



My gimmicks.

With so many new zines coming out these days, it is hard to build a subscribership up from scratch. A publisher needs something to draw attention to his new product and get people interested enough to pay for it. In short, every publisher needs a gimmick.

I've thought long and hard about what gimmick I wanted to make SK's, and I think I've come up with a couple. Let me know what you think. Nobody even noticed my most obvious gimmick. I used it last issue and I'm using it again this issue. Sleepless Knights is the only zine in existence today that is printed and published completely upside down. (Pause while you check.) Yes, even the staple is moved down to the bottom right hand corner to perfect the illusion. That is one reason why if you're looking for an interesting zine printed an interesting way, SK is for you.

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Fakes in General.

Before I get into my big report on all the fake zines I've received lately, I thought it would be appropriate to make a few comments on fakes in general and how I personally feel about them.

There seems to me to be sort of an anti-fake mood in the hobby at present. Nothing like Boardman's hysteria, certainly, but a sort of apathy towards fakes. People site the perponderance of fakes in recent months. So what? Really good fakes are works of art, and always appreciated. Fakes that aren't quite so good are still almost always enjoyable. One of the worst moments in the hobby's recent history was the end of the strike at the plant where Jack Masters works. (I swear the guy spent the entire strike hunched over his typewriter turning out fakes!) Fakes are not even all that common, really. How many do you get if you don't sub to Black Frog? How many even if you do? Before Y'all #3 there hadn't been one for a couple of months, discounting Peek. I'm not even sure Y'all counts since, like Peek, it isn't even a real zine to begin with.

But when a fake does finally come out, publishers either ignore it or relegate any comments on the fake off to the bottom of the page to fill space and nothing more. Zines don't have to devote as much space to fakes as I did in this issue, but some comments would be nice. Geez....give a young struggling faker a break! Even if no other publisher will do it, I will give a blow by blow report on all fakes I receive, even if it gets to the point where that is all I'm known for.

Lets face it: fakes are fun and you can't really ever get enough of them. We're far from saturation point now anyway. Jack Masters, where are you when we need you?

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My third joke.

- Q. What's another word for genetic engineering?
- A. Designer genes.

Recent Fakes.

As I said last issue, I will be reporting on any fakes I receive. Since I got a couple a fakes since last issue I guess I owe you some reports.

First received was Y'ALL #3. It's six pages of minor laughs. Better than No. 2 but still not very great. It seems to me that it comes down particularly hard on Kathy Byrne and Bruce Linsey (although not at the same time). Linsey has already mentioned Y'all #3 in his VOD and did not seem too perturbed. I hope Kathy can take it as well herself. Does this perhaps indicate that the fake was the work of Brux? Handwriting on the outside matched Bruce's chicken scrawlings. Also Caruso's name has been mentioned as a possibility. It is postmarked from Memphis, TN, so the faker did a thorough job. I worry that this fake was a bit rough on the above mentioned personalities, but I'm sure the whole thing was done in fun.

Rating: Two stars

Perpitrator: Linsey (Best Guess)

Next was the LIFE OF MONTY fake, postmarked from Santa Cruz, Ca., when the real LOM postmark is Oakland. Close, but no cigar. Although this was an attempt to immitate an actual zine, it was easy to catch as a fake because of several small errors, such as change of type face, similar but not identicle handwriting, and the different format (Open instead of the usual reduced digest). Still, the content was typical Del Grande, so if you weren't wary it might have caught you off gaurd. But it had a whole lot more of spelling errors than usual (Berch?). Since Boardman subscribes to LOM I wonder if he got a copy of the fake and if so, if he was taken in by such a vile and malicious deed.

Rating: Three stars

Perpatrator: Masters (outside chance), Linsey?

And now the kicker. The fakes claim to be done by the same person, someone calling himself the "Walrus." Obviously a Coughlan Protogege. If indeed the fakes were done by the same person, then the "Walrus" is getting progressively better at faking since his second work was much better than his (or her, even) first. If only his spelling would improve. (If only mine would improve!) Another possibility is that the faker of LOM used the name he saw used by the Y'ALL faker.

So who is the Walrus? Certainly not Masters (the Walrus himself says as much in Y'ALL #3) since the quality is no where near a Black Frog. Perhaps Linsey, since he has been tied in as a possibility for both zines, but I would think that he could do a better job as he is an experienced faker. I think that the walrus is new to the faking business, but whoever it is I look forward to more.

I of course have my own very strong suspicions as to who the Walrus is, but until I get some confrimation I won't finger anyone. I hope to make the announcement my next issue. Hope no one beats me to him.

Finally, here's an overdue notice that PEEK #2 has come out, published by that little tart Jane Proskin. Since no one else in the hobby has the guts to do something about her I guess I'll be the one: who is this cheap fluzzy and why is every one so hung up on her? Won't someone call a spade a spade and come out against the tramp (besides John Boardman)? She goes around lying about repsected publishers and still gets mentioned in every zien in the country. Well, I'll never mention that little tramp again in SK. Ignorant Slut.

((What's a Diplomacy zine without articles on how to play the game? Nothing much, so I give you now the first in a series of seven articles on How to Play Dip. I start off with....))

Italy.

I just wish to comment that if any of you wish to disagree with me on strategy for any nation, or write up an article about one of them (published or not), I will be happy to give it the same recognition I give myself each issue in this zine. I may not agree with you, but everyone plays a little different (that's what makes Diplomacy a good game) and all ideas are worth while (I think that is).

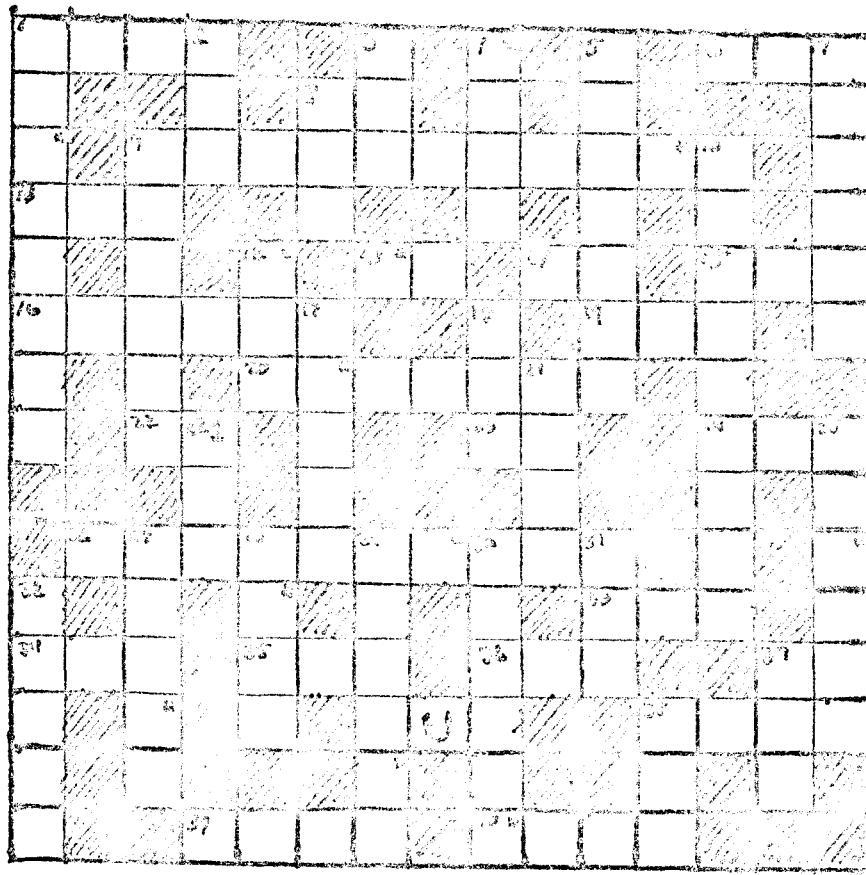
I believe that Italy presents a unique problem in the fact that the player must always choose whether or not to look East or West in his offensive options. Admittedly all players may look the usual direction, but this is usually folly unless one has an unusual and trusting three-way alliance between your usual possible enemies and friends. Unlike this Italy always has the choice, at least until someone is attacked or attacks. Some players have tried to tell me that the only practical way to turn is West, but I refuse to believe this. I believe the balance of power technique is the best technique for Italy. You may try standard techniques if you desire, but for the rest of this article I will deal with the balance of power.

West. This is my favorite admittedly, but not my only method. The best strategy for the balance of power is to gain allegiance to one power out of England, Germany and last and least, France. Once you have gained one of the above be sure that the other two believe you are looking East; and try to gain their support in helping each other attack your true ally (if something goes wrong you can always help them). Of course, during this time you may be changing your actual ally many times. The best in my opinion is to attack France with Germany's aid against a firm English-French alliance. In this situation, you would be able to destroy your opposition, hopefully while your ally is partially destroyed. You would then attack, and hopefully quickly destroy your ally's opponents while giving them virtually nothing. Then you would destroy your small ally. If needed, you would be a big enough power to proceed to the East and get the remaining centers needed for victory. Well, have you been ignoring the East all this time, no way! You would best promote a Turko-Austro alliance for the first year; then you try to subtly break it up and form an Austro-Russian alliance. Turkey is such a good defensive nation that he will probably be able to last until the west is finished off. You could then intervene on whichever side you desired and disrupt the balance of power to your advantage. Having Austria as an ally is never a bad idea, since she can always spread rumors to other nations in the west about whatever you desire.

East. You now have to option of two targets, since it's pretty hard to get at Russia for a while. Always join the losing side. You will probably profit more from this type of arrangement, but use discretion. Austria is usually your best ally, and is commonly the target of an attack by Russia and Turkey (which is an alliance best prevented if you are not one of the members). The military strategy is basically the same as in the West.

Diplomacy Crossword Puzzle.

After you finish the crossword puzzle, try to take all the letters in boxes marked \* in the upper right hand corner and arrange them in the blanks below so they make sense. No prizes for this one; just the satisfaction that you know What Is Really Going On if you solve it. It doesn't necessarily have to be about Dip; it just has to make sense.

ACROSS.

1. Hobby mascot
6. Troleria (abr.)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ what?
9. No place to retreat
11. Rest In Peace
13. Why \_\_\_\_\_?
14. South East
15. Turkish center (abr.)
16. Variant Numbers
19. \_\_\_\_\_ 7 countries
20. That which is cut
22. \_\_\_\_\_ army
23. North East
24. Grab \_\_\_\_\_ s!!!
26. Switzerland
33. Failed
34. English center (abr.)
35. English Center (bad abr.)
36. Sea (abr.)
37. New
38. Land force
39. Super \_\_\_\_\_; novice packet
40. To do other than promised

DOWN.

1. Originator
2. sub \_\_\_\_\_
3. Austrian pro- vince (abr.)
4. To stay put
5. Forced to move back
7. Tretick
8. Astrian Pro- vince (abr.)
9. Italian pro- vince
10. When a unit must retreat
12. Sea (abr.)
17. House \_\_\_\_\_
18. Turkish center
21. Diplomacy: the \_\_\_\_\_ thing \_\_\_\_\_
- 22½. Italian center (a)
25. Country
27. Life of \_\_\_\_\_
28. Friend
29. Balkan S.C.
30. Winter \_\_\_\_\_
31. English center
32. Navy
37. No Moves Received
38. Ambiguous (abr.)

Non zine review zine reviews.

Now you all know I don't believe in zine reviews. But if I did the zine reviews would be as follows (these are all the zines that I get):

Brutus Bulletin. My favorite zine, despite John Michalski's bunker mentality when it comes to politics. This publisher is so far right that he makes McCarthy look like a Red Chinese. But the thing that makes it all palatable is his great sense of humor and his world famous wide open letter column. He'll let you say whatever you want without censoring it as long as he gets his say at the end of your letter. John is quite the helpful person too, willing to help with any schemes or plots or even problems you have. He is also very anti-Trotick/Gaklyn, I hear, but have never seen evidence for this in his zine. But enough of John; his product is tops: excellent repro, letters and games, the not too many articles. Make no mistake about it, BB is a letter zine in the way that Retaliation is a press zine. If you want to know everything that is going on in the hobby, BB is a must.

Black Frog by the infamous John H. Masters, the clown prince of the fakers. Usually funny, this zine is very popular product. It is, in my opinion, a bit high at 50¢ an issue for what has been coming out lately, but the games are free and the occasional fakes are worth it. Besides, Masters has just started two new zines to carry his games so BF should come out a little slower and a bit fatter. But what we really need is for Jack to go back on strike so he can put out BFs at profuse rates. When does your current contract end, Jack? I'm just waiting til he does a fake of me.

Cheesecake. You can't ask for more out of a warehouse zine: repro is always crystal clear, games are easy to read and understand quickly, GMing is excellent, and the price is always as low as this issue of CK. It is the epitome of warehouse zines.

Diplomacy Digest. I'm very glad the hobby has a zine like this one. With nothing but reprints from his extensive archives of vintage dip zines, Mark Berch puts out something of a collectors' item every time he publishes an issue of DD. If you are really serious about Diplomacy and this hobby than this is a must for your collection. If you aren't, think again.

Diplomacy World. What can I say about this zine that hasn't already been said before? (Not even that.) It has the highest subscriber-ship of any Dip zine and for good reason. This is the closest thing to a Official Magazine of Diplomacy that we have. Like DD if you're anything but the most transient player, you really ought to be getting this one. My only gripe is that I wish it could be on time more often. Oh well, I guess my subscription lasts longer this way.

Emhain Macha. For such a funny name this is a pretty good zine. It's got two subzines that are honest to goodness real sub-zines, and are fine in their own right. It's printed on funny paper that Jack Masters dislikes (probably because he can't get that kind of paper to do a fake of EM). Recently EM has gone heavily into Squad leader and back into a lot about Ireland. Okay, I suppose, if you like that stuff like Mike Mills does. My only gripe about it (I always have a gripe) is the below minimum wages Mike pays for articles---only one free issue per page. Mike, give us a break. Two free issues for

Not really zine reviews (cont.).

a page is minimum to be sure at today's high prices for subs. Three would be nice, but I don't want you to do anything against your will.

Life of Monty. A very good zine 10 issues old published by, of all things, a freshman at UC Berkeley. And all I thought they did was hold rallies and burn things. With all his games just about to get rolling at last, Don DelGrande made a fine move and is apparently putting them all in subzines to be included with LOM. I was getting worried that all the games might over power the zine. Don's humor is, ummmm, interesting and, as you can tell by the name, Monty Python inspired. A good zine which I hope will make the top 15 in this year's Leeder poll. Congrats on finally getting your games filled, Don.

Voice of Doom. This is another of the more infamous zines about these days, much to Brux Linsey's delight. One step down from BB's letter column, Bruce has lots of letters each issue, but (but? is this a liability?) they do not generally range from the topic of Dip. VoD is probably the timeliest zine I get, every issue out on time, no excuses. Fine games are run if you're the type that doesn't J-walk, comb your hair in public, or go 60 mph on the highway. In short, Brux is a stickler for rules and seems to love to declare orders ambiguous and then argue over the merits of the various cases. Tro indeed! Usual has good reading material too, if you like letters about the value of crossing your 't's when writing your orders and articles all about theoretically possible but highly improbable orders like  
Linsey is not to be denied.

Whitestonia. Ironic that W would come after VoD since their respective publishers seem to be arch-enemies. W and its pubber John Caruso seem to be a little more relaxed about things than Brux, but when they get together there is no love lost between them. Although I like a few other zines better than W, I can't think of any other publisher I like more than John Caruso. Why? For the simple fact that he takes time to write to you. Write any other publisher and you get a note on the outside of your next issue of his zine; but write John and he will write you a letter and send it seperately. Either that or John is the only one in the hobby that bothers to pay any attention to me when I write him. I really respect him for it. But I like Brux too. (Well, the United States had a two-China Policy, right, so why can't I like em both?)

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And speaking of Bruce Linsey, in his latest VOD he gives me and SK a plug (which I thank him for) but it contained something I'd like to comment on. Brux says Dave Carter "has a terrifically gross sense of humor." Well, well, Bruce. Try this next joke on for size:

Q. Why is it harder to unload a pickup full of bowling balls than a truck full of dead Babies?

A. You can't use a pitchfork on bowling balls.

Code #

In the upper right hand corner of page one is your code number. (if this issue doesn't have one, watch out, you have a fake in your hands.) If you have subbed or plan to sub this will be your very own identification number from now until eternity (or your sub runs out, whichever comes first). All of your issues of SK will have this number in the upper right hand corner. There are some morally corrupt individuals out there who have nothing better to do than fake other peoples' zines. I am not so presumptuous to think that anyone would bother faking my humble little product, but just in case... Also, this number should be given whenever you turn in orders over the phone to me for your game. I will NOT accept phone orders without code numbers.

Oh yes, all the numbers are similar. For instance, they all have the same number of digits. All the numbers, when compared, mean some thing. The first SK contest is to tell me the significance of these numbers. If you're smart you can crack the code with only your number. You have to know something of me to know what you're looking for... The first one to tell me what I want to know gets my next three issues for free.

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First Anniversary.

I'd like to take this moment out to reflect on my first anniversary. Yes, hard as it is to believe, I've been publishing SK now for a month. As I pass this milestone, I look back at my two issues and remember the good old days. Going over this issue I find that it is not as funny as I hoped it would be, but an okay zine anyway. Maybe even a bit better than my first. SK has grown an extra page, too. And as I search for a joke or a funny remark to end this paragraph with, I realize that none is coming so I'll stop here.

Next issue.

So what's in the next issue from the Rubber Soul Press? Heck if I know. I'll figure that one out when I get there. SK #3 will probably have some gamestarts, better articles, and some comments on this issue (I hope). I am still devoid of inspiration to say something funny, so I'll wrap this issue up quickly and try to get in the mails before it's too late. I fear I am already too late.

Blank space.

FREE SAMPLE.....

JOIN A GAME.....

STAYBY.....

(If you publish) TRADE.....

