

NORTHERN FLAME

NO.35

ATTACK OF THE TURBOPHREAK PHRINGE...

**PAGE
FOUR**



BASS NOTES

1- This issue of **NORTHERN FLAME** is dedicated to A.J.Casson, the last surviving member of the Group of Seven. I'm not an art fan per se, but you didn't need to be to appreciate how this group of artists captured the essence of the Canadian wilderness and spirit in their work. If you are not familiar with the Group of Seven, I'd suggest you get yourself to a library and check them out.

2- Hopefully, this issue will be better layout-wise than last issue was. As I explained in my addendum, I was trying to do the DTP work at five in the morning last time and consequently had pages in the wrong order. Actually, they were on the proper pages, they were just on the wrong sides. Sigh. Anyway, I have a further reason to insist on professionalism in NF. I'm doing some DTP work for Sovereign Messenger, for whom both Mike Agnew and I toil. I'm doing promotional flyers for them which they mail to their customers. So far, I've done three for them at \$25 a pop. Since they want one every week, this will help pay for that trip to DipCon we're taking this year...

3- Speaking of DipCon, I've been getting a few flyers from Gary Behnen and Vince Lutterbie. They're a bit short on practical facts (where to stay, how to get there, etc), but I'm sure that'll be forthcoming. For those of you who are interested, it's being held in Kansas City, MO on July 3-5, 1992. It's \$25 before May 31, \$30 between June 1/July 2, and \$35 at the door. Rex Martin will be there as Keynote Speaker. Player of the Year and DipCon XV champion Gary Behnen will be holding a seminar on how to play, and yours truly will be holding one on how to publish (after last issue, yeah, right... Shut Up, Jack!). For more information, contact Gary Behnen at 13101 S Trenton, Olathe, KS 66062 ((913) 829 1474) OR Vince Lutterbie 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall, MO 65340-2837 ((816) 886 7354. If anyone's interested, The Fair Lady, Lorie of Holt will be coming with me, as will the halflings, Squire Jamie and Princess Amanda (Lorie's kids). They expect to raise a little hell with The Fair Lady Glenda of Hartwiggias.

4- Information should be going out shortly regarding CanCon. All I can tell you so far is that it will be held July 31-August 2, 1992 at the Scarborough campus of the U of T (same place). You can contact Doug Acheson at Unit 5, Suite 330, 320 Yonge St, Barrie, Ont L4N 4C8 for more information.

5- For you Michiganers, David Senzig passes on news of a Con to be held in Grand Rapids, Saturday April 25, 1992 9:AM-11:PM in the Knights of Columbus hall, 1140 Muskegon NW, Grand Rapids, MI. Contact Will Holden at 1023 California Way, Grand Rapids ((616) 454-0112). It's \$5 at the door and Herb Barents is expected to be there. Also available will be Civil War Miniatures, 3D Killer Kites (don't ask), and Battle Tech.

6- It's Hobby Awards time again. Ron Cameron is looking for nominations for the 1992 Miller, Walker, Koning, and Holley Awards. Unfortunately, he always seems to time his mailings to me until it's too late to do any good. Deadline is March 15, 1992, so you better hurry. The Don Miller Memorial Award is for Outstanding Service to the hobby. I'm rather fond of this one as it's the only one I've ever been nominated for. The Rod Walker Award is for literary excellence. The Koning Award is for Outstanding play of the game and the Holley Award is for quantity participation. Oh, and a donation to help pay for plaques/trophies would be appreciated. Even a couple of bucks won't do anything but help. Ron's address is 14790 Amorose, Lake Elsinore, California 92530.

7- Phil Reynolds sent along the latest issue of Dipadeedoodah and I must say, it was a very good read. Phil eschews hobby tradition for a reading zine by not having a letter column. The point, I believe, is to reduce the workload by curtailing the typing involved. I can relate to that. Especially interesting is Phil's article on his experience writing those infamous reviews for the Zine Register.

Another thing Phil is doing is running his "Hobby Favourites Awards". Again, I received this almost too late to include because the deadline is April 11, but in case you're interested enough to get a reply off to him right away, you are to tell Phil your (1991): Favourite Dip Variant; Favourite Player; Most Feared Player; Favourite Press Writer; Favourite GM; Favourite Hobby Personality; Recognition for Outstanding Hobby Service; Favourite Feature Writer; Favourite Subzine; Favourite Zine No Longer Being Published; Favourite "Playing" Zine; Favourite "Reading" Zine; Favourite New Zine; & Favourite Overall Zine. Phil also wants to know your: age bracket, State (hmmph) of residence, Years playing FTF Dip, years playing PBM Dip, Favourite Country to Play, Least Favourite Country to Play, and general playing style (I wouldn't answer the last one). Phil's address is #4286, 4202 Fowler Av, Tampa, FL 33620.

8- I screwed up last issue in CDO News. Claude Gaudron's street number is 620, not 629. If you had your vote returned, phone Claude and I'll add the phone charge to your NF sub credit. His number is (204) 233 5826.

9- This should have gone in earlier. I guess I shouldn't call it the ZR effect, but I AM having trouble filling my game openings in NORTHERN FLAME. I currently have Wiedemeyer, Gill (pd), Touchette and (maybe) Harshberger/Craig for Rob Lesco's Regular Diplomacy game. Flintlock II has Phil Reynolds and Eric Young. The GunBoat now has six players signed up and should start before next issue. C'mon people. I never had trouble filling games before Zine Register #19 came out. I'd hate to think that really WAS the cause...

10- Speaking of games, all players should not that there have been a couple of House Rule modifications for RegDip. See Andy Lischett's letter and my reply in The Mailman Cometh.

11- While I still have many copies of the 1991 CDO Census available, Douglas Kent also has the new PDO Census ready. His address is 54 Cherry St, #211, Rahway, NJ 07065 USA.



EDITORIAL

POSTAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 90S: FANS VS THE TURBOPHREAK PHRINGE

When postal Diplomacy started in 1963, the people involved came from science fiction fandom. Consequently, while it was acknowledged that postal Diplomacy was a game of strategy and tactics, the most important aspect of it was the opportunity it gave for creative writing, ie press releases. Few games ran that didn't have reams of press as players got into good natured verbal battles, many in the nature of continuing stories whose plotlines may or may not have paralleled the progress of the game.

This state of affairs lasted until the early 70s.

With the emergence of Avalon Hill, SPI and others as legitimate game manufacturers, a large group of people who thought of themselves as "wargamers" were created. These people were looking for the ultimate battle simulation game. At one time it was estimated that every major battle or war in all of recorded history had its own game based on it. The average wargamer thought nothing of studying 40 page rulebooks and setting up games that would literally require months of real time to play from start to finish.

Sometime around 1969 and lasting for nearly a decade, postal Diplomacy experienced an influx of wargamers looking for new horizons. This "wave" produced postal Diplomacy's biggest expansion and gave it the numbers it needed to survive. Many of Dipdom's finest players and personalities came in on the crest of this wave: Doug Beyerlein, Walt Buchanon, Lew Pulsipher, Robert Correll, Harry Drews and others (even your humble editor admits to being part of this wave when I joined the hobby in 1974).

For the most part, wargamer and science fiction fan have always gotten along and even profited from the relationship. Many wargamers lost their "battle faces" and learned to enjoy the relationships they found with others in the hobby. Many SF fans learned to think of Dip as a S&T game and took pleasure in writing articles about playing Diplomacy. Lord knows, I no longer think of myself as a wargamer.

Today, however, it seems as if this dichotomy is no longer working. The SF fan, with his interest in the personal side of the hobby and laid back attitude toward hard core gaming is almost an extinct creature on this side of the Atlantic. Meanwhile, the wargamer, with his strict interest in gaming, strategy and tactics is almost totally dominant. This is unfortunate, I think, as both sides have long contributed to making this hobby both pleasant and interesting.

VERTIGO, published by Dipdom's *Enfant Terrible*, Brad Wilson, has always been the self-styled (and quite correctly so) conscience of the hobby. Brad has a rare way of seeing things as they actually are, not as he or others, WANT to see them. Combine this with a true desire to make the hobby a better place to be and VERTIGO is always a worthy read.

In the latest issue, there is a discussion which I have found very interesting and relates to what I wrote above. The whole discussion is prefaced by a letter from Tom Nash to Iain Bowen which Tom also passed on to Brad. The text is as follows:

"As you may infer by all sorts of bits of information, I am thoroughly burned out of the hobby. I am working 10 hour days at a minimum, and then coming home to two kids gives me exactly

zero energy or motivation to be involved in games. I can hardly think of anything I wish to do LESS under these circumstances than lick envelopes, adjudicate a racing round in a RR game, or set up a Dip board to write letters and orders. Thus, I'm folding, resigning from most games, and probably will get down to a half dozen or less zines I see. JCAHO, the Joint Commission on Healthcare Organizations, the credentialing body for American hospitals, is coming in six months. Until then, my work life will simply preclude any active role in the hobby, even if I was enthusiastic and motivated, which I'm not."

"I was getting close to this even before work got crazy, though. The US hobby has simply changed in a very unappealing way to me. The focus on games only or, as we say, Turbo Freakdom, that is currently rampant here, has led this to be an extraordinarily unfannish hobby. And frankly, Dip alone isn't worth the effort for me without the fannishness. In addition, the surliness and nastiness is getting out of hand. Not feuding, mind you, nobody's choosing up sides, but just plain nastiness between people who lose all perspective that it's a goddamned hobby and a GAME, for chrissakes. Two examples: the savaging of Don Williams, the ex-BNC who admittedly did do a bad job staying anywhere near current on assigning numbers or publishing his stats but was, mind you, in the midst of a nasty divorce, by many pubbers who felt he should be banned from ever PLAYING again because of his performance. Two, Stan Johnson's recent article in Diplomacy World. While I agree with the POINT of his article (play to win), the churlishness and plain nastiness with which he portrayed his naysayers is all too common in hobby press, articles, letters, etc. This hobby has gotten sick, and lost all perspective."

"The loss of virtually all the really good, big and friendly chatzines, and the continuing excoriation of them when they don't meet Turbo Freak standards of timeliness has, it seems, most pubbers running scared ((into doing)) warehouses and little else."

"Of course, one can dismiss this all as the rantings of a chronically late pubber who's bellyaching because he's not appreciated, but to do so, I think, would be the easy way out. Dissenters would point to NORTHERN FLAME's 2nd straight year winning the Runestone as evidence that fannish zines are still appreciated, but I think it's an anomaly, not a trend. The very group (Hood et al) who campaigned long and hard to make timely game reports the ONLY value to consider in zines (and David is the contact point for most new hobbyists, and admittedly selectively recommends only certain zines to them, thus perpetuating HIS concept of the hobby and robbing it of the rich, diverse, polymorphous and heterogenous nature that made it so appealing when I entered; there was truly something for everyone and every taste), campaigned with all the stops out for a repeat for NF in the Poll. I don't know why. If I were a tad more paranoid, I might speculate that the CADs couldn't bear the thought of extreme lefty and Dixie basher Garret Schenk winning."

"Allow me to state for the record, David is one of the more enjoyable people I have met in the hobby, and I am not accusing him of consciously or deliberately sabotaging zines or styles of pubbing or participating in the hobby. However, as DW editor, David has an enormous responsibility to be OBJECTIVE and promote the hobby in all its forms, flavours and styles. He has not done this, but rather has strongly advocated ONLY the 'timeliness isn't everything, it's the ONLY thing' view of the hobby. Because of his enormous influence in his role at DW, the hobby has grown in the direction he has chosen for it. And I personally think it's a poorer place as a result. We are truly becoming a hobby of cranky, obnoxious, Turbo Freaks who don't give a damn about fannishness and its ideals, but only if A Bur-Mun succeeded or not. Too bad"

Too bad. Definitely. It may signal the end of the hobby. When I came into the hobby in 1974, it was under the tutelage of John Leeder who was/is famed for his laid back style. The Canadian zines back then were zines like Paroxysm, Cum Grano Salis, Fol Si Fi & Der Fliegende Hollender. Of all the Canuck zines, only G*A*S*S*E*D & Ptarth could be considered warehouse zines. The hobby, still strong in its SF contingent was a very fannish place to be and I enjoyed the experience. Today, only NF & Excelsior are really fannish. Coming back into it after a decade's absence was a bit of a shock. Games and timeliness were the rule and there were very few fannish zines. Unfortunately, I missed Voice of Doom and Europa Express. From what I heard of them, they were extra large 1970s type zines.

Brad Wilson, in his editorial following Tom Nash's letter makes several recommendations to improve things that bear comment:

1) *"Garret Schenk has to go as editor of the Zine Register."*

Possibly, although it would be better if Garret would simply learn to emphasize positive aspects of any zine reviewed. We do not need someone who seems to try to build himself up by knocking others down having the access to novices that the position of ZR editor has.

2) *"Try to be more understanding of others' troubles."*

3) *"Accept that this is a hobby, and treat it as such."*

Certainly. Anyone who gets worked up to the point of getting angry over the lateness of some game results or something that happened in a game has deeper problems than appear on the surface. A hobby is not only something you do for FUN, it's something OTHERS do for fun as well. Remember that.

4) *"As a GM, think about censoring press that is merely ((inflammatory))."*

Lately I have seen some pretty rude things written in a few of the zines I get that have me wonder about the writer. In a game in SO I LIED, one player sent a long letter to all the players in the game saying some pretty personal things about former NF publisher, Frank Easton. I know Frank and I know that the remarks were not only libellous but certainly uncalled for. Unfortunately, this sort of press writing seems to be getting more and more common.

5) *"Remember that different things turn different people on."*

The wargamer point of view is certainly a valid one. Diplomacy, due to the human element, is a game very much as complex as chess and, therefore, is as legitimate as any war game. HOWEVER, there are many people in the hobby who enjoy the NON-game human aspects of the hobby. In my own case, I look at the hobby as a gathering of pen pals looking for an exchange of ideas and interesting discussion. In that view (which I share with former PASSCHENDAELE pubber, François Cuerrier), PUBLISHING is my hobby, not Diplomacy. I only run games to a) attract readers, and b) give me a reason to come out regularly. I'm sure the TurboPhreak Phringe would be aghast at that statement. For the hobby to maintain (recover, actually) it's unique flavour, the TPP will have to stop promoting their point of view as the ONLY one.

6) *"Encourage ((fannishness))"*

I'd like to see some new zines start up devoted to having a good time. There are already enough good places to play. It's been often stated (most recently by Kevin Brown last issue) that "small zines are the backbone of the hobby". That's nonsense. Small zines are the backbone of the GAME. Big fannish zines like BEEN THERE, DONE THAT, VOICE OF DOOM, HOUSE OF LORDS, EUROPA EXPRESS and, dare I say it, NORTHERN FLAME, are the backbone of the HOBBY. Without them, all we have is a bunch of faceless names sending in orders to equally faceless GMs. When that happens, the hobby will have lost all of it's colour and flavour. I guess the word is personality. By the way, did you notice that all the zines (except NF) that I named are dead? Surprised? You shouldn't be. That's the way the HOBBY is going.

Just to summarize, the Diplomacy is becoming increasingly dominated by wargamer types, interested solely in games and the playing thereof. This has resulted in people forgetting that this is a hobby and villifying anybody who doesn't meet some strict wargamer standard. These people are the TurboPhreak Phringe. to coin a phrase. Unless the TPP learn to be more tolerant and the hobby regain its lost fannishness, the hobby will no longer be a fun place to be, at least for most of us.

THE MAILMAN COMETH!

ANDY LISCHETT

Your AIDS chart in #33 is sideways. At least, it's sideways compared to most charts, which would put the years on the horizontal axis to indicate an increase rather than a decrease when one scans from left to right.

((I copied the chart, graphic and all, from a textbook. I had no problem interpreting it and I thought the style was refreshingly different.))

I like your NVR houserule...did you steal it from me or did I steal it from you? Actually, I stole it from Randolph Smyth a long time ago, but maybe he stole it from you.

((Actually, I stole it from Bruce McIntyre, who I thought originated it. Now that I think about it though, I'll bet he got it from Randolph too. McBruce?))

Your houserules don't cover what happens if more than one draw passes; say AF & AFT. Also, I don't like Rule 10.B.iii: A draw must include leaders supply centre-wise. If I have 10, my faithful ally has 13, and our opponent with 11 realizes that he can't win, why shouldn't he be allowed to concede to me and my ally? In 1986V in CHEESECAKE, a 17 centre Austria conceded to England (14 centres) and France (3 centres) because he knew he couldn't take an 18th, stop E/F, or break up their alliance. If you are willing to do away with DIAS (*Draws Include All Survivors*), why not be willing to let the players decide who the important powers are? If you fear joke 1 centre concessions, just allow yourself, the GM, a veto.

((The wording wasn't the best on 10.B.iii. I meant for it to make sure the player with the most centres on the board was in the draw. It was only pluralized to cover the case where two (or more) powers tied for most centres. Therefore, your first example wouldn't be forbidden by the rule. As for your second example, I'm tempted to force a player in the position of that 17 centre Austria in 86V to fight on (I would have NEVER voted for a draw that didn't include me in his position. Even if it meant playing on til I was eliminated, if I had been that player, Andy, you'd still be running it in CHEESECAKE). But your basic logic still applies, let the players decide. Okay, Rule 10.B.iii NOW reads as follows: "A voted draw does NOT have to include all survivors, but the GM reserves the right to veto any draws he considers to be in jest. This will be known as the Bowie Kuhn Rule and is intended to preserve 'the sanctity of the game'." Fair enough, Andy? Oh, and new rule 10.B.v states: "In the event of more than one draw vote passing, all powers included in ANY passed draw will share equally in the resultant draw."))

BRENT MCKEE

When we enter something like the baseball predictions contest, we are, mostly, operating logically, based on past performances and form, which is the way the team has behaved in Spring training and in the first few games of the season. In truth, it is just like handicapping the horse races. A handicapper will look at the previous races that the horse has run, how the horse performed in its training runs before the actual race, and where the horse is located in the starting gate. Trouble is that while such a system will normally produce fairly accurate results if carefully and objectively applied, it doesn't take into account imponderables. In racing, the imponderables include the horse's health, the health of the rider/driver and even the trainer. In baseball, the imponderables which can't be known before the season starts include injuries to players who have a history of not getting injured, the relationship between players and manager and even owners, and trades. Predictions are based on the logically measurable factors; results (especially last year) are plagued by imponderables.

((I'd love to see Chaos Theory applied to pro sports. But, BTW, if you are using only

"logically measured factors", you're never going to be a good predictor; instinct is a major factor. Mind you, instinct is developed by a careful study of "logically measured factors", but is then allowed to "flow".))

Hey! Watch what you say about that fine product of the Saskatoon Blades, Wendell Clark. You may call him a goon, but just look how the Leafs have performed with him in the lineup, as opposed to the way they have performed without him. Besides, during my late and not particularly lamented attempt to become a teacher, I spent two weeks in Kelvington, which is where Wendell comes from. My landlady was Wendell Clark and Joey Kocur's grandmother. *((Oh yeah? Did she show you any slask marks on her legs to prove it?))* In truth, the sort of hockey played in the Western Hockey League tends to be more physical, chippy even, *((dare we say, dirty...))* than the type of hockey they play in Ontario and Quebec. I'm sure Michael Hopcroft would agree.

((You're right about Wendell Gascoigne, er, Wendell Clark's value to the Leafs. That, I feel, is a sad condemnation of the sport of hockey in general. I still say his sort would not be missed in a game of pure hockey. Now go ahead, ask me to define pure hockey.))

Congratulations are in order. Toronto is going to get a World Basketball League team in 1993, as a natural rival to Hamilton. Admittedly, it isn't the NBA, but then again, the ticket prices are not as high as NBA ticket prices would be. In Saskatoon, the price is \$7 for a regular seat, \$12 for court side. I suspect it is all a ploy to get The Sports Network to cover the league. I can't see it here, but Michael Hopcroft, living in a NBA city can watch Sports Channel America and see a basketball game played in Saskatoon. Go figure.

((That's the league where max headroom is 6'7", no? Bet it flops. T.O. fans only support big league teams. If the NBA would give us a franchise, you'd see a success story to rival the Blue Jays. They won't though...))

Since you get LEPANTO 4-EVER, I assume you have noticed the little digs that Mark Nelson has taken at the CDO. These can be summed up as "The existence of CDO should be taken with a grain of salt" and "Anything that organizations like the CDO and the DAA (Diplomacy Association of Australia) do could be done by one person in half the time". (I am paraphrasing wildly here) *((wildly, but accurately. I checked.))* I realize I am prejudiced, but I can't help but question whether or not he is right. Then too, I wonder why he doesn't air his views in NORTHERN FLAME rather than in a Swedish zine.

((He'll get around to it eventually, I'm sure. I think he's almost half right. First off, he is wrong about CDO's existence being in doubt. CDO is very much around and fulfilling its duties. It's just that we keep such a low profile, there isn't a whole lot of noise surrounding us. Orphan games are being transferred when needed; Randolph Smyth is Ombudsmanning when necessary (ie never); the Census is being published; a new Game Opening sheet is in the works from Claude Gaurton. The only area for improvement is in the locating and promoting of new blood into the hobby. With the folding of TYROMANIA due to lack of new players, I think we are lacking in that area. Give me some time though, I've got an idea... As for the work of organizations being better done by individuals, I agree wholeheartedly. At least when you talk about your usual organization. The CDO is run by individuals doing whatever work they feel needs to be done. We don't worry about meetings, or minutes, or committees. Whatever needs to be done, I do. And if I don't have time, I farm it out to one of the Committeemen. But given what little needs to be done (if it doesn't NEED to be done, we don't do it), nobody has much of a workload. And that's the way, uh-huh, uh-huh, I like it, uh-huh, uh-huh.))

There has apparently been a thriving hobby in Italy since 1972 which no one has noticed until. Since there are players in France, Britain, Germany, Austria, Italy (apparently), as well as a zine that the French have found in Siberia, all that is needed is someone from Turkey and all of the major powers will be represented. The potential exists for a seven country game with representatives from the seven major powers!

((I used to trade with a guy living in Italy (Enrico Manfredi) back in the 70s. His zine was called **IL CORRIERE DIPLOMATICO** and was done strictly in Italian. I don't speak Italian, but I can puzzle about as much of it out as I can the Français parts of **DIPLODOCUS**.)

I suppose that being one of the "same cast of long-winded and limited writers beating the same dead horses of topics", I should end now lest I bore brother Reynolds, whom I apparently do not entertain.

((Don't worry about it. Us boring folk can entertain each other, ok?))

BOB ACHESON

Don't be too quick to give up on Olerud. I think that he'll repay Cito's confidence with a banner year. I do agree with one of the comments though - Kelly Gruber killed the Jays both at the plate with his swinging strikes on armpit high fastballs and his play in the field.

Wendell Clark IS a hockey God. You're playing with your Jack Daniels future here. I will expect to see a retraction next issue. You can put it down as a flashback to your life in the 60s (bad drugs). Long live Wendell Clark!

((All my drugs in the 60s were good drugs. Remember the Colonel Cal of the Spaceways article? I'm not retracting a thing, even if I have to drink Yankee beer at the next DipCon. See my comments in Brent's letter.))

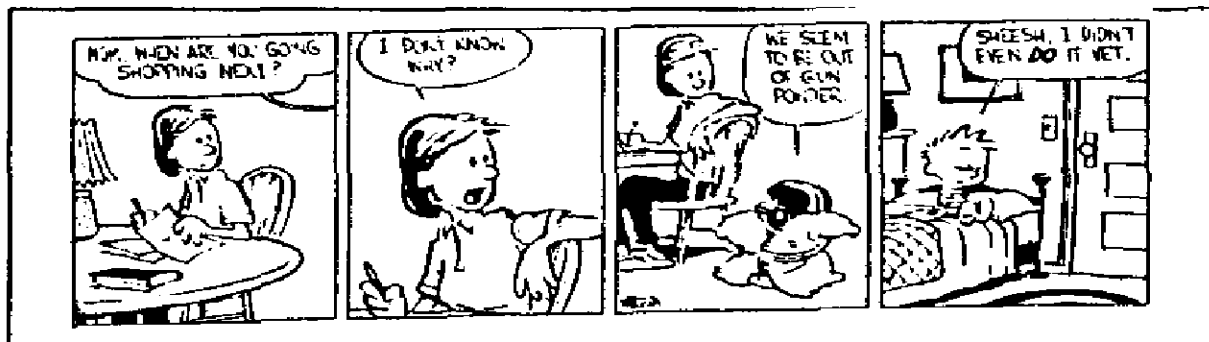
What do you think about Magic playing in the Olympics? I think that if he had the ball, he'd have a clear path to the basket...

((If I were playing for an opposing team, I would refuse to play against the US team. I have nothing against a person with AIDS and I have no misconceptions about how the virus gets passed on, but I do know that direct contact with the blood of an infected person is highly dangerous. Basketball is a bloody sport. Not the gushers you see in Aussie football or Wendell Clark hockey, but the little nick and cut kind. Remind me to show you the backs of my hands next time you're in town. I have played a lot of basketball and have the scars to show it. Magic should not play in the Olympics.))

ROBERT LESCO

On the topic of predictions, shortly after the signing of Jack Morris, my brother predicted we would be calling him, "Jack the Rip-Off" before August. If he's healthy, I think Viola is the better pitcher. Clemons and Viola is a scary one-two combination. The Red Sox can't be counted out. Ever since Bill Caudill, I've been skeptical of Blue Jay "saviours".

((I think Morris will give the Jays a great '92, an okay '93 and a terrible '94. But, then again, I wouldn't be totally shocked if your bro is right.))



After unloading Bell and Fernandez, largely due to their effect in the clubhouse, one has to wonder about the signing of Morris. A sportswriter in the Sun said he is "as pleasant as a rash." We shall see.

My memories of the 1991 World Series are mainly of ((announcer)) Jim Kaat's neck ties. Utterly ugly!

At least Toronto has one set of champions. I guess I will renew my Argonaut season tickets. While it is true that the Rocket ((Ismail)) has a gear no one else has, for my money, Pinball Clemons is the most exciting player in football - any league.

((I agree, although no one outside Canada will have heard of him. Too bad, their loss.))

Oddly enough, my brother and I had been showing ((Robert's new son)) Richard the split-fingered fastball when NF32 arrived. He impressed us by putting his fingers behind his ear in the best Gaylord Perry fashion. Obviously, he's familiar with the reputation of the pitch.

((Bet he's got more than enough spit, too.))

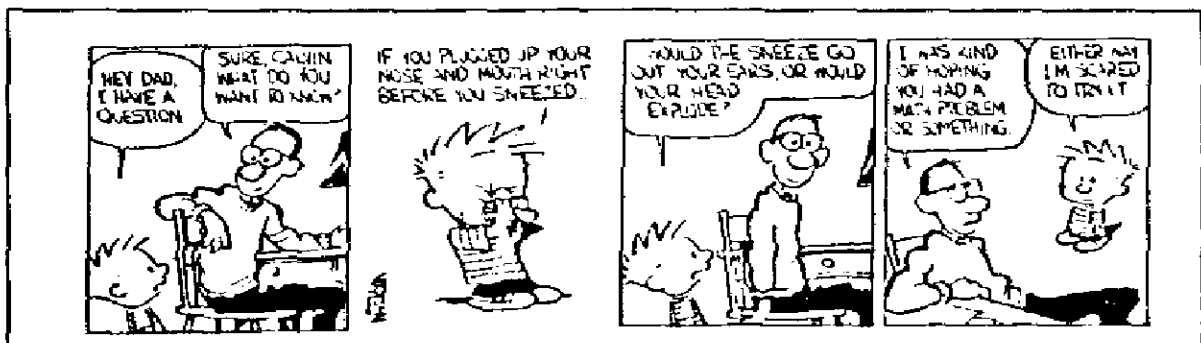
Actually, I was serious about Manuel Lee's range. To back me up, I can call none other than Tony Fernandez, quoted in Kelly Gruber's book HOME AT THIRD. I can't speak of games I haven't seen, but I counted a dozen plays I don't think Tony would have made, most notably throws to the plate. It likely doesn't mean much for '92, since the job may be Zosky's to lose.

((When I say range, I mean balls he can get to. One of my main memories of '91 is of Lee trotting towards a ground ball and then giving up on it when a good effort would have made the play. I personally don't think Zosky is ready, but I sure hope I'm wrong.))

Brent McKee's defense of Postal employees was certainly eye-catching. I imagine he's a big hit at the singles bars with lines like "Excuse me, Miss, I don't condone such actions, of course, but it seems both Son of Sam and Marc Lepine had been, er, 'disappointed' before..." which beats the heck out of my favourite line which is "Would you please take your bottom off my hand?"

It's my turn to say, "You can't be serious!?" Government run car insurance? From a self-proclaimed Libertarian! Do you really think any level government is capable of running such a scheme? People are quick to forget the experience of B.C., where the swivel servants involved went out on a lengthy strike. Anyone involved in a collision during the strike was simply out of luck. Further, from March '87 to January '88, auto insurance premiums for drivers over 25 with no at-fault accidents or convictions in the past 6 years rose 46.5% in Manitoba under a government run system. No industry is so badly run that the government can't do a worse job. Keep this up and you'll lose the right to call yourself a libertarian, Cal.

((Big deal. I'm voting Reform anyway. But look, first, I already noted that I hadn't



looked into the matter very much and second, we're going to import Brent McKee's Sask NDP to run the program...so there!))

A couple of issues ago, NERTZ brought up the topic of "Hobby Meets" where people gather at a pub to play or simply chat about games. It sounds like a great idea and one that could work in the Toronto area. Rotterdam has decent sized tables and it tends to be not so busy certain evenings, since it's in more of a business area than a residential area. Or maybe someone's place would be a better choice - no one will feel obligated to drink. Didn't you once, half in jest, suggest a Con where people simply socialized?

((Seems to me I suggested a Con where people simply drank, but perhaps memory is failing me... As for Toronto hobby meet, I wouldn't mind, but I think we'd need to start by having a few FTF games first. Maybe I'll see what I can do...))

MICHAEL LOWREY

I have to disagree with your line of thinking on the minimum number of votes need to qualify for the Runestone Poll. First, raising the minimum number of votes to make the RP more "statistically significant" is much like painting a pig black and white and saying that it makes it more of a cow. A black and white pig is still a pig and the RP still isn't anywhere close to being statistically significant. Those problems simply lie in other areas. In the case of the RP, you don't have a random sample and no attempt is made to account for the uncertainty caused by people not voting. And until these are taken into consideration, a higher minimum to qualify is simply a side issue if you want statistical accuracy. Of course, if you did want consistency, you might not come up with a clear winner...

Even if you were concerned about the accuracy of the Poll with zines making the list with only 10 votes, there are other ways to adjust for this without simply ignoring the zine entirely. You could adjust the mean to account for the low number of votes (again, this is not too nice statistically, but I don't think you're losing much...).

I see nothing contradictory in Kevin Brown's remarks in #34. What Kevin is saying is that though small zines (or for that matter, a lot of big zines I can think of) don't have a chance to win the Poll; their publishers might be harbouring less lofty goals. Cal, to some people, finishing in the top 20, or even the top half of the Poll is a major achievement. Don't take that away from them.

((My stated goal is to make the Poll a more accurate reflection of hobby opinion. If I was to succeed, how would that take away from those who make the top 20? Wouldn't it make it even more of an achievement?))

An aside that probably belonged above: a large number of observations (votes) is a good thing in Polls (if they're randomly drawn. However, how good depends on two factors: the size of the population and the population distribution. we know much more about Zine A if we have 19 of 19 eligible voters voting than a zine where we have only 20 of 150 people voting and which has a more variable distribution.

((First off, let me say that I'm no statistician; then again, I'm not totally ignorant of stats either. I know enough to know that your example of a black & white pig is silly. A pig is not something that can attain "cowishness". The Runestone Poll, or ANY set of data IS capable of being improved as a basis for statistical analysis.

Certainly, the sampling of voters in the RP is not ideally random. Of course not. It reflects the opinion of people who bother to vote. This isn't as good as what you would get if everyone in the hobby voted, but it'll have to do. We elect governments that way don't we? (Hmm, maybe that isn't a good argument. Never mind. I still prefer democracy over any other kind of system that doesn't have

me at the top.) I agree that even a level of 20 or even 50 votes isn't going to give you really accurate results, but doubling the minimum vote has to increase accuracy, even if only from focusing the average more tightly.))

Jacksonville in the NFL? Dream on, Kevin!

On your layout: the errata is nice, but listing pages that aren't where they should be doesn't do much good if you never list page numbers in the zine.

((Until last issue, I always used page numbers. And if you'll re-read the errata sheet, you'll see that I asked you to WRITE IN page numbers for your own reference.))

Finally, WDC. This is the ultimate "much ado about nothing". The WDC name and concept are the intellectual property of the ManorCon Committee and it's they that have the first and last say on this subject. Period. I believe they are interested in including continental Europe in the rotation and all this will be considered at WDC IV. They're also much closer to the various European hobbies, so they know more (Iain Bowen has been to the Essen Games Fair, for example). So, I say let the Brits figure it out.

((Sounds to me like the voice of common sense. I think that when this whole thing blew up it was a slow news year...))

CRAZY MARKIE NELSON

I can't agree with Michael Lowrey that you only get to see the good British programs; after all, you get to watch Benny hill and I'd guess you'd be hard pressed to find many British fans who'd class that as good British TV.

The general view over here is that US TV is of an unbelievable low quality because TV is so commercialized over there with little quality regulation and because you never lost any money by underestimating the intelligence of the American public.

Of course, this could be wrong; high quality US programs are not always going to make it over here; it's sit-coms and comedys that are exported over here in alarming numbers.

And, perhaps, this accounts for the impression that US TV sucks. How often have we had a program hyped as being "the best in the States" only to watch it and find a load of rubbish? Only last week a popular US sit-com had its first showing in the UK, hyped as being the most popular sit-com in the States last year (I can't remember the name, come to think of it, it might have been advertised as the best NEW US sit-com of last year), but in the Nelson household, it only took 5 minutes before the off button was being pressed.

But why should people have such a low opinion of US sit-coms/comedy? Simple. British humour and US humour are totally different. To be simplistic, US humour is more "up-front" and obvious; British humour is more subtle.

It is hardly surprising that we don't care for US sit-coms, we don't find the humour particularly amusing.

Maybe we should all sit down and try to think of our Top Ten favourite US serials/sitcoms/comedy. (I think that we need such a wide definition in order to reach 10!). Off the top of my head, I'd name M*A*S*H, CAGNEY & LACEY, STAR TREK and ... humm. Maybe next time, I write you, I will have thought of some more! CHEERS is very popular, although I consider it to be overrated...

*((I would have a hard time picking ten shows, but that's due, in part, to the fact that my tastes change over time. For instance, I used to absolutely LOVE watching a show called Hogan's Heroes. Now, I wouldn't make the effort to change the channel to watch it. Hmmm. Shows with staying power for me would be: STAR TREK, M*A*S*H, WKRP IN CINCINNATI, BIZARRE, maybe NIGHT COURT (with Markie Post). The only shows I will ALWAYS watch would be STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION and BLUE JAYS BASEBALL (which probably doesn't count). Anybody else have a list they want to share? We won't make (much) fun of you, even if WHEEL OF FORTUNE is on it. Which reminds me: add the game show JEOPARDY to my list.))*

My own view on UK education is more in line with James rather than your own views. Not that I agree with James on the grounds of University social life, no, I'm more concerned with declining standards of education.

At the moment, the British first degree is widely recognized as being the best such degree in the world. It is an academic qualification and to get it guarantees a "high" standard of education.

In particular, graduation is one of the higher grades and is taken as a universal indication of academic excellence and intellect.

We compare this to the American first degree widely accepted as NOT being worth the paper it is written on and not normally taken as showing anything besides the fact that you have a piece of paper in your hands. If you want to apply for a postgraduate course in the States, you almost always have to take additional SAT tests to see what your academic potential is: graduation don't mean a thing!

(As I understand it (Michael Hopcroft passed this information on to me), a holder of a Masters degree in the States is accorded the same respect as a holder of a first degree in the UK.)

To be fair, American doctoral qualifications are nifty; but this stems from the poor quality of the first degree. It is common conception amongst UK scientists that a US doctorate is equivalent to a UK doctorate followed by a post-doctoral position.

Anyway, back to the case in point. In my view, the quality of the UK first degree is being slowly eroded by a combination of increasing student numbers (the Government wants to widen access) and decreasing funding (the Government doesn't want to pay for widening access). Things are so bad that Universities are thinking of offering a lower standard degree course which will be the equivalent of the first two years of the present three year degree and anyone interested in going into research will have to study a two year Masters course before progressing onto a PhD. In short, we will be moving towards a US higher education system where anyone can go to a University and graduate with a worthless piece of paper.

I can't understand this attitude. By widening access to higher education you devalue the worth of attending University unless you're willing to import large amounts of cash into the system. What will be the outcome, given that the Government is not willing to put up funding?

The outcome will be that employers who take on graduates with good degrees because of the quality of their education will simply insist that they only recruit people with the next highest qualification. We won't have improved the standard of education in the UK, we will have lowered it.

Cal asks, are you going to University to learn? My answer is no, you go to University to be educated; a subtle difference.

((Bad attitude. The best Uni in the world cannot educate someone who insists on "being educated" but won't help by trying to "learn" .))

It is a common perception over here that American's like to play alliance games in FT and postal Dip. It's a perception that I believe to be correct. American players tend to stick to alliances and go for an alliance victory. Take the 3rd game Ron Newmaster describes where a game finished as a 2 way F/T draw with Supply Centre counts of T (9), F (8) & R(7). This would not pass in a UK game, it would be laughed at! A two way draw for two powers that do not even have a majority of supply centres?

If I had been Russia in this game, I would just have objected to the proposal and made them continue the game until I was eliminated.

Incidentally, I do not approve of any rating system where 3 draws and a win beats 3 wins. Again, it seems too common in North America to prefer rating systems which favour 2/3 way draws and it's not unknown to find rating systems which encourage players to take a higher place behind a low way draw rather than insist on a higher way draw. What this all goes to show is that Tournament Diplomacy is, as Dave McCrumb so elegantly described in an article several years ago, a variant in which you're not so much playing against the other players as playing the rating systems.

This is why my own preference is for fewer rounds, but longer games. Instead of two or three rounds on one day, I prefer tournaments which run one round a day, but that round is open ended and the game finishes when a result has been achieved. Short games encourage centre snatching. Nothing wrong with this per se as a way of running a Diplomacy tournament, it's just that I prefer tournaments which more accurately reflect the "traditional" game.

((Okay, here's a thought: how about taking a simple scoring system (say 1 pt for a win, 5 for a two way, 3 for a three way, etc) and TRIPLING whatever score a player gets on Friday night, DOUBLING it on Saturday and have it count for face value on Sunday? Would this not eliminate the sandbaggers who go for four and five way draws in the early rounds? Just a thought. Comments?))

I was surprised to read that Larry Peery thinks that he is in a good position to criticize anybody about their lack of info they have on the international hobby. This is coming from somebody who readily admits that, in 1988 (when he was still editor of DIPLOMACY WORLD), he had no idea that there was any Diplomacy hobby in France. It makes one wonder what he was doing whilst he was editor of DIPLOMACY WORLD.

As ever, Larry makes the same mistake of equating the international hobby to be the union of the individual national hobbies. There is very little international hobby in any of the countries that Larry mentions, so it is not surprising if people don't know about them.

Let's face it. Who cares about the Diplomacy hobby in Albania if they aren't taking an active role in the international Diplomacy hobby?



For the record, I think that the best method to determine WDC sites is by a ZONAL system. For instance, I favour a four-zone system of UK, North America, Europe & Australasia. This leaves the problem of deciding which Con gets to host WDC, but it means that we know where the Con will be. I believe it is unreasonable and unrealistic to have a scheme where individual countries take it in turn to host WDC. (For the record, I'm in favour of sites bidding for the rights to run WDC two years in advance, similar to the WORLDCON system. Most of the time, I expect that there will only be one site bidding to run WDC, but if somebody wants to put in a bid for a Con, then they can do so.)

I don't believe that the French are qualified to run WDC, and I don't know that the Austrians are either. I can't think of any Austrian Dipzine which has wide trading links with the outside world and this suggest to me that they are not qualified to run a WDC.

As for the French, Xavier Blanchot turned up to ManorCon last year. He had a lot of good ideas on how to run a World DipCon. After some discussion, he agreed that the best approach was to run a EuroCon in France in September 1992. This would be run to give him experience in running a DipCon and act as a useful exercise in coordinating publicity on a European level. A particular objective would be to attract as many German fans as possible.

If such an event went well then several active UK fans agreed that they would be willing to support a bid from Xavier to run a European WDC.

Since ManorCon, there has been no word from Xavier. It is getting to the stage when even if he does decide to run a Con in September 1992, it will be too late to properly organize outside publicity for the event.

This does not encourage a belief that Xavier would be a good organizer of a European WDC.

It has already been determined that WDC will not move to the Essen Games Fair. Essen is entirely unsuitable.

((I more or less favour the Committee approach to picking a WDC site, but I'd be comfortable with just about anything that does NOT need a formal constitution drawn up before it will run. See Michael Lowrey's comments.))

Oh, I've just thought of an acceptable US TV series: LA LAW. Incidentally, I have noticed that a number of "US" programs have been made in Canada. Of course, these "US" programs may in fact be "Canadian" programs. Are there any popular Canadian serials/sitcoms, and if so, what're they about?

((You're asking the wrong guy. Off hand, I know that NIGHTHEAT is Canadian, as is THE BEACHCOMBERS, DeGRASSI HIGH, BIZARRE was when it was on, and probably many more that I don't know of. I know that Toronto has a LOT of world class production houses here, and that after, I believe, Hollywood and Calcutta (or is it Bombay), there are more movies made here in town than anywhere else in the world. I'll bet Brent McKee would know more about this. Oh, also the TV show ROAD TO AVONLEA is very popular and is a quality show that is actually set in Canada (Prince Edward Island to be exact). It's formed around the "Anne of Green Gables" books))

THE BILL LAFOSSE DEPARTMENT OF TRULY TASTELESS JOKES

Question: What do you call a roomful of women when half of them have PMS and the other half have yeast infections?

Answer: A whine and cheese party...

STRATEGIC DIPLOMACY

BY HARRY DREWS

(From PAROXYSM #8, June 1, 1975)

Part VI: Turkey

In many ways, the problems that confront Turkey are the same as those with which Austria must grapple. There is the distinct danger of an early blitz by several neighbours that means certain elimination. If this threat can be thwarted and two or three supply centres have been captured, then the going becomes a little easier. For both Austria and Turkey, the avenues of expansion are very similar. Moscow and Warsaw are attainable easily enough, but St Petersburg cannot usually be taken without external assistance. There is a fair chance that Munich and Berlin can be taken, but hardly ever anything more in this direction. In order to win, it becomes mandatory in most games to take some Italian possessions. To do this, it is mandatory to break through the Italian bottleneck.

Despite the similarities, Turkey and Austria require different strategies of play. This can be directly attributed to two factors. Turkey starts from a corner position which is quite safe once a bit of expansion has been successfully undertaken. Also, Turkey can mount a balanced offensive which can be composed of any combination of fleets and armies.

The likelihood of an early multi-nation conspiracy against Turkey can often be correlated to an awareness level (read experience) of the players. More knowledgeable players realize that Turkey looks deceptively innocuous on the map, but, usually, what Turkey captures can not easily be taken away. If Turkey can reach about ten centres in total then it becomes extremely difficult for the other players, even acting in unison, to reduce Turkey in size. In appreciation of this fact, the successful Turkish commander will play his game as a continuous advance to more advanced stalemate lines.

If we are playing Turkey, how can we negate the early blitz on ourselves? The key is Austria and, if you can "read" Austria, then you can plan your early strategy. Convince Austria that he has more to fear from Russia/Italy than from you and you have broken the back of the blitz. In your correspondence with Austria, argue on the basis that you both have much in common, yet you compliment each other in position and equipment. Relentlessly dwell on the Russian and Italian dangers. Sow the seeds of distrust. Austria starts the game with a weakness that generates fear. If you can assume the role of protector and fellow weakling, then you have your foot in the door. Propose a reasonable plan of action. If your efforts to win Austria, then redouble your efforts with Italy and Russia. There are four of you in the corner. If you can get even one country on your side, then at worst there is a stalemate until one of the western powers intervenes and then you may have some success. It is difficult to be specific at this point, but if you want Turkey to win, you must be prepared to exert a lot of effort in the early going to avoid possible catastrophe. There are valid arguments to present to the Russian player. Russia must contend with both England and Germany. An agreement may be worked out that will concede most of the Balkans to Turkey. Russia will accept limited gains here in exchange for a quiet sector and the chance to concentrate his strength elsewhere. It may be a little harder to scrape up an argument that will cause Italy to accept your point of view. It can be done if Italy has western problems or ambitions.

The player who is determined to win as Turkey must be rather cold-blooded. If we count up supply centres, then it becomes clear that there cannot be a lasting alliance with any of Italy, Austria or Russia. The "reasonably attainable" centres include the perimeter Moscow, Warsaw, Trieste, Greece and everything for as total of thirteen. The difficult centres encompass St Petersburg, Berlin, Munich and the Italian sector. At some time the Ionian will have to be seized. To expand, Turkey requires dissension among her opponents. This means diplomacy, the delicate, subtle sort that some players never attempt. It may mean breaking and reforming alliances to prevent expansion setting in as a permanent nature.

Let us take a bit of space to recapitulate. All things being equal, Austria is the least threat to Turkey. For this reason, and because Austria can be of great value to Turkey, a determined effort should be made to form this alliance. In purely negative terms, a squash-Turkey alliance will achieve little momentum without Austria. In positive terms, Turkey can rip out the soft belly of Russia before a coherent defense is established. Or, alternately, Turkey can burst through the Ionian before Italy is a power and before France becomes established in the area. Austria becomes the pivot-point. The final motion will be to cave in this centre just as you would stick a fork in a warm pie. Austria will find it difficult to stab Turkey since she lacks the essential sea power. A minimum of units have to be retained to guard against this eventually, which makes for maximum efficiency. If the alliance with Austria has been formed, key the order of your attacks on Italy and Russia to what Italy does. If Italy is so foolish as to move into Trieste, then strike west. Should Italy become entangled with France, then give the broth a wee bit of time to simmer. Plunge into Russia and let the defense of the Ionian be lowered.

If no alliance with Austria exists, then all is not lost. But Turkey holds less of her destiny in her own hands. Time is crucial. With Italy or Russia as your ally, it will become harder and harder to stab this ally with the passage of time unless there is opportune intervention from the west. This is leaving a lot to chance. The more time that passes, the more likely it is that one of France, England or Germany will dominate the game and steal victory from your searching arms. If Turkey can take the Italian centres, there is a chance of taking Marseilles and Spain. It may not be necessary to try for the difficult German centres or St Petersburg. These last mentioned centres may rest forever out of your reach if there is organized western opposition to your advance.

There is some merit to the Russian alliance. If you can feel secure over the Black Sea and if Russia must keep one eye on Scandinavia, then you will be left to wage an essentially one-front campaign which will surely produce significant gains unless Italy and Austria are solidly united. Should the latter prevail, then all there will be is a stalemate. If Russia is intent on a sizable piece of the Balkans, then, as Turkey, you may have to be satisfied with limited gains and the chance of a Russian stab. In this case, it becomes imperative to deal with the Germans or British. All in all, the outlook is not quite as bright with the Russian alliance.

Should Italy become Turkey's ally, then there will be problems later on similar to those faced with Russia. One or the other must either stab at some point or else a disproportionate number of units must be committed to the defense. This alliance is not to be preferred unless there is nothing else, or unless you have the ear of the appropriate western power and can count on timely assistance in the stab. I suppose you could always imagine the best. Maybe the Italian player will have a heart of gold and will turn against France, leaving a skeletal force behind. But, when forming a strategy, surely it is inadvisable to assume that "things will turn out right" or that you have a golden pen that will work the miracle. Nor can you count on a players stupidity even though he may have a reputation for it.

As Turkey, be prepared for the worst. Do your utmost to stall the blitz. Do not hesitate to send incriminating letters you have received to the other players.((*)) Boomerang Austria over to your side. Forge correspondence ((*)) or supply your opponents with lies. Offer to substantiate these "facts" with documented proof, but somehow never get around to doing it. If you can get Italy, Russia or Austria to commit themselves against someone other than you, then the battle of survival is partly won. Should you hang on and even grow a little, then be cautious in your outlook. Your moves will draw more and more attention to yourself. It may become impossible to do what you planned. Do not despair but, rather, prepare yourself to share in a draw by forcing stalemate. Bide your time and an impatient opposition may disintegrate through internal stabs. The special stalemate mentality that is unique to the

Turkish position also means that your greatest fear becomes the likelihood of one of the three western powers winning without having to admit you to the draw. Direct all your efforts to preventing this. Go to the point of relinquishing centres to that neighbour of yours who can best resist this usurper. The Turkish path to victory may be one of the most twisting and uneven of any, but it can still be one of the "winningest".

Craftiness and deviousness are essential qualities to a winning Turk. If you can lie and maintain a sweet angelic posture; if you can stab an innocent and then pull the knife out a bit when someone else joins in the slaughter (so that your victim will be grateful and turn his fury on the latecomer); if you can bide your time til those around you become distracted and lower their guard against you, then, my boy, not only will Islam dominate your little Europe, but you will be ranked as one worthy enough to handle with aplomb those other, far easier, countries in other games. (Harry Drews)

*((* Harry's reference to letter passing probably dates these articles more than any other remark. While the sending on of correspondence received to other players was looked upon as a rather sneaky, but perfectly valid, tactic in the mid 70s, it is almost universally frowned upon today. Unfortunate, I think. I feel it is a good technique when used exceedingly sparingly... but I wouldn't try it today. 90s Dipsters have some new-fangled "code of honour" . Sniff. Ludicrous concept...))*

15 WAYS YOU CANNOT GET AIDS

((continued from last issue))

10- Being bitten by mosquitoes. There's no evidence the AIDS virus can live in insects. The mosquito myth arose from the high incidence of AIDS in Belle Glade, Florida. Research found that residents were getting AIDS from sex and intravenous drug use.

11- Being immunized against hepatitis-B (with the Hhepatitis-B vaccine) or hepatitis-A (with gamma globulin). Gamma globulin and one form of hepatitis-B vaccine are derived from blood, but the process of making the vaccine and gamma globulin inactivates HIV and all other viruses.

12- Being infected by pets, or by animals that have AIDS-like diseases. The viruses that cause feline-leukemia and certain immunodeficiency diseases in horses and goats can't grow in humans. HIV can grow in chimpanzees, gibbons, and rabbits, while a similar virus can infect macaques, green monkeys and baboons. So, if you infected yourself with their blood, you could get infected. Otherwise, the odds are negligible.

13- Working or going to school with someone who has AIDS. What if an infected child bleeds, and the blood enters another child's open wound? Experience with health workers accidentally exposed this way shows infection is highly unlikely.. Even when health workers accidentally stick themselves with infected needles, infection rarely results - one study showed a risk of 1 in 286 instances. There's no evidence from anywhere in the world that has traced a case of AIDS to the kind of casual contact experienced at work or in school.

14- Visiting an infected person's home. You can't get IDS from living in the same house as an infected person, much less visiting there.

15- Having sex with someone who isn't infected. That should be obvious. (Even with someone who *is* infected, the virus isn't easily transmitted in one or a few exposures.

THE FIFTH ANNUAL NORTHERN FLAME BASEBALL PREDICTIONS CONTEST!!!

Yes, baseball fanatics, it's THAT time of year again!!! It's been a long hard winter, (although I have to admit that trying to follow all the free agent signings and escalating salaries has certainly been a challenge) with little to do but watch the Blue Jays build yet another series contending team. Will Winfield and Morris bring the Blue Jays a title this year? Will Derek Bell and Eddie Zosky stay with the big boys? But, more, importantly, can **MICHAEL LOWREY** keep his mantle as the **ONE TRUE BASEBALL GENIUS** which he had bestowed upon him as the winner of the 4th annual Northern Flame Baseball Predictions Contest? Stay tuned as the drama unfolds right here in these pages!

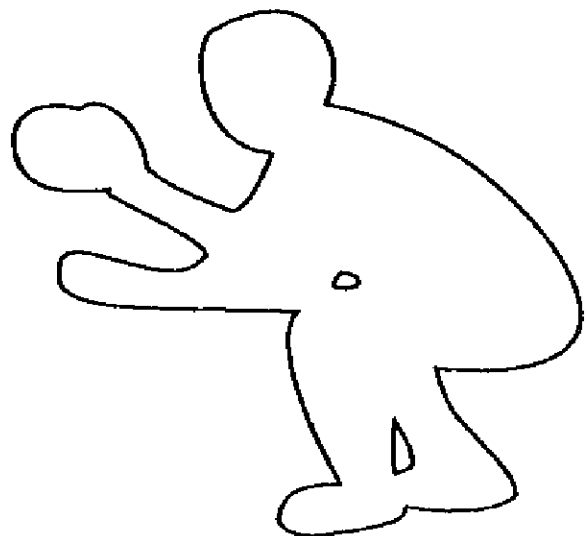
Playing is simple. All you have to do is send me your predictions for the 1992 Major League Baseball season, picking each team in the order it will finish in within its division. I will use the Modified McBruce Correlation Coefficient formula to determine the final standings. Last year's winner, Michael Lowrey, won the contest with a total score of 3.523, an exceptionally low score most years, but very respectable in the year of Worst To First.

I'm adding a slight wrinkle this year. I'd like everyone to send me their picks for post-season play, ie, who will win the League Championship Series and who will win the World Series (hint: the Toronto Blue Jays!). In the unlikely event of a tie, whoever comes the closest in their post season picks will take the title.

THE DEADLINE FOR ENTRY IS MONDAY, MARCH 30, 1992!

Don't be late! Send those entries in today! And **PLAY BALL!**

*Baseball
Fever
Catch It!*



SLAPPY'S SPORT SECTION

A subzine by Michael Hopcroft
420 SE Grand Avenue, #215
Portland, Oregon 97214

Well, it's February. The weather is amazingly nice in Portland, the Blazers are in first place at the All-Star break (in the middle of an exciting division race), and all is right with the world, at least as far as my monitor blurred vision will allow me to see. All, that is, except this little subzine. I'm having a hard time deciding what to write about this time.

Mainly its lack of guidance from my audience. Do I even have an audience? I have had a great lack of reader feedback on the content of SSS of late. When I started this subzine in 1991, I asked for input from the readers about what to talk about. In a way, it is working - there seems to be more sports chat in **NORTHERN FLAME** than there was in the past. But sometimes I feel like someone who has a compelling need to scream his lungs out lecturing an empty room (and no doubt attempting to build a functioning warp drive). Well, even if I don't hear back, I know that most of you read this thing. And really, that's enough (But a letter or two would be really nice...).

Suddenly, in one week, I get to see two really good basketball games. On Monday the 3rd, the Chicago Bulls and the Utah Jazz dueled it out for three overtimes in a game I wish I had thought to tape. What made this game so special? I think it was the give and take. Each step one team took towards winning was immediately canceled out by the other. First, Michael Jordan stepped behind the three point line and hit a superb jump shot to exactly give the Bulls what they needed to keep the game going. Then, in the first overtime, John Stockton hit what appeared to be a 33 foot running jump shot of his own to tie the game and keep it going. There was a lot of clutch play in the overtime, with players doing exactly what they had to do.

It was finally decided by the officials. It was an intense game, and naturally tempers flared. The result was that, with thirty seconds to go in the third overtime, Jordan found himself ejected for bumping an official (he was later given the first suspension of his NBA career) and the Jazz ended up shooting enough free throws to secure a four point win. I was so pumped while I was watching the game on cable that I don't believe it.

I was just as pumped on the 5th for the college game between Duke and North Carolina, also on cable. This was truly a hard fought match, played at the pace of a pro game with both teams giving all they could. One player received two cuts on his head (one on his face) but played on. Neither team could put the other away, even after a long run by the NC Tar Heels. North Carolina finally won on a night when top teams were falling all over the place; Oklahoma State lost too, leaving no undefeated teams in Division I. I don't normally dote on college basketball, and one of the things I was noticing is that several of the players in that game could end up as NBA draft picks in the next two years.

That's not the biggest thing I have on my mind right now though. My eyes, like those of many Northwest fans are turned north to Seattle where an unlikely drama is playing out over a bid to keep the baseball Mariners in town. A few months ago, Commissioner Faye Vincent said keeping the team in Seattle was a high priority. But now, he is determined to stop the most reasonable and best financed bid to do that, at almost any cost. Why? Because one of the main backers is Nintendo of America, a subsidiary of a company from <gaspi> Japan <horror of horrors!>.

Never mind that there are millions of Nintendo sets in this country, and that the US branch of this company, which is based in the Seattle suburb of Renton, employs at least a thousand people. It's "foreign money" and thus untouchable. The fans in Seattle are outraged that this is happening, and claim that Vincent is trying to play politics with their team.

Unfortunately, the owners in the Major Leagues have veto power over any teams being sold. They have another reason to be concerned: the new coalition trying to buy the M's has enough money to re-sign people like Ken Griffey Jr that the rest of the league have been wanting for years.

At this point, I must remind myself that the American League didn't want to go to Seattle in the first place. In 1969, they had an expansion team there, the Pilots, which almost went bankrupt; it moved to Milwaukee and the league was overjoyed. But the city of Seattle threatened to sue! Thus in 1977, they got a second chance with the M's. The league was probably not happy about having to do that; they might have been looking at Florida even then. The M's have floundered for fourteen years until they grew to the point of drawing 2.1 million fans in 1991 and going 83-79. Several big name players, like Danny Tartabull, got their major league start in Seattle before being either traded or signed by other teams.

All season Seattle fans have been struggling with the possibility of the Mariners leaving. The sudden news that the American League doesn't WANT a major league team to play in Seattle is bound to make the fans a bit bitter about the men who run baseball in the US and Canada. It's making me angry, as I really don't want the Northwest to lose this team.

And what is so horrifying about Japanese money? The NHL has allowed Japanese money to be invested in their new franchise in Tampa - the team wouldn't have floated without it. It doesn't help that all this trade-war rhetoric is going on (what's going to be suggested next? Send troops to Japan to tear down there factories?).

It is, in my view, less important where the money comes from than the fact that the money is there. A financially strong Mariners team, with the money to keep its best players in Seattle, could actually become a force in the American League. Wouldn't it be nice to have a pennant parade in view of the Space Needle? (I can hear Cal now - "Not nearly as nice as a pennant parade by the SkyDome!") *((Amen!))*

The brief side note on hockey brings me to the first of my game features. I'm wondering when **BREAKAWAY HOCKEY** will show up like everyone else, but in the meantime, I was sent a compact computer hockey game called simply **CC PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY**. For your 40 bucks you get the complete NHL rosters from the latest season, a nice simulation game that uses them, and a reasonably complete stats compiler. What's really nice is that it all comes in under 700K, easily within range of most PCs with hard drives (even as tiny as mine), and it might even work on two-floppy systems.

CC enables the player to handle and set lines for any team. Even teams that are usually run by computer will require human intervention before each game; injuries happen with realistic frequency and you must occasionally shuffle your roster to respond to them. Time in a game is measured in 15 second intervals, a boardgame style abstraction that doesn't detract from the game. The game unfolds on a play-by-play screen with appropriate drama for goals ("HE SCORES!"), penalties, and other events. Time seems to stand still for a penalty shot, of which I got 4 in 190+ games. Only one resulted in a goal.

The game keeps all reasonable hockey stats; goals and assists, penalties in minutes, power play and short handed performance, and the seemingly mysterious plus/minus stat. *((Ed note: Plus/Minus is a recent hockey innovation which, for a simple system, is a reasonably good barometer of a players performance - simply put, if a player is on the ice for an opposition goal he receives a -1; if he is on the ice when his own team scores, he gets a +1.))* Players have been performing up to expectations, and beyond them. A list is supplied of players who were traded during the year. One could do a replay with this, but it's the possibilities for leagues that really appeal to me. Maybe if I had some stat cards in front of me, I could draft a reasonable team. To top it off, every NHL season since 1955 is available for this game - time to meet some legends.

Here is the address:

CC Software Corporation
PO Box 112
East Freetown, MA
02717-0442 USA

Then there is my experience with **B-BALL**, a computer basketball game put out by a similar small firm. **B-BALL** uses a time abstraction too; a game is divided into "possessions" and each team gets an equal number of them. It too has a sort of hands-on computer coach; each team uses a substitution pattern that has been previously set up to determine when players come into the game. It too has a complete league, although only at 12 players per team. And it too plays remarkably well. Once you have established who goes where, all you have to do is pick up the players from the NBA teams, work out your substitution pattern, and let the wars begin.

The game manages to simulate a lot of the real NBA stuff, including last year's helter-skelter Denver Nuggets. It also is a great game for replays with one glitch - no injuries. There is one other thing which might be a problem on old machines; once you accumulate stats, the directory expands very rapidly. On the typical "modern" system this isn't a problem, but my hard drive is only 10Mb and fills up alarmingly quickly.

It's still fun, and at \$29.95 US it's almost exactly the right price, and the price includes a second season. Hooray!

Again, an address:

B-BALL Pro Basketball for the Computer
1523 Felton Rd
S. Euclid, OH
44121 USA

Right now, I'm wondering just when I will get update notices on any of the baseball board games I own. Avalon Hill does not send out such notices; the cards are there when they're there. I don't know if I'm still on Strat-O-Matic's new cards list, and I doubt I'm on APBA's as I never have bought "current" seasons for APBA. I'm not on **PURSUE THE PENNANT**'s mailing list, but I just sent them a letter and asked for their price list. Thus the dilemma - what to update?

I want to update something because 1991 was such an interesting season. The cheapest is probably **STATIS-PRO**, but I've had recent trouble chugging through games of **SP** (turning the four action cards to get a play result isn't quite the same as a single die roll, especially *solitaire*). My Strat-O-Matic set is in decent shape (the boxes always break for me though). They are offering (for a hefty \$71) a deal that included the new version of their PC game, the 1991 disk, and the 1991 boardgame cards. The new computer game got a rave review in the current **PRO-GAMER**.

For an equally hefty price, I can have the **PURSUE THE PENNANT** computer game on my system, or for \$40 I can get the boardgame with 1991 teams. Lance Haffner Games has a \$55 computer baseball game (the game itself is only \$40, but you have to buy an expansion disk if you want decent reports) that I'm curious about.

All of these options are so expensive that I can choose one and only one. Answers on a post card, please, to the address at the top of the subzine. I wish operators were standing by...

Anyway, it seems odd that now that I have a computer again, I'm using it mainly to write letters and run sports games. I always thought I would have some grander use for the thing. Still, next month I will have some boxing matches under my belt, as I finally succumbed to temptation and ordered TKO PROFESSIONAL BOXING from the Lance Haffner people. In four to six weeks, I will have on my hard drive the ratings for 600 past and present fighters able to go at it in a matter of minutes (if I had a faster machine like a 386, the fights would blur past in a matter of seconds!). It will probably be very reminiscent of playing TITLE BOUT, as the game is from the same designers and the ratings system is almost identical. Did Avalon Hill agree to this? I'm pretty sure they know about it by now, and they haven't used, to my knowledge...

Well, I've got to go. See you in Spring Training!

NORTHERN FLAME MAILING LIST AS OF FEBRUARY 23, 1992

Bob Acheson #1510, 10883 Saskatchewan Dr, Edmonton, Alta T6E 4S6
 Doug Acheson Unit 5, Suite 330, 320 Yonge St, Barrie, Ont L4N 4C8
 Mike Agnew 2316 Queen St E, Toronto, Ont M4E 1G7
 Dave Anderson 18 B St, Pontiac, MI 48340
 Gary Behnen 13101 S Trenton, Olathe, KS 66062
 Iain Bowen 5 Wigginton Terrace, York YO3 7JD England
 John Breakwell 62 Shackleton Way, Woodley, Reading, RG1 8AZ England
 Eric Brosius 41 Hayward St, Milford, MA 01757
 Kevin Brown 6703 St Augustine Rd, #209, Jacksonville, FL 32217
 John Cain 76 Banool Rd, Balwyn, Australia 3103
 Frank Cauz 209 Silverthorn Av, Toronto, Ont M6N 3K2
 Mario Cauz 209 Silverthorn Av, Toronto, Ont M6N 3K2
 Fred Davis Jr 3210K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043
 Frank Easton 1100 Wildrose Cr, Pickering, Ont, L1X 2R3
 Dave Elliott 51 Findlay Blvd, Downsview, Ont M3H 3L8
 John Ellman II 321 Marganza South, Laurel, MD 20724
 John Etheridge 91 Melinda Cr, Barrie, Ont L4N 5T7
 Stuart Eves 24 Birch Rd, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berks RG7 3LT England
 Mark Figge CFB Baden, PO Box 1575, CFPO 5056, Belleville, Ont K0K 3R0
 Thomas Franke Haarenufer 12, D-2900, Oldenburg, Germany
 Pete Gaughan 1521 S Novato, #46, Novato, CA 94947
 Claude Gautron 620 rue Ste Jean-Baptiste, Winnipeg, Man R2H 2Y1
 Don Gill 40 Goldpine Av, Courtice, Ont L1E 1P2
 Andreas Gomolka Vordere Bleiweisstr. 22, W-8500 Nürnberg 40, Germany
 Michael Gonsalves 530 Treasure Lake, DuBois, PA 15801
 Chris Greaves 33 Poplar Av, Toronto, Ont M9B 3R5
 David Harshberger University Gdns, F-6, Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 Bob Hartwig 6612 W 113th Av, Westminster, CO 80020
 Francis Hee PSC 473, Box 11, FPO AP 96349-1500
 Nelson Heintzman Box 603, E Amherst, NY 14051 USA
 Melinda Holley Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25725
 David Hood 2905 20th St NE, Hickory, NC 28601
 Mike Hopcroft 420 SE Grand Av, #215, Portland, OR 97214
 Andrew Hymas 250 Glen Manor Dr, Toronto, Ont M4E 2Y1
 Nevil Keogh 164 Crawford St, Toronto, Ont M6J 2V4
 Bill Lafosse 65 Barbara St, Trenton, Ont K8V 1Z6
 John Leeder 224 20th Av NW, Calgary, Alta T2M 1C2
 Robert Lesco 49 Parkside Dr, Brampton, Ont L6Y 2H1
 Andy Lischen 2402 Ridgeland Dr, Berwyn, IL 60402

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ASTERION #10

((While Crazy Markie didn't specifically say that this was Asterion, the 18 page letter he wrote me probably qualifies. Actually, the 18 page letter was followed quite closely by a 52 page issue of Mouth of Sauron... Still can't find a job, eh, Mark?))

How many Canadian zines are there these days? At the moment, I only trade with two (NF & XL), although I read James copy of The Canadian Diplomat, and I'd like to set up a third trade. Not necessarily with an all-out fannish zine, although some form of a letter column is a must. Any suggestions? Perhaps a run down of Canadian zines is in order.

((Ed note. Your best bet would probably be The Tactful Assassin (Eric Young). While TTA isn't a large zine, Eric encourages discussion and commentary. He IS trying to keep the zine under one ounce, so I'm not sure I should introduce you to him... Seriously, zine activity in Canada is probably at an all-time low with only NF & XL being really fannish zines. Pierre Touchette (Diplodocus) would like to be larger, but his readership seem a taciturn lot. You might want to have a go at Agent Orange though...))

In the UK (where we have a fairly rigid cut-off point of 8% ((of the total number of Poll votes received)) in our Zine Poll), the Zine Poll is often seen as defining which zines are part of the mainstream and which zines are fringe zines (another way of defining the mainstream is by considering which zines are reviewed in our review zine, Mission From God, as any zine which isn't reviewed is probably not a mainstream zine).

Of course, there is no shame in being a "fringe" zine. You can be a good GM, running games well and having a loyal band of readers who like your zine and still be a fringe zine. All that a fringe zine is, is a zine which has little contact with the hobby "mainstream".

You will note from this that actually defining what the hobby mainstream is, is rather difficult. If you are in the mainstream, you are in it, and if you are not, then you are not!

Do we gain anything from classifying zines as fringe zines or mainstream zines. I think we do. To be in the mainstream is to be part of a fannish tradition that dates back to 1969 (in the UK). To be in the mainstream indicates some kind of interest in the concept of the hobby as an institution in its own right, an institution that is more than a collection of gamers and fan-zines. It indicates an interest larger than when your next deadline is and how many more people you need to fill up your next waiting list.

It's worth commenting that this definition is zine based. By that, I simply mean that in determining if an individual is in the "mainstream", we first decide if the zines he sees are in the mainstream. If you like, in the UK we define the mainstream by a fannish process.

In the States, at this moment in time, there is not so much emphasis on fannishness. The name of the game is playing games, running games and talking about games. Of course, this has always been a dominant part of the US hobby.

Given this attitude, it is not surprising that there is a reluctance to throw zines out of the final Runestone Poll list because of a low number of votes. The attitude is that if it runs games and gets votes, then we must try and include it in the Poll no matter what.

Indeed, as Randolph Smyth says in NF#34, the 5 vote cut-off qualifier only came in because an average vote didn't make sense for a zine receiving such a low number of votes. It didn't come in because zines which could gather such a low number of votes shouldn't be considered as "essential" hobby zines.

Hence, it is not surprising that the dividing line between people interested in increasing the cut-off number and those that want to keep it as it is is very much a divide between those who consider fannishness to be the most important part of the hobby and those that consider running games to be the most important.

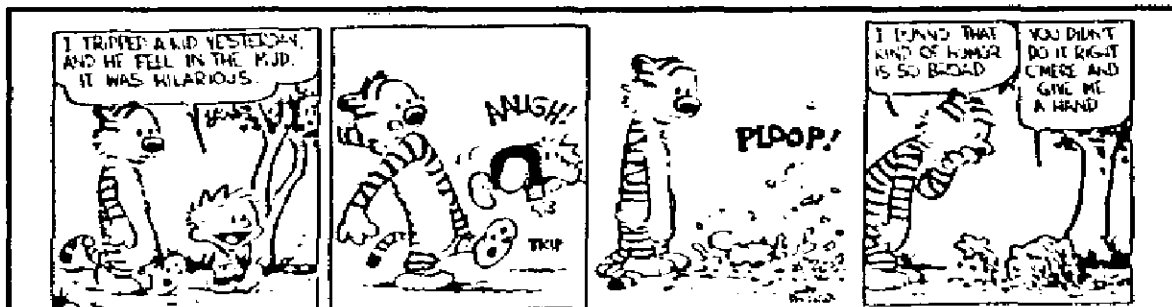
My own view is that a 10% cut-off (or 20 votes if the turn-out is higher than 200) represents a reasonable approach. I don't consider that this would "discriminate against worthy, but low-circulation, zines" (to quote Randolph) because my view is that any zine which can't pass this barrier is only on the fringes of the Diplomacy hobby. If a zine was only a fringe zine, then excluding it from the Poll is not a great loss.

If a zine has a circulation of only 15 (which might well be the case for a small time zine run by a GM for his friends and which runs two Diplomacy games), then are we creating a misleading view of the Diplomacy hobby by excluding it from the final Runestone listing? I think not.

To my mind, the Poll acts, in some sense, as a unifying factor by showing people how big the hobby is. It does this by showing how many zines qualified for the final rankings list and how many people voted. The list of zines that received votes is also an indication of the number of people that are around the fringes of the Diplomacy hobby. BUT, you do not make the Poll a unifying factor by including zines with very little support! There may be "many fine zines" (to quote Kevin Brown) that do not receive very many votes and are hence excluded from the listing. We don't cast doubt onto their fineness by excluding them from the final rankings list, we just say "Well, these zines received some support, but at the moment they really aren't involved in the hobby". Can a zine which only receives a handful of votes really claim to be an integral part of the hobby? I think not.

What I really like about this approach is that the final definition of what constitutes a mainstream zine is left to the voters. If a zine gathers enough votes to get past the 10% barrier, then it's in. If it doesn't, then it's out. And as I pointed out in my editorial for the September 1991 issue of THE MOUTH OF SAURON, running such a policy would eliminate most of the zines that Cal objected to in this years Poll. They just wouldn't have garnered enough support to get into that final listing. Now Kevin Brown argues that this approach means that the votes of many Diplomacy hobbyists are ignored.

Kevin argued that because most people vote for less than 10 zines, and that by eliminating those zines which receive less than 20 votes, you would eliminate the votes of half the voters. This might be true, I don't know, but it certainly isn't provable by the figures Kevin gives! But, let's consider this. Suppose a hobby member votes for 5 zines and all five zines are excluded from the final rankings list because they didn't gain enough votes. What this tells us isn't that our methodology is wrong because we are excluding a valid voter from exercising an influence on the final rankings list, but that this person isn't active in the mainstream of the hobby and that probably we aren't interested in his/her vote! If you only see fringe zines, then, by definition, you are only a fringe hobbyist (there is nothing wrong with being a fringe hobbyist, but, being such, why should you be able to influence the Runestone Poll?



In the UK, the situation isn't quite as simple as all this. The Pollster normally defines what kind of zine can be voted for: "at least three issues in the last year and running at least two games of Diplomacy/variants." He also allows some zines which wouldn't qualify under this definition: new zines (which may not have started two games), and zines which are undeniably part of the Diplomacy hobby, but which don't run games (or don't run Diplomacy games). *((Ed note: I suspect a zine like Diplomacy Digest would fit this definition.))*

This definition of an acceptable zine rules out a large number of zines that run postal games. But sports gaming zines (mainly football) are really a separate hobby in their own right. There are very few people that see Diplomacy zines and sports gaming zines and most of these zines do not have any trades with Diplomacy zines; almost all of them have no letter column and no hobby news column. Hence, they are not part of the Diplomacy hobby and are thus excluded.

I am not sure whether the postal RR and United zines that are cropping up in the States are part of the US Diplomacy hobby. I was under the impression that most RR players were also Dip players, but I read recently that this wasn't the case.

Only Eric is in a position to know what the true situation is, because only Eric knows what other zines the RR and United players voted for. So only Eric can say if these voters are Diplomacy hobbyists or not. After all, Diplomacy players play more than one game and if people who are undeniably Diplomacy hobbyists want to play RR or United, then perhaps you should recognize these games as acceptable? Given the way these zines were birthed in the States, I would tend to think that they should be included in the Poll.

But, as I have already stated, by imposing a 10% cut-off point, you would exclude most of these zines because they do not get enough votes to qualify for the final rankings list. This is as it should be; these zines are probably part of the US Diplomacy hobby, but are only fringe zines.

It is impossible to give hard and fast rules about which zines are part of the Diplomacy hobby; it depends on where you are in the hobby. In the end, the Pollster has to use his discretion. My view is that a Pollster has the right to exclude certain votes and certain zines. Take Kevin Brown's example where he said that if the only qualification for the Poll was running Dip, then he would fake a Dip game to gain entry into the Poll (actually, it would be easier just to get 7 of your readers to play in a game of Dip, and if you can't drag up 7 readers who want to play, then you really should ask yourself if you are part of the Diplomacy hobby). OK, so he's running a Dip game, but if I, as Pollster, decided that this was just a screen and that his zine really wasn't part of the Diplomacy hobby, I'd have no hesitation in excluding his zine from the Poll anyway! (Just in case anyone hasn't got my message yet, I would allow Kevin's zine into the Runestone Poll provided it got enough support to pass the 10% limit.)

To summarize what I have said: the Runestone Poll is a Poll for Diplomacy hobbyists. Diplomacy hobbyists may play in other games besides Diplomacy. A 10% cut-off point eliminates those zines which do not have much support in the Diplomacy hobby. Therefore, those zines are fringe zines. The Poll can only gain from excluding those zines which have very little contact with the mainstream of the hobby.

((Ed note: I find myself in almost perfect agreement with your comments, although I have little hope that your suggestion of a 10% cut off point will be implemented. In Eric's tenure as Pollster, he has made it very clear that his main goal is to avoid offending anyone. While this seems a bit unrealistic given the competitive nature of the Poll, it is a natural compensatory reaction to the feuding which accompanied Bruce Linsey's tenure as Pollster. Unfortunately, I feel that this attitude has gotten in the way of the search for a (relatively) true grading of zine performance. Perhaps Eric's successor will return the Poll to its roots.)) ((I can just feel another letter coming J..))

My last comments on the Runestone Poll are to do with presentation of the results rather than qualification for inclusion. It is an attitude that we've seen put into practice in the UK: Some councils have "outlawed" competitive games such as football, rugby, hockey, et al, in schools. You see, these games are "competitive" and by playing these games, children who are not very good at them are going to be discouraged and get inferiority complexes because not everyone can be good at everything.

That is a load of rubbish.

My own view is that nobody ever folded because of a low place in a hobby Poll. And if they did so, then I'd have to ask if they were suitable material for pubbing a zine in the first place. Anyone who can't take the flak and folds because of negative criticism is unlikely to be a good publisher. In fact, we are better off with such people out of the hobby.

Speaking as someone who always been in the bottom half of the UK poll (and I've been publishing since March 1985!), I realize why my zine has never done very well in a popularity contest and I realize that it will never do particularly well. Still, every slight increase in my position brings some small satisfaction to me.

The Runestone Poll should be printed in full. OK, after the top five or six places, the exact placement in the final ranking list is fairly arbitrary. The difference between 20th and 28th might be the result of one ballot paper. We all recognize this. There are zines at the top, zines in the middle and zines at the bottom, and where you are in that grouping is reasonably irrelevant (except that again you can be at the top, in the middle, or at the bottom of a grouping). I just don't think that anyone has ever been hurt by their position in the Zine Poll and how can you make comparisons about the change in a zine's votes over a period of years if you don't have the figures. I'm working on an interesting piece of work at the moment, trying to determine how much benefit a Pollster gets out of running the Poll, if he is also running a zine. I couldn't do this unless I had all the figures from all the Polls.

(Incidentally, there is no doubt that running a Poll gives you a big boost. I doubt that Eric's zine would do as well if he wasn't the Pollster. When Mick Bullock ran the zine, he excluded his zine NEW STATSMAN from the Poll.)

As for Eric's comments on the 0-10 range, come on! Just how do you determine what the worst zine is? By personal preference! So what do you expect, if somebody writes lies about you in other peoples letter columns or even in their own zine, of course you are going to be tempted to downgrade that person's zine. But by excluding the top and bottom 10% of a zines vote, a Pollster gets around such grudge votes. And if a zine is getting a large number of low marks, then either the zine is very controversial or just crap. And if a zine gets a large number of high marks, then the zine is either very good or the editor is trying to fix the Poll. (Incidentally, if the Pollster has published full figures each year about the Poll, then it's easy to decide what's happening, yet another reason for publishing full figures.)

Actually, I disagree with Eric that "these are amateur publications, many not taken too seriously by their publishers!" One of the problems in fandom is that too many editors take their publications too seriously. Get real, it's only a God Damn Hobby! And what's sadder, people taking the Poll too seriously or a Pollster that's afraid that he might upset people by telling them where they came in a Poll?!

However, I do approve of the smaller Polls that Eric runs (zine most liked by Canadians, etc) and this points the way forward. If people don't like the format of the Runestone Poll, they can run their own Polls. In the UK, we have the Zine Poll, the Gladys Awards and the Rusty Bolts. Three different Polls, run in different ways and aimed at different electorates. And we're none the worse for it. In fact, most people enjoy the diversity that's offered. After all, the Zine Poll can only reflect one type of zine.

And perhaps this IS a way forward for those small circulation zines that offer good games services, but are afraid that exclusion from the Poll might be detrimental. Why not start up your own Poll asking people to vote for their "Favourite Zine to Play Diplomacy In". At least then, we'd have another Poll to argue about!

((Ed Note: I disagree - too many Polls tend to result in poor turnout for any one Poll. I'd say that three are just about right. We have the Runestone, the Marco Poll and the Xyns People Read. Also, Phil Reynolds has the Hobby Favourite Awards which MAY be one too many.))

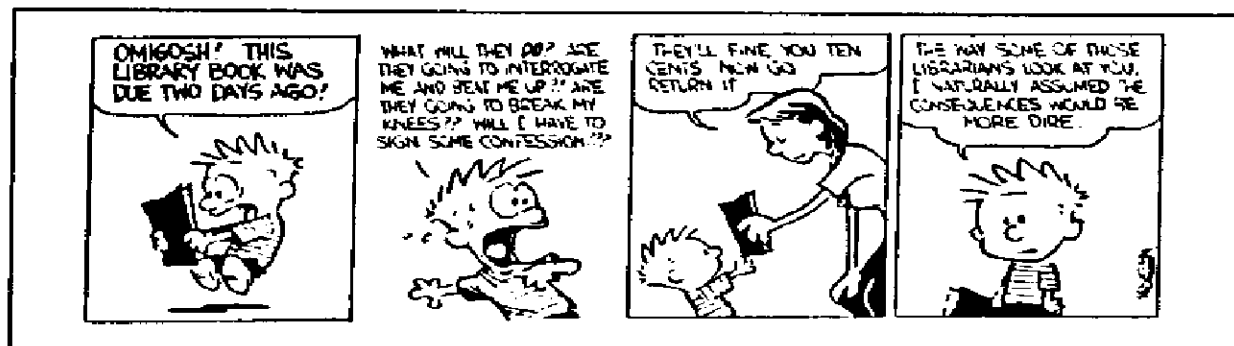
Personally, I was saddened when you decided to bring back the games into the zine as a result of outside pressure and, as I understand it, pressure from people not actually playing in the zine at that. As Piggott's Laws of Fanzines state, an editor runs a zine for his own benefit (or at least he does if he wants a good one). I'd have preferred it if you'd ran the games separate and brought out FLAME when you thought you had the material to do so.

((Ed note. The people you are presumably referring to are the people who reviewed NF in the Zine Register, Steve Nicewarner, Phil Reynolds, Brent McKee & Garret Schenk. To be totally honest, only Brent's review was considered by me to be constructive criticism (although Steve's certainly wasn't destructive as the tone in Phil and Garret's was) and thus to be taken seriously. When I added this to all the comments I had received since the original switch, all asking for a return to the zine of the games, the move was an easy one to make. Also, I had found that pubbing without the games lacked a certain drive that comes with meeting a deadline. In MY opinion, the zine had gotten a bit formulated and bland, if not downright stale. The above mentioned drive, as well as a certain bit of anger (a positive thing for me when channeled correctly) brought on by the ZR reviews will make NF a better zine. Note: of the "ZR Four", all but Garret play in NF games, as have all of the other people who have commented to me.))

Well, I'm not sure if Garret knows what an APA ((Amateur Publishing Association)) is, or has ever seen one, but let me tell you that "reading zines" such as NORTHERN FLAME, BEEN THERE, DONE THAT, COSTAGUANA, PASSCHENDAELE and the like are miles superior to the average APA. I'm not going to discuss why APA's tend to be rather shoddy affairs, but if anyone wants to accuse me of shouting my mouth off without knowing what I'm talking about, I'm more than willing to fill in the details.

Phil Reynolds is never going to achieve his ambition of being an important BNF ((Big Name Fan)) whom everyone respects until he realizes one thing: if you think something is worth doing, you go out and do it rather than waiting for "hobby approval". If Phil thinks the hobby needs a central forum for discussing hobby issues, rather than allowing people to discuss issues in different zines when they want to, then he should go out and run the damn thing! Then, if people agree with him, then people will support the idea - if people don't, then they won't.

Phil should take a leaf out of Larry Peery's book. When Larry finally left DIPLOMACY WORLD (after running it into the ground, an opinion of course, but just look at his Runestone Poll results for the period to confirm this; something else you couldn't do if Eric had his way about not publishing poor results) he decided that the Diplomacy community needed



a central zine to discuss WORLD DIPCON. Well, we didn't; we've managed quite well without Larry in the past, but he went on with WORLD DIPLOMACY and while I wouldn't agree with much that Larry writes, the zine is an overall plus. Larry didn't wait for hobby approval, he went out there and published. Damn the critics! If Phil is really concerned about what the hobby needs, rather than concerned with his reputation within the hobby, then he should damn well publish!

Hell, I'll support any zine that's willing to run my contributions (although, of course, these are only my opinions)!

Another example: I'd be surprised if Dick and Julie Martin asked Hobby wide permission before they started HOUSE OF LORDS and that was an excellent publication. It might not have had any "official" backing and the discussion might not have had any hobby-wide "authority" (things which I think Phil is interested in), but it was an excellent place to discuss hobby issues and a wide range of active hobbyists took part in the discussion, giving the discussion some kind of "authority". Interestingly enough, this discussion continued in other zines as well.

I was (not surprisingly) amused by Larry Peery's comment that "I'd sure like to be able to pick up a dipzine and not see Mark Nelson shooting off their mouths about something which they know nothing about". ((sic))

Aside from the grammatical errors in this sentence (given my own poor grasp of the English language, I am not in a position to complain about Larry's poor grasp of the language), I don't really agree with the proposition.

But hell, Larry may be right. Since he wouldn't make such a statement without having compiled a list of offenses and since he intimates that I have such offensive letters published so often (strange that they can be so offensive, yet so many editors are desperate to publish my material; no one has ever turned down a prime piece of Crazie Markie material) he won't have much difficulty in compiling such a list even if he doesn't have one at the moment.

So here is the first NORTHERN FLAME challenge competition. For NORTHERN FLAME #36 (late entries will not be accepted), Larry Peery is hereby challenged to provide Cal White with a listing of every offensive Mark Nelson letter published in 1991. Reference should be given to zine name, issue number, page number and EXACT quote stating just exactly what statement Larry is objecting to. Larry should also provide (for each case) an explanation of why he didn't object at the time to each comment.

Of course, I admit it's a fair cop, that I quite often write letters which are, well, "aggressive" and contain MY OWN VIEWS. I've always been of the view that the most important thing a fan can do is to contribute. His thing may be playing games, it may be writing letters or it may be publishing (and hell, if he has time, all three at once!), but whatever he enjoys doing, he should make a positive contribution to fandom.

I enjoy writing letters, exchanging views and the cut and thrust of a good argument. Sometimes, to get an argument going, you have to light a fire... And you know, sometimes I can get the facts wrong. Of course, this is strange; nearly all contributors to all the letter columns in fandom speak from personal experience and so get the facts right, but I'm always willing to admit that I may have got something wrong and readjust my views accordingly.

And with this being the case, it won't take Larry very long to compile such a list. If nothing else, it's going to be a damned good read, so just stay tuned for an issue more to see what he has to say.

In the final analysis, it's up to the editor to decide if he wants to run my letter. If someone doesn't like what I've written, I don't object to them writing in and explaining why

I'm being a nerd; after all, contribution is the name of the game.

((Ed note. I can't add much more than I said when Larry made his comment. People are always welcome to contribute to NF. I WILL edit for length, spelling, grammar or clarity (God knows, YOU know that, Mark!), but I almost never turn anybody down flat (hasn't happened yet); even if I did, I'd tell them why and encourage them to try again. People who are willing to contribute to a zine are the backbone of fandom, something which is near and dear to my heart. I'll take a non-playing writer over a pure wargamer type any day.))

By the way, you are right to come down hard on James for using the term "fanism", a truly horrible word which has no place in this hobby. This is surely an example of James shouting his mouth off about something he doesn't understand, else he would have used the word "fannishness", and I hope that Larry has noted this...

I agree that most US zines have gone out of fannishness. I've seen sample issues of most of them and I haven't been particularly impressed; even UPSTART didn't strike me as being particularly interesting or worthwhile (anyway, I doubt that Garret would accept an offer of trade from someone who doesn't run games, so I guess this feeling is probably mutual). There are still a couple of US zines that are worth reading. PENGUIN DIP (is it still going? Someone told me that it had folded.) ((Ed note. I don't know.)) and Pete Gaughan's zine ((PERELAN-DRA)) spring to mind as good zines although ones which you may not call fannish.

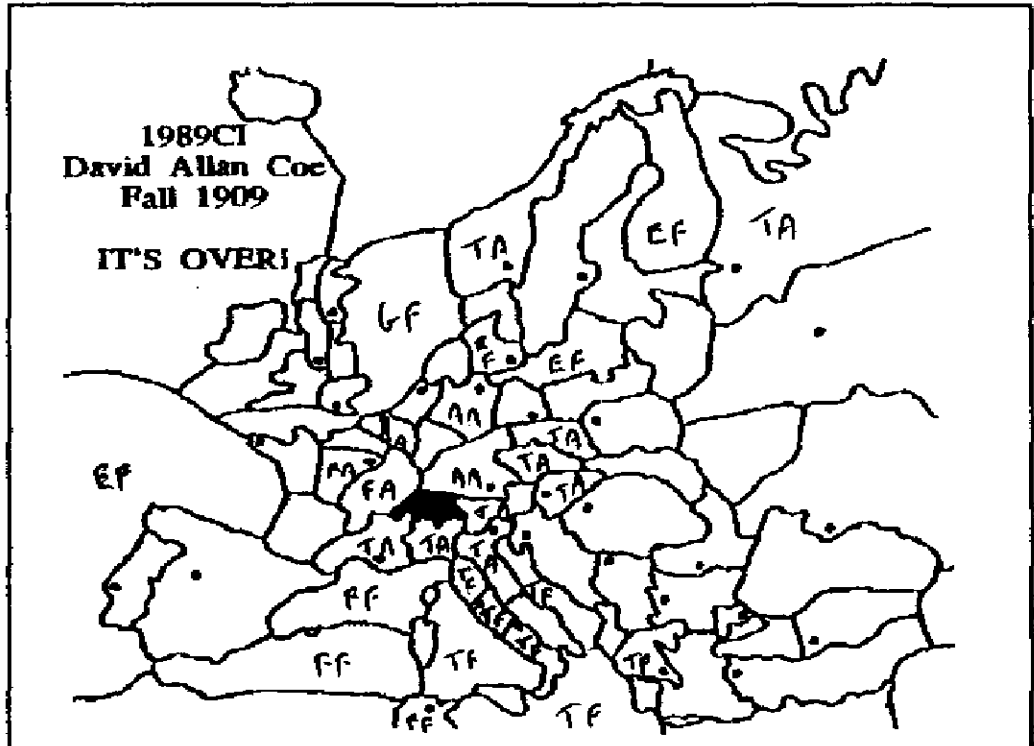
((Really? I considered PERE as the leading proponent of the non-fannish contingent. An excellent zine with games as the main focus and fanac as strictly secondary and incidental, (although certainly not a warehouse zine.))

A TYPICAL MEMBER OF THE TURBOPHREAK PHRINGER



What the hell
does he mean,
NO MAPS?

**PEACE
IN
OUR
TIME!**



1989CI The David Allan Coe Game JACK BOWS TO THE INEVITABLE AND DROPS OUT AS FAST FREDDIE WINS IT! MISS MELLIE IN SECOND PLACE WITH BUFFALO BILL A SURVIVOR!

Austria (Melinda Holley)
England (civil disorder)
France (Bob Acheson)

a KIE-ber; a MUN-kie; a hol-BEL, s by a bur /dis/.
a stp ret oth. f's MID, FIN, DEN, & BAL h.
Retreats a bur-par. a bel-BUR, s by a PAR; f LYO-spa;
f tyn-WES; f TUN-tyn; a boh-mun /dis, annihilated/.
f NTH h.

Germany (Bill Lafosse)
Turkey (Fred Wiedemeyer)

a MAR-spa; a tyo-PIE, s by a VEN; f TUS-lyo; f ion-TYN,
s by f ROM; f apu-NAP; f eas-ION, s by f GRE; a tri-TYO;
a gal-BOH, s by a's VIE & SIL; a mos-STP; a stp-NWY; f ADR h.

Supply Centres after 1909

A: mun, ber, [mar], kie, hol, bel. [5]

E: home, [nwy], [stp], den. [4]

F: bre, spa, par, por, tun, [bel] [5]

G: swe [1]

T: home, bul, rum, sev, mos, war, ser, tri, vie,

bud, gre, ven, rom, nap, **mal. nwy. sir.** [19] WINS!

1989CI Zine: NORTHERN FLAME; GM: Cal White. Austria: Randy Grigsby (Res F04), Melinda Holley; England: Jack McHugh (Drop F09), CD; France: Bob Acheson; Germany: Eric Blanpied (Drop W01), Brian Wilson (Res F03), Bill Lafosse; Italy: Rob Lowes (Out W05); Russia: Nelson Heintzman (Out W03); Turkey: Fred Wiedemeyer (Won F09).

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
Austria	5	6	7	7	7	4	4	5	5	All end game statements are welcome and will be printed next issue.
England	5	5	6	7	6	5	6	6	4	
France	5	5	5	5	7	6	7	6	5	
Germany	5	6*	5	4	3	4	2	1	1	
Italy	4	4	4	3	0	-				
Russia	6	2	0	-						
Turkey	4	6	7	8	11	15	15*	16	19 WINS!	

Fred Wiedemeyer
7632 92 Av
Edmonton, Alberta
T6C 1R4

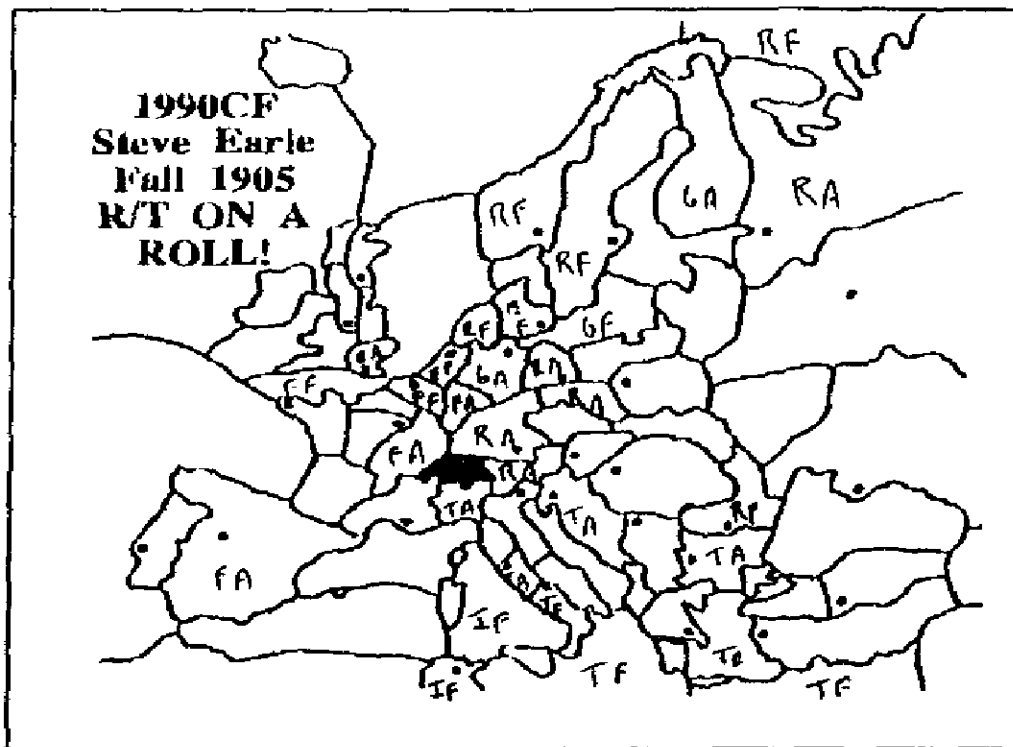
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49548 USA

Phil Reynolds
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4202 Fowler Av
Tampa, Florida
33620 USA

Steve Nicewarner
1310 11 Ephesus
Church Rd
Chapel Hill, NC
27514 USA



1990CF The Steve Earle Game Fall 1905

RUSSIA/TURKEY UP TO TWENTY-ONE!

- Austria (Nelson Heintzman) f WES-mid.
- England (Fred Wiedemeyer) f nth-HOL, s by f HEL; f ska-DEN; a LON h.
- France (Andrew York) f ENG-mid; a SPA h; f BEL h; a BUR-mun. s by a RUH;
a pie-tyo /dislodged, retreat to mar, oib/.
- Germany (Michael Gonsalves) Retreats a ruh-HOL. f kie-BAL; a hol-KIE; a FIN-swp;
f swe a English a lon-nwy /dislodged, retreat to ska, oib/.
- Italy (David Senzig) f TUN h, s by f TYN.
- Russia (Phil Reynolds) a STP-fin; f bot-SWE, s by f NWY; f BAR s f nwy; a pru-BER,
s by a MUN; a SIL s a mun; f RUM h; a TYO s Turkish a ven-pie.
- Turkey (Steve Nicewarner) f ion-NAP, s by a ROM; f eas-ION, s by f AEG; f smy-EAS;
a ven-PIE; a ser-TRI; a BUL h.

Supply Centres after 1905

A: {rom}	[0] OUT!
E: home, den, hol	[5] +1
F: home, spa, por, bel	[6] E/+1
G: kie, [ber], [hol], [swe]	[1] -2 / -3
I: tun, [nap]	[1] -1
R: home, rum, bud, nwy, vic, mun, her, swe	[11] +2
T: home, gre, bul, ser, tri, ven, rom, nap	[10] +2

THE DEADLINE FOR WINTER 1905 AND SPRING 1906 ORDERS IS APRIL 1, 1992!

- Fra-Rus: I still don't believe you. If you want to break the R/T, show me a positive sign -- stab the guy. Otherwise, it's an E/F/G/I against the R/T.
- Ger-Cal: Please, Cal! Am I dead yet? Please!
- Ger-Tur: Discover honour. STAB PHIL!
- Ita-Fra: Turban topped transports taking tremendous territory - trying to target tyrrenian terror temporarily. Tacit tabloid tactics tenure Turkey's triumph.
- Pope-in-exile-Sultan: Now I get it. Turkish cannons.
- Cezar-Czar: Et tu Bruta, should have gone for your ideal!
- Tunis-Kaiser: I see the fat lady approaching the mikel Oops, that's microphone...
- Ita-Aus: I will be joining you soon. So long! ((More press after 1991CJ))

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 England RG1 8AZ

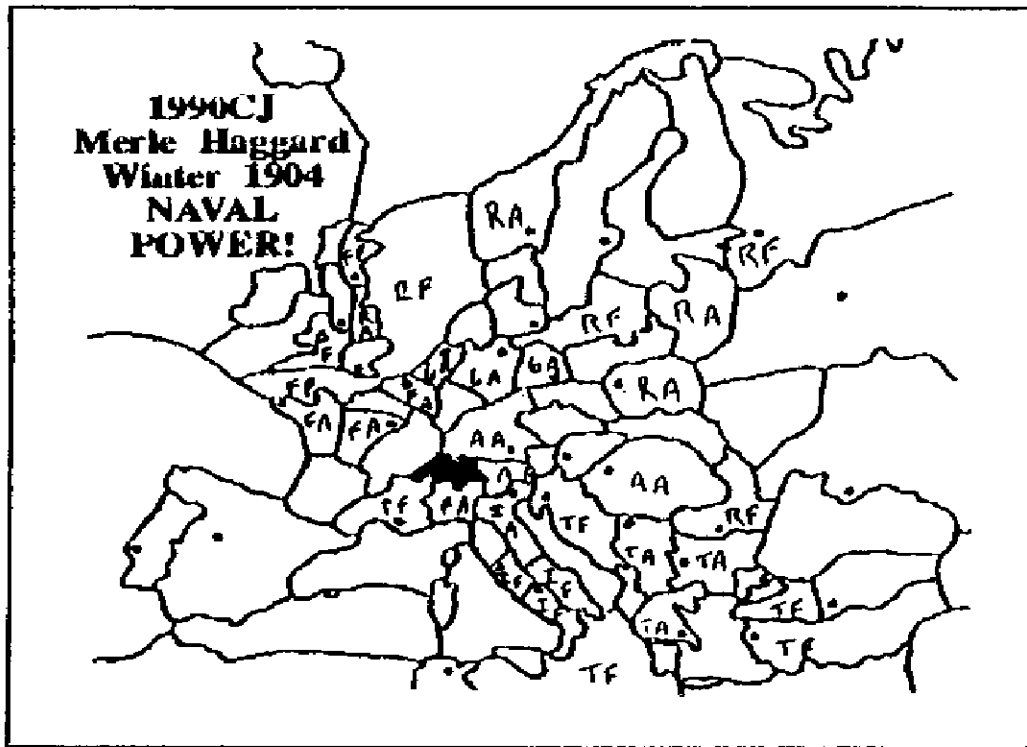
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1990CJ The Merle Haggard Game Winter 1904 FIVE FLEETS BUILT, FOUR FLEETS (AND AN ARMY) REMOVED!

<p>Austria (Bill Lafosse) England (John Breakwell?) France (Gale Wetmore)</p> <p>Germany (Bob Sorfleet) Italy (Stuart Eves) Russia (Randolph Smyth)</p> <p>Turkey (Graham Wilson)</p>	<p>Removes f rus. Has a's BUD, TYO, MUN. NRR! GM removes a pic, f bel, f den. Has f's nth, wal. Builds f MAR, no room for 2nd build. Has a's BRE, PAR, BEL, PIE, f's EDI, ENG, MAR.</p> <p>Removes f pru. Has a's HOL, KIE, BER. Builds f NAP. Has a VEN, f's APU, ROM, NAP. Builds f STPSC. Has a's LVN, YOR, NWY, WAR, f's RUM, BAL, STPSC. Builds f SMY & f CON. Has a's SER, BUL, GRE, f's ION, TRI, SMY, CON.</p>
---	--

THE DEADLINE FOR SPRING 1905 IS APRIL 1, 1992. Note that I mislabeled the season last time. I do that now and then to see who's paying attention... Orders on file for A/I/R.
 No press.

1990CF press continued...

Rus-Ger: Boy, Mike, you really have a bug up your butt, huh? Chill out, dude! I play for fun, too! I didn't get into an R/T because I lack imagination. It's because it's working! Steve turned out to be a good ally. You didn't. There was a point in the game, several turns ago, when I thought I had good relations with both you and Steve. By no means had I settled on an R/T - but I did once YOU got greedy and stabbed ME! So why don't YOU grow up and stop whining, Mike! Geez! And at the risk of causing my current ally, Steve, to do a double-take, I'm STILL not settled on an R/T! I ALWAYS keep an open mind to alternatives, but they have to be better ones before I'll trash what's working. And they would have to be with players who aren't flaky like you. Until our next game, Mike, (Bronx cheer!).

Rus-Tur: Heh! Well, I hope you found that episode amusing as I did! Noqw we can just laugh it off and forget about what I said...right, Steve? You KNOW I said all that stuff just to further gall Mike...don't you? Steve?

Rus-Eng & Fra: If Germany can blame anyone about a cradle to grave R/T, it's you guys (after himself!).

FACTS IN FIVE**1991FIF(C) TURN 1**

	Banking Terms	Types of Candy	Measuring Devices	Androgynous Names	Kitchen Utensils
Frank Cauz (250 pts)	G.I.C. Credit Loan Savings Acct Withdrawal	Gum Chocolate Licorice Sugarplum Caramel	GeigerCounter Calipers Laser Scale Voltmeter	Gale Connie Leslie Sandi Terry	Grater Collander Ladle Steamer Knife
Marlo Cauz (232 pts)	XXX Cash Loan Savings Interest	Gumdrops Chocolate Licorice Sugarbabies Taffy	GeigerCounter Clock Level Speedometer Anometer	Gale Chris Lee Sandy Robin	Grater Collander Ladle Spatula Oven Mitt
Eric Young (232 pts)	G.I.C. Credit Loans Savings Term	Gumdrop Chocolate Lollipop Sours Taffy	XXX Calipers Laser Sonar Transit	Gale Chris Lee Sam Toni	Grater Collander Ladle Scissors Tongs
Andrew York (202 pts)	XXX Cheque Line of Credit Safe Deposit Overdraft	Gumball Candy Cane Licorice Sucker Mint	Graph Cup Laser Steps XXX	Gerry Chris Lee XXX Billy	Garlic Press Collander Lid Sifter Whip
Andreas Gomolka (146 pts)	Giro Credit Loan Savings Time Deposit	XXX Crude Sugar XXX XXX XXX	XXX Chronometer XXX Scales Tape Measure	XXX Candy Lenny Sandy Kelly	Grill Can Opener Lighter Scissors Tin Opener

Turn 1 Notes & Commentary

Banking Terms: Answers disallowed: *Graft* (not a, shall we say, *official* banking term).

Type of Candy: Answers disallowed: none.

Measuring Device: Answers disallowed: *Gauge* (too non-specific); *Gyroscope* (to the best of my knowledge, a gyroscope doesn't measure anything); *Roll-O-Tape* (What's this? A brand name?).

Androgynous Given Names: Answers disallowed: *Gray* (as a *first* name?); *Sigourney* (I've never heard of a guy with this name).

Kitchen Utensils: Answers disallowed: none, but, Andy, whips belong in the bedroom...

SCORES AFTER TURN 1

F Cauz	250
M Cauz	232
Young	232
York	202
Gomolka	146

CATEGORIES FOR TURN 2

- 1) Geometry Terms
- 2) Straits
- 3) Flavours of Ice Cream
- 4) Primary School Subjects
- 5) Musical Terms

**THE DEADLINE FOR TURN 2 IS:
MARCH 20, 1992**

LETTERS: C / B / V / M / Choice

FACTS IN FIVE**1991FiF(B) Turn 4**

	Diplomacy TERM	Water Craft	Castle Part	Workshop Power Tool	Arctic Explorer
Conrad von Metzke (170 pts)	Army Fleet Convoy Press Move	Aux. Cruiser Frigate Canoe PT Boat Minelayer	Armoury XXX Chapel Portcullis Moat	Auger XXX XXX Paint Sprayer XXX	Amundsen Freuchen Cabot Peary XXX
Paul Cauz (158 pts)	Alliance Fleet Convoy Prussia Move	Ark Ferry Canoe Paddleboat Motorboat	XXX Forey Courtyard Parapet Moat	XXX XXX Circular Saw Polisher Mitre Saw	XXX Franklin XXX Peary XXX
Andrew York (158 pts)	Annihilated Fleet Coastal Crawl Pandin's Paradox Moves	AmphiTrac Ferry Caravel Punt XXX	Armoury Foundry Cistern Portcullis Moat	Auger XXX Circular Saw XXX XXX	XXX Frobisher XXX Parry XXX
Brent McKee (134 pts)	Annihilated Fleet Convoy Press Move	XXX XXX Canoe Punt Motorboat	Archer Slit XXX Courtyard Portcullis Moat	XXX XXX Cordless Drill XXX Motor Tool	XXX Frobisher XXX Peter Pond??? A. MacKenzie
Sandi Hood (54 pts)	Army Fleet Centres Prussia Moves	XXX XXX Cruise Ship Pontoon Boat XXX	XXX XXX XXX XXX Moat	XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX	XXX XXX XXX Peary XXX
Andy Lischett (202 pts)	Annihilated Fleet Cut Puppet Map	Aircraft Car. Frigate Canoe Punt Mine Sweeper	Armoury Fortifications Crenelations Portcullis Moat	Arc Welder Flashlight Chisel (Pneu) Punch Press Miter Saw	XXX XXX Cook Perry XXX

Turn 4 Notes & Commentary

Dip Term: Answers disallowed: none.

Type of Water Craft: Answers disallowed: *Float* (not a water craft); *Military Boat* (too generic); *Algerine* (that's a class of watercraft); *Monitor* (Ibid). According to Conrad, Auxiliary Cruiser is a special type of cruiser. Any objections?

Castle Part: Answers disallowed: *Alcove* (too generic); *Citadel* (not a part). Foundry came close to being disallowed, but I gave it the benefit of the doubt. They were usually found in villages.

Workshop Power Tool: Answers disallowed: *Power Drill & Power Nailer* (*Power* is part of the category definition and thus ineligible; *Craftsman Drill* (Inappropriate use of adjective).

Arctic Explorer: Brent, who is *Peter Pond*? Let me know by next turn or lose the points.

Continued next page...

SCORES AFTER TURN 4

von Metzke	668+170=838
Cauz	583+158=741
McKee	568+134=702
York	536+158=694
S.Hood	588+ 54= 642

CATEGORIES FOR TURN 5:

1) Circus Act (type); 2) Cooking Terms; 3) Star Trek Episodes
(original series); 4) Languages; 5) Dog Breeds.
Letters: M / W / S / T / choice

DEADLINE: MARCH 28, 1992

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NORTHERN FLAME is a journal of postal Diplomacy and its variants, fantasy, science fiction, baseball (lots of baseball!) and whatever else strikes the fancy of Ye Olde Editor and the Minions of the Flame.

YE OLDE EDITOR is Cal White of 1 Turnberry Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M6N 1P6. Phone os (01) (416) 654 1722 between 8-10:PM EST. Note that I now have a fancy answering machine, so there is **NO EXCUSE** for missing or late orders.

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