

Maelstrom

MAELSTROM #7
September, 1992

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MAELSTROM has drifted several issues on an apparent random walk through a reason for existence. I believe I've thought this through enough to try to explain the vision that I have.

I believe that Diplomacy has sufficient intrinsic appeal to be a major feature of American recreation.

Avalon Hill reports 6000-7000 set a year in sales. Which suggests as high as 150,000 sets in circulation.

The mainstay of both chess and bridge is the local club.

My vision is to tie this together to promote play of the game. An "organization" is the first thing that comes to mind but that misses the point. The gossamer thread that might begin to weave us the beginnings of a fragile nexus is a "service" that is provided that a local club is better off with than without.

There are four elements to this "service" that I envision as a point of departure. They are registry, ratings, features, and entertainment.

Registry - Club identification and contact person. Game report recording, and reporting.

Ratings - Performance evaluations because it is of interest to some gamers.

Features - Strategy or Diplomacy related stories that might help expanded interest or understanding of the game.

Entertainment - Perhaps the greatest contribution of Postal Diplomacy to the world of gaming is the variety of ways to have fun that have been developed. Local club activity might be enhanced if some of this can be shared.

MAELSTROM will not be the vehicle that attempts to provide such a service. MAELSTROM is a Postal Diplomacy publication. What you see developing in these pages is some trial and error experimentation with some of the components of the "service". The Demo game may serve to develop an entertainment item. Archive accumulation and research is to provide feature material.

CAL WHITE wrote a nice note in response to the last issue raising a question that I have theoretically struggled with for many years. If a central recording service is provided how is the integrity of the data maintained. In the 1970's I thought money would be the tool. My more recent reflections tended toward GM certification. In a recent conversation with JIM MEINEL, he suggested that perhaps the route to go is to ignore the problem until it occurs. That is, if the registry becomes important enough for someone to try to "cook" there will be those who will help build the appropriate controls.

His suggestion, which I will probably adopt, is to simply announce the existence of the registry and

its attendant features, and process whatever data arrives. This is a few months away, perhaps not until next spring, and there may yet be some revisions.

I realize that there is limited interest among those that have found a hobby home in Postal Diplomacy, and that perhaps the only potential contribution to the PBM hobby from the success of such an effort is a route to attract new players. Even so, I hope you will reflect on this and share your thoughts. Diplomacy is the best board game in the world. There is no reason why there shouldn't be a Diplomacy club in every town on the continent.

RATINGS

Maelstrom Ratings are designed to reflect current performance measures based on wins and draws, modified by strength of competition and country. We have looked at the top nine positions on the rating list after each 25 games from 1963 for 45 iterations in past Maelstroms. The following 11 iterations bring us to 1986. There are but 14 Everything's yet to go and we should be current.

The BNC for these is Bill Quinn and Steve Heinowski. Melinda Holley assumed the publishing duties, and the quality of material is superb. (Side note: I'm currently playing a game as Austria between Steve in Turkey and Melinda in Italy. I hope the quality of results of their collaboration in that game are nowhere near as good as the production of the Everything's that I just worked with.)

(46) Everything #61 1983

1. Randolph Smyth	11059
2. Tom Ripper	6041
3. Blair Cusack	5588
4. Lee Kendter	5555
5. Don Ditter	5232
6. Dan Stafford	5181
7. Jack Masters	5016
8. Jim Grosch	4902
9. Peter Fuchs	4258

(47) Everything #62 1983

1. Randolph Smyth	11059
2. Tom Ripper	6041
3. Dan Stafford	5567
4. Blair Cusack	5392
5. Lee Kendter	5182
6. Jack Masters	5016
7. Don Ditter	4924
8. Peter Fuchs	4258
9. Bob Sergeant	4060

(48) Everything #63 1983

1. Randolph Smyth	11059
2. Tom Ripper	6041
3. Dan Stafford	6020
4. Lee Kendter	5182
5. Jack Masters	5016
6. Don Ditter	4924
7. Blair Cusack	4387
8. Bob Sergeant	4060
9. Don Swartz	3932

(49) Everything #64 1983

1. Randolph Smyth	11059
2. Dan Stafford	5527
3. Peter Fuchs	5450
4. Lee Kendter	5182
5. Jack Masters	5016
6. Don Ditter	4924
7. Bob Sergeant	4060
8. Keith Sherwood	3964
9. Don Swartz	3932

(50) Everything #65		1984
1. Randolph Smyth	11059	
2. Dan Stafford	5959	
3. Lee Kendter	5182	
4. Peter Fuchs	5070	
5. Jack Masters	5016	
6. Don Swartz	4986	
7. Don Ditter	4924	
8. Bob Sergeant	4060	
9. Keith Sherwood	3964	

(51) Everything #66		1984
1. Randolph Smyth	11059	
2. Dan Stafford	5959	
3. Lee Kendter	5182	
4. Peter Fuchs	5070	
5. Don Swartz	4986	
6. Don Ditter	4924	
7. Kevin Kozlowski	4612	
8. Jack Masters	4543	
9. Keith Sherwood	3964	

(52) Everything #67		1984
1. Randolph Smyth	11059	
2. Don Swartz	6095	
3. Dan Stafford	5959	
4. Peter Fuchs	5401	
5. Lee Kendter	5182	
6. Don Ditter	4924	
7. Ron J. Brown	4612	
8. Jack Masters	4543	
9. Kevin Kozlowski	4422	

(53) Everything #68		1985
1. Randolph Smyth	12095	
2. Don Swartz	7094	
3. Dan Stafford	5959	
4. Peter Fuchs	5279	
5. Lee Kendter	5182	
6. Don Ditter	4924	
7. Ron J. Brown	4612	
8. Jack Masters	4543	
9. Kevin Kozlowski	4422	

(54) Everything #69		1985
1. Randolph Smyth	12095	
2. Tom Ripper	7836	
3. Don Swartz	7094	
4. Dan Stafford	5959	
5. Andy Lischett	5559	
6. Peter Fuchs	5279	
7. Lee Kendter	5182	
8. Don Ditter	4924	
9. Jack Masters	4543	

(55) Everthing #70		1985
1. Randolph Smyth	13175	
2. Tom Ripper	7836	
3. Lee Kendter	7460	
4. Don Swartz	6103	
5. Dan Stafford	5959	
6. Andy Lischett	5313	
7. Peter Fuchs	5279	
8. Jack Masters	4543	
9. Mike Mazzer	4340	

The following list is from results through Everything #71 which was published in early 1987. This list is the "active" players in placement order, their Maelstrom rating, their Dragonstooth placement number (-), and their Calhamer Points placement number. (Only the top 60 available including many players not active in 1986)

This comparison with Dragonstooth Ratings of the same data only to observe that there are similarities and differences. Both Doug Beyerlein and Pete Gaughan have expressed interest in the formula, but I think I will wait until I see the 1992 results before I share that.

1. Randolph Smyth	13175	(3)	(7)
2. Tom Ripper	7836	(6)	(17)
3. Lee Kendter	7460	(20)	(6)
4. Russ Rusnak	5922	(40)	(35)
5. Dan Stafford	5385	(2)	(11)
6. Don Swartz	5328	(13)	(44)
7. Andy Lischett	5313	(5)	(-)
8. Peter Fuchs	5126	(15)	(47)
9. Jack Masters	4543	(7)	(27)
10. Mike Mazzer	4433	(35)	(-)
11. Kevin Kozlowski	4422	(19)	(54)
12. Don Ditter	4385	(33)	(19)
13. Mark Berch	4340	(14)	(46)
14. Ron J. Brown	3908	(12)	(-)
15. Steve Langley	3771	(24)	(-)
16. Ronald Kelly	3466	(80)	(1)
17. Glenn Sherrill	3363	(60)	(-)
18. Mark Fassio	3349	(17)	(-)
19. Keith Sherwood	3327	(46)	(60)
20. Nelson Heintzman	3321	(23)	(-)
21. Kathy Byrne	3212	(32)	(8)
22. Blair Cusack	3171	(62)	(10)
23. David Lincoln	3089	(1)	(-)
24. John Jordan	3086	(89)	(-)
25. John Caruso	3030	(93)	(37)
26. Harley Jordon	2963	(-)	(-)
27. Bill Becker	2788	(81)	(57)
28. Al Pearson	2725	(77)	(51)
29. David Anderson	2715	(-)	(-)
30. David Ezzio	2689	(30)	(-)
31. John Kador	2674	(-)	(-)
32. Eric Ozog	2663	(-)	(-)
33. Mark Frueh	2662	(39)	(-)
34. Peter Reese	2638	(56)	(-)
35. Stephen Lee	2621	(-)	(-)
36. James Wall	2613	(75)	(-)
37. Jack Brawner	2592	(-)	(-)
38. Bob Acheson	2543	(-)	(41)
39. Dave Marshall	2537	(82)	(-)
40. Dave Ditter	2526	(63)	(26)
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43. Edi Birsan	2365	(-)	(4)
45. Stan Johnson	2297	(-)	(-)
48. Jim Meinel	2250	(78)	(-)
49. Dave Grabar	2204	(-)	(-)
50. Tom Swider	2196	(-)	(-)
54. Fred Winter	2042	(-)	(-)
58. J. Ron Brown	1926	(42)	(32)
67. Marc Peters	1847	(-)	(-)
68. Melinda Holley	1833	(-)	(-)
76. Bruce Lindsey	1677	(70)	(-)
79. Pierre Touchette	1656	(-)	(-)
82. Don Williams	1613	(-)	(-)
92. Brad Wilson	1396	(-)	(-)
94. Derwood Bowen	1341	(-)	(-)
95. Bob Olsen	1322	(-)	(-)
99. Steve Courtemanche	1281	(-)	(-)
101. Michael Quirk	1235	(-)	(-)
103. John Michalski	1209	(-)	(-)
112. Paul Milewski	1015	(-)	(-)

MAELSTROM PRIZE GAME #1

Housename: Allan B. Calhamer
 Prize List: Winner - \$100
 2 way - \$45/ea.
 3 way - \$20
 4 way - \$12
 5 way - \$ 7
 6 way - \$ 4
 7 way - \$ 2

Draws Include All Survivors
 Abandoned positions are CD
 Press - Dark Gray (Only your country name is protected)
 (Maelstrom does not print personal attacks -
 Editor's sole discretion)

England - Larry Botlmer
 France - Gary Behnen
 Germany - Chris Hurley
 Italy - Eric Voogd
 Austria - Bob Acheson
 Russia - Arthur Shulman
 Turkey - Marc Peters

Spr. 01 Deadline - September 25, 1992

ARCHIVES

The following puzzle appeared in Bruce Lindsey's Voice of Doom, issue #12, April 1980. Six correct solutions were submitted including Mark Berch, Randolph Smyth and Andy Lischett. Bruce offered 13 free issues of VoD for a right answer, so in the spirit of that wonderful publication, I promise to send copies of the next thirteen issues of Voice of Doom that are published to anyone that submits a correct solution. (There may be some delay.)

THE GREAT SHERLOCK HOLMES DIPLOMACY MYSTERY

I was enjoying afternoon tea one fine day at the residence of my good friend Sherlock Holmes when the postal delivery came. As he always had been since joining the postal Diplomacy hobby, Sherlock was eager to open his mail. Today, however, there was but one item in the post - and that was a zine in which Sherlock wasn't even playing at the time.

"Well, Watson," said he, "a rather light delivery today, I say! Only one zine, and I'm not even...hullo! What's this notice on page five?" I leaned over his shoulder. Page 5 was all but illegible - in fact only one sentence could be read. I read it aloud: "Will Sherlock Holmes (and it gave his address) please submit spring orders for Germany and assume the position, as Horace Morris has resigned?"

"But Sherlock," I protested, "you can't do that! You don't know who the other players are, nor do you know what happened in 1901; and even worse, you don't even know where the German units are!"

"Well, Watson, it would be easy enough to find all that out just by asking the GM, wouldn't it? But it would be more fun to let the players tell me!" he replied.

"I can see how you'd get the other players' names from their letters," I said, "but how on earth will you find out what happened in the game? The players aren't so likely to give you that information!"

"They may not mean to, but they will," was the mysterious answer to that. I decided to wait it out and see.

In the next postal delivery, sure enough, came seven letters - one from each of the six other players and one additional note on which the name couldn't be made out. "I'm going to proceed on the assumption that none of these players would lie to a standby just coming in, Watson," Sherlock proclaimed as he opened the first letter.

The first letter read as follows:

ENGLAND to the new GERMANY

Glad to see Horace Morris leave the game. Let me fill you in on how things have gone from my standpoint. After the spring 1901 moves I saw that the only way I could be 100% certain of taking a supply center (and thus getting a build) was to support myself into it. Lucky I did, too, else I wouldn't have got in!

Well, I'm keeping my deal with France and not building anything in Liverpool in this game until after '04. And my only army (in London) never was in a position to be convoyed. So you can see that things have been tight around here!

I must say, that was an interesting move that Horace made last fall with his fleet - into a supply center.

Keep in touch

Sherlock then opened the next letter, which read:

Sherlock,

Perhaps you're wondering why two of my units are currently residing in Germany. Well, it's like this,

see. I snuck the first one in last spring, and Horace could not stop the second from coming in the fall anyhow. Maybe that's why he quit.

Well, since neither of them is in a supply center, I'm sure you can fend me off for a while. Rots o' ruck!

Your enemy,
Russia

Sherlock sat puzzled for a moment before opening the third letter.

The next letter was longer, and read as follows:

ITALY to GERMANY

Dear Sherlock,

Welcome to our game, and good luck - we BOTH may need it! That's what I get for trying to get three builds last fall. Two builds! Since armies seem to be unfashionable in this game (only two countries built any armies) - I've built only fleets.

Sorry to see that two-country attack on Horace's unit which dislodged it, but Horace never was a good negotiator. But the lousy position is really his fault and his alone, for he left two armies unordered in the fall and wound up with no armies in supply centers in the winter! That's good old Horace Morris for you!

Say, though, look at my pieces! Do you realize that I can possibly take all but one of Austria's current supply centers by the end of '02? Maybe we can work together!

Best

To me all this meant nothing, but Sherlock had a determined look on his face as he opened the fourth letter. It read:

AUSTRIA to GERMANY

Sherlock,

Well, blimey! Aren't I the lucky one! Nobody from outside has stepped onto Austrian soil in this game (although my self-bounce in the fall sure did preserve THAT record)! I guess I should have known better than to vacate all of my home centers on the first move of the game!

Too bad nobody refused any builds this winter. In fact, it's too bad nobody missed any orders at all, other than the two unordered armies in the fall.

Sincerely,

Sherlock then opened the next letter.

Dear Sherlock,

Good luck in our game. Maybe German'll get to build in '02, unlike '01! Well, anyhow, I did what I thought best. I saw after the spring that I could pick up three neutral supply centers, but only took two of them.

Say, it's too bad that our GM doesn't allow us to build fleets inland - if he did I would've built one in Paris just for kicks.

Isn't it neat that after S '01 only two fleets were not in the water?

Yours truly
FRANCE

Sherlock then proceeded to open the last letter.

TURKEY to GERMANY

Woe is really me! Though two of my units moved last fall, neither move was into a supply center. So now I'm playing without any armies!

I'm afraid, therefore, that I can't help you in this game.

Disheartenly yours,

Finally, Sherlock picked up the last note (actually, a post card) on which the name could not be read. The card read as follows:

Sherlock-

This is a follow up to my letter, which you should also be receiving today. I just had a wild idea. After seeing the winter adjustments, it occurs to me that I can use my newly-built army to support a move in the spring, and then in fall 1902 I can put it in Norway via a Multinational convoy! What do you think of this idea?

See you later,
(name and country illegible)

P.S. Beware of France, I don't think he's as dumb as he may sound!

After looking over this assortment of stuff, Sherlock sat quietly for a minute or two. Finally, I interrupted the silence. "Sherlock," I said, "forget it! Just write the GM and find out the positions from him! You'll never figure it out from that mess!"

"On the contrary, Watson, not only can I figure out the current position in this game, but - assuming that nobody would lie to a new standby - I can now tell you EXACTLY EVERY SINGLE ORDER THAT WAS MADE IN 1901! Elementary, my dear Watson!"

Well, I stood there opened-mouthed for several moments, for I certainly saw no way to solve this problem. Can you, dear reader? The task, while not elementary, is indeed possible! In order to solve the problem, you must give the entire history of the game, through and including winter 1901. Go to it - because the prize is thirteen free issues of The Voice of Doom!

MONEY GAMES

Having spent twelve or so years in organized chess where everything is cash prize driven I was a bit surprised at the resistance to money prizes for Diplomacy.

In trying to recruit KATHY CARUSO for the Prize game she explained that she didn't like money games because 'people get too nasty'!

In his acceptance letter LARRY BOTIMER shared a similar viewpoint.

"I personally think money games are bad for the hobby. In the past some very ugly rumors got started around money games."

ROBERT BANOZIC declined to play primarily because he is dropping the PBM hobby, but also shared:

"Dip is cutthroat enough in my view without inserting a pecuniary element."

And then there is MICHAEL GONSALVES. Michael declined his invitation and then went on to share that by design CRIMSON SKY has mentioned polls and ratings a grand total of zero times and:

"...the last thing this hobby need is a list of 'grandmasters'"

Michael was conciliatory after that. Still I know that that particular communication represents the sentiments of a healthy segment of the PBM hobby. In re-emphasizing the first page, the Maelstrom objective is not to foist silly adornments on the PBM hobby. It is to explore what might be useful in promoting local Diplomacy clubs and FTF play.

In response to the comments about cash prizes I guess that I have to be shown on this one. I lived with massive egos and cash prizes in chess for so long I can't conceive how they might be intrinsically bad.

NEWSFLASH: In the PETE GAUGHAN decline he said that he could not take on anything new as he would be assuming the Zine Register post after next issue! Wonderful!! I think Pete is one of the most literate writers in the hobby. Tom Nash and Garret Schenck are tough acts to follow, but Pete has the potential to improve on excellence.

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