

VANILLA

FUDGE

VANILLA FUDGE is the organ of the Postal Diplomacy Rating Commission, and is issued by its Chairman; in this case it is Konrad Baumeister, 11416 Parkview Lane, Hales Corners, WI 53130 U.S.A, and this is therefore a product of the Crossroads Press International. VANILLA FUDGE is issued

on an irregular schedule; coming out whenever I deem it should come out. As a rule it appears at least once after each issue of Everything comes out. It goes free to the below-mentioned people; non-ratingsmasters may subscribe to the FUDGE at the rate of 10 issues for \$2. This is EGGNOG Enterprises Production #92.

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This issue will be relatively short; I just want to get things moving with this issue. The length of those that follow will vary, but I'll try to keep it between two and ten pages. I don't think we'll have to go over one ounce. If I do (preparing for every contingency), then it'll count for a double issue for the suckers subscribing.

VANILLA FUDGE will be sent free to several people: Steve McLendon, Robert Sergeant, John Leeder (tentatively), Doug Hollingsworth, Rod Walker, Scott Marley, and Jerry Jones. Steve, Bob, Doug, and John (maybe) ratingsmasters, while Rod will get a free ride for his help (and also has a sort of rating system, only for countries), and Scott and Jerry will receive copies for the archives and for his publishing Diplomacy World, respectively. Others may and probably will be added later. See the Postal Diplomacy Rating Commission Constitution in VANILLA FUDGE #2. Other interested people may subscribe at the rate of 10/\$2. Oops, almost forgot. By virtue of his being the Boardman Number Custodian, Lee Kendter Sr will also receive complimentary copies of this, issue by issue.

The Postal Diplomacy Rating Commission is a voluntary association of people who run rating systems for Diplomacy players. Criteria for being a member will be published in the next issue. The Commission makes it its business to discuss what makes a regular and irregular game, and to attempt to formulate a base of games which all rating systems will use: The Standard Rating Base, hereinafter SRB. The Base and its use make it simple to compare the various rating systems in use...and, well, you get the drift. To accomplish this goal, the Commission traditionally cooperates with the Boardman Number Custodian.

This, as you may have noticed, is not exactly organized. This sheet is merely an attempt to see whether or not the various ratingsmasters in the hobby are willing to work together on this project. If you are, then do get in touch with me on the subject by the end of the month if possible; VANILLA FUDGE #2 will go out in early March.

There are also some things up in the air at present. For one, quite a few Runestone issues ago John Leeder muttered something about getting his old rating system, ODDMOD, up to date. If he's working on that then of course he's quite welcome to be a member of the Commission. DTRS and the CPCRL are of course, up to date, since I've seen the latest recently printed. (Blair Cusack was running ODDMOD for a while, too, so I don't know whether or not something will happen.)

Alas, I'll have to murder another master since I'm out of room this page.

I didn't want to do a second page, but it would appear that I have no choice.

As for myself, I am doing two things around ratings: I am working on a system of my own, soon to become public, and am, just because it's so much fun, reconstructing the Average Calhauer Piont Count Rating List, which was once run by Rod Walker. This latter is being done with the help of a local friend of mine who obviously is a masochist at heart.

So that's what I wanted to say. Nextish will have several things in it, but most important will be the Constitution of the PDRG, and some topics to be discussed. You'll see.

But in the meantime, I've got a lot of space for which I have no use. In that case, I may as well explain the name for this 'zine (since I apparently have a penchant for bizarre names, or so I've heard). So here goes:

The Vanilla Fudge was, of course, a rock-and-roll group which existed between early 1967 and late 1969. It featured Carmine Appice (drums), Tim Bogert (bass), Vinnie Martell (guitar), and Mark Stein (organ). If you had been around at George Harrison's house in the summer of 1967, you would have heard an astonishing version of the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby", a version that sounded like Godzilla jamming with Mitch Ryder and a sedated Detroit Wheels. It gave one the feeling that the tempo had been slowed down by as much as four times -- if not the tempo, then your mind. That was the Vanilla Fudge. They were just another Long Island R&B-rock group until they started interpreting contemporary rock songs so uniquely that even the Beatles were sitting up and taking notice. That summer George Harrison would play their album to anyone who would listen.

Their first single, an incredibly slow-motioned version of the Supreme's fast-paced "You Keep Me Hanging On", was a huge hit in England immediately upon release. A year later it hit in the United States. It was the Vanilla Fudge at their most musically effective, the song seemingly destined to go on forever. "Eleanor Rigby", too, seemed to have been put on a rock and stretched out...tortured to the point where the tension was no longer bearable. As a matter of fact, the initial key to the Fudge sound was the overt pain present in their dinosaur arrangements. Instrumental riffs were carried out to the point of extinction. Vocals quivered, cracked, and spluttered. Singers gasped in between ominous keyboard rumbling and tortured guitar solos. St. Stephen a go-go.

The Vanilla Fudge made the whole notion of interpretation interesting again. But their live performances left a bit to be desired. What came across as heartfelt pain on wax often looked like advanced catatonia onstage. The Fudge's sound soon began to grow a tad pretentious, with the Fudge moving from "Ticket to Ride" and "Bang Bang" to "18th Century Variations on a Theme by Mozart" and "The Windmills of Your Mind." The Vanilla Fudge decided to call it quits at the end of 1969, with Bogert and Appice forming Cactus. The others left the music scene entirely, as far as I can tell.

The original Cactus sound was something of a cross between your average heavy metal outfit and the La Brea tar pits. With numbers slowed in tempo to the point of catatonia and instrumentation searing through the leaden beats like red-hot bullets, Cactus proved to be a mild success at best for the fresh-faced fans of the seventies. The group splintered, regrouped, and splintered again before reforming as The New Cactus Band in 1973, with none of the original foursome within the ranks. Bogert and Appice have pretty well stuck it out as a duo, joining with Jeff Beck and, of late, sitting in with a British band, Boxer (so much for alliterations).

Enough of that. I hope to hear from all of you by 1 March 1980. Thanks.

Now I have to use envelopes. I should have kept the above shorter...