

Getting a little cocky, yes?

No sooner do I crow last issue about being on time than printer problems rear their ugly head. An extra day because they didn't call to tell me the job was done, then I find half the print run cocked up (pages were numbered 1, 10, 3, 7...). That'll put me in my place.

So what have we this issue to keep everyone interested? (Who's that in the back who yelled, "Not much?") More movie reviews, that's what. Specifically a review of Disney's The Black Cauldron, which opens on Wednesday, and shorter reviews of Silverado (out now for two or three weeks) and The Man With One Black Shoe (opened just last Friday). The Black Cauldron review is rather long and indulgent, but what can you expect from an animation fanatic? The fun begins on page 4.

Speaking of fun, the Con report last issue was just so much fun, I thought I'd do it again. Thus, we have a writeup of the first few days of MadCon III, held at the beginning of July. I had to leave the Con early to attend a wedding, but it was terrific while I was there. Check out how terrific on page 6.

Since the ISE has been in operation the last year, I've had numerous people ask me for recommendations on British zines. Unfortunately, I don't get bunches of 'em, so I don't feel I'm any expert. In, however, an attempt to provide people with a bit of an idea of what zines are like over there, I review a few of the British zines which I do happen to get (or which wandered into my mail box over the past few weeks) on page 9.

Which leaves games, of course. Diplomacy is on page 3, including the second IT gamestart. (ANDY PANDA PLAYERS, your game deadline was extended.) And United actually gets started this issue on page 10, with 17 teams in two divisions! Get psyched, people! UNITED MANAGERS, you should have an extra sheet or two included with this zine; details in the report.

And we have a new game on the scene, possibly. How many of you are familiar with the board game Twixt, formerly a 3M Bookshelf game and now, I believe, owned by Avalon Hill? If you're any good, I have a little proposition for you on page 14...

Which pretty much takes care of what's in this issue--but doesn't say anything about what's not in it. Among the latter are Runestone poll results (a bit too controversial for staid 11'1 IT), comments on LIVE AID (although I enjoyed all 17 hours) or my vacation back in Minnesota (thanks for the ice cream cones, Frauke!)--or a letter column. Maybe you're not really not writing me, you're just faking me out, in which case it's not really a non-letter column,

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IT'S A TRAP!

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PLUG TIME

If you've had your head in the sand, you may not have realized that it's been a good year or so since Diplomacy World #38 hit the streets. If you've had your head in the sand recently, you may not yet know that DW #39 is, at long last, out. For those just joining us, DW is the semi-pro flagship zine of the hobby, devoted almost exclusively to Diplomacy and variants. It had fallen on hard times recently due to problems, and I must admit appearance in my mailbox of issue #39 was a complete shock to me.

But what a zine DW #39 is! A meaty 50+ pages of reading material here, including Daf Langley on running a Con, Kathy Byrne on FudgeCon, Wrobel and Peel on the beginnings of WARTHOG, Berch with another Shep Rose tale to strike fear into the hearts of GMs everywhere, game winners, stats, rules to World Diplomacy VI, and on and on and on. And with the arrival of Rod Walker's new typewriter (which looks to do proportional spacing, no less) and George Grassle at Publisher, this is a great looking publication, as well. Rod, who used to do the whole shooting match himself, is now Managing Editor, which I suspect means caring for the administrative end of things. Kathy Byrne, who is now General Editor, has gotten off to a great start in putting together a zine chock full of good reading for the mainstream Dip hobbyist--along with an appropriate reminder that DW is what you and I put into it. If the three of them can keep this up, and people (including me) start submitting articles, this incarnation could fulfill a lot of untapped potential for DW.

In case you can't tell, I'm pretty enthusiastic about this. DW #39 is available for a list price of \$2.75 from Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024. Make cheques payable to R.C. Walker. Check it out.

[illegible]

A quick plug of an album I've been listening to lately:

Suzanne Vega, Suzanne Vega, A&M Records. Impressive self-titled debut album from this young product of the recent folk revival in New York. No acoustic-only folkie she, though, as she makes very effective, unobtrusive use of electric instrumentation throughout (some reviews I've read have made favorable comparisons to Joni Mitchell around the time of "Hejira"). The songwriting is truly remarkable; the lady has a definite way with words. I've seen her twice now down at D.C. clubs (once with Billy Bragg), and she's well worth watching for--not overwhelming as a stage performer, but she has a lot of quiet charm, and who cares anyway when you get to hear music that's so good? Highly recommended.

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From Eenie Meenie Minie Tweed, by Sam Hurt. *1985 by Sam Hurt. Reprinted by permission.

MOVIES

Update from last month's reviews: GO SEE Return to Oz! I've seen it three times now, and we have here a rare film which gets better with successive viewings. Don't expect a musical (as did Siskel and Ebert), don't expect anything in particular, just go and revel in an exquisitely-made film. RtO hasn't been doing great business, so don't expect it stick around long. See it now, before it becomes a forgotten, underrated film.

The Black Cauldron

I saw Disney's The Black Cauldron at a preview last Friday night; it opens here (and, I suspect, in most major cities) on July 24th. I've been looking forward to this film (with some trepidation) for several years now, and will give you the film's background as I know it (and I may have my facts wrong), followed by my impressions.

The Black Cauldron is based on Lloyd Alexander's five-book Prydain series, the second book of which is also entitled The Black Cauldron. TBC was the last project which Walt Disney himself initiated before he died, the studio having bought the rights to the Prydain series shortly before. Because of this, TBC has been a very important project at Disney since Walt's death. The intent was to make it a milestone in animation (much as Walt tried to do with Sleeping Beauty), a fitting memorial, if you will. Unfortunately, this was about the time (late 1960s--early '70s) that most of the older, experienced Disney animators started retiring or passing on. Finding good replacements is not easy, because most animation studios now can remain solvent only by turning out "limited animation" drek for Saturday morning TV. Thus, TBC has been an off-and-on project at Disney for some 15 years, while they produced things like The Rescuers, and The Fox and the Hound, to provide training for the younger animators before embarking on TBC.

THE FILM ITSELF: Don't expect anything like the Prydain books. What they've done is taken (some of) the characters and background of the Prydain series and built a new story around them. This is reasonable; since they decided not to concentrate on just one of the books (which probably would have led to a better film, but let's not quibble), it's better to start from scratch than to try to cram all five into one film. The film's story concerns Taran, a young Assistant Pig-Keeper who dreams of adventure. Taran's master, the enchanter Dallben, divines that the evil Horned King needs only to find the legendary Black Cauldron to conquer all of Prydain. So that the Horned King will not use the powers of Ben Wen (Dallben's pig, whom Taran cares for) to locate the Cauldron, Dallben sends Taran to take the pig to safety.

Now although this is a definite departure from the books, they've chosen their bits and pieces rather well, and put together an engaging premise that could have made for a very good film. Very unfortunately, I can't say that I think they succeeded, and I think the main reason is that the story takes place in a vacuum. When I compare it with Snow White or Pinochio (both unfair but inevitable comparisons), I feel that the earlier films work well because the conflict is on a very intimate level, a single person's (or puppet's) struggle to escape with her life, or become a real boy. Thus, they can get away with not providing a lot of surrounding detail only indirectly concerned with the story. But in The Black Cauldron, if I'm to care that the Horned King wants to conquer Prydain, I'd better be shown enough surrounding detail to convince me it's a real place populated with real creatures. I think a sense that the whole land of Prydain was banding together against the imminent threat of the Horned King would have helped give TBC some much-needed grandeur. (My own speculation is the story fell prey to a case of too many cooks; I counted 16 people given credit for the story, I think seven directly and nine for

"contributions." Wonder what would've resulted from the hands of one or two people with a clear vision of a story to tell.) Of course, the Disney people know their main audience, and there are a number of comic secondary characters to please the kids. This is expected and tolerable (although I never thought I'd live to see cleavage jokes in a Disney animated feature).

ANIMATION: The Black Cauldron is a film filled with fire, crumbling rocks, splashing water, and, believe it or not, slick editing. Now I'm only an interested layman, but I suspect this is because it's easy to hide mediocre animation behind flashy effects. (I'm reminded of the criticism that the animation in Waterhip Down looked good because since rabbits move in a jerky fashion, you couldn't tell that the animation wasn't smooth.) Don't get me wrong; I think the effects animation is genuinely impressive and, well, for an animation fan like me, might even be worth another admission. (I found the birth of the Cauldron-Born to be particularly striking.) But that doesn't mask the fact that the animation of the main characters is nothing to write home about; none of them move with any real weight.

Technically, I was pretty disappointed--and I'm not an expert on animation technique. For a milestone-in-animation film, I would have expected the cels to be hand-inked. Instead, we get the sketchy lines of time-and-money saving xerography, a technique which can look good in the right style of film (e.g., 101 Dalmations), but which only struck me as looking shabby when it was used here. And where were the multiplane camera shots, which use multiple cels to give a sense of depth? I only counted two, but maybe I just wasn't looking carefully enough (or don't know what to look for).

On balance, The Black Cauldron is bit of a disappointment. If you're into animation, you'll probably want to see the effects animation (but then, you'd go even if I didn't tell you to). If you have young children, they'll love it, to judge by the reaction of the numerous children brought at the preview. Otherwise, I can't really call it a waste of time, but I don't feel you'd be missing too much if you don't see it--which is what's really unfortunate about the film.

Silverado

Good show, this. Four archetypal characters (a quiet loner, a reformed crook, a hotshot, and a seeker) end up banding together to rid a town of its greedy, controlling cattle baron and his crooked sheriff henchman. A well made film, a bit tongue-in-cheek but not so much that it loses credibility. (Check out the final showdown, with tumbleweeds rolling through town, no less.) If it has a problem it's that there are too many characters, all portrayed by fine actors, for director/screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan to give them all their due, although this probably happened in cutting the film down to within the studio's time limit. Worth seeing.

The Man With One Red Shoe

This is practically a scene-for-scene remake of the hysterically funny French film The Tall Blonde Man With One Black Shoe. It is also vastly inferior. The basic story concerns the title character's becoming unwittingly involved in a battle between two factions of an intelligence agency (the CIA, in the American film's case). In the French film he is blissfully unaware that anything extraordinary is happening, while the coolly professional agents run espionage rings around him, giving him credit he doesn't deserve for being in on the game; the contrast is extremely funny. In the American film, however, Tom Hanks plays the title character without the naivete that was so funny in the French film, and the CIA agents are just plain stupid, all for the sake of some sophomoric jokes. Don't ruin a good film for yourself by seeing a bad copy. Look for Tall Blonde Man in a revival house somewhere, and forget about Red Shoe.

THE FIRST DAYS OF MADCON III

There are Cons and there are Cons. A phrase with cliché overtones, by which I merely mean that Cons have their different flavours. On the one hand there are organized tournament Cons, extremely well-run and concentrating almost exclusively on Diplomacy, such as DipCon and MaryCon. On the other hand, there are Cons which aren't run so much as held, their main attraction being nonstop socializing and a variety of games. For my money, MadCon is one of the best of these. MadCon III, held over the "weekend" of July 4 at Marc and Debi Peters's house in Madison, Wisconsin, lived up very well to the reputation of its predecessors. I was at both earlier MadCons, and intend never to miss one as long as I can help it. Why? Because MadCon attracts what is probably my favorite cross-section of hobby people, in what is definitely one of my favorite cities. (Okay, so I was born in Madison, so I'm prejudiced, so sue me.)

I arrived July 3, having flown into Chicago and gotten a ride with Mark Johnson, a long-time friend (and subscriber). I spent that night with Mark and his house-mates (UW grad students all), and was, despite having talked late into the night, reasonably ready the next day to socialize with a bunch of gamers. A quick call to the Peters residence yielded a set of incorrect directions out to their house in western Madison, courtesy of Dale Bakken. No problem, though, because it turns out that Marc and Debi live about six blocks from where I grew up. The ride out was laden with nostalgia, and I almost couldn't believe it when I discovered the Con was within sight of the drugstore where I used to buy candy as a kid.

Enter the Peters residence, then, a comfy townhouse, and who do we have? Mike Barno and his friend Rich (whose last name I neglected to record), Scott Hanson and Frauke Petersen down from Minneapolis, and Debi and Dale. Marc's at work, but the Peters's three cats are making up for his absence by making people feel welcome. Not enough players for Diplomacy, even when James Wall arrives bearing the customary MadCon beverage (Debi and Frauke aren't keen on playing, and the cats aren't showing any interest, either), but that's a definite mandate to sit around, gab, and exchange zines. Joy of joys, Scott and Frauke have brought down Hase und Igel, a German game with which I became enamored at MadCon II, and my enjoyment is in now way diminished by the fact that I get trounced. Marc finally gets back from work; one, two, three...seven players? Guess what we play next...

Unfortunately, my performance in this game doesn't quite live up to how much I was looking forward to it. As England, I went full against Rich's Russia, leaving myself wide open in the early mid-game to a stab by Wall's less than benevolent France. I think he used some silly excuse like the fact that I miswrote a key order in our joint attack of Germany. Some people are just naturally fickle, I guess.

After the Dip game ends, it's time to get introduced to Circus Maximus. Now here's a game I take a liking to immediately, not in the least because I win with a very fast chariot, avoiding contact with the others as much as possible. Of course, fortune played a bit of hand, as most of the heavy chariots hung back and did each other in early on, so I only had to lap Barno's, and fortunately snuck by it unscathed. All in all, a lot of fun.

But it's getting late, so I stretch out on the couch, and--what's this? Dickens, one of the Peters cats, decides to stretch out on me. I decide the next morning that I'm glad no one had a camera, as the others apparently draped Kokomo (Debi's hand-puppet monkey, a MadCon fixture) around me and had a bit of a chuckle. What can I say, I'm adorable when I'm asleep.

Then it's up early Friday morning to a great breakfast courtesy of Debi, and Wall, Barno and myself walk over to the nearby grocery store to buy munchies and a newspaper. We say good-bye to Scott and Frauke, who must return to Minneapolis since Frauke has to work over the weekend, thereby dwindling our numbers. But a Con never stops. Wall, Barno, Rich and myself occupy the morning playing Survive, a truly fun Parker Brothers game wherein you try to get people to safety off a sinking island, all the while sending sharks and sea monsters around to gobble everyone else.

With everyone finally up about noon, the next game in line is Grass, a Mille Bornes look-alike with a little bit of Hearts and Crap-on-Your-Neighbor thrown in. This one continues all afternoon, finally breaking up (with no winner) when Jeff Richmond's arrival at the Dane Co. Airport becomes imminent--and besides, we have to think about supper. After deciding on Crandall's, a restaurant down near the state capital with a Friday night fish fry, Marc, Wall and myself head out to the airport to pick up the first weekend arrival for the Con proper. I entertain Marc and James on the way by waxing nostalgic over the plastic octopus outside a car wash. You sure do remember strange things from your childhood.

Jeff is evidently eager to get to the Con, as he's the first one off the plane, and the four of us beat the other four to Crandall's. We stuff ourselves with fish (well, some of us do, at any rate), then it's in the cars for the ride back to the Peters's. As we get onto the Beltline, who's that ahead of us? Yes, it's the other car, with Rich and Barno in the backseat. Chuckle. Get on the Beltline and make rude gestures at one another. Giggle. See Rich make motions as if to moon us. Laugh out loud, and make encouraging motions. See Rich turn around and rub his fingers together, looking for money. Guffaw and hold up our wallets. See Rich actually moon us. Go into hysterical convulsions while travelingtravelling 60 mph down the highway. Get home, tip Rich for the performance, and then find out the Dale and Debi had no idea any of this was taking place in their back seat.

What's not going to seem mundane after a ride home like that? Well, Empire Builder can come close, as Marc, Barno, Rich and myself begin a game that goes on and on, if only because we weren't giving it our complete attention, stopping to answer phones, get another beer, and so on.. The others play card games, and we continue without interruption until the MO-lads (no MO-lasses, though) show up from Missouri about 11:30 or so, fired up for Diplomacy. Heck, sounds like a mandate to us, so let's pack up EB and start in...

Randy and Jeff Ellis, Dustin Lawrence and Matt Fleming are the new participants; Mark Frueh arrived with them but didn't play. Talk about hectic--I'm Russia trying to coordinate an R/T with Randy Ellis, only to get stabbed; Frueh wants to talk with me about the seven Insanity Dip games we're in; and then Bill Becker shows up, bearing the latest issue of his K-Line, with the final results of the first United season. This last bit is too much. Whenever I get the K-Line at home, I'm no good for the rest of the evening because I'm too engrossed in poring over the results--and here he gives them too me in the middle of a Dip game! So I find out I did very well in the last session, and I start dancing around the kitchen like an idiot, and I'm only paying half attention to the Dip game in which I'm supposed to be playing, and the Theme from Rocky is playing in my head, and...and I'm kicking ass in this Diplomacy game! What?

I ally with Turkey, then talk to Austria and we pull off an effective stab of Turkey, then I get back together with Turkey and we pull off an effective stab of Austria! This is a dream--I have enough units to be able to push into the Atlantic by myself. Peters's Italy and myself clean up while Austria and Turkey drag each other down, and Jeff Ellis's England and

Fleming's France start to become concerned about how well we're doing, with Bakko's Germany in the middle. Had this been a postal game, I know I would have entertained thoughts of going for a win, but since it was face-to-face and people seem more inclined to play stop-the-leader, Peters and I brought Bakko in for a very satisfactory three-way, a fitting end to my best performance in a Diplomacy game since...well, since Detroit two years ago. Maybe I should stop paying attention in all my games.

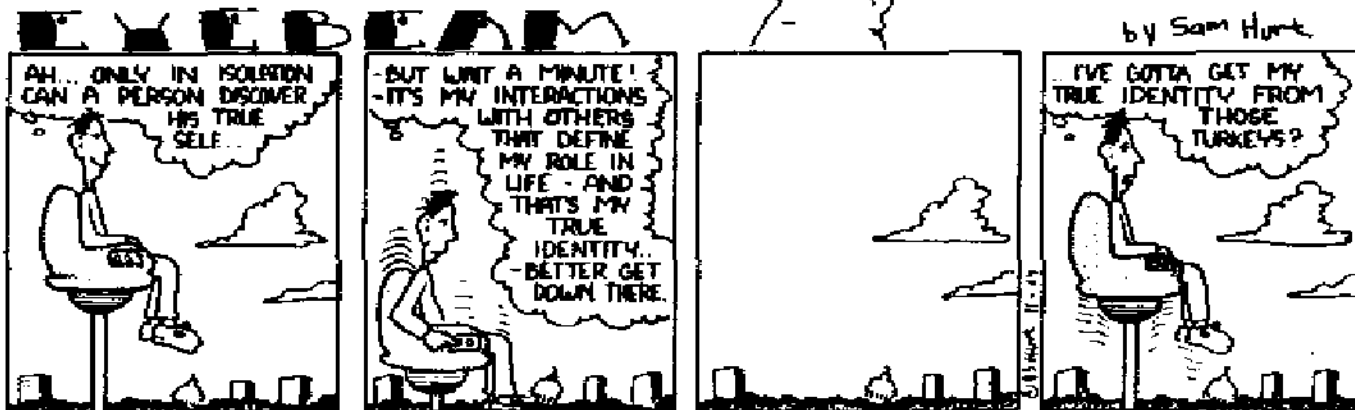
With the Diplomacy game over, it's almost 4:00 a.m. now, and I have to catch a bus for O'Hare airport at 8:00 in order to attend an old friend's wedding. In a situation like this, a normal person would get some sleep. Me? I stay up the rest of the night with Becker, talking and talking and talking about United, about Alan Parr's United world championship tournament we both played in last year, about our teams in Jim Williams's United league, about Bill's team in Konrad Dolata's Der Metzroller, about the K-league's first season and my awe at the way John Narciso has been able to dominate it... It's awfully nice to be able to go on at length about United with someone who's as fanatic as I am.

But it's after 6:00 by now. Wall and Fleming have been staying up talking baseball as enthusiastically as we've been talking United, and the four of us decide to adjourn for breakfast to the same International House of Pancakes where we've eaten the last two MadCons. I'm definitely beginning to feel the effects, catching myself dozing a bit in the car there and back. A quick shower and shave so I'm presentable, then Bill and James take me downtown so I can catch my bus, which provides a welcome opportunity to sleep for three hours--not, however, before I catch myself reminiscing a bit about the Con and wishing I can stay for the rest of what is without a doubt my favorite Con of the year. And so to sleep.

Recapping events in a Con report like this, however, really fails to convey why I enjoy MadCon so much--and that is doubtless the personalities of the MadCon regulars. Marc and Debi, being exemplary hosts and providing terrific meals. Dale Bakken, acting as host with Marc and Debi and always very mellow. Scott and Frauke, fellow Minneapolitans who introduce me to terrific games. James Wall, whom I always enjoy seeing. Mark Frueh, host of MadCon I and fellow Diplomacy fan. Randy Ellis, one of the friendliest people I've ever played Diplomacy with. Matt Fleming, one of the most knowledgeable people I've come across. Like I said earlier, I'll never miss a MadCon if I can help it--if only because it helps me remember that this hobby is filled with great people.

(From Ennis Meenie Minnie Tweed by Sam

Hurt. ©1985 by Sam Hurt.)



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A LOOK AT SOME BRITISH ZINES

War and Peace Derek Caws, 17 Malta Road, Buckland, Portsmouth, PO2 7PJ
Denver Glont Glover Rogerson, 11 Buckingham Place, Clifton, Bristol,
BS8 1LJ
Noway the Lads Martin Le Pevre, 1 Wellesley Nautical School, Blyth,
Northumberland, NE24 3PF
Prisoners of War Wallace Nicoll & Doug Rowling, 228 Kinnell Avenue,
Cardonald, Glasgow, G52 3RU, SCOTLAND

One mainstay of a number of British zines that is not in wide use here is the zine review. Maybe that's because the relative seriousness with which we on this side of the Atlantic approach postal games makes publishers more sensitive to reviews and the like. In any event...

War and Peace #29 came in a few days ago, a zine I'd not seen before and one I definitely intend to receive from now on. Derek Caws looks to run a good zine, all Diplomacy and variants (and a Bourne)--just what most people are used to over here. We also find discussion of tournament ratings systems, Derek's recap of the latest Football (a.k.a. soccer) Association season, and a lively letter column. Not the flashiest around, but just the sort of well-produced zine which I've always really enjoyed. June issue had two openings in an International Dip game run by someone from Sweden, it seems.

When you get down to it, I seem to consistently like zines that have a distinct flavor of their editor's personality, which means we must be talking about Denver Glont. The zine is Glover, Glover, and more Glover, although a little less so since Kim Dent left and John Norris's subzine Heimskringla came on board. Rogerson's style strikes me as midway between stream-of-consciousness and I don't know what, and I'm addicted. The man also writes the most perceptively accurate zine reviews I've come across, which translated means that I tend to agree with his assessments of a zine's strengths and weaknesses. (Now watch me try to disclaim that after he savages IT next issue!) Norris is running a United-like American Football game of his own invention (American Football looks to be gaining tremendous popularity in Britain), called Touchdown. No TD openings right now, but it should prove interesting to watch. Oh, yes, DG runs Dip and variants, specializing in Downfall, a Lord of the Rings variant.

Noway the Lads #45 just came round, too, and it's worthwhile if you're not too concerned about it being regular. Sadly, one of my favorite sections, a science fiction and horror film column/subzine by Stephen Laws will either not be appearing anymore or appearing less frequently, I can't quite sort out which. Happy news is that it's because Stephen's first book, entitled Ghost Train, has been published, and his zine time is being taken up with giving author interviews and the like. There's even more change in the works for the zine, though. Will Baughan, who was formerly coeditor (he says "nominally edit") with Martin Le Pevre looks to be stepping down. We'll wait to see what impact this has on the next few issues. Apart from that, HL has a bit of Diplomacy, Railway Rivals, and a well-established Kn Garde game (something I've thought more than once about trying).

Prisoners of War is the product of Wallace Nicoll and British ISE rep Doug Rowling. It's nice and thick when the mails get it to me. A lot of chat, a lot of subzines, a lot of games. We have a letter column (filled with the social consciousness which is so much more prevalent there than here), and account of a trip to the Soviet Union, a couple of music columns, and some personal soapboxes. On the games side, Diplomacy, Norris's aforementioned Touchdown, variants, El Nabisco (wild west role playing?), Psychosoccer (another postal soccer game), and Sopwith (WWI air game). Plenty of things to interest, so give it a look-see.

UNITED

AND WE'RE OFF! We have 17 teams, barely enough for two divisions. Printed here in the zine on the following pages are the team names and financial statuses, the managers's names and addresses, and the team rosters. IF YOU ARE A MANAGER, you should have received with your zine a copy of the schedule for this first season, plus a blank form that you should use to send in your lineups for the first session. Let me know immediately if I slipped up and forgot to include yours. IF YOU ARE AN INTERESTED SPECTATOR and would like copies of all this nifty stuff the managers get, so you can better follow the league's progress, let me know and I will make sure you get everything.

A BIT ABOUT THE CUP: If you've glanced at the schedule, you've noticed that one match from sessions 7, 8 and 9 is reserved for the single-elimination Cup tournament. Since the tournament is set up for 16 teams, and we have 17, the bottom teams from each division will play an extra match against each other first round to determine who fills the 16th slot. All Cup matches are played on neutral ground; i.e., neither team gets home advantage. In the case of a tie, the match will be replayed. And now...

A Little More Q & A:

If I name an apprentice, who is not otherwise in my lineup for the game, to take penalty kicks, does it count towards the four game apprenticeship? Unfortunately, you can't do that; the penalty kicker must be someone in the game's lineup. Soccer doesn't have unlimited substitutions, as does American football.

When is interest charged to a team? At the end of each session, after you've collected your earnings for the month. Thus, those of you who went 500K into debt don't need to worry about having players sold off immediately (which I'm sure is a relief).

What's a "pseudorandom" number? A "random" number generated by a computer. Use of the term "pseudorandom" is merely a tacit recognition of the fact that no present-day digital computer can generate a sequence of genuinely random numbers, simply because a computer must have some algorithm by which it chooses the next number in the sequence. A computer cannot "just pick a number," although there are certain tricks which can be used (such as taking the number of seconds since January 1, 1970) which are close--for a single number. If you kept using the number of seconds since 1970, for example, the numbers in the sequence would just keep getting larger and larger, which is certainly not random. The best method, then, is to use such a number as a "seed," an initial pseudorandom number from which an algorithm will generate another pseudorandom number, and so on. There is extensive mathematical theory behind the design and testing of random number algorithms, and the sequences generated by the best pass even the most stringent tests for randomness.

More on Home Advantage: There was still some concern that the home advantage is too, um, advantageous. Although I was reasonably sure that this was not the case, the question did get me wondering, since I did not really know what percentage of games were won by the home teams. To satiate my own curiosity, and to try to allay fears of an unbalanced game, I counted the league games from the Bill Becker's first season:

HOME wins: 104

Draws: 27

AWAY wins: 64

Thus, Bill's first season saw home teams winning 55% of all games, away teams taking about 33%. So although there is definitely an advantage at home (especially early in the season), it isn't overwhelming.

DIVISIONAL PLAY: In European football, divisions are not static groups of teams as they are in the NFL. Instead, the whole league consists of a hierarchy of divisions, the best teams playing Division I. Normal league matches are not played between teams in different divisions. At the end of each season, the league champion is the club at the top of Division I. In preparation for the next season, a few of the teams at the top of each divisions's standings are promoted to the next higher division, while those at the bottom move down. Thus, the league as a whole is kept competitive, as teams tend to play others of approximately the same strength.

This league will be run in this fashion. Since, however, the current division assignments were made at random, the top teams from both divisions will reign at the end of the season as co-champions. In preparation for season two, the divisions will be reshuffled, the top half of each going into Division I, after which we'll carry on as explained above.

And now, what you've been waiting for. The number in parentheses after each manager's name is the club's cash situation.

DIVISION I

BREAKFAST BUDDIES John Narciso (-500K) 1512 Wall Dr. Titusville, FL 32780	ENDWELL ENZYMATIX Mike Barno (OK) 2811 Robins St. Endwell, NY 13760	F. C. VOLKSWIRTSCHAFT Scott Hanson (-200K) 2626 Stevens Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55408
GORMENGHAST Ty Hare (-500K) 1001 N Weber #204 Colorado Springs, CO 80903	HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE Dave Kleiman (OK) 6151 Fenster Ct. Indianapolis, IN 46234	HUMBOLDT BUDS Kevin Tighe (OK) 290 12th St. Arcata, CA 95521
JOSE'S HEROES Pete Fuchs (-500K) 3585 Inspiration Colorado Springs, CO 80917	KOMIC RELIEF Bill Becker (-400K) 810 Turwill Kalamazoo, MI 49007	REDLANDS JUVENTUS Don Williams (-500K) 217-B Craig Ct. Redlands, CA 92374

DIVISION II

CARIOCA FOOTBALL CLUB Phil Dancause (OK) 300 Hidden Lake Stafford, VA 22551	CHESSMEN OF HASTINGS Steve Courtemanche (??) 300 Main St. Apt. #1 Woburn, MA 01801	DECOMPOSING COMPOSERS Bruce McIntyre (OK) 6191 Winch Burnaby, BC V5B 2L4 CANADA
DUBLIN FIRE Dan Stafford (-500K) 58 W 9th Apt. E Columbus, OH 42301	EVIL DOERS Tom Hise (-100K) 4568 Black Rock Dallas, TX 75211	LITERARY GIANTS Pete Gaughan (-500K) 509 Sandpiper Dr. #130 Arlington, TX 767013
NORTHSIDE EAGLES Kevin Brown (OK) 100 Patton Dr. Warner Robins, GA 31093	ST. LANGLOIS CHANGERS Steve Langley (-300K) 2296 Eden Roc Ln. #1 Sacramento, CA 95825	

Have your lineups in to me by 17 August 1985; I will not accept lineups over the phone. **SEASON STARTER BONUS:** So you don't miss the opportunity to scout this session if you'd like, you all have one (1) free VP with which to start the season. Good luck to all!

DIVISION I

BREAKFAST BUDDIES

GK King Vitamin
 SW Lucky
 DF Boo Berry
 DF Count Chocula
 DF Franklin Berry
 MF Crackle
 MF Pop
 MF Snap
 FW Cap'n Crunch
 FW Chockle
 FW Toucan Sam

ENDWELL ENZYMATIX

GK Jungle
 SW Bungle
 DF Humble
 DF Rumble
 DF Trumble
 MF Fiddle
 MF Twiddle
 FW Dibble
 FW Fribble
 FW Kibble
 FW Tribble

F. C. VOLKSWIRTSCHAFT

GK Birkenstock
 GK Cibu-Geigy
 SW Daimler-Benz
 DF Aldi
 DF Karstadt
 DF Kloppenburg
 MF BMW
 MF Lufthansa
 MF Siemens
 MF Telefunken
 FW Adidas
 FW Bayer
 FW Puma
 FW Volkswagen

GORMENGHAST

GK Swelter
 SW Sepulchrae
 DF Barquentine
 DF The Post
 MF Muzzlehatch
 MF Prunesquallor
 MF Sourdust
 FW Bellgrove
 FW Play
 FW Rottcodd
 FW Steerpike

HER MAJESTY'S S. S.

GK Moneypanney
 SW Q
 DF James Bond
 DF Columbo
 DF Kananga
 MF Blofeld
 MF Felix Lighter
 FW Albert Broccoli
 FW Ian Fleming
 FW Goldfinger
 FW Dr. No

HUMBOLDT BUDS

GK Mr. Nagoo
 SW Race Bannon
 DF Mel Blanc
 DF Paul Frees
 MF Astro
 MF Dino
 MF Sherman
 FW George Jetson
 FW Mr. Peabody
 FW Johnny Quest
 FW Barney Rubble

JOSE'S HEROES

GK Jose Muldoon
 DF Ted Adams
 DF Bob Ekeler
 DF Jim Freiheit
 DF Ken Martin
 MF Scott Morgan
 MF Don Peterson
 MF Randy Wampler
 FW Bob Collins
 FW Wayne Crupper
 FW Ed O'Connell
 FW Jeff Sharp

KOMIC RELIEF

GK Smothers Brothers
 DF Curly
 DF Larry
 DF Moe
 MF Alfalfa
 MF Farina
 MF Spanky
 FW Chico
 FW Groucho
 FW Harpo
 FW Zeppo

REDLANDS JUVENTUS

GK D. Zoff
 SW A. Bertagnin
 DF S. Crane
 DF S. King
 MF J. Conrad
 MF S. Donaldson
 MF T.S. Eliot
 MF W. Stevens
 FW W. Buckley
 FW J. Donne
 FW R. Frost
 FW J. Voltaire

If I've made any spelling errors on any of the players's names in either division, let me know by next deadline.

DIVISION II

CARIOCA FOOTBALL CLUB

GK Moulinha da Venta
GK Souza

SW Djalmacao

DF Fonseca
DF Martinho
DF Mostagem
DF Quintana
DF Zavaia

MF Beito
MF Gavrincho
MF Xe Xe
MF Xito

FW Almira
FW Elio
FW Paulinho
FW Rubenito

CHESSMEN OF HASTINGS

GK Paul Morphy

SW Max Euwe

DF Adolf Anderssen
DF A. L. Deschappelles
DF L. C. La Bourdonnais
DF Alexander M'Donnell

MF Jose R. Capablanca
MF Francois Philidor
MF Johannes Zukertort

FW Ruy Lopez
FW Howard Staunton
FW William Steinitz

DECOMPOSING COMPOSERS

GK Josquin des Prez

SW Johann Sebastian Bach

DF Ludwig Van Beethoven
DF Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
DF Antonio Vivaldi

MF Johannes Brahms
MF Gustave Holst
MF Modeste Mussorgsky
MF Maurice Ravel

FW Ralph Vaughan-Williams
FW Hector Villa-Lobos

DUBLIN FIRE

GK Sergeant

DF Adamson
DF Butler
DF Watson

MF Harr
MF McCulloch
MF Morrissey

FW Clayton
FW Evans
FW Hewson
FW Mullen

EVIL DOERS

GK The Blob

SW Annihilator

DF Electro
DF Enforcer
DF Kraven

MF Deathlok
MF Dr. Doom
MF Punisher
MF Ultron

FW Bullseye
FW Speed Demon
FW Mauler
FW Grim Reaper
FW Terminator
FW Whirlwind

NORTHSIDE EAGLES

GK Fred Kennedy
GK Bob Martin

SW Phil Jordon
SW Eric Lester

DF Phil Foster
DF Paul Gorny
DF Mark Huntington
DF Mike Ivey

MF Ron Duncan
MF Alan Elder

FW Dave Abbott
FW Jason Becker
FW Art Creque
FW Barry Neal

LITERARY GIANTS

GK Natty Bumpoo
GK Paul Bunyan

SW Cpt. John Carter

DF Nick Adams
DF Tarl Cabot
DF Chu Chulain
DF Conan the Barbarian

MF Joris of the Rock
MF Doc Savage

FW King Arthur
FW Beowulf
FW Hercules
FW Dray Prescott
FW Darth Vader

ST. LANGLOIS CHANGERS

GK John Destrier
GK Nelson Raleigh

SW Teo Campion
SW Ian Ogilvy

DF Benjamin CWM
DF George Mycroft
DF Montgomery Python
DF Asa Simons

MF Lesley Leigh
MF Paidrigh McGoohan

FW Algernon Blont
FW Leonard Dayton
FW John Syngyn-Psmyth
FW Seb Tombs
FW Jamie Wright

TWIXT

What you see below, provided it reproduces well, is my representation of a Twixt board. If you are unfamiliar with the game, it is simple enough that you don't need to run out and buy a copy to play it (although it's good fun and, I think, worth it). The basic idea is that the red player wants to connect the top and bottom edges of the board with a chain of red pieces; the black player wants to do likewise with the sides.

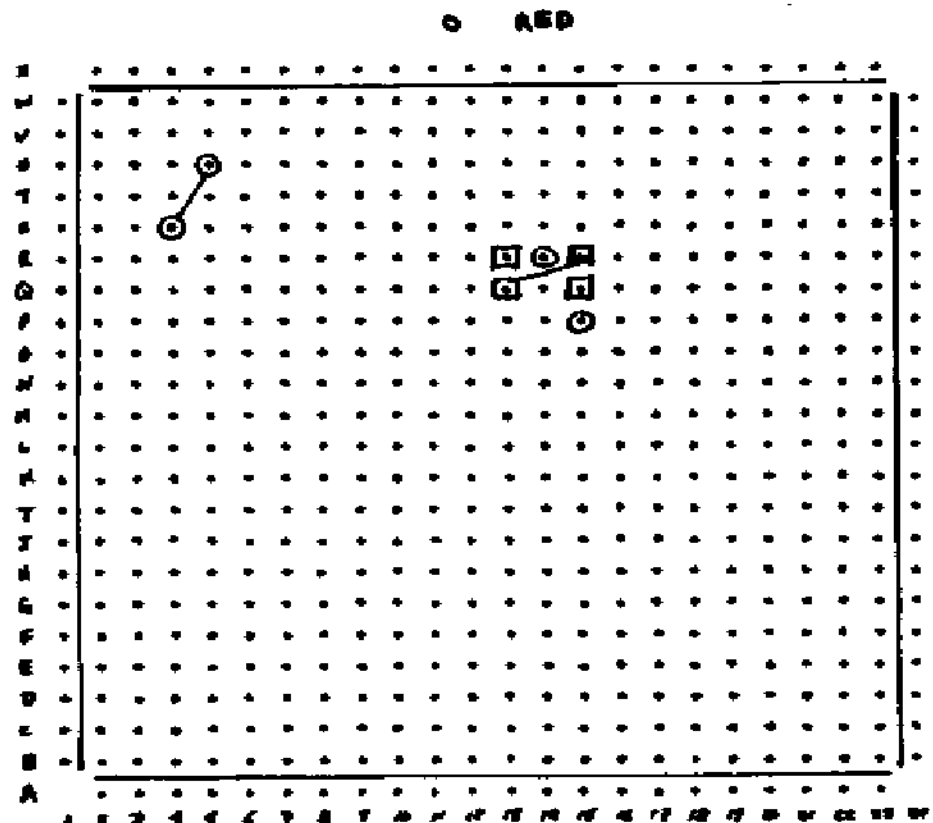
The players alternate turns, placing a peg of the appropriate color in one of the holes each turn. (The pegs will be represented here by either a circle or a square around a dot.) Only the red player may place a peg on the top or bottom row (the ones beyond the horizontal lines); only the black player may place a peg on the far right and far left rows (the ones outside the vertical lines). Upon placing a peg, a player makes any legal connections from the just-placed peg to other pegs of the same color already on the board, thus forming chains. A legal connection is a chess knight's move (two up and one over, as in the red connection from S-4 to U-5), such that the line does not cross any other existing connections (even connections of one's own color). Thus, the black connection from Q-13 to R-15 prevents both red from connecting R-14 to P-15 and black from connecting R-13 to Q-15. The one who connects their two sides of the board wins. There can be no draws, since the only way to completely cut someone off and prevent them from winning is to win yourself.

Now, the reason I'm introducing this here is that I bet some of you out there are familiar with this game and think you're pretty good. I think I'm pretty good, too, enough that I'll give five (5) free issues to anyone who beats me. I'll play up to four games simultaneously with the first four people who send me an initial move. You be red, and just send the coordinates of your first peg placement--no

game fee, no NMR fee, no nothing. (Hard to beat a deal like that, yes?) We'll simply play back and forth, like postal chess; I'll report the ongoing results whenever the zine comes out. When you send in a move, include a list of all legal connections which you think result from your peg placement, so that we can check to make sure our "boards" don't become out of sync.

Good luck! (Dare I say I think you'll need it?)

(In case the board doesn't reproduce clearly, I've lettered the rows from A to X, bottom to top, and the columns from 1 to 24, left to right.)



THE LAST PAGE

[illegible]

DEADLINES:

For Diplomacy and United:

17 AUGUST 1985

For articles and other submissions:

12 AUGUST 1945

Telephone deadline (for Diplomacy only) is 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the applicable date.

[illegible]

GAME OPENINGS:

United (6 desired):

\$5.00 game fee

\$5.00 NMR fee

(No, you're not out of luck just because you weren't in time for the league! I'll consider opening up an expansion division with as few as four players, but would like enough to provide you with variety in the schedule.)

Twist (first 4):

NO game fee

NO NMR fee

(No cash investment for the chance to win five free issues! Go for it...)

11-

DIPLOMACY STANDBY LIST (standbys are wanted, and receive three free issues when they complete a standby position):

Dan Stafford, Conrad Von Metzke, Robert Acheson, Matt Fleming, Steve Dycus, Kevin Brown

[illegible]

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[illegible]

It's a Trap! #3 has been brought to you by: Steve Knight
11905 Winterthur Ln. #103
Reston, VA 22091 USA
(703) 860-3746

Estimated posting date for issue #4 is 20 August 1985.

11-

Diplomacy is a registered trademark for a game invented by Allan B. Calhoner and copyrighted by the Avalon Hill Company.

United is a postal game of soccer management invented by Alan Parr.

Twist is, I believe, currently copyrighted by the Avalon Hill Company.
I'll check.

STEVE KNIGHT

11905 Winterthur Ln. #103

Reston, VA 22091

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