiger players). Specifically people may be interested in producing a regular Gazeteer on items of interest to the member states. (hit-lists, map exchanges, target info., grand strategic planning etc.). I think this is a great idea. Anyone at all interested please contact me A.S.A.P.

Just as a last point of interest I have joined up in SA202. I am [2] The Limbic System. It is apparent that there are a number of known people in the game. Next issue I will have more details to give (i.e. I will wait to find out whether anybody minds being mentioned first).

ED's note:

Rick now has a new pair of glasses so (hopefully) there should be a marked decline in spelling mistakes!

Esther

In the last few issues of TGB there have been some maps of the RFS universe published. OK now you've got them, so how can they be used for the vile purpose of winning?

Firstly, there are three ways of winning. The easiest (and least glorious) is the credit victory. This currently stands at 30000 credits, and has been the overwhelmingly most popular way of winning (i.e. easiest). Next is the planet victory, which is to get 64 planets at the end of any one turn. So far this has only happenned once in normal "credit victory" RFS games, and is about to happen in the first "no-credit victory" game. Lastly, the most glorious way of winning is to control Earth, for which you get a free game, instead of the measly free set up.

The credit victory can be achieved fairly easily. The idea is to get sufficient income each turn to take you over the 30000 mark before anyone else gets there. Normally someone gets to 30000 credits around turn 22 or so.

There are 3 ways to get credits: getting planets, selling ore on Earth and using Research Planets. Each planet captured is worth between 20 and 60 credits per turn, most being around 25 credits or so. If you collect planets you will find that it will take about 22 turns to reach 30000, by which time you will have about 45 planets. The disadvantage of this is that the other players will see you getting ahead and will gang up on you; meaning that you will start losing planets (and income) quickly.

A better way of collecting credits is by selling at Earth. Around turn 10 or so, the ore prices will have settled out at about 20 credits per unit of ore, so that by selling only 100 units of ore you get 2000 credits, which is about twice the usual player's total income! This strategy needs some careful planning, however, since selling small amounts of ore every turn will lower the price for that particular type of ore very fast to the point where it isn't worth it anymore.

To get around this, the idea is to capture enough planets to put you 2nd or 3rd in credit level (while encouraging the other players to attack the player with the most credits "because he is going to win if not stopped!"), and then turn 20 you sell as much ore at Earth as you can get there.

The other way to get credits is to collect research planets. RP's are worth the same each turn as other planets are, but you get a bonus for owning the research planet, 1cr/turn for 1 RP, 16cr/turn for 2, 81cr/turn for 3 and 256cr/turn for 4 or more RP's. In addition to this the research planet orders can be used to generate credits, but this isn't a usual use and requires some careful thought to make it reasonable to the GM!

So much for credits. In a no-credit victory game, this sort of thing doesn't work, since you can only win by getting 64 planets or by capturing Earth. Getting 64 planets seems to be

the easiest, because a lot of players don't go farther the C or
D ring, and there are a lot of planets in between all those
player's empires. Often in credit victory games you can still be
finding neutral planets in the last turn of the game - just
because people don't explore.

The bottleneck for getting to 64 planets is the number of
ships that you own. A ship can find 1 planet per turn, so that
even assuming that you use 5 ships to explore (which is all you
start with) and assuming you don't land on anyone else's planets
then it will take 13 turns to reach the win. Now, there are many
limits to this, the main one being fuel. If every ship finds 13
neutral planets, that means that it will be using at least 13RO,
probably far more. And then, what about all the other player's
exploring ships - defense units "weigh" as much as 2 fuel, and it
is hard to even build enough defense for 64 planets let alone
carry it there.

In reality, a good rule of thumb is that a ship assigned to
exploration should find 1 undefended planet every 2 turns. This
means that you would need 5 ships working for 26 turns to get
enough planets.

As I said, ships are the bottleneck:- the more you have the
more you can afford to send off to explore, while still feeding
your industry and fighting off your unfriendly neighbours. It is
probably valid to say that for every ship exploring there will be
another on duty moving ore or fighting back home. So this means
to keep those 5 ships "in the field" you need 5 more; say 3 cargo
and 2 battleships, back in the B and C rings.

So, you will need to build ships. 5 extra ships will take 10
turns to build, if you are very careful in managing the ore
supplies. And if you think of them being 0 15 medium cargo
ships, you will need to move 40 units of R4, R5, R6, R7 and 60
units of R1, including the ore you start with on your home
planet, in those 10 turns. So you need to use your cargo vessels
to move this ore only - forget about building industry or mines!

Another problem when you get up to 40 or 50 planets, is that
you can't help having a high credit level:- and since the other
players will spot this, you are likely to be attacked. One way
to get around this is to use your credits for buying ore on Earth
and building at Earth. With lots of credits it is possible to
build a 1 10 medium cargo into a 1 160 super cargo in 4 turns.

Well, anyway you don't want to win by getting 64 planets, you
really want to win by capturing Earth - you get a free game
(worth $80!) for that. So how do you do this?

It requires a different approach to winning by planets or
credits:- it doesn't matter how many credits you have, and it
doesn't really matter how many ships you own; just what sort of
ships they are.

Earth has 200 defense units on it, so you need at least a 200
20 to take out all the defense. This wipes your poor old super
battle in the process. Additionally, you will need about 5
medium or large battles (say 50 6) to drive off the other players
and to cope with the Space Patrol, which has that annoying habit
of attacking the player who shoots at Earth.

At minimun, then, you will need one 200 20 and five 50 6's:
how do you get them? Firstly, the super battle would require 400
units of ore (assuming you started with an O 20) and would
require 7 turns of building for the fighter units, which is a bit
hard when the 50 6's will need 500 ore and 9 more turns to build.

This is where the Research Planets come into it. You can
increase a ship's F units by 50% if that ship is on a RP and
using more RP's increases this amount.   So, if you have one RP,
you would need to start with a 60 20 large battle and to increase
it 50% three times (on turns 10,   14 and 18). Or you could use,
say, 3 RP's for a 100% increase twice with a 50 20.

Additionally, the RP's are useful for solving another problem
- getting enough type 2 and 3 ore. Type 7 ore is common, and the
RP rules let you transmute about 30 units of ore at a time, or
more under certain circumstances.   Another use for RP's would be
in delaying the other players in defending Earth - you can be
sure that they will! All that is needed to defend Earth is for
one ship to arrive each turn, thus keeping Earth neutral even
without the defense units being there.

The upshot of this is that you will need as many RP's as you
can lay your hands on. There are 5 within 3 jumps of everyone's
home planet, but 3 of these are only 2 jumps away from other
people's home planets. This means that some fancy diplomacy will
be required.

Over all, then, two things are important.   Research planets
are essential if you want to go for Earth, and are very useful
for planet and credit victories (e.g. for moving ships quickly to
rich exploration areas). The other thing is the number of ships
that you own. You will need as many as you can get, and in
particular for a planet victory you will need to plan on building
a new ship every second turn for the whole game.

That's it then. Now all 9 players will win in every RFS game
(I think that's the way it's supposed to go.....).

Eric Roche

A Few Ideas on RFS II

The incorporation of a shield unit into RFS ships. My basic idea is for the unit to absorb shots fired at the craft. A new order would be needed to make them slightly weaker. They would not have mass, nor would they alter ship description, except they aren't "always on". They must be charged. For each 2 or 3 units charged, 1 unit or type 0 would be used. The order would be something like "S114 E 10", ship 114 energise 10 shields. The units would be most efficient on a cargo ship which could afford to carry plenty of ore 0. A large fighter must carry fuel (and lower fire power) or expose itself for more power. They would be best if made from type 5,5&6 or 2&6, so that they use some of the rarer ore types.

I also think the game is a little slow in starting, the first few turns are not worth what later turns are. I can see two options. 1) Lower the price for the first five or so turns. 2) Start all players with maps out to C rings, or with ships positioned on B-ring planets at the start, or some such alteration.

One last idea concerning trading. I like the idea of trading at Earth. I would also like to see monetary trading at other places. The easiest way would be to use the Earth buy & sell orders, but allow them to be given at any planet, providing a player other than the planet owner has a ship in orbit of course. The trade would only occur if one place gave the sell order, another the buy. Prices would be as per Earth Market Price. for example, Player1 writes "S114 T 5 P 2", Player2 writes "112 T 5 X 2". So long as S114 was at planet 112, the result would be for 5 units of type 2 to change hands.

Yours Faithfully,
Robbie Gates

FINAL POSITIONS

Final Positions Game 30

Player Name	Score	Ships	Planets	Industry
Fralia	17194	3	9	9
Sassan	14839	10	15	72
Renegade	23806	17	33	157
Satyr	12156	5	7	74
Satan	20771	8	23	85
Z	13263	9	17	63
SMURF	30970	11	41	97
Gloin	24951	10	36	76
Spock	25294	10	26	83

Notes on the Game

SMURF is the first New Zealander to win a game. Renegade captured Fralia's homeworld on the last turn of the Game and became the equal first player to achieve this goal (another player in different game also conquered a homeworld at the same time).

FINAL POSITIONS Game 32 The First No Credit Victory Game

Player Name	Ships	Planets	Industry
Coriolan	13	15	70
Sother	7	32	87
Amra	7	6	81
Spendle	9	14	92
Vom	9	15	79
Tar Aiym	23	27	90
Who	9	36	103
Frey	11	25	86
WIZARD	11	66	99

Game Notes:

WIZARD started a countdown a few turns from winning with all player messages reading 10 ...9....8... etc. He was hoping to convince other players that he was going to make a grab for Earth. But most players started to realise he was nearing a planet victory and started to react but too late. When he was on 63 planets most players had Wizard at 55 planets. As this was a No Credit Victory game the final scores have not been shown. One point of interest for other No Credit Victory Games that even at Turn 30 and one playrr having 66 planets there were about 20 unowned planets left in the game.

FINAL POSITIONS Game 38

Player Name	Score	Ships	Planets	Industry
FALCOR	30313	12	42	112
Astral!	17919	5	8	74
Lorax	13392	4	12	67
Valcray	17365	6	13	75
Pandora	23139	10	30	76
Austpbma	21410	8	23	79
Kalessin	25237	6	34	96
SAII	12041	5	21	65
Zombie	20024	10	19	79

FINAL POSITION Turn 21 Game 39

Player Name	Score	Ships	Planets	Industry
Gabrial	12314	5	10	64
Starman	21413	13	27	76
Freeman	31050	5	22	97
Meldan	18209	12	17	69
BIMULOUS	32085	9	27	76
Zeus	27186	7	24	86
Blake 7	24317	8	39	99
Beaumont	17670	9	21	73
Starlord	16778	10	24	87

Game Note:

MELDAN made a fierce bid for Earth but just failed. His efforts illustrate how difficult the task is without at least one ally. In another game two closely allied players (so closely allied that they casually swap ships and planets between themselves) have also met disappointment over Earth. Previous articles in the Go Between have pushed the line that probably close co-operation between at least 3 players would be needed to achieve this victory condition.
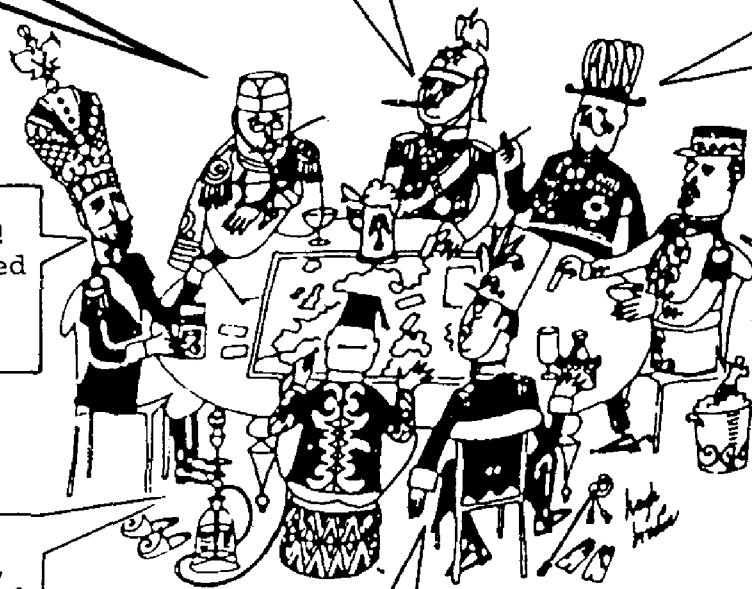
1987 National Diplomacy Championship

All Vienna is hungary for war!

Jawohl mein Herr, order your units to the Institute of Technology, Broadway, near Sydney Central Station. Only $20 to enter but we must pay before 1st June to avoid an additional $2 late fee!

Yes, old chap, it's on the long weekend in honour of Her Majesty's most royal birthday, 6th to 8th June, at 9am each day.

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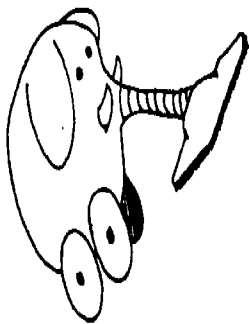
GALAXY 39 REVISITED

Suffering from imminent Black Hole Syndrome the Sirians had bequeathed to nine of the ten highly industrialised civilisations their 45 hyperdrives and accompanying technology.

Bimulous Baggins a descendant of the now remembered Bilbo Baggins received news of the legacy with both delight and disquiet. New toys were a joy but the wise wizard pointed out that prehaps there was evil amongst the other Spacelord beneficiaries.

Accordingly an adventure began to explore the universe and share the trinity of Truth, Justice and the Bimulean Way.

Initially Bimulous built 16 PD, 2 Industry, 1 mine of ore type 1 and 1 mine of type 4 - the first of many mediocre planning decisions. Four planets were discovered, the richest being the one which would ultimately have least bearing on this history.

After two years 8 planets were owned including a research planet; the route to Earth had been determined and radar detected the presence on Earth of ZEUS's ship *Intruder*.

The galatic grapevine revealed that STARMAN had replaced STARLORD as the galatic ruler with most credits, a credit representing universal influence. Thirty thousand of same was enough to buy a directorship in the "Go - Between" and hence control of the universe and everything.

BIMULOUS settled into fifth position easily: close enough to the leaders but not so high as to be considered a threat for universal supremacy. A visit to Earth and a modest purchase identified to all BIMULOUS' score.

By the end of year three STARMAN was about to be replaced as leader by MELDAN who in turn would succumb to FREEMAN'S claims. Zeus had two large cargos on Earth.

Bimulous Baggins was reminded of his ancestral heritage of the "Took" Family: Someone took his 'B' world.

MELDAN shattered the airwaves with a cryptic anti-ZEUS message. Meanwhile STARLORD APM'd for 'peace with all' an offer Bimulous accepted resulting in limited information exchange. It was discovered around this time that ZEUS owned a planet bordering the Research Planet "Eld".

So outraged were the peaceloving hobbits by the loss of a 'B' ring planet that they insisted that a medium cargo ship be converted to a Large Ship. "Defence of the Empire" set forth to reclaim the lost world.

In year 4 MELDAN continued the barrage against ZEUS. ZEUS and STARLORD were on Earth sending fuel and cargo building ore prices quite high.

Having retaken the 'B' world to the tumultuous welcome of the local inhabitants and having discovered that the planet had been looted it was determined to proceed. An evil dark dank planet "Quag I" (aptly named) was discovered to be owned by an evil dark dank spacelord MELDAN. Bimulous in some trepidation attacked the mine type 4. A letter was dispatched to ZEUS. An alliance was formed and the mighty olympian joined in simultaneous efforts to quell MELDAN.

For Bimulous the alliance with ZEUS was the most important factor. All relevant information was exchanged. In years to come ZEUS would cop most of the flack from MELDAN's allies.

In year 6 BIMULOUS failed to push home the advantage against MELDAN. From this point MELDAN could and did dictate the terms of the conflict.

The seventh year found the seventh ship "Endeavour" built as the first battleship. Fourteen planets were owned. FREEMAN continued to increase his lead though ZEUS in seventh position had the second highest scoring rate.

Year 8 brought the second Research Planet "OR". Ship to ship battles proceeded on "Quag I". STARMAN and the long suffering GABRIAL were in conflict. So too it seemed STARLORD and BEAUMONT. Meanwhile ZEUS was experiencing problems with FREEMAN. We knew little of BLAKE7 except that he kept accumulating planets and would shortly pass STARMAN to take on a solid 2nd position.

Year 9 and the assault on MELDAN's 'B' world "Marek" was about to end as the adversary brought in another medium ship. "Endeavour" in further poor timing reached "Quag 1" to encounter a battleship. MELDAN continued to outwit the little hobbit.

In year 10 there was a fairly ordinary use of Research Planet facilities – the increase of cargo units. BLAKE7 now had the the highest scoring rate. MELDAN had 4 RPs, FREEMAN and STARLORD 3 apiece with the others two apiece apart from the luckless GABRIAL surrounded by FREEMAN STARMAN and MELDAN.

BEAUMONT landed on the RP "OR". Measures were taken to defend the planet but peace was made and a small gift – the nice planet "Pluto" – gifted to him.

M.LYCETTE

Year 11 proved good for ZEUS with 2 more RPs and the highest scoring rate.
BIMULOUS had 20 planets and built "Christian Barnard" to counter MELDAN's "Heart
Attack". Despite massive losses the fight for "Quag 1" was accelerated - after all
it was a HOLY WAR !

Year 12 found ZEUS beating MELDAN and MELDAN beating Bimulous. Meanwhile
FREEMAN continued to zoom ahead both he and BLAKE7 scoring exceptionally well.

The thirteenth year brought the destruction of MELDAN's large cargo on "Quag
1". An attack was mounted on the industry. The Earth price of fuel had skyrocketed
to 60 and all measures were now taken to conserve fuel.

FREEMAN had taken his fourth RP and ZEUS was reduced to three. A further
battleship was sent to "Quag 1". ZEUS moved to 4th, STARMAN to 6th and Bimulous
remained midfield two income years behind FREEMAN.

Year 16 and MELDAN's final defence was shattered and the planet liberated. A
fourth Research Planet was discovered and Bimulous took on the highest scoring rate.

Year 17 and the frantic building of cargo units continued. All ships were sent
to collect fuel for a massive Earth sale planned for Year 18. Bad news - the large
cargo 'Alpha' had landed on a fuel depot simultaneously with STARMAN's large battle.
Bimulous moved into 4th and Zeus with steady trading was now first. BRAVO!

In the eighteenth year the noble scientists of that goodly light dry planet
"Quag 1" constructed a highway to bypass STARMAN's unfriendly fleet. Twenty eight
planets were held but resources stretched to the limit. BLAKE 7, Bimulous, FREEMAN
and STARLORD had four research planets each, ZEUS, MELDAN and STARMAN had 3 RPS,
BEAUMONT 2 and poor GABRIAL yet to strike it lucky.

As year 19 commenced the initial trading found Bimulous 2nd to the mighty
ZEUS. MELDAN now showed why 'Quag 1' was not the scene of further battle by landing
a Dreadnought and an armada of battleships on Earth. MELDAN did not attack Earth,
however, merely the supercargo that was there. STARMAN's homeworld scanned. He had
six ships there.

Year 20 and Bimulous reached the lead with 2 super cargos on Earth. FREEMAN
landed 3 super cargos, a large cargo and a battleship. At the end of the year he was
but 333 credits short of universal supremacy.

Revenge was had on STARMAN'S battleship. MELDAN destroyed earth defences.
Bimulous' final large cargo "Great Expectations" landed on Earth brimful of fuel,
which was still selling at 30 credits per unit.

Year 21 and this was the way the world ends - not with a bang but a trade. Victory was obtained. <u>ZEUS</u> made final trading. <u>MELDAN</u> shot at everything in sight and Bimulous' remaining fleet found <u>STARMAN</u> poised for an effort of annihilation. Prehaps the 4th Research Planet shouldn't have been called "Starman's Envy" !

THIS EPISTLE PROVES:

1. Hobbits can rule the universe

2. Despite many many many errors victory can be achieved.

3. With luck, proper timing and a real good ally like <u>ZEUS</u> peaceful traders do have a chance.

4. By winning you have first opportunity to insult the other Spacelords.

5. That history is in the eye of the writer.

6. That I can count to six.

Siriusly this was the hobbit's first galaxy and I <u>DO</u> hope all other spacelords had as much fun as I did.

Bimulous Baggins
Took Cottage, Butterfield Lane, Surrey

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THE FIRST FIVE TURNS - AND THE LAST FIVE.
By Bimulous

I may be slow, prehaps dull, yet it seems to me that the first five turns in *Retrun From Sirius* (RFS) are as enjoyable, intriguing and time consuming as any other turns.

In RFS there is so much to do but limited capacity. There is the time to set the entire foundation of your empire and strategy. There are some options I find interesting:

A. Do the STAR-GRAB and hope none of these early gains are lost and your fleet cut-off from supply.

B. Concentrate on a battlefleet in case Granny Smith is a neighbour.

C. Build industry and large cargos to transport them to planets rich in ore 4.

D. Build mines - which type?

E. Put all efforts into securing Research Planet's -

F. Visit Earth and obtain the best buying price.

G. Be the first to Earth with a Large Cargo and force up prices.

H. Make an early All Player Message

I. Transport ore home - which types?

J. Make sure your small empire is well defended by Planetary Defence Units - how many are needed?

As I enter my third game of RFS I still wonder for hours about the right balance. Therefore there is as much value at the beginning as in the last few turns when you bring your strategy to the test. If that involves trading there is more arithmetic than strategy though admitedly that tremendous game element of timing remains.

Because this is science fiction we can assume a reasonable universe. In such it is not reasonable for the price of one unit of ore to exceed the income from a planet.I would suggest that a better balanced game might incorporate:

a) A <u>maximum</u> selling price of 15 credits for any one unit of ore; minimum 5 credits with buying price 50% higher.

b) A victory condition of 52 rather than 64 planets.

c) A * appearing next to any progressive score when 40 or more planets are owned.

I would anticipate a game lasting 25-30 turns rather than 20-25 as at present. This might also enable a greater chance of an Earth Victory. The suggestions modify rather then change the game - a game which is certainly value for money.
BIMULOUS
PS: My final comment should be remembered when I next ask for a modest Research Planet request!

Final Analysis

by Lindon Flood

February saw popularity polls take place for both FD1 (turn 10) and FD2 (turn 5).

In FD1 Bimulous was once again voted most popular rebel leader, although the 20 points he scored was 6 less than his turn 5 figure. Dorsai and Tantel El Hur were second and third respectively, a much better performance than their turn 5 effort. Mad Marks Marauders moved out of equal last position with one point apparently scored on the strength of his artwork in the Go-Between.

Two of the original 18 players have now dropped out of this game, but the remaining 16 have been heartened by the discovery of the CPU's location and successful attacks upon several factories. Morale is also being kept high by a newsletter that is being published by one of the players.

What will happen to the player that currently has a heavy tank sitting on top of his HQ?

The polling in FD2 was close, but after a recount Arak was declared the most popular rebel on 27 points from the Dagonian Rebels on 26. Five players failed to score any points at all, tying for the John Howard encouragement award.

One player has dropped out of the game, after deliberately provoking the computer into nuking him. Fortunately the missile was slightly off-target and most of his troops survived to be redistributed to his neighbouring rebels and the leader (not necessarily the one that got the most votes).

A sizeable alliance of players has formed and appear to be neutralizing any players that won't join their merry band. Orchestrated attacks upon factories have already occurred. As in FD1 there are one or two players who seem to be more interested in blowing up their fellows than saving humanity.

A possibly useful anomaly in the reporting system has occured to me. When one of your units is hiding from all other units it does not show up on their printout. If it is only hiding from one other commander or the computer it prints as if it weren't hiding at all. This means that a situation can exist where you have a unit hiding from a computer unit in the same hex as another player's unit. He can see you and the computer unit, but the computer unit can only see him. This situation could be exploited to either get the other players unit hammered or possibly to get some easy battle points, although that depends on whether the computer unit uses a direct Fire order or an engage order.

I have also noticed that the CPU in FD1 has not increased its attack/defence points since the start of the game. This means that none of the maintenance robots have gotten through successfully, either because the rebels have eliminated them (unlikely) or there is a bug in the programming that directs them (much more likely). I will be looking into this as soon as time permits.

Death Of A Factory

By Goldstein's Followers
(With help from the Warrior in Jet and Gold and hinderance from Jagpanzer)

Background first. I'm in the upper NE corner behind a range of mountains. This geographic barrier has hindered my expansion. I have sent squads to the west, jeeps south and the trucks are being held in reserve.

Jagpanzer player [17] has killed one of my scouts, mined one of my major traffic routes (a jeep lost 5 defence and he lost a sapper), won't answer my letters, straffed me on turn 7. A real nice guy.

Have also met player [3] Name of Your Choice (now called Raucous Herberts). I lost a jeep and scout to him but that's not the fault of the current player. Warrior in Jet and Gold I also met near the ruins. I have lost track of who else I have talked to especially the player who phoned me with an offer to join the South Coast Alliance.

Back to the Factory

Player [18] told me around turn 5 about the factory. I sent a jeep in on turn 6 to strafe all computer units. It didn't come back....but I did gain 7 points. It started to look like a big fight brewing. Turn 7 (the delay of 1 turn allows me to bring up my squads) sees me bring in 2 crack squads, 1 jeep, 1 crack squad at hex 5 - 14 (in case hex 6-14 gets nuked). A jeep, crack squad and a reinforcement are within two hexes while a truck is bringing up another reinforcement to the battle zone.

Battle reports show an easy fight. Factory hits me for 1, I hit it for 12 points of damage and then kill it. A robot dies at hex 5 - 14. Where are the 5 extra CPU units that were there when I straffed the factory 2 turns ago? I expect they chased after player [18] who must have attacked the factory and then retreated. The only real damaged inflicted on me was when Player [17]..hiss... straffed me for 4 points of damage. I think that he doesn't know that I know that his HQ is at hex 3 - 14. That is a threat if you are new to PBM games and cannot read between the lines.

Now what?
All these forces are now doing nothing, anyone want another factory destroyed? Want to launch an early pre-emptive strike against the CPU? It is starting to get dull up here in the North East.

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES,

Please note new GMs/addresses to whom your moves should be sent.

GAME MASTERS:

84A	84C	84E
Paul Mellor	Duncan Baxter	Darryl Davis
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85 M, and 87 A	87 B
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NEXT TURN DEADLINES
        All moves to the GMs by: FRIDAY 22nd. May, 1987
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