

NEW LOOK, NEW POLICY, NEW PRICES

I've been deeply concerned about the appearance of the last few issues of SNAFU! The E. B. Dick alcohol machines I have available do terrible things to stencils. Last month I ran the stencils over 300 times to get 30 copies. If you thought they were bad, they were the best of the lot. By the time I was done, the stencils were unusable and I decided I didn't need this aggravation every month.

So, to save my sanity and your eyesight, I took the plunge and am now paying commercial rates for photocopying. Though I got a reasonable deal, this means a considerable rise in prices. Each copy I mail out will cost me in the neighbourhood of \$1.07, so a sub rate of \$6.00/12 issues splits that cost between you and me. Of course current subbers and players can continue at the old rates until their game/sub expires. In fact, if you act before April 1st, you can still sub at the old rates. (\$2.50/11 issues)

In order to get a reasonable price for photocopying I agreed to run 30 copies a month. This means I will have to run more games. (I now mail out about 30 copies a month.) So, I will "open up" to non-Mensans. This does not mean I would not like to run more all-M games; on the contrary, I hope Fred Davis will consider passing me another official SIG game in the future. Meanwhile, if you wish to play in an all-M game, apply to Fred. If you apply to me, I'll assume it's for an open game.

One thing I will do is keep a standing offer for a regular open game. No official announcement. I'll just keep a list of people who write expressing interest in playing until I get to the magic number eight. So, unless otherwise stated, there will always be an opening for a regular open game. (Traders please take note.)

I hope the appearance of the zine will help your eyesight, which I know has been strained these past few months. Thanks for everyone's patience and for all the nice things everyone's said, despite the printing problems. That, especially, has made me want to improve the quality.

Now, does anyone have an old Selectric typewriter they're not using?

SNAFU! is a zine devoted to the postal play of Diplomacy.

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1980 IC / Mensa 12

SPRING 1903: SPAIN OCCUPIED AT LAST! RUSSIA FIGHTS ON THREE FRONTS; MAJOR SHAKE-UP THIS FALL???

AUS (Lewis): F Gre* H; A Ser* - Tri; A Gal - Sil*; A Vie* (S)
A Bud - Gal* (5)

ENG (Byrne): F Por* H; A Bre* H; F Eng* H; F Nwy - Swe /d/ (R:
Nth; Ska); F Nwg - Bar*; F Edi - Nwg* (6)

GER (R. Young): A Den* H; A Par* (S) A Bel - Pic*; F Hol - Bel*;
A Kie - Ruh*; A Bur - Gas*; A Mun - Tyr* (7)

ITA (Phillips): A Mar - Spa*; A Ven* - Tri; A Apu* - Ven;
F Ion* - Gre; A Pie - Mar* (5)

RUS (Letcher): A Mos* - Ukr; A War* - Ukr; F StP (nc)* (S) F Swe-
Nwy*; F Rum /A/ (S) AUSTRIAN A Ser - Bul (NSO) (5,4)

TUR (Wilson): F Smy - Aeg*; F Bla* (S) A Bul - Rum*; A Arm* (S)
A Sev* H. (5)

PRESS

Berlin - Rome: En garde!

Roma: Recent rumors that the King of Italy has been undergoing treatment for paranoia are totally unfounded. His armies will soon punish the party responsible for these treasonable activities!

Turkey: Italy against Germany? The mouse nips at the heels of the lion. The King of Italy should not see enemies behind each spy report; that could lead to many strong enemies instead of allies.

Turkey to Germany: An alliance of Italian land power and English sea power could put you in a tight spot.

Turkey to Russia: Sorry, Charlie.

SUMMER '03 and FALL '03 due FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1981



STANDBYS! I need standbys; I need lots and lots of standbys!

For 1980 IC you must be a Mensan in the Diplomacy SIG.

For 1981 W you must be a Mensan, not necessarily a member of the SIG, but living in Canada, Alaska, or the North-East USA.

Sign up now and avoid the April 1st raise in rates. (Until April 1st you can have a standby slot and a sub for the length of that game for a mere \$3.50! After April 1st it'll cost you a sub at \$6.00/12 issues, plus \$2.00!)

(The first one to correctly identify the lyrics I've parodied above gets a free issue, plus fame!)

1981 W / North 1

STARTING LINE-UP

AUSTRIA: Michael Granatstein, 53 Marlborough Ave., Toronto,
Ontario M5R 1K5

ENGLAND: Errol Platt, 3270 Havenwood, Mississauga, Ont. L4X 2M1

FRANCE: Michael Morris, 1657 Munroe Falls Ave., Apt. 17,
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221

GERMANY: Leonard Johnson, 3120 E. 41st Ave., Anchorage,
Alaska, 99504

ITALY: Bill Young, 618 Indian Road, Clearfield, PA 16830

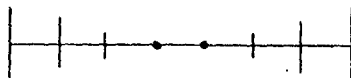
RUSSIA: Garvin Boyle, #1 - 288 Byron Ave., Ottawa, Ont. K1Z 6Y9

TURKEY: Steve Hutton, 982 Wales Ave., Mississauga, Ont. L5E 1K5

STANDBY: Bruce Poppe, 407 Carmarthen Ct., Exton, PA 19341

SPRING, 1901 ORDERS due FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1981

NOTES: The above was mailed to the concerned players on the 12th of February, so as to give plenty of time for initial negotiations. There's a good balance of experienced players and novices to the hobby, so it should make for an interesting game. The Boardman number (1981 W) cost me a buck, so please use it to refer to this game from now on (though you can still call it NORTH-1 as well). Good luck to all and to all a good fight!



VARIANTS

Getting tired of the same old map and rules? Once the chaos of changing formats and beginning new games dies down (I may be picking up a few orphans soon), I'm considering offering a variant game. One I'd be interested in running is CONQUEST OF THE NEW WORLD, originally designed by Lew Pusipher (described in DIPLOMACY WORLD #25), and refined by Fred Davis (described in BUSHWACKER, Vol. IX, No. 11). One thing I like about this variant is that no area naturally "belongs" to any power. (The Great Powers begin in Europe, which is off the map, and enter the New World from the Atlantic Ocean.) I imagine the Diplomacy aspect of the game would be greatly enhanced in the early part of the game to prevent conflicts in deciding which area to colonize first.) About 5 players is best.

Another is BOURSE, basically a regular game, but with currency added. By judicious buying and selling on the currency markets you can make or break another power. (7 players)

If interested in these, or any other variants, let me know and I'll assemble the necessary maps and rules. But I do not feel capable of running any of the fantasy variants that I've seen (ie., those with wizards or time/space warps).

THE OTHER WORLD: MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Fred Davis has been keeping careful tabs on my little history lessons every month, correcting minor errors as they crop up. I'm bound to make them, as I never studied history, per se, after grade ten. I took my degree in "The History and Philosophy of Religion"—if you can follow that, but I don't think many dippies would be interested in the development of Buddhism in China. I don't think I could handle it now anyhow, after teaching high school English for seven (can it be so long?) years. I just happen to have a lot of books (which seem to reproduce during the night), so I look things up every month and try to piece together the story of an area in Europe for you. So, I'm learning at the same time.

Last month I "did" Tunis. Fred writes, "Originally, the name 'Tunis' applied to the entire territory, and not just to the capital city. Hence, the native ruler's name was the Bey of Tunis. On maps printed up to the year 1914, the province is shown as 'Tunis.' Sometime between 1914 and the time I started elementary school in the '30's (I was a map freak by the time I had reached third grade), the French changed the province to Tunisia. It would be interesting to find out which year this happened. After independence, the country kept the new name. Therefore, in Diplomacy, Tunis does not break the rule of only Home SC's being named for cities."

Anyone out there know when the name was changed?

But this hits upon a problem I have when doing this "research." I have a Britannica Atlas dated 1977 and a National Geographic Atlas of the World dated 1975. It's quite a headache sometimes trying to relate the Diplomacy playing board to the countries described in them. (Poland is a case in point. It has been divided and reunited with different territories so often, just what was "Poland" in 1900? I stuck with "Silesia," "Galacia," and "Warsaw," which are two provinces and a city. Modern Poland includes that area on the board called "Prussia." But what was the status of Prussia in 1900? That's an example of the kind of problem I have to deal with.)

Fred has pointed out something before (in BUSHWACKER or DIPLOMAG—I forget which) that bears mentioning; that is, the spelling of "Gulf of Lyon." Sorry folks, there just ain't no such animal. In most atlases it's spelled "Gulfe du Lion." I managed to find it in English in a pocket atlas and it was spelled "Gulf of Lions." Does anyone have any idea on how it came to be mis-spelled on the playing board?

So, thanks Fred for keeping tabs on me. And everyone else: don't be shy to point out errors. That way we all learn.

Next month I'll find a nice quiet Scandanavian country again.

SUMMER VACATION?

The response to the suggestion that we take a month off of Diplomacy this summer has not exactly been overwhelming. There have been a few comments, printed below, but one gets the feeling it's not exactly a burning issue. I trust you all realize that with the change in format, I am no longer bound by the school's schedule and can print any time of the year now. But I still would like a longer break during the summer. However, I'll abide by your decision.

From Bill Young: "I like the idea of a month's vacation during August. My biggest complaint about postal Diplomacy is GMs/publishers who simply disappear without notice to anyone. Number 2 complaint is players who do the same. I can understand anyone tiring of the routine and wanting out; what I can't understand is the lack of enof courtesy to notify the others involved. In any event, a month free each year would help both publishers and players come back with renewed enthusiasm.

"I don't go along with Doug Beyerlein's suggestion that 'all zines' adopt an August vacation. An annual vacation of at least a month is good; but each publisher should adopt the month most convenient for him. Personally, I probably take more vacations in February or March than in the summer."

From Fred Davis: "I like the idea of an August holiday, but doubt that we could ever get everyone in the hobby to agree on it. Many people would rather close up shop in December, when mail is so backlogged."

That's it. Dan Wilson sent a publishing schedule that would have one issue published July 24 and the next September 4. Without more feedback that's probably what will happen (ie., a long break), though not necessarily on those dates.

Don't be shy! Speak up.

PLUGS

My mail box was recently invaded by a new (relatively) zine from the Bronx. INVASION, published by Bruce Schneier, 455 East 17th St., Brooklyn, NY 11226. Sub: \$5/12 issues. The first thing I noticed (being an English teacher) is that Bruce can neither spell nor type—which makes me feel better about the goofs I make. But don't let that throw you; he's a wild sense of humour. For example, he's asking us all to call this year 1980 II "because 1981 is a silly name for a year." He's running three regular games now and has openings in other regular and variant games.

Try also THE VOICE OF DOOM, published by Bruce Linsey, Bldg 11, Apt. 21, Leisureville, Watervliet, NY 12189. I didn't mention this zine last month because Bruce says he doesn't expect to have any game openings until 1982. He does need standbys though. VOD seems to generate controversy (which is good) and is carefully prepared and beautifully printed. Subs: \$5.50/10 issues.

WRITING ORDERS

If some of you sub to other zines, you'll probably be aware of the flap in THE VOICE OF DOOM lately over the following order which Bruce Linsey, the GM, received in a game: "A Vie-Tro." Bruce disallowed the order on the grounds that it was ambiguous; he didn't know whether the player meant a move to Triest or to Tyrolia. He's received quite a bit of flak over his decision. Perhaps it's easy to criticise from the vantage of hindsight, but, placing myself in Bruce's shoes, I too would probably be in considerable doubt as to what, exactly, the player meant as I sat alone at the kitchen table writing up a game report. Remember that Bruce did not have dozens of people peering over his shoulder at the time pointing out that "Tro" could only mean Tyrolia as there's no "o" in Triest. (At the same time there'd be a minority pointing out that the "o" could have been a poorly written "i".) From what Bruce has said on the subject I've no doubt he was genuinely confused by the order when he wrote the game report, and that alone, in my opinion, is enough to call the order ambiguous. I expect a number of players to object to my siding with Bruce in this matter, considering all I've written about my casual attitude towards badly written orders, but what my attitude boils down to is: if I can figure out what a player means (which may be different from what he intends), I'll use his orders; if not, then I won't accept them. I think that's a pretty fair attitude to take.

However, there's a simple way to avoid problems like this: and that is for players to write out the names of provinces and sea spaces in full. The way I write up game reports, by using abbreviations and combining two orders (eg., A Rum (S) A Ser - Bud) is not the way I write up orders to send to GMs when I'm a player. There's a simple reason: GMs get confused more readily than players. And that's not entirely facetious. A season's game report for 1980 IC takes me about an hour to prepare, with all the checking and re-checking I do. I shudder to think what some GMs go through every month with their dozen or so games.

So, be kind to your GM in whatever game you're in. Put the Boardman number, your country, the season, and the real date at the top of the page. Keep your orders separate from personal notes. Write them clearly, preferably in a list (so they can be ticked off). Again, separate your press. Some GMs cut it out for reproducing. Be consistent in your format and signature to make it easier to spot fraudulent orders.

The orders for my country are the most precious thing for me in any game I'm playing and I don't want to take the chance of a beautifully conceived plan being snafued by a GM who can't figure out what I meant to write.

Thus endeth this month's sermon.

TRAVELS WITH MYSELF

In the past five years I've made three trips across North America. I thought it might be of interest to some readers if I were, when space permits, to relate some of my experiences. I've probably passed through, or near, your area at one time or another (except for the southern US and the far north), so perhaps you'd like to see how a stranger passing through saw things. All my observations and experiences are subjective, of course, and memory may play some tricks. But as much as possible I'll throw myself back into the mood I was in at the time.

The first trip crossed the US from Sarnia/Port Huron, through Omaha, Denver, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, north to the border, and home on the Trans-Canada. That was in '76. In '78 I entered the States at Buffalo, circling round Lake Erie, south-west to St. Louis, Tulsa, Albuquerque, the Grand Canyon, Salt Lake City, Omaha, Detroit and home. In '79 I drove across Canada from Montréal to Vancouver following a truck a friend was using to move his furniture. I flew home that time. I've also wandered around New England and the Maritimes. In the two trips I made alone I drove a Pinto with a tent in the trunk. I usually camped out, though the second time I made more use of motels to get my breath back. But for the first trip, which I'll begin here, I had only \$200. cash and a Texaco credit card, so motels were out of the question. The entire trip took about six weeks.

I guess there's nothing quite like one's first real trip alone. Somehow I had missed out on the hippy migrations to California when I was a student during the '60's (usually because I had to work during the summer to make enough to go back to school). In '76 I had just finished my first year of teaching in Maniwaki and it was the first time in my life I had a job waiting for me at summer's end. I also had just ended, painfully, a long term relationship with a woman and got a bit cut up in various short term romances. I had pretty well recovered my strength from a near-fatal accident a year before, so I started dreaming of California. As the idea of simply driving there took shape in my mind, I started having vivid dreams in which I'd set out for a drive, crest a mountain, and see this fabulous city laid out beside the ocean.

I set out from my sister's place near Kitchener, Ontario and drove to Sarnia. I had been born there, which is why I wanted to go that way. I had planned to stop, but the momentum of driving carried me right up the Blue Water Bridge, which I had often crossed as a child but this time I was seeing it with an adult's appreciation. That's an astounding bridge. As one goes up, the southern end of Lake Huron opens to view, with lakera and pleasure boats dotting the incredible deep blue. At the peak one swears he can see Manitoulin Island. Then down, questions at the border: where are you from? where are you going? Citizenship? How they manage to catch smugglers is beyond me! Stay on the highway towards Flint and Lansing. High banks on either side of the highway. Lots of deciduous trees. American highway surfaces are different from Canadian ones: harder, more cracked, but leveler, solid-feeling.

Signs are weird. "No passing" posted on the left hand side of the road. Makes sense, I guess, in a perverse sort of way.

It's difficult to keep highway numbers straight; they all sound the same when you have to make quick decisions: 66, 96, 94 blend together. As one heads south-west from Lansing the country broadens out and one's spirits rise accordingly; a feeling of expansiveness. It seems as if I have a sign ten feet high declaring my foreignness. Other motorists wave. A friendly-looking woman in a Datsun passes me several times, with a big smile each time. I follow her, playing highway games. Turn west towards Kalamazoo. (Does such a place really exist? My father often threatened to kick me all the way to Kalamazoo. It must be a myth!) A massive tribe of motorcycles creeps by. Thumbs up signs and big smiles. A huge psychedelically-painted bus with "Jefferson Starship" painted on the side! Really? I felt as though I had personally met Grace Slick.

Towards evening I follow a sign to a campground near Bangor. Nicely shaded spot near a gravel-bedded river. Middle-aged couples, sitting under camper awnings stare at this thin, blue-jeaned, head-banded character in motor-cycle boots pitching his tent and cooking dinner on a camp-stove. I shower and they relax. Can't be all that bad, I guess. Campground owner stops by to tell me they once had a Canadian stay there a few years before. Did I know them? I sit by a small fire in the dark, smoking, relaxed. I sleep well.

Next: Real down in Omaha!

CANADIAN-US RELATIONS

Hah! I finally got a rise out of someone! I made a little dig at American spelling last month and someone rose to the bait. Writes Darryl Phillips: "Why dou you think the spelling would be superiour in Canadian editiouns of rule books?"

Rather than list all the crimes against the English language that Americans perpetrated on the English-speaking world (like using "real" as an adverb (as above!); and creating montrosities like "nite," "tho," and "thru-way"), let's just say this: You can spell it "supply center" if you wish, eh?, but I'm goin' ta spell it "supply centre." Otherwise, eh?, you might think this is a Merican zine, eh?, when, in reality, it's a Northa Merican zine with a crazy Canajun pubber, ya know eh?

Whatever, you must admit that this is a more interesting controversy than trying to discover who the real Buddy Tretiak is!

NEXT MONTH: Who knows? Not even the Shadow this time!

THIS MONTH: Special thanks to my wife Ann who did the layout and pasteup even though she doesn't play Diplomacy. Don't forget to celebrate the Ides of March and St. Pat's! And may you never put a letter to an ally in an envelope addressed to someone you're about to stab!

Ron