



# RANDOM THOUGHT

ISSUE #1 - Jan 10, 1987

Hello there, and let me welcome you to the first issue of RANDOM THOUGHT, a zine for all gaming seasons, published by me -- Jeff Zarse. Some of you probably knew this was in the making, some of you didn't, and some of you probably don't even know who I am. RT is a zine featuring Diplomacy, yet with a smattering of other distractions. Primarily, I'll be running the third ever postal game of Empire Builder -- and that has me very excited. I've also enclosed the rules here for a game called Nuclear Destruction which is another one of those lie to everyone else and win type games. Let me know if this interests you at all. I'd like to tell you all what to expect here, but quite honestly I can't be sure. Since I'm still in school, chances are I won't have lots of time for the frills. A letter column could possibly develop, but how am I to know if I'll attract letters? I plan on writing tid-bits on the latest in movies or rock music and invite you all to do the same. And if I get real creative (chances are good), then we'll have some form of contest or another. Articles are welcome, and authors will be bountifully rewarded with free issues. At any rate, you can bet you'll see a bunch of games being run here in RT.

And speaking of games, to kick things off, I'm opening 2 games of DIPLOMACY and will open more in the near future, but I want to go easy at first. You'll find my house rules starting on page 3. And if you folks have some favorite variants, let me know & we can give it a shot, OK? Also, as I mentioned above, I'm opening a game of EMPIRE BUILDER which is a railroad building game that's just breaking into the postal scene. And I now enter a very elite group of EB publishers (there's 3 of us). Write me if you're interested. Priority will be given to those currently in the fewest EB games.

I would also like to draw your attention to my subscription rates. They are listed below and I'll be the first to admit they're higher than I'd like. The problem is that Hanover, New Hampshire is the monopoly capitol of the world with one record store, one book store, one super market, and only one (you guessed it), only one printing/copy store. I'm victim to their rates and regrettably, must pass them on since we college kids don't have cash flowing out of our ears. Sorry. Things won't be cheaper unless I get a circulation of 90 or over. And, realistically, this won't be for a while.

Random Thought is published by Jeff Zarse, Hinman Box 284, Hanover, NH 03755, (603) 643-7549. Diplomacy costs \$4 for the game + \$4 NMR deposit. Empire Builder costs \$10 for the game. If you want just to play EB and not get RT, it'll cost an extra 20 cents a turn. RT subscriptions will cost you a mere \$6 for 10 action-packed issues!! Stand-bys are needed and will receive 3 free issues for signing up. Trades are welcome and solicited.

Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer and is copyrighted by the Avalon Hill Company. Empire Builder was invented by Darwin Bromley is copyrighted by Mayfair Games, Inc. Nuclear Destruction was invented by Rick Loomis and is distributed by Flying Buffalo Games.

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Then James Garner is really the devil in disguise, condemning people to eternal damnation.

# All About Me -- Jeff Zarse

Hi -- This here's a bit of insight into who I am, what I'm doing, etc. In other words, brace yourselves for an undoubtedly dry piece of reading. I loathe writing about myself probably as much as you loathe reading about me. I think the last time I sat down and wrote something along these lines was the classic fourth grade "what I did over summer break" kind of drivel. So for both of us, I'll try to keep this short and get on to other things. With that said, I'll get on with it.

I'm 19 years old and a sophomore at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. On breaks, I'm back at home in Lake Forest, Illinois (about 20 miles north of Chicago) and so you guys might have to keep on your toes as to where your orders go since it will generally take 3-4 days for mail to be forwarded. Lest you fear that school will interfere too much with my publishing efforts, I believe the only suffering will be exam times when I might have to run game fliers only or extend deadlines a week or so; but in general, I will have no trouble finding time for publishing.

I have, as of yet, chosen no major, but I'm leaning strongly toward a math major -- primarily specializing in probability and statistics. Then again, there's also French and Economics... oh well -- I don't have to commit myself until June or so and a lot could change in the mean time. Right now I'm taking a class in introductory statistics that basically builds on the probability background I've had so far and slowly works the analysis of statistics into the probability concepts of random variables. I've also got a class in "Policy Studies" which is a sort of spin-off of the Government department here. The class examines organizational behavior in private and public structures of management wherein there is a dilemma which needs resolution and the various options must be examined. Finally (that's right - 3 classes), there's a class in moral philosophy which involves reading Plato, Hobbes, Kant, and Mill and examining various definitions of justice. All this in just ten weeks since Dartmouth uses trimesters (that's why only three classes) and that's it. If any of this sounds interesting to you, please write as I'd be more than eager to go into some details.

That's about where my life stands right now and I should just be finishing my first week of classes as this goes to press. I've also recently started playing racketball every night for an hour or so with my roommate, Bob. I enjoy it a lot since it gives me something active to do in the winter (I couldn't ski in order to save my life) and since it's 20 minutes to the nearest bowling alley, I guess I'll be sticking to racketball.

That's all I've got to say -- and chances are this is probably the last article I'll ever do about myself. I think I'll just have some fun with this zine and be myself here so you can hopefully get to know me better without any more autobiographies!!

**SURVIVE!!** may soon make it's postal debut right here in RT!! However, I've run across a few snags in adapting the game to postal play and am hoping some of you can help. I've overcome the take a tile, then see what appears, then roll, then move the monster problem simply with a matrix of conditional order possibilities that's really very simple.

The problem I have is the initial placement of the 40 men. I've got a few ideas:

- random assignment of pieces by GM then players assign the values.
- players submit preference list of all 40 spaces and then GM assigns the pieces, always giving a player his most preferred available space.

As you might see, each has its difficulties. The first one is purely random and will most likely be very unfair to a player. For the second method, I know which spaces to put the pieces on -- but I don't know which value piece to place there. Should I just use 6-5-4-3-3-2-2-1-1-1 or a player submitted order?? And if I use the greatest to least value order, do I tell players the order in which the pieces were placed (and thus have all players know which of their opponents men are worth the most) or do I just give each the board set up -- Poof! all the men have been placed!?!

If you've played the game, please give me your input. If you're unfamiliar with the game -- go buy it; Parker Brothers makes it and it sells for @ \$10.

# RT House Rules for Diplomacy

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1. These HRs are designed to clarify any problems which may arise in the game. The order of precedence for applicable rules is:
  - A unanimous vote of all players for a rule change
  - The rules of a particular variant being played
  - These house rules
  - The DIPLOMACY rulebook
  
2. Administrative
  - Subscriptions are required to play in a RT game. If a player's subscription runs out, no grace issues are sent and he is dropped from any games.
  - I will need all game fees before the game starts (Spring 1901)
  - Game fees and sub. rates can be found on page 1 of every issue
  
3. Country and player selection
  - I will ask for preference lists. Should I receive less than seven, I will first randomly assign countries to those with no preference and then apply the lists to choose those remaining
  - If a player requests not to play in a game with another player, the request will be granted and kept confidential
  - Neither two players from the same area code, nor players related by blood or marriage will be allowed in the same game, unless nobody objects
  
4. Seasons, separation of seasons
  - Seasons will be run using the summer/fall & winter/autumn/spring turns
  - Winter 1901 will always be a separate season
  - Later seasons may be separated because of complexity or by request of either 2 or 25% of the players (whichever is less)
  
5. Deadlines and NMR insurance
  - Deadlines will be about every 4 weeks
  - I will receive phoned orders up to 10pm (my time)
  - You may give me your number and ask for insurance that I call on deadline night if you're about to NMR. I make no guarantee of succeeding
  
6. Missing deadlines/Stand-by players
  - When a player NMRs (misses orders), a stand-by player will be called. Should the original player miss the next deadline, the stand-by takes over
  - A player may also be removed if he NMRs 4 times in the game
  - A player who misses Spring 1901 orders is removed, a stand-by gets the position, and the game is delayed
  - A stand-by player won't be called twice in one game, unless it's for the same country.
  - When an original player (who has not NMRd) resigns from a game, he is entitled to collect any NMR deposit he paid, provided he submits orders for the current turn along with his resignation.
  - No builds received results in no units built. No retreat received results in

that unit retreating off-the-board. No removals received results GM-made removals in the following order: 1) non-home, non-supply territory 2) non-home, supply center 3) home, non-supply center 4) home, supply center; I'll always remove the first one alphabetically in each class

### 7. Orders

- Orders should be legible and unambiguous.
- For abbreviations, use what you want -- just remember that it's your job to convey your meaning since it's my interpretation that counts. And if I am unable to decipher an order, it will hold
- Orders should contain the season, country, date, game name, and signature
- If you have orders for more than one game (or personal notes for me) please use separate sheets of paper
- Perpetual orders and orders for future seasons will be allowed, provided (again) that they're on separate sheets of paper
- Conditional orders may be made so upon any criterium except for orders for the present season, or any future turns

### 8. Press

- Press will be grey and edited only for nastiness and "hurt potential"
- During a separation of seasons, only press which is specifically marked for the turn played will be printed

### 9. Game ending proposals

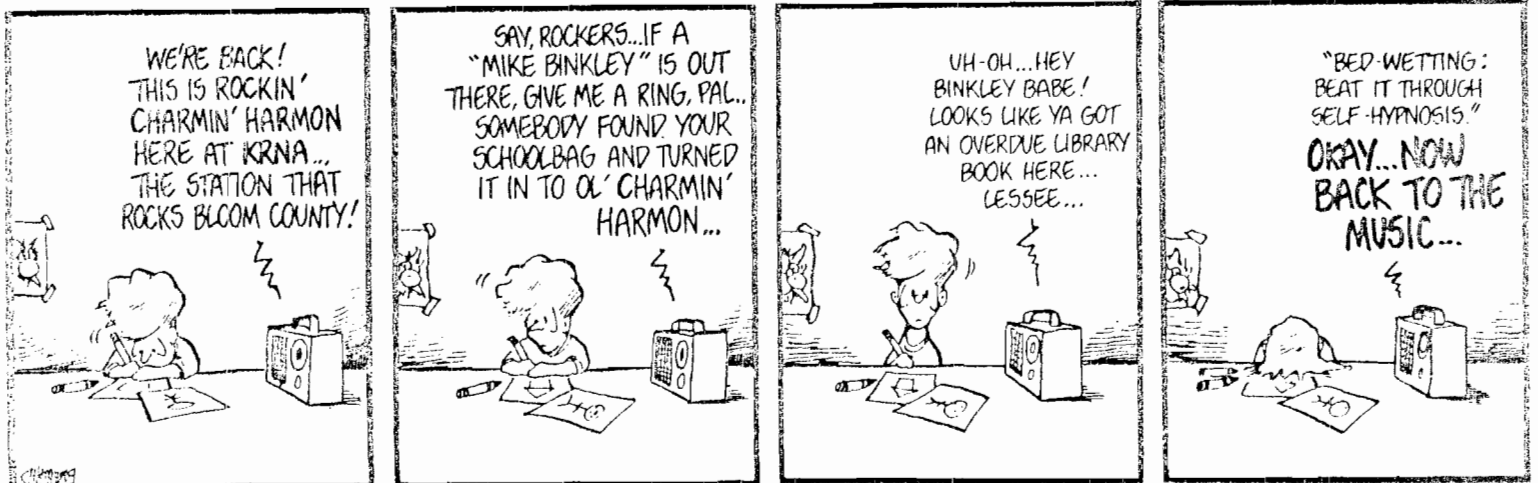
- Votes for draws and concessions will not be accepted before 1905
- NVR (No Vote Received) = "I forgot" or "I don't care"
- A specific proposal passes if it has more "Yes" votes than NVRs.
- Of course, one "No" vote will kill any proposal
- I will always print the vote breakdown and any player may request that his vote be published.

### 10. Nasty stuff

- Deception of the GM (me) will result in the player being pulled from the game and dropped from the zine
- Similarly, I reserve the right to deny any player a subscription or game
- In the event of a player's particular dispute, arbitration by a third party will be sought.

Bloom County

By Berke Breathed



# NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION RULES

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**Nuclear Destruction** is a game for 7-12 players. Each player is assigned a major country and begins with 60m population. There are also minor countries which start the game with 20m population. The object of the game is to destroy the population of all the other players while keeping at least 1m of your own people alive. There will be about 50% more minor countries than majors.

**Starting:** Each player starts with \$100m cash, 9 factories, 20 missiles, 10 ABMs and 0 farms. Minor countries will have 1 factory and 5 missiles.

**Turns:** There are 2 types of turns, "normal turns" and "battle turns". Battle turns only occur during times of war -- in times of peace they are omitted. If a battle turn results in no missiles fired, war is declared to be over and peace returns. At the start of every normal turn, players receive \$5m as income.

## Normal Turn:

- 1) Every turn, the player specifies the output to be produced by his factories. Factories may produce 1 missile, 1 ABM, or 1/3 new factory. No more than 1/2 (rounded up) of a player's factories may build ABMs. If a player NMRs, his factories build missiles only.
- 2) A player has 3 spies which are used to spy on other countries. However, a player may spy on only one major country per turn. That is, he may spy on 3 minors, or 2 minors and 1 major. Spying on a minor reveals all the indices (control points) that the major powers have there. Spying on a major reveals that major's population, # of missiles, and # of ABMs.
- 3) A player may invest in a minor country by sending missiles and/or cash. Sending \$1m earns 1 control point in that minor. Sending a missile earns 10 control points. A player may invest in any number of minors each turn.  
**Example:** Sending \$13m and 2 missiles to Cuba earns 33 control points in Cuba (and if a player spies on Cuba, he'll get that information)
- 4) A player may buy a farm for \$10m. Farms produce 1m population each turn, including the current turn. Farms may be bought up until the second time war is declared. After that, no more farms may be bought.
- 5) A player may sell a factory to a minor. Minors automatically bid for the factories with their cash and players have no control over the bidding. The minor with the most cash will get the factory. If two majors sell factories, they will each receive the second highest bid. A minor will buy more than 1 factory if it has twice as much cash as the other

minors bidding against it. Minor's factories build missiles only.

- 6) A player may declare war. Players declaring war receive 10 bonus missiles which must be launched or they self-destruct and damage their own country. Any number of players may declare war and all will receive 10 bonus missiles. War may not be declared on the first turn of the game.

## Battle Turn:

- 1) When war is declared, players are told who started it. Players may fire any missiles in their home country, plus any missiles in minors they control (in which they have the highest index of control points). If two players are tied for the highest index, then nobody controls that minor. When firing missiles, players must specify the origin, the destination, and how many missiles to fire.
- 2) Incoming missiles will be destroyed by ABMs for as long as the ABMs hold out. When all ABMs are gone, a missile will destroy 1m population and 1/3 of a factory. Missiles launched at minors will destroy population only, but not the factories.
- 3) Players left with no population after a battle turn are eliminated. Players left with population, but no factories will be given 1/3 factory for each turn until they have 1 factory. If all the minors in a game are destroyed, the GM will create 5 new ones.

## Game Repots:

Each normal turn, players are privately informed of their population, cash, missiles, ABMs, and spying results. They are also told in which minors their index is 1st or 2nd, but not which one -- you have to spy to get that information. Publically, players are told which majors sold factories, which minors bought them, and for what price.

Before battle turns, players are privately told from which minors they may fire missiles, and how many.

After battle turns, players are publically told which countries fired missiles, who they fired at, and how many were fired. The remaining population of attacked countries will also be public information.

## Miscellaneous:

- 1) Transfers of cash, missiles, and factories are allowed between players. Transfers may not be conditional (i.e. give China a missile if he sends me \$10) and are disallowed. No more than two factories per turn may be given to a player.
- 2) Deadlines will be about every 4 weeks.

Hi Larry -

Here's a sample of my new  
Zine, Random Thought. Hope you enjoy it.

FIRST CLASS

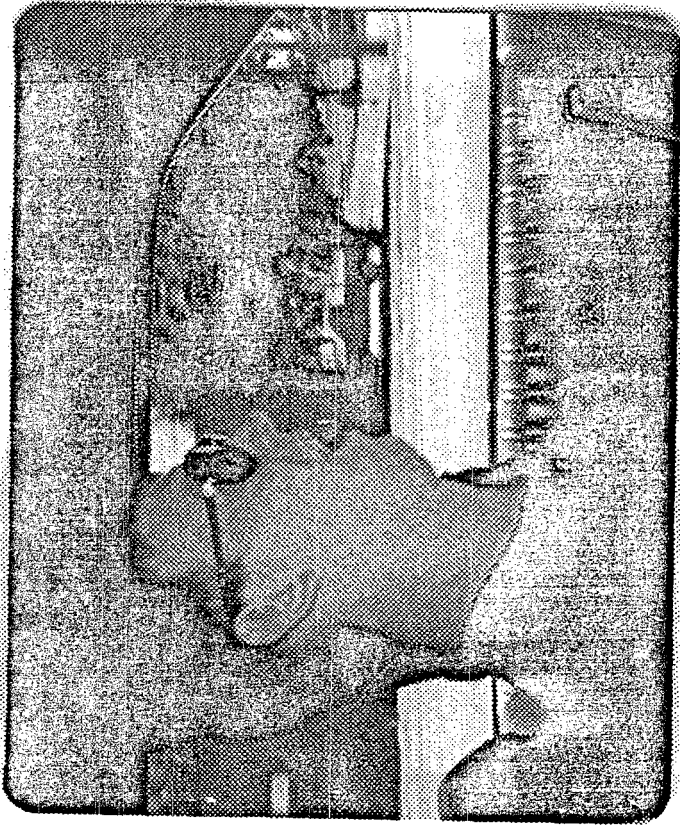
Larry Peery  
P.O. Box 8416  
San Diego, CA

~~92102~~  
oops!

FIRST CLASS

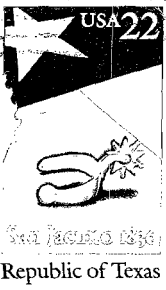
# RANDOM THOUGHT #1

What if Polaroid pictures really  
captured a person's soul?



Jeff Zarse -- Cruising, 1986

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gleefully sends the 1st issue of Random Thought to: