

THE LIFE OF MONTY DEATH

OCTOBER 29, 1989

20 PAGES

At least I survived

60c

GRAHAM CHAPMAN 1941 - 1989

It's hard to call it "Life of Monty" when the "Monty" you're referring to is no longer alive. Sort of like when John Lennon died - there won't be any Beatles reunions, either. (Well, you can try, but it won't be complete - it won't be real.)

For those of you who aren't sure which member of Monty Python is Graham - he's the tall blonde one. He was also the star of the movie *Yellowbeard*, but there are some things that are better left unsaid . . . and outside of the occasional quick spot on *Saturday Night Live*, he didn't make much of a "post-Python" impression like John Cleese or Terry Gilliam (director of *Brazil*) or Michael Palin.

Although he kept no secrets about his homosexuality (which, as far as I know, had nothing to do with his death), there is one item that didn't make much news in America at the time, but I thought I'd mention here: back before the release of *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (which was the film that gave me the idea for my title - not *The Meaning of Life*), a British newspaper called *Gay News*, supported in part by Graham, published a poem called "The Love That Dares to Speak Its Name", which dealt with a Roman soldier having gay sex with the crucified Christ. A right-wing watchdog, Mary Whitehouse (Britain's answer to Jesse Helms?), had the paper's editors arrested for blasphemy, but the consensus was that it was the paper itself, rather than the poem, and homosexuality, rather than blasphemy, as the target. To make a long story short, the paper was found guilty and given a hard slap on the wrist, but this worried the makers of *Life of Brian* as some people felt that it was blasphemous. Not that this matters in "freedom of religion" America - but as this same First Amendment allows the "pro-blasphemy" side its freedom to speak, things got hot.

Enough of that. The hobby lives on. Diplomacy will last forever. However, *Life of Monty* does *not* last forever. As some of you may know, I was planning to change the title soon, either for issue 100 or the soon-to-follow tenth anniversary, mainly because the title may confuse people who are expecting me to say something about Monty Python - which I haven't done for a number of years before today. However, as the title now seems inappropriate under the circumstances, it's time for the big switch. No complaints, please.



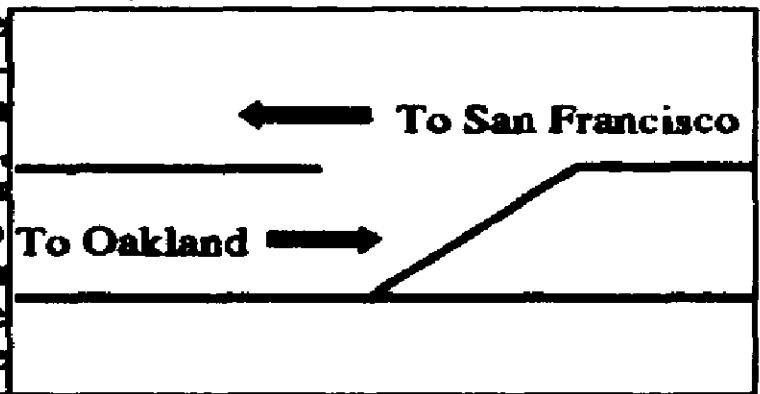
... are a sure cure for all Diplomatic ills. This is issue 97 (not issue 1 - I'm just changing the LOM part, and not the issue number part) of *A Sharp Mind And A Straight Knife* from Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339, USA, phone (1)(415) 461-2692, but only 5 PM - 11 PM Pacific time, and no collect calls.

ANATOMY OF AN EARTHQUAKE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 5:04 PM (all times Pacific Daylight Time - that's GMT-7; note to European and Australian readers that the USA is on "summer time" until the end of October): I just pulled off I-80 in Richmond (about 10 miles north of Oakland) and am tuned in to one of the radio stations broadcasting World Series game 3. Suddenly, it feels as if I'm driving on a bumpy road. "I hope it's not a flat," I thought. Then, I notice that every major radio station has gone off the air. "What, is my radio out now?" As I continue driving, one station regains power and mentions that there was an earthquake. Meanwhile, I notice that store owners are looking at the fronts and sides of their stores, mainly checking their large windows for damage.

TUESDAY, 5:45 PM: Although the bridge I have to cross suffers no damage (it's a relatively new bridge - built "only" 35 years ago), traffic is a mess because the stoplights are out. Finally, I get home; apparently, I am one of the lucky ones as the power in my

area went out only for a second. Quickly to the TV for the latest news - "it's a 6.5 centered near San Jose" - "it's a 6.9 centered north of Santa Clara" - "it's a 7.0 centered in Hollister" (just south of San Jose) - "part of the Bay Bridge has collapsed". (Does this mean that the World Series will now be called "the what's-left-of-the-Bay Bridge series"?) Apparently, a small section of the upper deck (the Oakland-to-SF direction) became detached and one end fell onto the lower deck (the SF-to-Oakland direction) - see the inset to the right for a graphic depiction. Anyway, there was one car that was pinned between the two decks, and one car that was told to turn around on the upper deck tried to jump the gap and ended up with its front wheels stuck on the split section.



Meanwhile . . . part of San Francisco is on fire (shades of 1906) as one section's houses are pretty much wiped out. It seems that this section is landfill, created in 1915 for an exposition, and the combination of "loose dirt" and the heavy quake caused a number of the three- and four-story houses to partially sink into the ground. Over in Oakland, a one-mile section of the elevated freeway collapses, killing 200 people when a large part of the upper level collapses onto the lower level - whatever was in there was compressed to the size of *the width of this page* - and both levels subsequently collapse onto the ground. (This road connects the Bay Bridge to the Oakland Coliseum; imagine if this had happened after either of the first two World Series games when those roads would have been filled.) Half of the Bay Area is without electricity; this includes all of San Francisco, where the only light for 700,000 people is the fire.

WEDNESDAY, about 9:00 AM: As two of the east-west bridges are closed, the shortest way to get from the East Bay to San Francisco is to cross the bridge I normally use to get to work and then cross the Golden Gate Bridge. The Highway Patrol request that nobody travel unless "absolutely necessary", so I'm granted a leave of absence from work. (You taxpayers don't worry - although I'm a Civil Servant, it'll probably come out of my vacation time, of which I have plenty saved up as I never use up my yearly allotment.) The news broadcasts show the complete devastation. People at the site of the sinking houses are being interviewed. As the water pressure is gone throughout SF, the

only way to get water to the fire is to connect a series of pumps to get water from San Francisco Bay, about 1/4 mile away. (By the time the pump was connected, the fire had spread to four additional houses.) One smart guy put things in perspective: when asked "Do you need anything?", he said, "We don't need more fire trucks or more water - what we need is more baseball stadiums!" (For those of you who missed that one - the San Francisco Giants have threatened to move out of the city unless they get a new stadium, and the November 7 ballot includes a city proposition to authorize new bonds and raising the hotel taxes to pay for a new downtown stadium; if it doesn't pass, the Giants have announced that they will leave within five years.)

WEDNESDAY, 9:50 AM: The one break from the Earthquake news - the space shuttle carrying the Galileo space probe (with the plutonium power source that has caused all of the commotion) is launched without incident.

What's this - not only are people taking photographs of the devastated part of San Francisco, despite being told by every TV and radio station to stay away as the gawkers only get in the way, but there are **TOUR BUSES** driving by the area! Never mind how many people are dead - just get the pictures and then on to Fisherman's Wharf to pick up a World Series T-shirt, or maybe somebody will be selling "I Survived The Great Quake of '89" T-shirts for \$20 (at about \$18 profit - \$18 going to the salesman and \$0 to the victims) to take home for the neighbors to see. That's funny - when looters try to take monetary advantage of a disaster, they get arrested or even shot, but when these "profiteers" do it, nobody seems to care. Maybe if the city started selling "limited edition official earthquake" T-shirts, hats, coffee mugs, and whatnot (love that whatnot) with the profits going to the victims

More good news - Chris Carrier informs me that he has talked to Mark Lew (who lives in Oakland), and Mark says that he went through the quake unscathed - but I think he was on the Bay Bridge when a *different* part of it collapsed.

RUNESTONE POLL RESULTS - 1989

(sorted by modified mean score)

I finally got my copy of *The Cream Shall Rise* (or whatever Dick Martin is calling it this year in *Retaliation* and *House of Lords*) on October 20. Yes, it contains the usual 'zine-against-'zine (not to mention subzine-against-subzine and GM-against-GM) vote comparisons in its 104 pages, but at least it has the complete results. As usual, I am publishing the results in "mean score" order, as the poll was originally run (actually, the top and bottom 10 percent of each 'zine's votes were discarded and the rest averaged to determine the mean), but the actual standings (2/3 of the mean plus 1/3 of the preference matrix score) also appear.

1	8.667	1	FIAT BELLUM
2	8.591	2	PERELANDRA
3	8.222	15	DISEASE CITY
4	8.148	24	ELECTRONIC PROTOCOL
5	8.000	12	TRAX
6	7.750	3	CAROLINA CMMND & COMMENTARY
7	7.722	4	BENZENE
8	7.714	10	DARK MIRROR
(tie)	7.714	27	DIPPY
10	7.652	5	PENGUIN DIP
11	7.588	12	THE CANADIAN DIPLOMAT
12	7.535	11	THE ZINE REGISTER
13	7.533	8	HOUSE OF LORDS
14	7.500	9	NORTHERN FLAME
(tie)	7.500	14	REBEL
16	7.375	7	COMRADES IN ARMS
17	7.364	6	PASSCHENDAELE
18	7.333	21	FOL SI FIE
19	7.222	23	EXCELSIOR
20	7.200	18	NOT NEW YORK
21	7.136	20	UPSTART
22	7.114	31	BUSHWACKER
23	7.067	22	HAGALIL HAMAARVI
24	7.036	16	COSTAGUANA
25	7.000	17	GRAUSTARK
26	6.944	19	CHEESECAKE
27	6.938	29	KATHY'S KORNER
28	6.882	32	DIPLOMACY DIGEST
29	6.875	25	RETALIATION

30	6.844	26	THE SCRIBBLERIST
31	6.778	36	DIPLOMACY WORLD
32	6.706	33	CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES
33	6.636	28	EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED
(tie)	6.636	44	THE MESSENGER
35	6.583	43	NO NAME FLYER
36	6.556	51	PROTOCOL
37	6.500	48	TWO BARS IN C SHARP
38	6.462	39	THE LAST RESORT
39	6.455	34	GET THEM DOTS NOW!
(tie)	6.455	38	SON OF FLIP
41	6.440	40	CATHY'S RAMBLINGS
42	6.375	35	DIPADEDODDAHI
43	6.357	30	THE APPALACHIAN GENERAL
44	6.353	37	THE BOOB REPORT
45	6.333	41	THE HOME OFFICE
46	6.250	47	THE GAMER'S 'ZINE
47	6.235	42	LIFE OF MONTY
48	6.188	53	TER-RAN
49	6.125	45	OHIO ACRES
50	6.077	49	EVERYTHING
51	6.000	57	DIPLOMAG
52	5.947	46	VERTIGO
53	5.933	52	WHO CARES?
54	5.800	54	QUINIPIQUE
55	5.758	56	PRACTICE
56	5.700	50	COUNTERMEASURES
57	5.667	55	POLITESSE
58	5.625	58	THE MEGADIPLOMAT
59	5.500	59	NEWS FROM BREE
(tie)	5.500	62	HANSARD
61	5.222	60	SO I LIED
62	5.130	63	NOT UP TO MODERN GRAPHICS STDS
63	5.125	61	TYROMANIA
64	4.938	65	BOAST
65	4.933	64	ALPHA & OMEGA
66	4.250	66	LORD OF HOSTS
67	4.143	68	DIPLOMACY WORLD NEWS
68	4.125	67	FEUILLETONIST'S FORUM
69	3.947	70	KNOWN GAME OPENINGS
70	3.840	69	KGO ZINE DIRECTORY
71	2.100	71	THE VOLCANO CITY NEWS
72	1.818	72	KAISSA

And now for a few other lists....and some additional comments:

TOP 10 SUBZINES
HIGH INERTIA
BEEN THERE, DONE THAT
BACKSTRETCH
MOIRE
EXTREMISM IN THE
DEFENSE OF LIBERTY
THE ABYSSINIAN PRINCE
SHADOWPLAY
NOTES FROM THE BUNKER
FRUMP
CDO NEWS

TOP 10 GMs
Russ Rusnak
Francois Cuerrier
Andy Lischett
Jim Benes
Kathy Caruso
David Hood
Pete Gaughan
Bob Acheson
Eric Klien
Paul Gardner

TOP 11 VOTE-RECEIVING 'ZINES
THE ZINE REGISTER (53)
REBEL (52)
KNOWN GAME OPENINGS (46)
DIPLOMACY WORLD (44)
BUSHWACKER (43)
DIPLOMACY DIGEST (42)
THE CANADIAN DIPLOMAT (42)
THE SCRIBBLERIST (40)
EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED (39)
PASSCHENDAELE (39)
PRAXIS (39)

In the subzine poll, *Meeting of Minds* (now called *Top Knife*) finished 25th out of 27. What is surprising is that the two lower-rated subzines are John Caruso's *Foot in Mouth*, which got the most votes (44; *High Inertia* was second with 39), and Julie Martin's *OPERABLE*. As my subzine is a "specialty" subzine (for IDTR ratings), my low score isn't surprising - but why the other two?

Maybe some of the more fanatic "Un-Darksiders" gave *OPERABLE* a low score because it DARES to publish letters from "the Darkside"? . . . In the *Lord of Hosts - Alpha & Omega* matchup, five of the nine people voting on both gave *LOH* a higher score, while three rated *A&O* higher and one rated them the same . . . Speaking of matchups, three people gave *Life of Monty* a higher rating than *Kathy's Korner*. Report to KK for your nicknames immediately . . . In the GM poll, I received votes of 1, 7, and 10. Trust me - the 1 is closer to the truth than the 10 . . . How would I have voted for myself if I could? *LOM* gets a 7 (not enough "news";

becoming too "warehousey"), *Meeting of Minds* gets a 4 (it's out of touch with the hobby - after all, it's FTF), and my GMing gets a 5 (far too many mistakes for anything higher) . . . Even a vote of zero would give John Barnes a mean GM rating of 7.6, and Randolph Smyth 7.4; they're both one vote short of the minimum.

DULL MINDS & CROOKED KNIVES (ASM&ASK readers)

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Ron Bottner, 1069 Greco Avenue, Apartment #215 B, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

Derwood & Thomanine Bowen, 251 Ward Street, Salem, VA 24153

Doug Brown, 3385 Maricopa Court, Cameron Park, CA 95682

(VICTORIANA) John Cain, 76 Banool Road, Balwyn, 3103, AUSTRALIA

Allan Calhaver, 501 N. Stone, La Grange Park, IL 60525

(PROTOZOAN) Scott Cameron, 4 Meadow Lane, Hicksville, NY 11801-5304

(THE MBGADIPLOMAT) Chris Carrier, 1215 P Street 12, Sacramento, CA 95814

Kathy and John Caruso, 636 Astor Street, Norristown, PA 19401

(BUSHWACKER) Fred Davis, 9210 K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Stephen Dorneman, 94 Eastern Avenue #1, Malden, MA 02148

Greg Ellis, 1709 San Antonio, Apt. 211, Austin, TX 78701

John Fleischman, 3318 S. Bentley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034

Jim Goode, 211 Maplemore, Clarksville, TN 37040-3558

Rich & Dylan Hanson, 616 East Clinton Avenue, Monmouth, IL 61462

(REBEL) Melinda Ann Holley, P.O. Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727

(NOT UP TO MODERN GRAPHICS STANDARDS) Michael Hopcroft, 3936 N. Albina Avenue, Portland, OR 97227-1208

Steve Hughes, 110 Tennyson Road, Warwick, RI 02888

Chris Hunt, P.O. Box 4013, Irvine, CA 92715

(RETALIATION) Dick Martin, 17601 Lima Drive, Rockville, MD 20855

Tim Moore, 405 Fair Drive #101, Costa Mesa, CA 92626-6215

(THE ZINE REGISTER) Tom Nash, 5512 Pilgrim Road, Baltimore, MD 21214

(THE ABODE OF THE ABNORMAL ABBOT) Jan Niachwiadowicz, 35 Poplar Crescent, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 0QD, U.K.

Scott Nixon, 133 Pulaski Street, Fredonia, NY 14063

(CATHY'S RAMBLINGS) Cathy Ozog, P.O. Box 17457, Munds Park, AZ 86017

(DIPLOMACY WORLD NEWS) Larry Peery, P.O. Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102

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Tom Slaughter, 1545 Northcliff Trace, Roswell, GA 30076

(COSTAGUANA) Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Avenue, San Diego, CA 92117-3813

(MAD POLICY) Richard Walberdine, 13 Offley Road, Hitchin, Herts., SG5 2AZ, U.K.

Mark Weasman, 124 Burleigh Drive, Ithaca, NY 14850

(EVERYTHING) Don Williams, 44016 4th Street East, Lancaster, CA 93535-3613

(VERTIGO) Brad Wilson, P.O. Box 126, Wayne, PA 19087

K REMLIN "AIN'T MISBEHAVIN", TURN 2B - Skeleton Politburo gets filled while Chiefmakers make their moves

FUNERAL COMMISSION: As I said last time, Satin must be nominated (being the only Politburo member eligible for nomination) and, since there are not enough votes to deny him the post, elected Party Chief. CREEP declares 8* on Satin and gains control. (Asterisks indicate gaining control with an IP declaration.)

REPLACEMENT: Steps are numbered in order using rulebook numbers.

6.0: Manjak is shifted to KGB.

6.1: Mischif becomes Ideology; Karrienko becomes Economy. Satin ages 2 (now 65++).

6.11: Niewitko becomes Foreign; Schukrutoff (B) becomes Defense.

6.2: There are no Candidates to promote; neither Manjak nor (uncontrolled) Karrienko promote People to Candidates.

6.21: Palavarian (G) becomes Industry; Shootemdedsky (H) becomes Sport.

6.3: RNM declares 1* on Shootemdedsky; Shootemdedsky promotes Nikotin (R) and Strychnin (T). Shootemdedsky ages 2 (now 71).

6.31: Talksalott (T), Doberman (L), and Eatstumuch (M) are promoted to Candidates.

REHABILITATION: CREEP declares 1* on Mischif. Manjak rehabilitates Nogoodnik, Protzky, Putschnik, and Wasolin; Mischif rehabilitates Boremtodev. Manjak ages 20 (now 83++); Mischif ages 5 (now 73++).

PARADE: Satin needs a 14 to wave, but only rolls a 12, so no wave is credited in turn 2.

STANDINGS AT END OF TURN 2B

PARTY: Satin (O), 65++, CREEP 8, OLM 3

KGB: Manjak (P), 83++, NEP 3

FOREIGN: Niewitko (D), 73

DEFENSE: Schukrutoff (B), 75

IDEOLOGY: Mischif (I), 68, CREEP 1

INDUSTRY: Palavarian (G), 70

ECONOMY: Karrienko (N), 63

SPORT: Shootemdedsky (H), 71, RNM 1

CANDIDATES: Talksalott (J), 67; Doberman (L), 65; Eatsturnuch (M), 64; Nikotin (R), 59; Strychnin (T), 57
SIBERIA: Goferbok (C), 74; Purgemoff (F), 75
KREMLIN WALL: Aparatschik (A); Krakembeds (E)
PEOPLE: Boremtodev (K), 73++; all others (Q, S, U-Z) at their printed SP level. No declared IPs on any People.

PARTIES

CREEP: Dave Anderson - **EFC:** Mark Weseman - **OLM:** Rick Pierce - **NEP:** Chris Carrier - **RNM:** Tom Nash - **LNTC:** Scott Cameron

QUESTION from Chris Carrier: did I roll each purge separately in turn 2A or all at once? **ANSWER:** Separately - especially since any "miss" would have ended the purge attempts.

TURN 3A DEADLINE is **DECEMBER 2** (an extra week to allow for holiday mail)

**HELP!! REPLACEMENT
PLAYER NEEDED FOR
"1830" - FIRST COME,
FIRST PLAY - PBM RULES
AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

1830 "STARLIGHT EXPRESS", TURN 4 - There's nothing wrong - don't worry - everything is going to be fine - isn't it?

I assume all of you got the word that some of the numbers in the "Stock & Operation Rounds" and "Player and Corporation Standings" sections differ. The standings are correct.

STOCK PHASE - The only action was by Conrad von Metzke, who bought the last 10% share of C&O for \$67. The priority deal now belongs to Pierce. As all of the C&O stock is in players' hands at the end of the phase, the price of C&O goes up to \$71 (location B 0).

OPERATIONS PHASE

MINOR COMPANIES: SV - RP \$5; C&SL - DM \$10; D&H - RH \$15; M&H - DM \$20; C&A - DM \$25; B&O - JG \$30

CORPORATIONS:

NYNH (ordered by RH): place #7 tile on E21/SE. Run "2" train G21-F20 (\$50). Pay dividends: JG \$5, RH \$25. NYNH price goes up to \$82 (C 0)

C&O (ordered by JG): place #2 on G7/SE. Run "2" train F6-F2 (\$70); run other "2" train F6-G7 (\$40). Pay dividends: JG \$33, CvM \$44, DM \$33. C&O price goes up to \$76 (E R 1)

NYC (ordered by RP): place #69 tile on G17/NE. Run "2" train E19-G17 (\$30). Pay dividends; RP \$18. Buy another "2" train for \$80. NYC price goes up to \$71 (D L 1)

Note that there is only one "2" train remaining

**MAP: E 19 - 57(SW), NYC token; E 21 - 7(SE);
F 6 - C&O token; F 18 - 9(SW); F 20 - 55(E); G 3 - 8(NW);
G 5 - 8(W); G 7 - 2(SE); G 17 - 69(NE);
G 19(N) - NYNH token**

PLAYER STANDINGS

Rich Hanson: \$55, D&H, 50% (Pres) NYNH

Conrad von Metzke: \$277, 40% (Pres) C&O

Rick Pierce: \$37, SV, 60% (Pres) NYC

Dick Martin: \$168, C&SL, M&H, , 30% C&O, 10% PRR

**Jim Goode: \$121, B&O private, 20% (Pres) B&O, 30% C&O,
10% NYNH**

CORPORATION STANDINGS

NYNH (60% sold): Par \$82, price \$82 (C 0), \$740, "2" train, token in G 19(N)

C&O (100% sold): Par \$67, price \$76 (E R 1), \$510, 2 "2" trains, token in F 6

NYC (60% sold): Par \$76, price \$71 (D L 1), \$600, 2 "2" trains, token in E 19

B&O (20% sold): Par \$100, price \$100 (A 0)

PRR (10% sold): no price yet

PANIC! Conrad von Metzke has resigned. One player expressed some interest in possibly being an 1830 standby (I think it was

Michael Hopcroft), but I didn't get any standby orders. Anybody who wants to take over Conrad von Metzke's position can do so by sending in orders. Orders at this stage of the game consist of (a) stock buying and/or selling orders, and (b) operating orders for NYC Corporation (lay track, run train, pay dividends or put money in corporation treasury, and possibly buy another train and/or token). If you want more detail, the PBM rules are available from me on request - just ask. Player addresses appear in the complete address list in this issue.

DEADLINE for TURN 5 is DECEMBER 2 (an extra week because of holiday mail and to find a replacement)

Rick Pierce sent in some suggestions for dealing with Conrad's position if nobody else joins - does anybody else have any ideas? (Personally, I would let Dick and Jim decide among them who would be NYC president and put Conrad's 40% in the Bank Pool. Any comments?)

TALISMAN "INTO THE WOODS", TURN 1 - The Wizard walks the dark side, and it costs him

Michael Hopcroft NMRed - this turn, the Swashbuckler will remain in the tavern (as I misplaced the turn 1 die rolls), but in the future, any NMRs will be handled randomly

FIRST MOVE

WARRIOR (Pierce): Tavern - Fields next to tavern

WIZARD (Dorneman): Graveyard - Ruins

MONK (D Hanson): Village - Fields across river next to village

CENTAUR (R Hanson): Plains between tavern & city - Ruins

SECOND MOVE

WARRIOR: Fields next to tavern - Fields next to village

WIZARD: Ruins - Plains next to tavern

MONK: Fields next to village - Ruins

CENTAUR: Ruins - Village

ENCOUNTERS

WARRIOR gets a Pixie Follower and a Water Bottle

WIZARD met an Angel (lose one life) and saw a Ghost (Craft 4), which goes to the Graveyard

MONK gets a Potion of Strength and a Staff of Mastery and is ignored by a Werewolf (who turns followers into werewolves)

CENTAUR also met the Angel (no effect) and visited the Mystic in the Village (DR 1 - he was ignored)

WARRIOR: 4L, S4, C3, 1G, Pixie follower, Water Bottle

SWASHBUCKLER: 4L, S3, C3, 1G

WIZARD: 3L, S2, C5, 1G

MONK: 4L, S2, C3, 1G, Potion of Strength, Staff of Mastery (when you land on an Enemy card, he becomes a follower until your next combat)

CENTAUR: 4L, S3, C3, 1G

FACE-UP CARDS: Ghost (C4) in Graveyard

L indicates lives; C indicates craft; S indicates strength; G indicates gold

YOUR TURN 2 DIE ROLLS:

DEADLINE for TURN 2 is DECEMBER 1 (an extra week because of holiday mail delays). Here's the press:

THE CENTAUR, a member of an ancient race steeped in arcane lore and mythological greatness, wishes to impress upon the Swashbuckler, Monk, and Warrior the dangers of allowing a Wizard to survive in an environment devoid of magic users. He must be destroyed!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **AREA-RATED DIPLOMACY -**
GAME Ellis, Cameron, Martin, Hughes,
OPENINGS Nixon, Schneider(?) signed up.
Need 1 or 2 more. Must be
AREA-rated.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **RAILWAY RIVALS -** Cain, Ellis,
Mercer, Pierce signed up. Would like two more. Map CN
(California-Nevada) will be used, available from me when the
game starts, or from Conrad von Metzke.

STANDBYS NEEDED in Diplomacy
and 1830 (maybe some for Kingmaker as well) - you get 50 cents
credit for each of your first two sets of orders and \$1 credit upon
finishing the position.

TOP KNIFE #31

This is *Top Knife* (formerly *Meeting of Minds*), the subzine of International Diplomacy Tournament Ratings (IDTR), edited and published by the IDTR chairman, Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339, USA, phone (1)(415)461-2692.

Well, the San Francisco earthquake appears to have affected mail from Great Britain, as MANORCON results are still unavailable. However, the last of the non-British tournaments has finished, and John Cain has sent me the results:

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMACY OPEN

was held October 7-8 in Adelaide. Neil Smark presided over the tournament, which saw 26 players compete in three rounds over the two days.

IDTR points are in parentheses

1. (16) John Cain
2. (12) James Vickers
3. (9) Frank Meerbach
4. (7) Andrew England
5. (5) Michael Hopton
6. (4) John Spaan
7. (3) Jeff Perkins
8. (2) Robert Wessels
9. (1) Greg Calder

With only MANORCON and MIDCON to be scored, Steve Cooley is still atop the IDTR standings with 36; Steve Gould is second with 28, Andrew England moves into third with 26, and Hohn Cho and James Vickers each have 24.

Although 36 points appears to be a lot, the MANORCON winner will receive at least 37 points if at least 137 players participate in the tournament. As over 160 people have participated in MANORCON in each of the past two years, it appears as if Great Britain maintains its lock on the IDTR Championship Cup . . .

YET ANOTHER CHANGE IN THE IDTR RATING SYSTEM

After due consideration of the facts that (a) too much influence is being given to the size of each tournament as far as the winner's share of IDTR points is concerned, and (b) the use of "number of rounds" is not necessarily an accurate measurement as different

tournaments spread their rounds out over various days and with various time limits, the 1990 IDTR Rules and Regulations (possibly to be published in the next *A Sharp Mind and a Straight Knife*) will include the following rating system for 1990 IDTR sanctioned tournaments:

(1) The winner of a tournament receives 100 points - regardless of how many people participated or how many rounds were played.

(2) To score places below first, let "n" be the number of players divided by 10 and rounded down. (For example, in a 75-person tournament, n = 7.) Second place scores $100 \times (n - 1) / n$, rounded down; third place scores $100 \times (n - 2) / n$, rounded down, and so on down to nth place, which scores $100 \times 1 / n$, rounded down.

For example, in an 83-person tournament, n = 8, so first place is worth 100 points (as always); second is worth $100 \times 7 / 8$, which rounds down to 87; third is worth $100 \times 6 / 8$, or 75; fourth is worth $100 \times 5 / 8$, or 62; fifth through eighth receive 50, 37, 25, and 12.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF 1990 IDTR SANCTIONED TOURNAMENTS

(Australian) CANCON Late January in Canberra
VICTORIA April(?) in Melbourne
WORLD DIP CON II Late June in Chapel Hill, NC
ORIGINS Early July in Atlanta
ATLANTICON Mid-July in Baltimore
MANORCON Mid-July in Birmingham, UK
(Canadian) CAN-CON August in Toronto
DIPLOMACY EXPO June(?) in Sydney
PACIFICON Early September in San Mateo, CA
SOUTH AUSTRALIA Early October in Adelaide
MIDCON November in Birmingham, UK
SCOURGE OF SIMCOE Details to be announced

Also, I am trying to find at least one Los Angeles tournament for sanctioning - preferably not at the same time as WDC or ORIGINS

**KINGMAKER "ME AND MY GAL", TURN 5 - Caernarvon
doors closed in Douglas's face**

If you didn't get the correction I sent out: Beaufort and Roos defeated Holland in the combat at Weymouth; Roos now controls Henry

PRE-MOVE: Holland is executed (Holland goes back in Chris Hunt's hand; Le Swan goes to Beaufort; Earl of Essex goes to Chancery); Herbert is named Constable of Dover Castle; Courtenay is named Admiral of England; Plantagenet-York (belonging to Northfain Knights) begins in Fotheringhay; Plantagenet-Lancaster (belonging to King's Court) begins in Windsor.

Nixon's Faction (Nixon)

HOWARD remains in Farnham

GREYSTOKE, GREY, NEVILLE, and SCROPE remain in
Masham

WHITE DUCHESS II (Ozog)

HERBERT and CLIFFORD remain in Harlech(g)

KNIGHTS OF THE HIGH SIERRA (Westman)

BERKELEY remains in Harlech

STANLEY (Douglas)-s2-s5*

Courtenay remains in Okehampton

Le MICHAEL (Douglas)-s2-s5*

Le MARGARET (Lynn)-s25-s26-s24-s23-Maldon

Le CHRISTOPHER (Southampton)-s18-s17-s16-Dartmouth

*Le Michael can't enter neutral Caernarvon voluntarily - see the fourth paragraph of "Sea Movement" in the Basic Rules

KING'S COURT (Anderson)

ROOS and BEAUFORT (Weymouth)-h50-h42

BOURCHIER (Bath)-Salisbury-h43

PLANTAGENET-LANCASTER remains in Windsor

Le SWAN remains in Cardiff

ROYAL ORDER OF THE GARTER (Hsu)

AUDLEY remains in h38

NORTHFAIN KNIGHTS (Mourc)

PERCY (Wells)-Bath-Bristol-h31-h32-Kenilworth(g)

HASTINGS (h19)-Tewkesbury-Kenilworth(g)

PLANTAGENET-YORK (Fotheringhay)-h24-Daventry-Kenilworth

COMBAT: Herbert, Clifford, and Berkeley siege Harlech (280-200; **PLAGUE SHREWSBURY HEREFORD 3-2**) and are successful - but Berkeley dies in the attack (Berkeley returns to Mark Weseman's hand; Bristol City goes to discards; Earl of Salisbury and Treasurer of England to Chancery); Herbert and George enter Harlech and capture Edward of March.

Percy, Hastings, and Plantagenet-York siege Kenilworth (210-200; **PLAGUE BERWICK 3-2**) and are successful. All three enter and Percy takes Edward of Lancaster.

TURN 5 CROWN CARD:

TURN 6 EVENTS: **PEASANT REVOLT** (no effect); **PEASANT REVOLT** (no effect); **STORMS** (Le Michael lands in Caernarvon; Douglas remains in Caernarvon(g) while the ship is held by the town as if it began the game there); **STORMS** (no effect); non-event to Hunt; **PLAGUE NEWCASTLE/DURHAM** (no effect).

DEADLINE for TURN 6 is DECEMBER 7 (an extra week because of mail delays). One item of press:
PERCY - Death to the Lancastrians!



DIPLOMACY "LES MISERABLES", SUMMER/FALL 1903-
The steamer crowds prove to be too much in the Ukraine

Thanks (and 50 cents credit) to Scott Cameron for sending in unneeded standby orders for Germany

SUMMER 1903 RETREATS: Both Austrian A Rum and Russian A Gal rodered retreats to Ukr, so both are removed.

FALL 1903

AUSTRIA (Melinda Ann Holley): A Gal-RUM, A Vie-GAL, A SER S A Gal-Rum, A BUD S A Gal-Rum, F Gre-Bul(sc) (d/ret to Alb, OTB)

ENGLAND (Michael Hopcroft?): NMR - has A LON, F NWG, and a retreat from E Nth to Eng, Yor, Edi, or OTB

FRANCE (Jim Goode): F LYO S A Mar-Pie, F Mao-WES, A Spa-GAS, F Tyh-ROM, A Mar-PIE

GERMANY (Ed Allen): A BEL H, F HOL-Nth, A DEN H, F Kie-HEL, A Ber-SIL, A MUN-Tyo

ITALY (Dave Anderson): F ION H, F TUN S F ION, A Pie-TUS, A TYO-Mun

RUSSIA (Tom Slaughter): F NWY S F Ska-Nth, A Stp-LVN, F Ska-NTH, F BLA S A Rum, A Rum_H(d/ret to Ukr, Sev, OTB)

TURKEY (Stephen Dorneman): F EAS-Ion, A Bul-GRE, F ABG S A Bul-Gre, A Bul-GRE, A Con-BUL

SUPPLY CENTERS (GAINS IN CAPS, losses underlined)

AUSTRIA: Bud, Tri, Vie, Ser, Rum, Gre - 5, even or build 1

ENGLAND: Lon, Edi, Lvp - 3, even or build 1

FRANCE: Par, Bre, Mar, Spa, Por, ROM - 6, build 1

GERMANY: Kie, Ber, Mun, Bel, Hol, Den - 6, even

ITALY: Ven, Nap, Tun, Rom - 3, remove 1

RUSSIA: Mos, Stp, Sev, War, Swe, Nwy - 6, build 1 or 2

TURKEY: Con, Ank, Smy, Bul, GRE - 5, build 1

"OR" indicates a possibility if a retreat is OTB

SEPARATION OF SEASONS! Too many retreats/builds for my taste. **DEADLINE** for **AUTUMN** (retreats) and **WINTER** (builds/removals) 1903 is **DECEMBER 8** (an extra week because of holiday mail delays).

PRESS

TURKEY-ITALY: "Look out behind you!" (And no, it's not just another old gag)

TURKEY-WORLD: "Look out for Austria!" (And no, it's not just another old bag. [Sorry Melinda, I couldn't resist])

MOSCOW-BERLIN: Is any body out there?

MOSCOW-GM: Indeed, what has he done . . . conditional builds were enough to celebrate at this juncture!



"FLEET SYRIA! REPORT TO THE GM IMMED-"

"You called?"

"I see you're getting the message now. **WHAT** is **THAT** on the bottom of page 4?"

"White space. It's a solidarity whiteout."

"Whiteout, huh? Well, take **THIS**:"



"You think that's impressive or something?"

"Well, it fills up the white space that's still here on the day before publication, **AND** - get this - it shows off the new symbols heretoherefore not appearing in this 'zine."

"Heretoherefore?"

"This is **DIPLOMACY** - not **SCRABBLE**. No challenging my words! Now, **WHY DID YOU RESIGN FROM THE HOBBY?**"

"I'll answer that question with a question:"

Where am I?

In the Hobby.

What do you want?

Your support.

Which side are you on?

The Hobby's side.

What side is that?

That would be telling.

Who are you?

I am the GM.

Who is the Hobby Master?

You are Fleet Syria.

I am not a unit -

*I am a **FREE PLAYER!***

*You are a **DIPRISONER***

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