

NEW! IN THIS ISSUE:

JUSTIFIABLE REASONS TO GO FOR SECOND,

IN

PLATYPUS

Hey! Is that Wright? Or Nott?

Find out on page seven.

TT

17

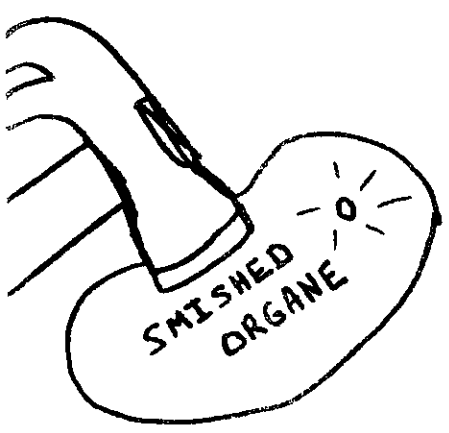
WHEEZE-
What an ally.

← Crazy Dutchman

WELL,
C.D., AS SOON
AS I FINISH
GETTING DRESSED,
I'LL TAKE YOUR
SIGNED AGREEMENT
TO TAKE 2ND PLACE
BACK TO MY
BOYFRIEND



↑ Ally's ally.



Welcome the the chilly old WINTER issue of PLATYPUS PIE, here to warm your black little hearts on this cold day in December, and putting ye ol editor even further behind in studies than anyone would have thought possible. Here in the Journal of animal malapropisms, various subjects of disinterest are considered, rejected, and, sometimes (when Glomphf is around) Digested. When nothing else is doing, I go down to the ocean and watch a rock. When even THAT gets dull, I usually get around to recording the fitful progress of postal Diplomacy games 1971EH (The Winner's Game, in W'05), 1972AR (The Newcomer's Game, in W'04), and 1972BT (The Open Game, now in Winter 03). Those of you most keen-eyed will notice that all games are together, which allows PP to run itself along on a 3-3-1 deadline schedule. Enter at your own risk.

This is a Journal of Postal Diplomacy, PLATYPUS PIE #17. It has no games open now or even ever at a fee of \$15. Diplomacy is a board game (not a simulation--see page eight to ten) published by Games Research, Inc., Boston, MA. It was invented by Allan B. Calhamer, original thinker par excellence. (Hypermodern is still one of my favorite light games).

THE EDITOR: Brenton Ver Ploeg; 520 Parker Ave., #202; San Francisco, CA 94118. Phone: (415) 668-9218. These days, I am REMARKABLY easy to reach by phone, at least if you compare it to times past. PLATYPUS PIE is published every three weeks, except that the Winter Issue, which you now hold, comes out only a week after Fall, since all three games herein are in similar seasons.

REPLACEMENT ROSTER: 1971EH (1) Doug Beyerlein (2) Lenard Lakofka; 1972AR (1) Paul Bond (2) Jan Le Pire (3) Dick Trtek (4) Steven Soong; 1972BT (1) John Hendry (2) Arn Vagts (3) Jim Hall.

COSTS: Subscriptions are now six for a dollar. No more 13 issue subscriptions are being taken at 13 for \$2.00, because there aren't going to be that many more issues of the magazine. See issue #16 for details.

STATUS: The gamesmaster is entering First Semester finals in his final year of law school. Don't fuck with the gamesmaster, as he is in a foul mood as a result. Further complication: the gamesmaster has given up cigarettes, and finals always was the time when the total went to three packs a day.

1971EH B U C H A N A N T A K E S L E A D W / T E N W I N T E R 1905
VAGTS, BESIEGED, PREPARES FOR NEW CONFLICT
NEW ALLIANCE PATTERNS FORMING FOR THE
B I G P O T A T O E B A K E

- AUSTRIA (Ward): (Autumn 1905--R A Berlin to Silesia). EVEN.
- ENGLAND (Buchanan): Build Army Edinburgh.
- GERMANY (Birsan): Build Army Kiel.
- ITALY (Vagts): Even.
- RUSSIA (Bytwerk): Remove Army Warsaw.
- TURKEY (Tretick): Even.

Positions for the start of Spring, 1906:

- AUS: A's Sil, Boh, Mun, Bud, Bul; F Smy (6).
- ENG: A's Edi, Bel, Par, Bur, StP; F's Nth, Bot, Nat, Mid, Spa(SC) (10).
- GER: A's Kie, Ruh, Ber, Gas; FBal (5).
- ITA: A's Mar, Ven, Vie, Tri; F's Lyo, Wes, Gre, Aeg (8).
- RUS: A's Sev, Mos, Liv; F Con (4).
- TUR: A Ank (1).

CENTER CHART; 1901 THROUGH 1905

A	5	7	8	7	6
E	5	7	8	9	10
F	5	3	1	-	
G	5	5	4	4	5
I	4	4	6	8	8
R	7	6	5	5	4
T	3	2	2	1	1
	01	02	03	04	05

This chart will be brought your way in all PP games every five years, as a spot check on the progress of the games. The player for France was Greg Warden. Arnold Vagts replaced the resigning Conrad von Metzke as Italy in Winter, 1902.

DEADLINE FOR SPRING, 1906 MOVES IS CHRISTMAS DAY AT NOON. That's December 25th of course. There will be no mail delivery on that day, and, what is more, mail delivery over this season is VERY SLOW. Mail early, dammit, particularly those of you not at normal phone numbers.

1972AR

W i n t e r ' s F r a n c e S t i l l T o p WINTER 1904
 ARMIES RAISED ALL ACROSS EUROPE--LAND WAR ON?

AUSTRIA (O'Regan): Remove Army Bohemia.
 FRANCE (Winter): Build Army Marseilles.
 GERMANY (Hall): Build Army Kiel.
 ITALY (Parsons): Constant.
 RUSSIA (Rocamora): Build Army Warsaw.
 TURKEY (T.S. Williams): Constant.

Positions for the start of Spring, 1905

AUS: A's Pie, Vie, Bud, Ser; F Bul(SC) (5).
 FRA: A's Ruh, Bel, Bur, Mar; F's Nat, Mid, Lyo, Naf, Tun (9).
 GER: A's Kie, Mun, Ber, Edi; F's Nth, Bal (6).
 ITA: A's Tri; F's Smy, Tus, Tyr, Ion (5).
 RUS: A's Nwy, Swe, Sil, War, Ukr, Rum; F Sev (7).
 TUR: A Con; F Bla (2).

DEADLINE FOR SPRING, 1905: CHRISTMAS DAY AT NOON, 1972. There are, of course, no mail deliveries on that Monday, so please plan accordingly. Even more importantly, remember that mail deliveries over the Holiday season are NOTORIOUSLY slow, so send in moves very quickly and change them later if you desire. Otherwise, I'll have to bother both of us by calling on Christmas Eve.

A SOLEMN REMINDER

The bottom margins, as I told you last issue, are going to be off for the next few issues, because the paper-guide has been snapped off the typewriter, and I am notoriously lazy about getting things fixed, unless the things are parking tickets, in which case I make a valiant attempt.

NEW MAGAZINES ARE COMING OUT ALL OVER

There are some magazines with which PP has just established trade agreements, and I must say that I'm pretty impressed. When PLATYPUS PIE fades into the woodwork in March, the gap will be admirably filled and then some. The newer magazines which come to mind right off the bat are ARMADILLO (Steve Cooper), THE SILMARILLI (Chic Hilliker), CARPETBAGGER (Steven Bell, whose address I have lost, it seems), and TANGELO EXPRESS (Rich Hull).

It always serves as a surprise to me when new players immediately start a magazine, and, more than that, I am somewhat concerned over the dangers implicit in such a move. Overall, I would suggest that a new player start slowly, perhaps playing in games for even several years before starting a magazine. The aim, of course, is to avoid a burn out of interest through overwork. Moreover, someone who loses interest as a player may do some detriment to the games in which he has cast himself or herself, but the player who is also a gamesmaster both defrauds his players by taking money for false promises, and creates several more orphan games.

Nevertheless, the energy seems much greater than mine. IMPASSABLE is still going strong, and has branched out into new fields. The biggest example of all is of course HOOSIER ARCHIVES, now over 100 issues, which Walt Buchanan started when he was very new to the hobby. I cannot but conclude that everyone else's schedules are more lenient than are mine. Frankly, the main reason I'm sticking it out now is that I have so frequently cursed others who dropped out that I'd be ashamed.

1972BT

FIRST COUP OF GAME -- KEY!

WINTER 1902

HENDRY TAKES OVER ITALIAN FIGHT FOR 1904!

MCCALLUM LOADS UP ON ARMIES IN CENTER!!

LIPSON'S SUPRISE--RUSSIA BUILDS FLEETS!

AUSTRIA (McCallum): Builds Army Vienna, Army Budapest.
ENGLAND (Osmanson): Build Army Liverpool.
FRANCE (Rocamora): Build Army Paris.
ITALY (Key Hendry): Remove Army Venice.
RUSSIA (Lipson): Build Fleet St Petersburg (SC), Fleet Sevastopol.
TURKEY (Le Pire): [Autumn Retreat--A Con to Smy]; Remove A Ankara.

Positions for the Start of Spring, 1904

AUS: A's Mun, Boh, Vie, Bud, Tri, Bul; F Gre (7).
ENG: A's Liv, Lon; F's Eng, Nth, Hol, Den (6).
FRA: A's Bre, Par, Bel, Bur; F's Mar, Wes, Tun (7).
ITA: A Pie; F's Rom, Tyr (3).
RUS: A's Kie, Ber, Liv, Con; F's Bla, Arm, Sev, Bal, StP(SC) (9).
TUR: A Smy; F Aeg (2).

SPRING 1904 DEADLINE IS AT NOON, CHRISTMAS DAY, 1972. There are, of course, no mail deliveries on that day. Moreover, mail delivery over the holidays is notoriously slow. Even more than that, many of you will possibly be home for the Holiday season, and will not be able to be reached by phone. So, please send in mail EARLY, and, if you are going to be home, and want the magazine sent there, PLEASE SO STATE IN THE LETTER ACCOMPANYING YOUR MOVES.

I made what I consider to be a good faith attempt to reach Jeff Key by phone, both collect and at my expense. His phone was disconnected, and, although he told me that he might be moving to Kansas City, I have had absolutely no word from him on the matter. He is therefore the very first, and I hope the only, player to be dropped from the PLATYPUS PIE roster. I even tried to see if there had been some attempt to leave a forwarding number--there had not. Jeff, I know that you are busy, but rules are rules--this will be your last issue of PLATYPUS PIE--as a dropped player--unless you wish to subscribe. My appreciation to John Hendry for taking over play--though he didn't sound exactly thrilled about it over the phone.

This space is now officially a waste! The only alteration of note is to alter the stand-by roster printed to page two to remove John Hendry's name from the #1 position. Reason? He had the great fortune to become a player in 1972BT. (A Reason is when you didn't get enough salt on it the first time around).

ANYTHING WORTH HAVING IS WORTH
CHEATING TO GET!

--W.C. Fields

STILL ANOTHER INSTALLMENT IN THE ORGANE DEBATE--STAB #57

[We continue, fruit freaks, with the letters or whatnot from sTab #57, this time from Walker (the rejoinder) and von Metzke].

ROD WALKER, Rantoul, Illinois: No doubt one can approach California by coming up through a manhole, but going down into a manhole is the best way to approach Florida. ((Someone should tell the AAA)). Quite personally, I wouldn't admit it if I had a border with (echhh) Alabama, but I suppose Alabama is a social, intellectual, cultural, and mental step up for Florida, just as it is a step down for Dogpatch. Needless to say, Florida "oranges" reflect the highly underprivileged climate in which they are raised. Also the inferior soil. Frankly, I hope Ed Halle has other hobbies besides playing with Diplomacy and in 25 cubic yards of dirt....Of course, people who foolishly believe in the superiority of Florida oranges to anything (except, possibly, turpentine) probably do have odd ways of amusing themselves.

California oranges are, of course, superior to any and all, as has been amply proven in these pages. It is true that we are surrounded by deserts, mountains, and other barriers. Is it not written that the road to paradise is not easy? The lush, ever-blooming orange trees dot the countryside and fill the air with their sweet fragrance (mistaken for "smog" by those unaccustomed to perfume in the atmosphere). The trees bend under heavy loads of sweet, juicy, giant fruit. No wonder we do not allow the diseased, unhealthy, pathetic products of other states into our Republic.

A note to any Rosicrucians in the audience. Remember, California is the only surviving portion of the continent of Mu. Eat your hearts out, foreigners!

. . . .

On to a less important topic. On January 20 1969, the city of Washington will see a very impressive public ceremony. Richard M. Nixon will, on that date, come as close to being President as he will ever get. At least, he will receive the title. It is the culmination of a long and tenacious fight. It is the story of dogged determination and will to get ahead by hook or by crook. What is the moral of the story? Well, maybe you can't fool all of the people all of the time, but if you can do it just once, it lasts for four years. [At this point, who would have allowed themselves the bad dream that...?]

CONRAD ETC. VON METZKE, San Diego, CA: I note that dozens--literally dozens, mind you!--of perverse paranoiacs find it necessary to defend the citrus crops of whatever state they happen to owe their current loyalties to. Rod Walker defends California oranges. Do you know why? Because Rodney Clifford Walker was born in California! Rodney Walker, native son of National City, California, 92050, a suburb of San Diego, uses that astounding fact to justify his support of the California orange. Now I ask you--have you ever seen National City? The mayor lives in the storeroom of the McDonald's hamburger stand; the only two theatres are a burlesque house and a Mexican film outlet; the streets are named for Presidents, but are so old that they discontinue with Roosevelt (theodore); the biggest corner in the city has the world's only six-way traffic light (at Roosevelt & National & 18th Streets); and the city became world famous [what more than the traffic light would you need?] when the police force staged a raid on homosexuals in the City Hall Rest Room. They arrested 37. ("How do you separate the men from the boys in National City?" "With a crowbar.") Given this picturesque view of National City, can you imagine a National City orange? The aroma of burning oil from the San Diego Naval Station hangs over the entire city and infests the crops as well as the people with a, to say the least, distinctive aura.

Jeffrey Warren Key happens to defend Texas oranges. Jeff Key was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Everyone admits that Louisiana is merely the by-product of centuries of soil build-up floating down the Mississippi River, or perhaps the severed appendage of the East and West Texas dust-bowls. Perhaps in his justified embarrassment, Jeff felt that a transference of loyalty was in order. So, in his usual inimitable manner, he selected the next worst state [what happened to Alabama?] and raised his orange banner there! Yes, Texas produces oranges. Or, more accurately, it produces a semblance of oranges. As my scientific investigations have revealed, Texas orange growers plant orange trees and let them go up to their maximum height (about 22 inches); they then hang suet and other bird foods in the branches and go inside to their picture windows to watch stealthily as the feathered creatures come to consume the goodies and leave behind the usual calling cards of their presence. After perhaps an hour of this, the orange growers shoo the birds away, collect the "oranges" that the birds have left, roll them into balls, and market them.

Eduard Halle makes a pathetic attempt to build the Florida orange into a significant item, but in his argument he inevitably gives the secret away. He suggests that Rod Walker crawl through the sewers and manholes to visit him; this is Rod's choice if he wishes to do it, but he will be drenched if he does [that is true, regardless of what goes through them, yes?]. These manholes are, of course, the surface outlets of the Transcontinental Orange Juice Pipeline, built in 1837-1840 by Osmund von Oranj, the inventor of the orange. Having developed his magnificent citrus joy, Osmund decided that the entire nation should benefit from its glories. So, he started digging from the home of the original orange (grade A-1) in Worland, Wyoming, and built orangequeducts to Florida, Texas, California, and Kaispell, Montana. Lacking suitable facilities for pipelines, von Oranj was forced to, at his pleasure, use the already laid sweage lines that are local to these localities, but the result was infinitely superior to the original product anyway, so he let it go at that. And, to this day, orange juice--produced in quality quantity only in Worland, Wyoming--continues to seep through the strange openings scattered around our country, maliciously passed off by the locals as 'our finest product.'

Maybe the lemon is what we should be discussing. We've seen quite a few of them floating around recently.

CAROL ANN SCHNEIDER, St. Louis, [huh? Oh, yes], Missouri:

If Rod Walker found Sandy soil in the orange juice served at W.U., it must have been due to his instrument. After all, a centrifugal doesn't sound like a very expensive device. Or perhaps he was drinking our famous orange Classic Juice, sometimes known as a sedimental favorite.

ANOTHER SHOT FROM THE FIRESIGN

PASTOR FLASH (under): I want you all to pick up those plates and eat of those condiments, then, I want you to fill your bodies and your mouths and your minds with the thoughts and the realities of food. Dear friends, Jesus said, "Let us be as children." And what do children do? They stuff themselves from day to night. They eat. They fill themselves with the realities of existence, my friends. The one common bond that holds us together. The bond of food, the need for food, the void of emptiness. We must fill it and fill us with the fullness of it. We must eat of our friends the birds, and our friends the cows, and our friends the pigs. Yes, its good to eat a friend, my friend. And when the duck comes down with the magic word [remember Groucho?], what is the word? The word is "Food!" And we ate him. Eat! Eat!

SOUND: a TV click.

WRIGHT OR NOTT

Harvey Steel Co. v. United States

by Lincoln B. Smith

[In the case of Harvey Steel Company v. United States, the Court of Claims rendered a judgment, by a majority of four of the five judges. The majority opinion was rendered by Nott, Chief Justice, and the dissenting opinion by Wright, Justice. The following lines were dedicated to Mr. Justice Wright].

That Wright is Wright and Nott is Nott
Logicians must concede.
That Nott is right and Wright is not
Four judges have decreed.

That Nott is right, and Wright is not,
We all must now agree;
That Nott is right, and Wright is Nott---
The same thing, to a T.

If Nott is Nott, and Wright is Nott.
It comes without a wrench
That we have not, if not two Notts,
Five judges on the bench.

If only four, as shown before,
And three agreed with Nott,
The judgment is unanimous,
And Wright's dissent is naught.

The knot is not, is Nott not Nott?
But, is Wright right, or Nott?
Is Nott not right? What right has Wright
To write that Nott is not?
Do I do right to write to Wright
This most unrighteous rot?

BECAUSE HE KEPT IMAGINING A PENSIVE RABBIT--Kenneth Patchen

[Some issues ago, I closed an issue of PP with the notation that Kenneth Patchen had died, and that, in 50 years, everyone would wonder why the news was buried in the papers. Tastes vary, of course, but I would like to give you a poem from one of my favorite poets]

The little green blackbird went off outdoors
And sat on a tree under a spreading chair.
When the sun came out it got dark
But the little greenblackbird hadn't ever
Felt that lonely before and he laughed.
So some dinnerplates broke, the sun awoke,
The waitress in her flowered apron spoke;
And the little green blackbird sadly answered:
"If a friend of mine comes inquiring for me,
tell him I've gone to join my grief
To the wintry crying of the Northern Sea."

And he leaned back with a puzzled smile,
 Like the tiger amused by an old sundial.
 So the rain closed, the door closed,
 The sun closed; also, the moon, a jar
 Of raisen pudding, the tenth of January,
 And half a raccoon. Now, alas, there was
 Nothing left except the world; and nobody
 In his right mind expects the world
 To do anything now except close.

FOR WANT OF A VALID ARTICLE, THE EDITOR RUMINATES ABOUT FINISHING

The ARENA poll of player attitudes towards order-of-finish is an ongoing commentary concerning attitudes prevalent in the Diplomacy Community on the subject of what comes after a win. Is second better than a seven-way tie or not? I have been engaged in a four way discussion on this matter in back issues of COSTAGUANA, among Walker, Phillips, myself, and, to a lesser extent, von Metzke. So, all in all, I have avoided most references to the controversy. Nevertheless, my listing of the personal aspirations that I have in X Diplomacy game has drawn some comment from various writers who, among other things, have had the incredibly bad judgment to voluntarily receive issues of this magazine. In response, I would like to discuss my viewpoints in somewhat more detail than last issue's short summary.

Before going further, let me re-state the vote I submitted to Edi for the ARENA poll: A win, of course, was the most desired outcome. Thereafter, I ranked, in order: a two-way tie, 2d place, a three-way draw, a four-way draw, 3d place, 4th place, five-way draw, six-way draw, seven-way draw, and then came 5th, 6th, and 7th places. In short, I placed third and fourth places above draws involving five, six, or even seven players, and placed 2d place ahead of a three-way tie.

This last distinction, as I mentioned last issue, is quite problematical. There is really no difference between the two alternatives in my mind, even though most rating lists would more strongly reward a three-way draw. The actual determination in a given case would doubtless be contingent on the people in the game--who I wanted to reward, get revenge upon, and so forth. After the amount of time elapsed in such a case, usually at least five or six game years, something would doubtless have come up to influence my decision one way or the other. Given the fact that I am choosing an alternative OTHER than the win, that means that someone in the given game has double-crossed me to some greater or lesser degree. Now, this can't happen consistently, because a Diplomacy player has to retain a certain degree of credibility--if stabbed, he should be more than willing to make the transgressor pay above and beyond that which the stabber originally calculated. That discourages such action in the future. On the other hand, this sort of thing can't be too extreme, either.

As an example, its currently the rage to repeat the pledge that, should a stab be forthcoming, the Prosnitz tactic in the recently completed "Grudge Game" in HOOSIER ARCHIVES would be utilized by the wronged player. That is, the attacked player would immediately open up his rear areas to other enemies, denying all gain to the stabbing player. This is, no doubt, only a temporary surge, eventuated by Gene's remarkably effective transference of all his centers to the game's eventual winner, Edi Birsan. It doesn't happen often. The situation usually isn't ripe for it, and the attacking powers are usually too well organized for it. In short, as a method of revenge, this procedure is remarkably ill-advised. Its most conspicuous difficulty is that it leaves the stabber

very much out of the game--hardly what he would want. Rather, the first aim of a sTabbed player should be an attempt to stay in the game, which involves (face it) a lot of Diplomatic work. To say that this is possible is to say that you are a better negotiator than the person who has attacked you--simply offering more territory to someone else is not always the solution. At least, you are on your own.

Assume, for the purposes of discussion, that you have been successful, but that the sTab has forever cost you the desires which you harbored of capturing first in the game. The choice comes to 2d place, with a possible elimination of the player who has sTabbed you, and a three way tie between the three of you. Doubtless this is open to much discussion, but there would be no doubt in my mind--in 80% of such situations I would opt for 2d place. Maybe, in future games, that would result in my not being sTabbed in similar circumstances. Obviously, the long-term goal here is to WIN the games which sTabs of the sort described above (stopping the win but not wiping you out) might otherwise deny. If that is scheming cynicism, then here's my ass for branding--I appreciate the affliction.

In cases where the fight was just too hard, and where the leading player has gained his edge simply through fighting weaker opposition, there isn't a chance in 100 that I would take the offer of 2d place rather than try to guarantee a three way draw. Nor can I envision a situation where I would begin the game offering to take second place. There might be a possibility that a incoming replacement player, in a justifiable attempt to do the best he can for the country he plays, might offer to take second, or even third, in cases where elimination would otherwise be the result. In fact, I suspect that, whether replacement players are involved or not, most of the justifiable desires to take a place rather than sacrifice oneself for someone elses tie are the result of situations where its either surrender or die. As for me, to be true: "better red (or white, or yellow, or green, or blue, or black) than dead."

The point I'm making here, I suppose, is that moreoften than not the "votes" which we take on order of finish are woefully meaningless. Usually, players that offer to take a order of finish are players that would have died fighting for, in effect, someone ELSE'S glory, whether it be a tie for that other player, or simply a higher order of finish. As a result, the options are not even open to us to determine whether to go for a tie or a better placing by the time the situation comes up. In my 12 games, I can't EVER remember having to make that sort of decision very far in advance--usually the situation will dictate the event.

In regard to the other frames of reference (the distinction between 2d place and a three-way tie being the point of all the rambling discussion above), I more or less go on the basis of what is still my favorite rating list--the BROBDINGNAG system, devised by John McCallum and currently maintained by Jeff Power. I always wanted to achieve no worse than a "0" score on the system, which means fourth place. That means, to me, that you have drawn the game down the middle, because three players have beaten you, and three players have lost to you. Once again, I recall for you my overall bias--I do not, when I play a game of Diplomacy, see myself as the Lord-Chancellor of some early 20th century European nation, out to get the best for it that I can in terms of national survival. No matter what sort of scenario that Allan sets up, and the "Win-Only" rating systems support, I can no more think of a winner and six losers than I can think of evil landlords when I hit Park Place with a hotel on it. Calling the game all sorts of "simulations" makes no difference to what I, in my sheltered view, consider an unalterable fact: there are seven people that start a game of Diplomacy, and all results which

seek to neglect that fact suffer accordingly. True, I view the games in terms of wins and losses, but not on a per game basis. Rather, I view confrontations with individual players on a one-by-one basis. That is, in four games, a win, two 2ds, and a 5th, I consider that I have beaten 12 players, and lost to six, not that I have won one and lost three.

Now, on the BROB system, a two-way tie is better than 2d, because both participants each get +5, rather than the +4 garnered through a 2d place finish. A Three-way draw nets all three +4, so you can refer back to the comments above for my distinction on a game-by-game basis. The main flaw that I see in the BROB format is that it counts all games equally. That is, early games count just as much as do later games. As a result, some very good players, such as Edi Birsan, are mired firmly down in the listings. Unfortunately, the math involved probably prevents something like this being done sans a computer, but its at least a thought. Maybe it could be done both ways, so that we could compare the differences.

Many rating systems have viewpoints quite different from mine, and, as we have mentioned before back in some earlier issues of PP, you should always be willing to use whatever diplomatic weapons are at your disposal--rating lists are some that are potentially very powerful. At present, I think that there is perhaps a bias towards the "win-only" school on the sum of the rating lists, particularly now that NUMENOR has passed on. Nevertheless, I am entitled to my off-base and radical opinion, just as everyone else is entitled to theirs.

Although my discussions with Andy Phillips were the longest and silliest I have had on this subject, I have constantly been involved with allies and enemies in various games in which I have played. The discussions which I most recall are ones with Dave Johnston wherein he tried to convince me of the value of the "win-only" school. He said then: "I suspect that we can get this down into a couple of situations: would you rather be the third eliminated in 1904, or the first eliminated in 1909? I suspect that if you answer the former, I have no hope of convincing you of the folly of your ways." That, I fear, remains too true.

These differences, however, are healthy for the hobby, and always at least mildly interesting to discuss. Its encouraging to see, from the almost unbelievable coverage that the ARENA poll got (101 returns!) that those of you who don't place a seven-way tie above 2d place in a losing cause are at least in a substantial majority. Encouraging, that is, to me. Discouraging, no doubt, to Dave Johnston, whom I think has dropped from the hobby entirely.

Besides, all of this shouldn't make any difference, should it? Unless you are in a position where you have to surrender and go for placing rather than die (something that should even impress someone of ANY philosophy), there is no reason in the world why you SHOULD be willing to settle for less than a win or a two-way tie, previously negotiated. In most cases where that hasn't been the case, you've done something wrong anyway, and don't really have standing to cry in your beer about the order of finish. Which makes this whole article nonsense.

So, remember that SACRED COWS MAKE THE BEST HAMBURGER.

-coitus interruptus-