

P L A T Y P U S

P I E

# 2

JANUARY 4, 1972

Dedicated to Glomphf--  
Able to flatten tall buildings  
with a single pass, which cer-  
tainly is less strain than  
leaping them.

Welcome to issue #2 of the friend of the Pie. This a a mag-  
azine of Postal Diplomacy\* edited by Brenton Ver Ploeg, 520  
Parker Ave., #202; San Francisco, CA 94118. My phone num-  
ber is (415) 668-9218. Call only on Mondays between 6 & 10  
pm Pacific Time. Otherwise, you might interrupt something  
that you shouldn't. (I play a lot of solitaire).

THERE ARE AT LEAST SEVEN FOOLS IN THE WORLD

and they are playing in the first winner's game in PP. The  
players and their countries:

**AUSTRIA:** Bob Ward  
8665 Florin Road, # 176  
Sacramento, CA 95828 (916) 383-5946

**ENGLAND:** Walter Buchanan  
R.R. # 3  
Lebanon, INDIANA 46052 (317) 482-2824

**FRANCE:** Gregory Warden  
4500 Walnut St., # 106  
Philadelphia, PA 19139 [Phone #, Greg?]

**GERMANY:** Edi Birsan  
48-20 39th Street  
Long #island City, NEW YORK 11104 [Phone #?]

**ITALY:** Conrad von Metzke  
P.O. Box 8342  
San Diego, CA 92102 (714) 239-1574

**RUSSIA:** Randy Bytwerk  
1915 Maple, #107 (Engelhart Hall)  
Evanston, ILLINOIS 60201 (312) 475-5741

**TURKEY:** Buddy Tretick  
3702 Wendy Lane  
Silver Spring, MARYLAND 20906 (301) 942-8306

THE DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 8TH, 1972. A single sheet ditto with  
the above information was sent to the players several days ago.  
Press releases will allow Black Propaganda, but the GM will  
print one ficticious move per player per season along with the  
usual orders in order for the player to key his press to the  
release. This method is sometimes used in DIPLOPHOBIA.

**GAMES OPEN:** Winner's games are closed, though replacement pos-  
itions are FREE (disregard issue #1). There is one OPEN sec-  
tion at \$5.50, open to anyone but winners of MORE than one game.  
There is also a novice section, open to players whose first

game was numbered 1971A or later. Fee is the same. The last two games will need replacement players, and they too will be free henceforth. No game that is not a winners game will start without at least two standby players.

I shall call collect on the night before the deadline .....er, I mean OF the deadline, at 10 PM your time if moves have not arrived. PLEASE NOTICE THAT I SHALL DO THIS UNLESS I RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CONTRARY. Of course, I shall hardly hold those instructions against you. I shall need, therefore, phone numbers from all players in PLATYPUS PIE.

Other methods which may be used to prevent missing your' moves might be sending along a carbon copy the day after the moves are sent, or, sending GENERAL ORDERS. I shall now allow these.

These other two sections are open because people asked for them. Whether they fill or not is immaterial to me, because we already have one game, which may be ~~enough~~ enough anyway. But NO MORE GAMES will be opened until one ends.

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### THE DIPLOMACY ASSOCIATION

The point of this section is simply to say that there will be no point to this section. I have, in the past, been somewhat involved in this discussion, but those days are past. I will print some letters on other matters if they are interesting, but the Diplomacy Association is a matter on which I shall maintain strict silence. Both sides, as is usual in this sort of confrontation, have some good points and bad points. I do, however, think that membership can hardly hurt anything. John Beshara heads this group, and you can join by writing him at 155 West 68th Street, #1021; NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023. You'll have to send along a dollar. As for me, I display a vast number of emotions concerning Diplomacy Organizations of all shapes, sizes, and motivations, the most common emotion of which is total indifference.

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### TRADES

At present, I seem to trade with the following people: Van Andel, Miller, Walker (Erehwon), Buchanan, Vagts, Weber, and Pulsipher. Everyone else seems to wisely be holding their breath, perhaps for my likely suicide. This seems to be the last issue I will send out to large numbers of people, so let me know if you want to continue. Ooops. I forgot Just, Warden, and Ward. The above list is a perfect indication of my law-trained mind--it is totally, utterly, random. You should catch some of the examinations I write sometime. Subscriptions, by the way, are cheaper than I thought they would be. A break for you--if you pass them up--at 8 for a dollar.

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And now, alas, I shall take you into an involution of my tortured mind--four pages of material on rating lists. That may not seem like much to those of you who wade through pages and pages of other magazines, but its a lot to me. I would say, by the way, that most editions of PLATYPUS PIE will be from five to ten pages, with six about average. I don't know what will fill all that space, but I'll think of something ripe and pornographic, as promised.

## WHAT'S ALL THIS BROUHAHA?

Somewhere in this issue will be a (hopefully) complete version of the averaged Calhamer Point Count rating scheme first seen in HOOSIER ARCHIVES # 45. At this point, I would like to discuss several different positions on ratings, and include two subjective ratings--the Beyerlein Poll and the HA Publisher's Poll. Most of this is very old hat to you, and the two polls I mention have been in print for quite a few weeks now. It is nevertheless my intention to print the top two boards of every rating system now extant or soon to be so, providing that their editors will allow me to do so.

The Averaged Calhamer System is, in many respects, the most "pure" of rating systems. It measures only one thing: victory. There are no shades of victory, save perhaps a draw with one or more other players. Aside from a win or draw, there is only defeat, regardless of whether one was wiped out in 1902, or ended with 16 pieces in 1916. In short, this is precisely the measure which Calhamer advocates. Personally, I think it does NOT take into account the fact that there are seven people in the game, and that the 2d place finisher has done better than the first eliminated. It is perhaps this aspect of the system which makes me want to publish it. . . that way, at least, I can pan it as I give it. Details of what a "loss" under this system entails will be found later in this issue, where the ratings themselves are found. But regardless of how one looks at it, the averaged Calhamer System gives a clear picture of how often X player enters the winner's circle. Just as importantly, it negates every criticism of rating lists that I have ever seen from those against such animals--this system, my friends, is the WORD.

( )  
 Comments on other systems (such as the BROB listing done by Jeff Power these days, and the Burt-Warden listing, and the Walker listing) will accompany my re-publication of their top two boards. The current topic of conversation now turns to the Subjective lists.

These concepts had been discussed generally before, but it remained for Doug Beyerlein, long an authority on rating lists in Diplomacy, to offer the first. Response to the two completed thus far has not been overpowering, which is a shame, because they are quite interesting, if nothing else. Furthermore, one could claim that they are something else, I guess, but that might be belied by the sometimes obvious inequities which are extant in this sort of a rating. My publication here of Doug's 2d poll is almost out of date, because the deadline for the next poll is February First. Still, here it is:

Top Board	<u>Beyerlein Player Poll # 2</u>		Second Board	
1. Brenton Ver Ploeg(2)	150	13	8. Gary Jones	59 9
2. Eugene Prosnitz(2)	132	10	9. Doug Beyerlein	58 9
3. John Smythe(3)	121	8	10. Hal Naus	53 6
4. Rod Walker	116	12	11. Larry Peery	50 7
5. John Beshara(2)	109	9	12. Geo. Schelz(1)	43 5
6. Derek Nelson	74	6	12. Edi Birsan	43 6
7. Andy Phillips	67	7	14. John McCalm(1)	38 5
			14. B.A. Tretick(1)	38 5

The numbers in (parentheses) are the number of first place ballots received. The first column consists of the total number of points accumulated (points are awarded with 20 for first, and decreasing numbers on down the scale, much as sports polls are handled) and the second column is the number of total ballots on which the player in question is mentioned out of the total submitted last poll of 17. The inequities I talked about are obvious from my position in the poll. This will straighten itself out as more people vote. In order to vote for poll #3, out in February, list the top 14 players in your opinion in Postal Diplomacy who are currently active, and mail the list to Doug Beyerlein, 3934 S.W. Southern; Seattle, Washington 98116. Incomplete lists will not be counted, nor will lists without rank-ordering. Results will be published here, in HOOSIER ARCHIVES, and in EREHWON. There will likely be more this time, but I don't know what they might be.

Walt Buchanan, editor of the best Diplomacy Genzine in current existence, HOOSIER ARCHIVES, expanded on this concept with what he called the ARCHIVES PUBLISHER'S POLL. In effect, this was intended to be limited to Publisher's alone, thus gathering people who would, apparently, know more about the general field. Publishers are not, of course, prohibited from voting in Doug's poll, so there is doubtless some overlap. In fact, 11 ballots were cast in the APP, which is over half of the number cast in the BPP, #2. The results, however, were rather markedly different in some instances. To wit:

Top Board	Archives	Publisher's Poll	Second Board
1. John Smythe (7)	170	10	3. John Beshara 61 6
2. Edi Birsan	106	8	9. Doug Beyerlein 52 5
3. Brenton Ver Ploegh (1)	100	8	10. Larry Peery (1) 43 6
4. Hal Naus (1)	73	7	11. Lewis Pulsipher 46 4
5. Eugene Prosnitz	72	6	12. Tom Eller (1) 41 3
6. Andy Phillips	65	8	13. Randy Bytwerk 35 3
7. Rod Walker	65	9	14. Rick Brooks 32 2
			14. Len Lakofka 32 3
			14. John McCallum 32 4

Walt's interesting comments are not reprinted here, of course, but can be found in HA # 48.

After a year or two of this has gone on, we can probably do some other interesting things with these polls, but there isn't enough raw material yet to do so. If you are at all interested in this sort of thing, you should send your ballot to Doug. I can, on the other hand, realise that there are no small number of people that run the gamut of emotion from A to B on rating lists. In fact, that may be the sane view.

Rating lists, however, have impressed themselves on me from the beginning as something which add interest to the game. While still starting the game, far away in Vietnam, I read all the rating lists I could get avidly, to determine the quality of my position if sandwiched between players X & Y. Each person in Diplomacy, however, seeks his own reward. For many, the reward can be as simple as meeting new people. Maybe we should allow rating dependent on how many new contacts one makes in the game?

CALHAMER POINT COUNT LIST

The Top Fourteen

8:25	Edi Birsan	5:00	Jerry Pournelle
8:20	John Smythe	4:40	Hal Naus
7:12	John Beshara	4:12	Dave Lebling
6:12	Eugene Prosnitz	4:10	Mike Goldstein
5:34	Andy Phillips	4:00	John Koning*
5:12	Doug Beyerlein	4:00	Buddy Tretick
5:04	Charles Turner*	4:00	Charles Wells*
		4:00	Monte Zelazny*

Players marked with an \* are known to be inactive by me. That is--they not only have no active games at the moment, but they no longer have any real association with the hobby. Some of them may return eventually.

This list is complete as of 186 completed games, and is taken from HOOSIER ARCHIVES # 45, 20 November 1971.

This listing is not, obviously, a rating list. It has the same weaknesses as does the master point system in bridge: the player with perseverance needs only a reasonable modicum of skill to earn points. In the above list, a full point is awarded for a win, with partial fractions, divisible by 60, awarded for draws of two or more players. It is quite true that none of the above players would have reached their positions without a true facility for the game, but there is no indication in the above accounting as to how a player has done relative to the total number of games played. Even that, of course, has some disadvantages. Edi Birsan, for example, started play in the game a great deal more slowly than the pace which he is now setting. Just the same, an interesting comparison to the above is gained by averaging the total score against the total number of games completed. This was also done in HA #45, excluding draws, and I am here updating this Average Point Count Rating System. Draws are included, which results from some information I have recently received from Rod Walker.

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AVERAGED CALHAMER RATING SYSTEM

Several observations are in order concerning this rating list:

1) The percentages are somewhat different than the above listing. A perfect score of 1.000 is awarded for victories in all games, and a draw is awarded as a percentage of the win. Thus, a four way draw would earn each participant .250, and a two way draw would earn .500.

2) I have not had the time to do this list for all players yet. I shall continue with Walt's practice, and list the top two boards.

3) A win is easy to determine under this system. The real issue becomes muddled, however, when we try to determine just what is a LOSS. In this regard, I am working with Rod Walker's listings in NUMENOR, and hence many of the considerations are the same. For instance, I shall rate seven-man tournaments as one game. The primary distinction I shall make concerns a case where the GM has played in his own game. In many rating lists, these games are not counted at all. Here,

these games will be counted against the GM playing in his own game. If he plays, he gets credit for playing, and a loss will lower his percentage. If he wins, he will not get credit for the win, but a compromise here prevents him getting credit for a loss. Other players, however, will gain credit for a win or draw in a game in which the GM played. I might point out that the inclusion of this criteria lowers my own score because it allows the inclusion of 1969I, in which Buddy Tretick played as a GM.

4) Since I am using Rod's general system, replacement players are at a disadvantage under this system. That is--they will often get credit (if they play more than three game-years) for a game--thus lowering their overall percentage--when they have no real chance to win the game because of their poor initial position. This is the only really unfortunate by-product of this system. Many players do not play a lot of replacement positions, but some, like Andy Phillips, will have their positions somewhat weakened.

5) The system is complete as of this week in magazines which I receive. That is--I will count games which end in the magazines I receive only. Other games will have to wait until they are recounted either by Walker or McCallum, and I can get some information on them. This also allows me to deviously add a win for me. (Sneaky).

First Board

1. Randy Bytwerk (3)	.667
2. Thomas Eller (3)	.657
3. Brenton Ver Ploeg(4)	.625
4. John Beshara (13)	.462
5. Jeff Key (7)	.429
6. Gene Prosnitz (16)	.388
7. Rick Brooks (4)	.375

Second Board

8. Jerry Pournelle (11)	.364
9. John Smythe (24)	.354
10. Dan Barrows (5)	.350
11. Mike Goldstein (13)	.346
12. Mehran Thomson (6)	.333
13. Lewis Pulsipher (3)	.333
14. Andy Phillips (18)	.300

The numbers in ( ) are the numbers of completed games. No players in Postal Diplomacy are rated until they have completed three games. Ties are broken by number of games. Forgive my strike-over if I don't manage to get rid of it--there is a tie for first place, and the names are arranged alphabetically. This listing includes John Beshara, though he is currently inactive. If he does not enter a game by the time the next issue comes out, his name will be deleted. Don Miller, for instance, has a rating of .750 with four games, but has not been active in postal play for some years.

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 I remember saying, back on pages three & four, that I read everything on ratings I could get my hands on when I started the game. Actually, that's not strictly correct. I read John McCallum, and who could want more? His comments, in the old BROBDINGNAG, and his comparisons of various players, were one of the first motivations I ever had to start playing the game after being aware of it for about 2 1/2 years. Four pages of rating material might be somewhat extreme--who can ~~the~~ say? But I'm not bothered. The quality and quantity of this magazine will change greatly from issue to issue, and I pretty much do what I feel like at the time. As for you, fool, YOU can simply not read anything which bores you.

GOOD NIGHT DAUE — PLOP, CHET

Maybe I should have some sort of idea as to what I am going to say before I start writing. That way I will not be forced to add various material in this way. Please Note:

1) Players in the game were assigned by lot, as the rulebook instructs. The drawing was done by a friend.

2) The game number is 1971EH. Incidentally, with the addition of another game that started, this means that Eric Just will be able to have 1971EJ, "just" as he wanted. The number of new games never ceases to astound me. Perhaps its the flyer in the game itself, and the promotions. Two years ago, though, it seemed to me that Diplomacy by mail was dying a slow death. Instead, it seems, new people have come along. There are very few that are still here from the start. I wonder what the duration of stay is for the average player. Maybe its simply that I do not receive the newer magazines. Well, I'm happy to see the increase--lets hope the games finish, as they seem to be having a tendency to do.

3) On page six, I have the indecipherable statement that "Buddy Tretick played as a GM." Sigh. This is the first page of this magazine that I have typed while straight, and I am very much afraid that this will have to stop. What I mean to say is that Buddy played Turkey in the same game that he (among three or four others) gamesmastered. Moan.

4) The new WAZIR is out, with an excellent ~~xxxxxxx~~ article on stalemates by Beshara and Ann Vagts, one of the very best new players in the hobby. Other articles of great worth are always to be found in HOOSIER ARCHIVES, the best general Diplomacy magazine (in my humble opinion) in the country. My favorites are by Gene Prosnitz in #s 12, 13, 14, & 15, entitled Principles of Alliances. There are hardly many better commentaries on the very general sort of information you have to know to play the game. Other articles are generally of great worth also.

5) IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION OF ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR GAMES: It makes no sense to me to limit open games to players with one or less wins. Open games are open to EVERYONE, and I do not know why I didn't already say so. Novices are welcome to play, as are Birsan or Smythe,--over eight wins each. Of course, you pays your scratch and you takes your chances. Novice games have entrance requirements prescribed as previously announced. "Winner's games" may include some invitations by me ~~at~~ at any time to play, providing the player is acknowledged to be good--whatever ~~that~~ that means.

6) CLOSING PRESS CLIPPING SENT BY GEORGE SCHELZ:

PLATYPUS VENOM

The platypus has one-half inch spurs on its hind legs that are like those of a fighting cock. A venom is discharged from these spurs that is similar to rattlesnake venom.