15
Oct
1974

There are those who make up rating systems,
those who throw up at rating systems,
and those who toady up to rating systems.
This publication is going to throw the fear of God into somebody....

LAPUTA is an occasional publication for the Postal Diplomacy Rating Commission, a voluntary association of curators of postal Diplomacy rating systems. It is automatically sent to members of the Commission. Interested parties may subscribe @15¢ an issue. A copy will also be doposited with the Postal Diplomacy Archives in Lebanon IN. This issue is Pandemonium Publication # 562, edited and published by Rod Walker, 4069 Jackdaw, San Diego CA 92103

Item I:

I'm sure we're all agreed our business should be public, which is why I have offered subscriptions. If there is any objection to this, please let me know.

Further, however, I believe we ought to have an opportunity to conduct our current business without undue outside heckling...if you all understand what I mean by that. Therefore, it will be my policy that subscription issues will not be mailed out for 30 to 60 days after publication. Again, if anyone objects to this, let me know. I believe it will give us more peace and quiet in which to do our thing.

Item II:

Effective yesterday, Douglas Beyerlein is Custodian of the Boardman Numbers (and therefore a member of this Commission by virtue of that fact and his rating system).

By the same token, Conrad von Metzke is no longer a member. He has repeatedly expressed to me his complete lack of interest in our work, any way. He is accordingly dropped from the Commission. Ordinarly, I guess it would be a good thing to take a vote on this matter, but given that Conrad does not want to be a member.....

Item III:

We are now ready to approach the matter of John Beshara. On 3 October 1974, I sent John the following letter:

"Enclosed is a copy of LAPUTA 2. As you can see, the PDRC is about to begin work in earnest, after a considerable delay dating from (unfortunately) 1972. Of course, you have received copies of several other communications, so that you should be aware by now that the PDRC has at last come back to life.

"This letter constitutes an official invitation to the Curator of the Averaged CPCRL--that is, TDA's "Ratings Survey"--to participate in the work of the Commission. Since the identity of this individual has not been made public, I am contacting you and Eric [Verheiden] simultaneously on this matter.

"By tradition, every Curator of an active rating system may be a member of the PDRC if he desires. We have universal participation at this point, save for the TDARS (or ACPCRL). However, since Len Lakofka has stated that he does not consider your listing a rating system, I will be constrained to seek a formal vote of the Commission admitting the Curator to membership. However, I will not propose any such vote until I have a name to put before the Commission.

"Inasmuch as the IDA has an official representative on the Commission, I see no reason why the DA should not, also. In fact, an invitation was issued to that effect in 1972, to which there was no response. Since the TDARS is TDA's official rating system, its Curator, as a member of the Commission, would also be ipso facto the DA's representative. Or, conversely, an offidal representative from TDA would also ipso facto be considered the "Rating Survey"'s Curator.

"As a courtesy,various business items of the PDRC have been sent to you in the past. This policy is followed with LAPUTA 1 & 2. However, to my knowledge, there has been no response by you to any such item sent to you. Therefore, future issues will not be sent (although you may of course subscribe if you wish).

"I am taking this course of action because if the DA has a representative on the Commission, this information pipeline will replace the one formerly established informally with you. And if TDA is not interested in participating in the PDRC's work, I see no purpose in contiuing a one-way input of information which can only be justified if it is an exchange.

"This letter will be published in Laputa in 2 weeks, on the 18th. I will also publish any reply I receive from you or Eric. If none is received by then, I will assume none is forthcoming and that the DA is not, in fact, interested in coöperating and participating with us. I would regret that. It seems to me that the hobby can be advanced and improved only through coöperation. Certainly in the past the Commission and its members have shown their adherance to that principle. It is my hope that your response to my letter will be in the same spirit."

John's reply, dated 9 October, is as follows:

"It would grieve me for you to think I was a bad by by failing to respond to your letter of October 3rd. And I am delighted you acknowledge in the last paragraph of your letter that postal Diplomacy is a 'hobby'. By 'hobby', I presume you mean an advocation pursued for recreation; for, that is what the hobby means to me.

"Neither presently, nor as Chairman of the Board of Directors of THE DIPLOMACY ASSOCIATION, am I interested in the politics of postal Diplomacy. The politics does not amuse me and I, therefore, consider it an undesirable adjunct to the hobby.

"It is unclear to me what the PDRC represents itself to be and what your connection is with that purported 'Commission'. If you will advise me of the nature, goals and membership of the PDRC, it would be most appreciated. Upon receipt of this information and a request from the PDRC to THE DIPLOMACY ASSOCIATION to appoint a representative to the membership of the PDRC, I can assure you of our continued cooperation with those aspects of postal Diplomacy which advance the hobby.

"In the interim, let us maintain the informal arrangement on a personal basis that is established between us and between me and others for the exchange of rating information."

My reply, dated 15 October, is:

"Thank you for your letter of the 9th, here today. It, and this reply, are being published in LAPUTA #4 tomorrow. The points raised in your letter may be quickly answered.

"The membership of the PDRC is listed in LAPUTA #2, which was sent to you.

"The goals of the PDRC, in terms of its immediate business schedule, were published in LAPUTA #2, which was sent to you.

"The nature of the PDRC is both stated and implicit in LAPUTA #2, which was sent to you. Further, John, we have discussed this subject over the telephone sufficiently that I am aware that you already knew the 'nature, goals,and membership of the PDRC' before you wrote your letter of the 9th.

"Your request for information you already have is just so much sandbagging. I am in no mood to put up with it. Either you want to coöperate with the Commission, or you don't. It is as simple as that. Either way is O.K.

"An invitation from the PDRC has already been issued. It is up to you to take action on it or not, as you choose. You know what is going on, and if you wish to participate, now is your opportunity. We are not waiting for you, and the business of the Commission is proceeding apace. When and if you wish to take up the option offered you, we will be glad to take action on it then.

"In the interim, there will be no arrangement for informal exchange of information. The reason for this should be clear to you. In the past, there has been no exchange. Members of the Commission have sent you information, but in return you have done little or nothing. Even when specific information has been asked for, it has not been forthcoming. If you want an exchange of information, then you are going to have to supply your end of the exchange first. As a minimum, we will need an exact list of the games included in, and excluded from, the Averaged CPCRL...that is, the 'TDA Ratings Survey'. In addition, I believe we ought to know exactly who is involved in that listing and in what capacity. It is also necessary to have a more precise indication of the criteria on which a game or a player in a game would be excluded. Only then can we form any clear idea about the system. Yours is the only rating system for which this information is not available.

"When you are ready to respond specifically to our requests and our invitation, the Commission will be glad to take further action. Until then, the matter is in abeyance."

[In a P.S. , I informed John of the time-lag noted in Item I.]

If any member of the Commission disagrees with my stand, please let me know. The basis of my stance is that TDA must coöperate with us as fully as we are coöperating with each other. I hope this will meet with your approval. Unless there is objection, I will assume that I have your authority to continue negotiations with the DA on their participation, using the same guide-lines I have already set up. Of course, I welcome any advice and suggestions. I would guess most of us don't regard their participation as important one way or the other...but it is right and proper that we open the door.

Item IV:

Next issue will be a check-list read-out of Len Lakofka's work on the games we all rate or don't. I have some comments and corrections (to his own listings) from Doug Beyerlein. Anybody else?

Side note: Doug informs me he has a difficulty with the ODD System. Even if he changes his rating criteria, he may not be able to do so retroactively. To remove a game requires calculating the entire system from that time forward over again...and in some cases he lacks John McCallum's original figures. Adding games may present similar difficulties.

PS- I've not heard from Jeff Power— Jeff, are you out there ...?

#30#