

I'm (sob) all alone in Suite 100...

# THE VOICE OF DOOM

#69

November 30, 1982

Circulation: 117

by BRUX

Please note that the game deadline this time is 6 weeks instead of the usual 4, to account for the slow postal service during the holiday season.

Woody called me upon receiving the last issue of VD, and he was in a rage over the fact that I printed his letter and over the fact that my reply was as angry as his letter. He says that he is going to an ombudsman concerning the MILKY WAY game, whether I call one or not. What Woody doesn't understand is that an ombudsman is someone agreed on by both the player and the GM. He can of course write to whomever he chooses, but I don't have to agree with (or go along with) whatever is said. The only action he can have taken concerning the game without my consent is to have Don Ditter declare it irregular, but since Woody has already accused me of doing that, I don't think this is his goal. His complaints about my handling of MILKY WAY are as follows: 1) I should not have declared the game over because he vetoed the concession vote over the phone; 2) I should not have permitted the game to start back up after it was declared over; 3) I have prejudiced his chances in the game by printing his letter last issue as it was labeled "not for print".

My replies: 1) He did not submit a "no" vote to the concession to Turkey; 2) He and all six other players specifically agreed to disregard the concession vote, so I felt I was being fair to let the game go on; 3) His letter was not labeled "not for print" -- in fact, he specifically gave me permission to run it over the phone! Also, it seems to me that his first two complaints are contradictory -- I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't.

To make a long story short, Woody is going to write to an ombudsman, though it's still not clear to me exactly what end result he wants to achieve. However, you don't automatically get an ombud in VD; it's up to me whether I call one. In the MILKY WAY game, I have acted in accordance with my house rules to the letter and I will not call an arbiter.

Woody also made some not-so-vague threats that he is not going to take this lying down, but he wouldn't elaborate beyond that other than to say "You'll see what I mean." I expect this means I'll be up for attack in his zine and maybe some others; fine with me as I can handle my own feuds by now. Now I'll give a warning to Woody -- publicly! Points 1 and 3 above are blatantly untrue, Woody, and since they both directly concern your game in VD I regard them as deception of the GM. You know what the penalty for that is in VD. I've tried being patient on this so far, but don't keep making misstatements about actions I have taken as a GM. Because my supply of patience is just about used up.

The Voice of Doom is a journal of postal Diplomacy published every now and then by Bruce Linsey, 24A Quarry Drive, Albany, NY 12205. Phone (518) 459-9250. Subs are 10 issues for \$5.00. Standbys are wanted. There are no game openings, and there will be none for a long time.

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The deadline for all games contained herein is January 7, 1983.

J U P I T E R

19800jk

TURKISH ARMY WASHES ASHORE IN SPAIN; GERMAN FLEET GOES TO HELL!

Winter 1910

- AUSTRIA: Build A TRI
- ENGLAND: even
- FRANCE: Remove A Sil, A Spa
- GERMANY: Build Mon Kie, Build Dum Ber (will play 2 short)
- RUSSIA: Build A WAR
- TURKEY: even

Spring 1911

- AUSTRIA (Carter, ordered by Carter): A LON H, A GRE-Smy, A Rom-NAP, A Pie H (NSU), A MAR U, A TRI U
- ENGLAND (Barno, ordered by Lew): F TYR C TURKISH A Bul-Spa, F NTH C GERMAN A Den-Lon (NSO), F CLY-Nwg
- FRANCE (Sherwood, ordered by Rauterberg): A GAS-Syr by teleportation (imp), F Nwg-Cly, F ENG C AUSTRIAN A Lon-Bre (NSO), A POR S TURKISH A Bul-Spa
- GERMANY (Rauterberg, "ordered" by Olsen): Mon Kie See Mon Kie Do (NSU), Dum Ber Than BRUX (imp!), F BOT-Tle (H), A MUN in June (H), A BUR-Ried Paul (H), A Nwy-FIN, F Hol-HELL, A DEN of Thieves (H), A BEL-Baker (H)
- RUSSIA (Lew, ordered by Carter): A SEV-Arm, A MOS-Sev, A WAR-Mos, A Ser-RUM, F WES C TURKISH A Bul-Spa
- TURKEY (Olsen, ordered by Barno): A Bul-SPA (F AEG C, F ION C, A ARM-Sev)

Game Notes: There were two adjudication errors last season. The German F Bot-Swe should have succeeded, although this was brought to my attention one day too late to be corrected, so the fleet remains in Bot. Secondly, the French F Nwg did NOT move to Nwy. This was also brought to my attention too late, but I am putting it back where it belongs anyway as there was already a German army in Norway. Sorry 'bout the errors!

Also, the right parenthesis was omitted from the "(imp)" notation following the failed Austrian A Lon-Syr. Once again, this came to my attention too late to be corrected. My apologies. This game has been punctuated by errors.

The proposal that the game be converted to regular Diplomacy did not pass. Now there is a proposal to form a new country with three home centers determined by random draw, and assign it to a standby from the list, selected at random. OK by me if all players vote for it. Please vote by next deadline; NVR = no. If it passes, we'll worry about working out the details...

I accepted "Hell" as an abbreviation for Hlg in the orders for the German units, since Hlg is the only space bordering Hol with a string of characters remotely resembling "Hell", though I must say there are several characters in this game who resemble its occupant.

All press this month is Turkish, except the one from me.

Press:

- SULTAN: Please note that I made one error on Paul's orders. I'm so sorry. Actually I meant "Feed A Nwy to the Fishes" but all I could think of was Fin. That'll be five dollars.
- OLSEN to BOARD: If we all continue to refuse each others' builds, eventually there will be no units on the board. Memo to Mark Berch: what's the minimum number of units there can be? Two, I believe, but let's let the Dipmaster decide.
- BRUX to OLSEN: The answer is one. An in-depth analysis of this question took place on page 11 of VD #8.

((JUPITER continues next page))

JUPITER (continued)

PILGRIM to EUROPE: I have returned from the mountain. The wisdom of the Dipmaster is mine. He even taught me how to play Germany.

SULTAN to EUROPE: I note that I now have four units, just one more than the teensiest power, England. Frankly, gentlemen, I am not used to such treatment. I'm not used to being next to last. I want last!!!!

BRUX to PUDGE: Will you settle merely for having the most ludicrous position?

COA: Mike Barno, c/o Satan, twelve miles beneath your feet.

OLSEN to BARNO: Painting me with the toady brush, are you? You've got the roster a bit messed up, but overall, you're fairly close to the mark. Except that Michalski is my good friend and would never, never stab me! He's almost as nice a guy as Mazzer himself!

OLSEN to WOODY: You roast him good, Woody. I'm with you all the way.

OLSEN to BRUX: You roast him good, BRUX. I'm with you all the way.



LUNA

1982V

FRANCE BUILDS AN ARMY IN PARIS!

Autumn 1904

AUSTRIA: A Ser r ALB

GERMANY: A Mun r BER, F Hol r HLG

ITALY: A Rom r OTB, F Tun r OTB

Winter 1904

AUSTRIA (Gorham): Remove A Apu

ENGLAND (Lew): Build A LON

FRANCE (Osuch): Build A PAR, F MAR

GERMANY (Jurkowski): Remove A Den

ITALY (Chatfield): even (out)

RUSSIA (Ditz): Build A WAR, A MOS

TURKEY (Larzelere): Build A CON, F SMY

Game Notes: Brian Lorber has dropped out of the game and Bryan Jurkowski is now the German player. This is a black press game, Bryan.

Press:

PAR: You can't stop the LUNA Tic. He used to have a problem but he got it fixed.

LON to STP: Cool it, fockwad, just cool it.

JOKES BRUCE LINSEY TELLS HIS STUDENTS: Class, what's a fockwad?

CLASS: (Silence)

BRUCE: Oh, about two mips. (Heh, heh.)

CLASS: (Silence)

CLASS to LUNA: And you thought Alex was a jarhead.

LUNA to CLASS: You have our heartfelt sympathy.

AUSTRIA to ITALY: Ooooh Babe, don't leave me now / How could you go / When you know I need you / To beat to a pulp in the Fall of '04 / Ooooh Babe

PF: So ya / Thought ya / Might like to / Play in VD / To feel the warm thrill of confusion / That Berch's Head glow...

KARL MALDEN to AUSTRIA: You're stuck in a strange land and you lost your ally. What will you do? What WILL you do?

PINK FLOYD: Hey you, sending fleets into the Med, total vacuum in your head, can you reach me? Hey you, hitting pointlessly at Scan, writing jokes about the Klan, can you teach me? Hey you, forcing zines into a fold, always doing what you're told, can you break me?



ARE FRENCH UNITS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES? SOUTHERN ALLIES GAIN GROUND IN BOTH THE EAST AND WEST!

Fall 1904

AUSTRIA (Arnawoodian): A Mos-LVN, A Ukr-WAR, A SEV H and laughs at the quality of GMing in VD, F CON H and laughs with A Sev, A Gal-SIL, A Gre-SER, A BOH S ITALIAN A Tyo-Mun, A Bre S ITALIAN A Gas-Par (NSO) (d; r Pic, OTB)

ENGLAND (Mazzer): F Nwy H, F Nth-DEN, F Nat-IRI, A Par-Bur (NSU), A BEL U

FRANCE (Rauterberg): A Par-BRE (F MID S), A Spa-GAS, F Naf-WES

GERMANY (Kador): A RUH S ENGLISH A Bel-Bur (NSO), A MUN S ENGLISH A Bel-Bur (NSO), A KIE S A Mun

ITALY (Angle): F Ion-TUN (F TYR S), A Bur-PAR, A Gas-MAR, F Wes-SPA(sc) (F LYO S), A TYO-Mun, F RUM S AUSTRIAN A Sev

RUSSIA (Saleski): F Swe-BAL, F STP(nc) H, A Ber-PRU

TURKEY (Blitstein): F Tun-Ion (d; r Naf, OTB)

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA:	Vie, Bud, Ser, Gre, Smy, <del>Wyn</del> , War, Mos, CON, SEV	9, build 1
ENGLAND:	Home, Nwy, BEL, DEN	6, build 2
FRANCE:	<del>Par</del> , Bre, Por, <del>Par</del>	2, remove 2
GERMANY:	Kie, <del>Par</del> , Hol, MUN	3, even
ITALY:	Home, Tri, Tun, <del>Par</del> , Bul, <del>Wyn</del> , Mar, Spa, RUM, PAR	10, build 2
RUSSIA:	StP, <del>Par</del> , Swe, Ber	3, even
TURKEY:	Ank	1, even

Game Notes: Thanx to Jerry Lucas for the standy orders which, it turned out, weren't needed. Sorry, Jerry, I can't accept "guest press" either.

Last season's game report erroneously listed F Nwy-Swe as succeeding for England. It should have been listed as failing. All players were notified.

See elsewhere in this issue of VD for discussion of some not-so-pleasant goings on involving this game.

Press:

WOODY to SALESKI: Knowing Linsey he probably lost your orders.

RUSSIA: To those of you who I didn't notify, I'm sorry about the NMR. I did send in orders, but they arrived late.

ITALY to BIG DADDY: What's Rauterberg talking about? I write all my own orders (after Bruce tells me what everyone else's were).

MUSHROOM to WOODY: My houserules are:

Rule 1. The GM is always right.

Rule 2. In case the GM is wrong, refer to Rule 1.

WOODY to BRUX: I play under quite a few GMs as you know. I am not accustomed to pointing out mistake after mistake as I seem to be doing here. I bet Trouble would be a better GM and he's dead!

BRUX to WOODY: Thanks, pal. Your asinine comments never fail to make my day. Oh, by the way, the GM error reported above is the first in this game, and Trouble was a she.

ROME to VIENNA: Abra, abracadabra, I'm gonna reach out and stab ya!

CUPCAKE MAZZER to KAISER KADOR: You're doomed! I hate you! You won't last another two turns! Your mother wears army boots! (Boy, this black press stuff is fun.)

WOODY to MAZZER: Angle was hoping you were on our side. My reply was, "That's the kiss of death. The only good Mazzer is a dead Mazzer."

((MILKY WAY continues next page))



WALES to POPE: Bravo! Even though you haven't written for some time I am impressed by your travels. The orders are inspiration and the plan to meet in Moscow is on. Shalom.  
 TURKEY to PARIS: I am not a puppet, I am a Kane Toady. Every month I send my moves to Eric on a post card and he checks them and sends them on to Mr. Bruce. Bruce and Eric told me this is how it works and they mean business as demonstrated by the (ann)s and (U)s which accompany so many of my moves. I don't put those in myself, by the way. As you can see, my hands are really rather tied. Eric is my best friend in this entire game and he would never approve of me attacking him. And even if I did, Bruce would never let me win after I "aired our dirty laundry all over the VD letter page and most of Alexandria", to quote a certain very well-respected GM. But thanks very much for your kind words. I hope to negotiate with you again real soon.

ENGLAND to GENTLEMEN LEADERS OF EUROPE: Take heart lads! We in Britain are rallying our fleets to sting the white-beast and hopefully inflict heavy casualties upon him. The persistent encouragement of the Russian to lie to our allies and stifle his opponenets will fall short. Our joining together offers a glorious return to diplomatic honor and the relinquishing of all distrust. Besides I just can't stand the rotten lyrics he puts out. If there be any moment to lay aside our petty differences, it be now, and whatever the outcome we shall carry the fight to the enemy hordes. Come France, join the German and English in turning the tide of this foe. Let us set aside our temporary disputes and battle the Cossack. Shalom.

PARIS: Continuing his policy of conducting international negotiations through the media, Pres. deGalled has chosen a rock group, The Hooligans, to convey his message. Listen to the lyrics of "BriBri O'Loff":

French fleets on the move  
 They're startin' to groove  
 That's cause they've got a new leader.  
 I don't need to fight  
 A stab is alright  
 Just lay down your British peter.

Don't cry, just cause I've lied  
 It's only British Wasteland.

Brian, hear me out  
 I don't want to shout  
 Just look away while I stick it in your rear  
 The Frogs are a plague  
 And soon you'll all beg  
 But all your pleas will fall on deaf ears.

Don't cry, just cause I've lied  
 It's only German Wasteland.

TSAR to ENGLAND: Well, Mark, you can make me or break me; which will it be?  
 TSAR to BRUX: Where was my press release apologizing to Germany last season? Please run it this turn if you still have it.

BRUX to TSAR: Sorry 'bout that! You'll have to resubmit it if you want it run.

WARSAW to VIENNA: If you made it to the Ukraine this season, I congratulate you on an excellent guess.

LE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE to KAISER: Maybe you should spend more time on your orders and less on your press. We'd be better off with a fleet in Hlg. Hope you took Holland.

ROME to CONSTANTINOPLE: How's that for cooperation?

SEVASTOPOL to ANKARA: On we march! Let's stomp those damn Austrians and Italians into the ever-lovin' ground!

PAR to LON: 'Fess up. You purposely miswrote that order just to make yourself infamous. Maybe "La Bel Support" will make it into the next Lexicon -- but I doubt it!

((NEPTUNE continues next page))

NEPTUNE (continued)

RUSSIA: Where was my press to Germany last season?

BRUX: I think I inadvertently omitted it. Sorry!

TSAR to PRESIDENT OF FRANCE: Here's a nightmare which probably won't happen: A Tyo-Pie; F Tyr-Lyo!

TSAR to POPE: Listen, I've got this great idea for you...

WALES to TURKEY: You have lived under the bear long enough, join us in containing the rushing wave of white which will turn on you all too soon. Shalom.

RUSSIA: I took a big chance this season. If Austria went to Ukr, it's bye-bye Moscow.

WALES to ALLIES: Well guys, I'll do my part. Fare you well. Shalom.



O R I O N

1982Y

AUSTRIAN PIRATE SHIP SLIPS INTO THE IONIAN -- BUT WILL IT VANISH?

Summer 1904

AUSTRIA: A Bud r VIE

FRANCE: A Bur r GAS

Fall 1904

AUSTRIA (Ozog): A Vie-TYO, F Alb-ION

ENGLAND (Newell): A EDI H, F Lvp-IRI, A Nwy-STP (F BAR S), F Nth-NWY

FRANCE (Wrobel): A GAS-Spa, F Iri-MID, A PIC-Par, F ENG-Pic, A LON H

GERMANY (Wittmond): A BEL H (A RUH S), A BUR-Par, F Ska-DEN, F Swe-BOT

ITALY (Howerton): A Pie-MAR, F LYO-Spa(sc), A TRI S RUSSIAN A Bud-Vie (NSO), A Gre-ALB, F ADR S A Gre-Alb

RUSSIA (DeLuca?): NMR! A StP U (d; r Fin, Lvn, OTB), F NWG U, A MOS U, A GAL U, A Bud U (d; r Vie, OTB)

TURKEY (Leritte): F Tyr-WES, F Ion-TYR, A Rum-BUD (A SER S), F BLA U

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA: <del>Bud</del> , <del>Tyr</del> , Vie	1, remove 1 *
ENGLAND: <del>Lon</del> , Edi, Lvp, Swe, Nwy, STP	5, even
FRANCE: <del>Mar</del> , Par, Bre, Por, Spa, LON	5, even
GERMANY: Home, Den, Hol, BEL	6, build 1
ITALY: Home, Tun, Gre, TRI, MAR	7, build 2
RUSSIA: <del>StP</del> , War, Mos, Sev, Rum	4, remove 1 *
TURKEY: Home, Bul, Ser, BUD	6, build 1

Game Notes: COA for Peter DeLuca, 4222 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104.

I believe Peter will be back with moves for next season, but just in case would John Davies, Box 968, Port Hardy, British Columbia, CANADA VON 2T0 submit standby moves for Russia?

(\*) in the supply center chart means that, if Russia retreats to Vienna, Austria will be at 0 and should make 2 removals (meaning he is out), and Russia would be at 5 and would stay even.

Press:

ROME: The Italian government respectfully sent a carload of flowers to the funeral of the late Austrian ruler who recently expired.

CON to MOS: Pete, please be quicker with the letters. Not enough time to settle plans if you do not respond.

KIEL: When questioned about the presence of a German fleet in Sweden, an Imperial Navy spokesman implied that the fleet was merely making a courtesy call and stocking up on Smourgasbord.

((ORION continues next page))

BELGIUM to PICARDY: Sorry you couldn't make it. (I agree, our alliance is working well. It certainly is secret, too.)

ROME: Baron Roberto is happy to announce the liberation of Spain from the French oppressors. It was reported that the local senioritas met the Italian sailors on the beaches with flowers and vast quantities of local wines.

CON to ROME: Announcing the alliance that will sweep the board: Russia, Italy, and Turkey will sweep by 1906.

KING DAVEY to BRUX: Do you have any idea what you're doing to my position in this game by guaranteeing your silence through my elimination?

BERLIN: The Flemings are free at last!

PORTUGAL: Former major power seeks benevolent master for mutually advantageous toady relationship. Respond to: Toady Offer, P.O. Box France, Lisbon, Portugal.

KAISER to PROF. LERITTE: Just what are you up to, anyway? Enlighten your ignorant servant.

VENICE: Military authorities met with a delegation from Yugoslavia to work out plans for home rule. This is just another example of the goodness of Italy who seeks only to liberate the oppressed peoples of Europe. It was further announced that the Army in Greece was being withdrawn after the local elections were completed.

CON to BRUX: OK, I stabbed England (at least I tried, does that count?). Let's see if you keep your promises.

GERMANY to ENGLAND: Don't worry -- divine intervention should prove unnecessary.

ROME: Baron Roberto sends his best wishes to the Kaiser.



P E G A S U S

1982Z

ENGLISH CONVOYS MAY MEAN DOUBLE TROUBLE FOR FRANCE! TEN SUPPLY CENTERS CHANGE HANDS!

Summer 1904

GERMANY: A Mun r BOH  
 RUSSIA: F Sev r RUM

Fall 1904

AUSTRIA (Husk): A BUD-Vie, F VEN S A Tri, A TRI S F Ven, F AEG S RUSSIAN A Bul-Con, A Ser-BUL (A GRE S)

ENGLAND (Halverstadt): F NWY S GERMAN A Fin-StP, A Wal-BRE (F ENG C, F MID S), F Hol-KIE, A Yor-BEL (F NTH C), A Den-SWE

FRANCE (Chatfield): A MUN S RUSSIAN F Kie (NSU), A GAS-Bre, F TUN H, F ROM H, F TYR-Nap

GERMANY (MacFarlane): A BOH-Vie, A Fin-STP

ITALY (Jones): A NAP-Rom, F ION-Nap, A APU-Ven (F ADR S)

RUSSIA (Meisner): A Sil-BER, A StP-Nwy (d; r Lvn, Mos, OTB), A Kie-DEN (F BAL S), F Rum-Sev (ann), A Bul-CON

TURKEY (Punches): A Con-Bul (d; r Ank, Smy, OTB), A Sev-RUM (F BLA S)

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA: Vie, Bud, TRI, Ser, Gre, Bul, Ven	7, build 1
ENGLAND: Home, Bel, Nwy, Hol, <del>Den</del> , Swe, BRE, KIE	9, build 1
FRANCE: <del>Par</del> , Mar, Spa, Por, MUN, TUN, ROM	7, build 2
GERMANY: <del>Mun</del> , <del>Kie</del> , STP	1, remove 1
ITALY: <del>Rom</del> , Nap, <del>Tun</del> , <del>Ven</del>	1, remove 3
RUSSIA: <del>StP</del> , War, Mos, Sev, <del>Rum</del> , Ber, CON, DEN	6, build 1
TURKEY: <del>Con</del> , Smy, Ank, RUM	3, even

Game Notes: When there is such a darcimonorious number of retreats, builds and removals to be made it becomes difficult to write out conditional spring moves for all the different possible autumn and winter results. Therefore, I am declaring a separation of seasons in this game. Autumn and winter 1904 only will be due at the next deadline; spring 1905 will be due at the following deadline.

((PEGASUS continues next page))



PEGASUS (continued)

SULTAN to BERLIN: I hope my attack on the Russian Bear helps your cause.  
 KAISER to ARCHDUKE: No offense, but when you're down to two, you go for anything you can get. Besides, you're siding with Russia, and you know how I feel about that!  
 ANKARA: The Turkish forces continue to advance against the hated Russian foe. The Sultan has expressed his displeasure with the Austrian aid to Russia and hopes that war with Austria is not necessary.  
 ANKARA to LONDON: Together our forces can save the world from the Commie menace -- long live the forces of good.  
 ST. PETERSBURG: There was much rejoicing today as the Kaiser took his new throne in the former Russian capital, proclaiming the liberation of all the Russian people of the North from the Tsar's iron rule. Next stop? Moscow!  
 ANKARA to BUDAPEST: Where are you, Randal? It's time you answered with a few straight answers...the world wonders.



Q U A S A R

1982AE

TURKEY SNEAKS INTO MUNICH, AND IT'S ONLY 1904!

Autumn 1903

ITALY: NRR! A Tri r OTB

Winter 1903

AUSTRIA: Build A Bud (imp)

ENGLAND: Build A LON

FRANCE: Build A PAR

GERMANY: Remove F Bal

ITALY: even

RUSSIA: even

TURKEY: even

Spring 1904

AUSTRIA (Spector): A Tri-VEN (F ADR S), A Bud-TRI, A SER-Gre, A Vie-Tyo (NSU)

ENGLAND (Glaspey): F DEN-Bal, A SWE-Den, F NWY-Swe, A LON-Nwy (F NTH C, F BAR S),  
A EDI U, F HOL S GERMAN A Mun-Kie

FRANCE (Burd): A Bur-RUH, A Par-BUR, A Pie-TYO, F Tun-WES, A Naf-TUN (F TYR S)

GERMANY (Howerton): A Mun-KIE, A Ber S A Mun-Kie

ITALY (Paul?): NMR! A Ven U (d; r Pie, Tus, OTB), A ROM U, A APU U

RUSSIA (Lansing): F Kie-Bal (d; r Hlg, OTB), A Pru-BER (A SIL S), F StP(sc)-BOT,  
A Mos-STP, F BUL(sc)-Gre

TURKEY (Stebbins): A Boh-MUN, A Gal-WAR, F AEG-Gre, F ION-Apu

Game Notes: I hope Mark Paul will be back, but just in case would Dave Marshall, Rt. 3, Box 361-A, Russellville, KY 42276 please stand by for Italy? Thanx. Also thanx to Rick Ragsdale for the standby orders which turned out not to be needed.

Don Burd has asked me to confirm that he got his last copy of VD two weeks late. It is true that he called me about two weeks after the deadline for #67, and I sent him a replacement copy at that time. The Postal Disservice strikes again!

Press:

BERLIN ((VIA GERMANY)): The Kaiser, recently mugged in the Tiergarten while walking with friends, awoke briefly from his coma and weakly asked his attendant family, "Are you sure we are related to the Queen of England?"

CON to RUS: I'm just sightseeing in Warsaw.

FRANCE to TSAR: Talk about phony wars! What about your two RAT allies in Greece?

((QUASAR continues next page))



Room for only one page this issue; other letters held over to next ish... ||

### The Gossip Column

From an anonymous subber:

Dear Bruce,

If you get a set of orders that appear ambiguous do you try and get in touch with the person to clear them up or not, or is it against your house rules? The reason I ask is if it is not against your house rules to do so would you mind calling me if mine ever appear ambiguous? If they are intended to be ambiguous then I plan to label them as such.

((Sorry, I won't do this. But you can write me well ahead of the deadline, or call me any time, to ask how I would rule on a given set of orders. If you write, enclose a SASE.))

From Judy Winsome (excerpt):

Dear BRUX,

...Regarding Alex's allegations that you are a pervert -- perversion is a relative term. You're still my kind of guy. Thanks for inviting me to comment.

To Alex -- loved that poem "The Sea" in VD #64. May I reprint it in Winsome-Losesome? I was also very excited to learn that you PLAY SOCCER! I love soccer too and play whenever I can. On Sundays during the off season I play in pickup games. I suspect I may be a little older than you, but I play in a women's league on the peninsula. Keep up the writing! Maybe I should start a soccer column in WL!

From Bob Olsen:

Dear BRUX,

I wish you hadn't printed that second letter of mine (the one on page 20 of last issue). As far as I can see, it said nothing of any importance aside from some hot and ill-considered comments written in the stress of a bad moment, and I never expected you to print it -- of course I could have put DNG on it, and should have.

I would like to retract and apologize for the things I said about Bob Osuch in that letter. Bob and I have discussed the Mass Murders game since that was written and I am confident that his only intent was to run the game as smoothly as possible and that none of his actions were meant as favoritism.

Sometimes we say things in anger that we don't mean. Worse, sometimes we even forget they were sent out.

((Sorry your letter was printed when you didn't want it to be. To reiterate my editorial policy for the benefit of the unwary, most letters I receive are printed. The only exceptions (usually) are 1) letters pertaining to a game I'm running or playing in; 2) letters which are labeled "confidential", "not for print", "off the record", or some such; and 3) letters which are not of general interest such as sample requests. Please, everyone, if you don't want your letter printed, label it as such at the time!))

From Ruth Glaspey:

Dear BRUX,

It is positively mortifying to be a contributing factor to breaking your streak of no NMRs! Small comfort that I share the shame -- you may be assured that it won't happen again. If the Postal Escargot (US Snail) gets any slower it will be running in reverse...

I'm especially chagrined to have missed the deadline because I had worked your new word "darcimonorious" so cleverly into my press, even though I spelt it rong. I think it's a perfectly beautiful word, and I'd like to see it pass into the standard vocabulary. When the dictionary folks contact you about buying up the rights to it, however, they will ask about a derivation. What will you tell them?

Please give the attached bulletin to Alex Lord. Since reading a sample of her concrete poetry a few issues back I have been hoping she would publish more of it in VD. Perhaps she has a few poems or short stories she would like to submit to our creative writing contest.

How Dipdom Handles Confidential Material

or

The Readers Go On the Record with Their Replies to "Off the Record!"

The "Off the Record" situations posed in VD #66 have generated a response far more enormous than I had anticipated. No fewer than twenty Doomies offered their opinions on the article, which enables me to make this a nice, juicy follow-up piece which I hope will be enjoyed even by those who didn't respond. In fact, certain of the ten situations would have made good articles by themselves, what with the amount of discussion they generated.

I will not repeat each question verbatim, since some of them were lengthy to begin with. Instead, I will paraphrase each situation before printing the replies and my own comments. I am indebted to Judy Winsome and Garry Hamlin for the wording used in some of the paraphrasings. This is going to be the longest article ever published in VD, so without further ado...

SITUATION 1: A LETTER, SUPPOSEDLY INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION, IS DISCOVERED TO HAVE BEEN INTENDED AS CONFIDENTIAL BY ITS AUTHOR -- AFTER IT HAS BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THE ZINE. DO YOU LEAVE THE LETTER IN?

John Michalski: Yes.

Mark Keller: No, take it out somehow.

Bob Osuch: Simple. Just leave the letter in and claim that you never received the follow-up to remove it.

BRUX: Are you serious? I would view such an action as dishonest!

John Pack: Find something as big as the letter to fill the space, if after a call to the writer he understands the situation and still wants off the record treatment.

Mark Johnson: Retype the other letters ((which would have to be retyped as a result of removing this letter)). It's your own fault for hitting the typewriter before the deadline. My house rules would not allow me to accept ANYTHING after the deadline.

BRUX: But house rules only apply to game-related stuff, not letters for publication. You're not a publisher, but I can assure you that it is very common for me to type up a lot of the zine well in advance of the game deadline; how else do you think I can put out 40 or more pages in one weekend?

Bob Olsen: 24 hours ((the time between the first letter and the request that it be kept off the record)) is not too long to ask for. You have to retype the other stuff. In fact, as long as it's not that near the deadline, you still should.

John MacFarlane: As a publisher your first duty should be toward your subbers, so I'd say retype it. Having the letter printed could really mess things up for that subber. The best way would be to wait until close to the deadline to type it up, but that's not always possible.

Al Pearson: No choice; take the letter out. If there was no other way to delete it other than retyping "a couple of hours", you haven't planned very well.

Kathy Byrne: Can't you just paste someone else's letter over it! If it was, however, all printed, copied, and ready to go -- I'd let it stand with my apologies to the writer.

Jeff Noto: No. Most GMs have a deadline for submitting orders, and it is generally assumed that this is also the deadline for sending in other material. So long as the card arrives before the deadline, you must defer to his wishes.

BRUX: I think you're wrong in saying that it's "generally assumed" that non-game stuff has the same deadline as game orders. In fact, I've never heard of such a policy! I've often printed letters received the day after the game deadline. If the question had involved a press release rather than a letter, I'd have to agree with you.

Konrad Baumeister: This was my case with you. I would do as you did -- ask the writer for permission. If he refuses you have no choice but to retype. Lucky for you, I didn't refuse.

BRUX: Golly, yer a huluva guy!

Mark Luedi: No; the letter should not be left in. Obviously, the request for confidentiality was an afterthought and the person was being conscientious. However, I would tell that person that if he did that again I'd mail him a dead skunk.

Pat Conlon: A piece of cake. I wouldn't place a letter in the zine just for its value as controversy. ((The question stated that the original letter was "just loaded with controversial shit.")) Name calling and unsubstantiated accusations would have been edited already. And yes, I would make every effort to retype that section of the zine, omitting any "belatedly confidential" material.

Jim Williams: Despite the retyping, I would not print the letter in question. I would ask the writer of the letter, though, to please let me know with his letters whether or not they are for print, and I would explain the problems caused by not doing so.

Mark Berch: This asks the question of when does something on the record go back off. Strictly speaking, your reader is out of luck. For all he knows, you blabbed on the phone minutes after you got the letter. You cannot be criticized for printing the letter, so the question becomes one of courtesy. For myself, I would probably take the letter out unless I felt there was some compelling reason to print it, even with the extra work. However, if the zine had already gone to the printer, it would stay in.

Ronald Brown ((of Canada. In VD "Ronald Brown" is from Canada and "Ron Brown" from California -- this distinction being made on the basis of a suggestion printed by Ronald in Snafu!, though it seems to have been ignored by everyone but me.)): Doesn't apply as I can easily cut out a letter and repaste using the method I do. Too bad if it's a lot of work, you have to cut that letter somehow.

Steve Langley: I type up something to fit and replace his letter. I may cut and paste the following letters to make the hole smaller. Your "no other way but retyping" condition is not based in reality.

Mike Barno: Ethics are certainly more important than convenience. So you spend an extra hour (or two or three) retyping your zine -- big deal. You're committed to putting hours in anyhow. If you won't go out of your way to respect the guy's wishes, you can expect to (deservedly) lose friends and readers.

Garry Hamlin: I say you delete the material if you cannot gain permission to use it. If necessary, for photocopying, cover the confidential material on the master; for ditto master, simply slice off the offending material or type over it. If the copies have been made, obscure the material with an ink marker. Unquestionably, this will mar the appearance of the zine. But if the readership is informed as to why the disruption took place, they will probably be indifferent to it, or may even react favorably. Bottom line, the integrity of the zine is of greater consequence than its external appearance. This gets down to Aeschylus's line about trying to "be, rather than seem, the best."

Judy Winsome: In my case I use a word processor and would omit the letter. If you use photocopying you could cover it with another article or cartoon. If you are typing dittos, you've got a problem. What I would do would depend on what was said, who said it about whom, etc. No deadline or publishing frequency (or pride of always meeting deadlines) is worth creating emotional turmoil for someone unnecessarily. If someone, either the writer or the subject, will in my judgement be greatly disturbed by publication, I'll omit the article. The typing time lost is a small price to pay. I'm not here to hurt people. I can retype the rest of the page and publish at a later date. I'll just age that writer's letters in the future before I print them.

BRUX: I get the benefit of making my response to each question after reading everyone else's; a big advantage as I can make my tone more argumentative if I know I'm going to be disagreeing with the masses! I don't agree entirely with any of the responses to this question; though my opinion on the matter is close to Mark Berch's.

I would try to get ahold of the writer, either by letter or phone, and get permission to leave the letter in. In the event that I could not get permission, I'd make an honest attempt to delete the letter by whatever means I could. But if it was too close to the publishing deadline, or non-Dip matters would make it inordinately inconvenient for me to put in the extra work and time required to delete the letter, then I would leave it in and write a note of explanation to the writer. While I can't side with John Michalski's blanket "yes" to leaving it in, I also cannot see myself following the (in my opinion, radical) suggestions of Garry Hamlin and Judy Winsome that I ink it out on the printed copies (Garry's suggestion) or send out the zine late (Judy's). As Konrad says above, I faced this situation once with one of his letters, and he was nice enough to rescind his request for confidentiality once I explained to him that I'd already typed my whole letter column.

SITUATION 2: A NEW PUBLISHER IS GMING A GAME IN WHICH UNBEKNOWNST TO THE OTHER PLAYERS, ONE OF THE PLAYERS IS HIS BROTHER, ALTHOUGH THE BROTHER IS ENJOYING NO ADVANTAGES FROM LIVING WITH THE GM. AFTER LEARNING THIS IN CONFIDENCE AND UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE THE GM TO TELL THE OTHER PLAYERS, DO YOU SQUEAL? IF SO DO YOU DO IT PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY?

John Michalski: If his brother is at home with the GM, the game is irregular, and you should blow the whistle on it. If not, it's just a case of a pseudonym alone, which is irrelevant.

Mark Keller: No, you don't squeal -- unless you find out his brother is indeed getting inside info.

Bob Osuch: No problem. As long as the HRS permit it and no improprieties exist, mum's the word.

John Pack: Write the GM, inform him of his dishonesty, and urge him to put the game under a guest GM. If he refuses, a public statement is in order. Every chance should be given, though.

Mark Johnson: I would inform the other players in that game only. It's their game. Let them decide what, if anything, is to be done.

Bob Olsen: As long as you don't have any proof, or inkling, that anything underhanded is going on, you should butt out, or continue to express objections privately to the GM.

John MacFarlane: I'd probably respect the GM's request. If he wants to GM his games in this way, it's his problem. Most likely, this will either be found out by the players who will then resign or call for a replacement, or they will catch him on some other unethical cahрге. You always run some risk when signing up for a game under a new pubber.

Al Pearson: Do I squeal? Sometimes; in this case I might "suggest" to one of my player friends he might "check" on any relation between the English player and GM. I damn sure wouldn't print the GM's letter.

Kathy Byrne: Playing under an alias is serious business, and I feel all the players should be told of the situation -- privately!

BRUX: It's not clear to me from your reply whether you feel that the GM's relationship to the English player is the problem, or if your objection is to the use of an alias per se. If it's the latter, I do know that some GMs permit aliases, provided they are themselves informed beforehand.

Jeff Noto: You certainly do not "squeal" privately to the other players. The GM has less of a chance to defend himself. If you're going to do it, do so publicly and give the GM a chance to defend himself.

Konrad Baumeister: No, I shut up. I continue to write to the GM in question. Next time he has openings, though, you can advise any prospective players that they ask the GM to reveal the true names of all players, at least once at the start of the game. I also know better than to sign up in his games myself. The GM may be acting entirely honestly, but it's still all too easy to suspect that something may be amiss.

Mark Luedi: Tricky. How 'bout a wait-and-see attitude? Wait-and-see how the "brother" does in the game. Wait-and-see if the "brother" appears to be playing anywhere else. Wait-and-see if anybody raises a ruckus about it, then "squeal". It is really none of your (my?) business in this case. If/when something happens; then would be the time to reconsider. Perhaps a few tactful questions concerning the GM (and his reliability) to the players...in the game.

BRUX: I almost answered Al Pearson's comment the way I'm going to answer yours: why speak in riddles to the players? Either you should tell them, or you shouldn't; but I don't see what good it would do just to raise their suspicions without actually coming out and letting them know what's up. Seems to me that by asking "a few tactful questions" per your suggestion, or suggesting to a player that "he might 'check' on any relation" as Al advises, gives you the worst of both worlds -- you've violated the confidence without fully exposing the problem.

Pat Conlon: Too vague. Does the player-brother live with the GM-brother? What does the BNC say about the regularity of such a situation?

Jim Williams: I would do nothing. Many pubbers have very close friends playing in their zines, and I don't consider a brother that much different. I would try to convince the pubber to reveal the identities of all aliases upon the game's end, though.

Since the house rules permit aliases, I don't feel that the GM has done anything unethical.

Mark Berch: This is the only really difficult question for me from your list. I would try to persuade the brother to reveal this, too. I would probably keep my mouth shut, but it's a very close decision.

Ronald Brown: I would pass that info on to the hobby custodians responsible. The BNC must know, for one, so he can declare the game irregular. As a hobby custodian myself, if it was within my sphere, I would send the offender a sternly worded letter informing him that the hobby could not support this type of action. I wouldn't threaten; just make my point and drop it. I would not drag it out if he was stubborn on the matter. However, I simply wouldn't mention the zine for plugs, etc.

BRUX: Well, then, it's not really clear what you think should be done. First you say that the BNC must know so he can declare the game irregular. But if he does this, the whole hobby will soon know the story, as the BNC would have to provide his reason for such a decision. Then, however, you seem to indicate that you wouldn't actually inform the players or publicize the facts. Maybe you're saying that you'd leave the dirty work to the BNC -- let him spill the beans? It's unclear to me.

Steve Langley: I would continue to attempt to persuade him that allowing his brother to play under an alias could only ruin his reputation as a GM if it were to become known, unless he were to reveal the information himself. I would point out to him that a secret held by two is not a secret and that he is risking a lot to maintain a little. Parenthetically, I do not feel that allowing a relative to play in a game is unethical, so long as the relative has no special advantages. I do feel that the situation is close enough to a borderline ethical misdeed that I would want all of the players in the game to give the use of a brother as a player their vote of acceptance, and so I would not allow the use of an alias under such a situation.

Mike Barno: It's tough. Personally, I'd let it be -- it's legal by his HRs, and (he claims) not unfair. One idea: write an article discussing the whole situation, including explanation of your reservations (general ethics). Don't make it too offensive to him. Offer it to him for his contribution, suggesting it's better to do it that way than for it to come out in more scandalous fashion.

Garry Hamlin: ((Garry did not respond to this situation.))

Judy Winsome: I would tell the GM that I am informing the Boardman Number Custodian that the game may be irregular. The custodian is the one to judge whether it's irregular or not, not me. If Don ((Ditter)) wishes to notify the players, he should do so so they will not waste time playing what they think is a regular game. Don will handle things diplomatically.

BRUX: Provided the brother isn't living with the GM and using a maildrop, I vote with Jim Williams. A brother is not that much different than a close friend, and most GMs if not all have close friends playing in their games. You cannot assume that the brother is going to receive inside info, any more than you can assume that any GM's close friends will receive such info. The GM gets the benefit of the doubt here, and he is not in violation of his houserule on aliases. I wouldn't squeal.

SITUATION 3: A WELL-KNOWN PUBLISHER WITH WHOM YOU ARE FEUDING IS PUBLICLY LYING ABOUT YOU IN AN ATTEMPT TO HURT YOUR REPUTATION. HE ADMITS THIS IN A CONFIDENTIAL LETTER TO YOU. DO YOU PRINT HIS LETTER?

John Michalski: Yes, and pass the original around too.

Mark Keller: Well, it's a tough one but you probably shouldn't print it -- however, it might just get mixed up in your outgoing mail to some other publisher?

Bob Osuch: I guess you'd have to keep everything confidential now, wouldn't you?

John Pack: Print whatever reply is available, then write the other guy and inform him that you intend to print the letter if the attacks continue.

Mark Johnson: Not yet. The letter is confidential but the fact that it exists and is in my possession is not. I would print something to the effect that I had a letter from X that proved X was a liar and would print the letter next month if a public apology from X was not forthcoming. If I didn't receive the apology, I would print the letter and make copies for anyone who wanted one.

Bob Olsen: What's all this garbage about reputations? If you're doing right the lies of one halfwit will not matter. Sure, you respect his confidentiality. If the poor jerk thinks he's winning by doing things this way, it's the least you can do for the brain-damaged.

John MacFarlane: It depends what he's using on you. Try doing the same thing back to him, and if he prints your letter, print his. Otherwise, the odds are still even, and chances are you shouldn't be feuding anyway if it comes to these tactics.

BRUX: Try doing the same thing back to him? No way Hosea! He's the one stuck in the mud at this point, and I'll be damned if I'll resort to his tactics too. I think your solution is terrible!

Al Pearson: No, I wouldn't print it. I would copy it separate from my zine, have a notarized statement prepared, and send both to every publisher I know. Although I didn't print the letter in the zine, the schmuck who pulled that stunt would become well-known for what he is.

Kathy Byrne: If a publisher is lying, he'll make a mistake and then you can hit him -- but an off the record letter shouldn't be printed.

Jeff Noto: No. If it's your word against his, then your best defense is the words of your players, who more likely than not will come to your defense. Example: You have reasons (as to whether or not they are justified, I don't know and don't care) to warn others about Bob Arnett, yet many people still consider him to be a fine GM.

BRUX: I never criticized Arnett's GMing.



Konrad Baumeister: No, you can't. He's got ya! However, you "may have heard" from someone else that his feud is all a put-on, an elaborate lie. Go ahead and print that rumor (even if you had to make it up yourself).

BRUX: I don't think that would help your cause at all -- it would make you seem like a rumor-spreader, not him.

Mark Luedi: Ohhh. A real toughie. Are you grading this on a curve?? This guy's got you over the barrel. Send him a dead skunk too ((You're really into dead skunks, aren't you? You're gonna like VD, I can tell...)) with the threat that, in lieu of a public apology the letter would lose its "strictly confidential" classification. (Perhaps I'll change my answer farther along.) But, I'd probably suffer if given the choice.

Pat Conlon: No, I wouldn't print his confidential confession. He might get a lot of mileage out of the fact I had betrayed a confidence, or he could claim I forged the letter. Better to ignore the asshole. As long as he's getting attention, or knows he's getting "under your skin", he will continue his childish attacks.

Jim Williams: I would print the letter to clear my name without a moment's hesitation. The other pubber has given up his right to be treated fairly, by printing outright lies. I owe him no consideration at all, and I wouldn't feel the least bit guilty about breaching his confidence.

Mark Berch: You are just out of luck. Rules must apply to everyone. If each of us can decide when to waive the rule and when not to, then there's no point to the rule in the first place. If you break the confidence, then you descend to his level, and the expected response from the rest of the hobby will be "A Plague On Both Your Houses".

Ronald Brown: I'd publish the letter as is. He has already broken with trust and ethics by deliberately lying. However, I wouldn't respond to his original lies to begin with. Let him make a fool of himself. I let my players and subbers decide for themselves.

Steve Langley: I would respond by telling him that xeroxed copies of his letter to me had inadvertently been included in letters I'd sent to Kathy Byrne, Steve Arnawoodian, Bruce Linsey, etc., etc., etc. -- and let him hang himself while trying to cover his ass.

Mike Barno: I'd probably paraphrase the letter or just mention the existence of such a letter. If I really felt I had to, I'd photocopy the letter. (If I retyped the letter, he could deny it and many people would believe him. Confidentiality can be tricky.)

Garry Hamlin: ((Garry did not respond to this situation.))

Judy Winsome: This is tough for me to comment on because I don't see myself feuding in my zine. My demeanor would be to ignore the comments or make light of the situation at my expense. I am not responsible for what others choose to think about me. I am me.

BRUX: If someone had a gun pointed at my head and was foolish enough to hand me a gun under the condition that I not use it to defend myself, I'd blow the sucker's brains out in self-defense. If someone was lying about me and was foolish enough to admit it in a "confidential" letter, I'd smear the sucker's words across my pages in self-defense. Jim Williams hit the nail on the head again, as far as I'm concerned. As for Mark Berch's claim that I'd be sinking to his level, I disagree. I certainly wouldn't fault another hobby member for clearing his own good name, even if it meant breaching the confidence of a dishonest schmuck.

SITUATION 4: IN A POSTAL GAME, YOU ARE PLAYING TURKEY. GERMANY TELLS YOU THAT HE INTENDS TO GO AGAINST RUSSIA AND STAND HIM OUT OF SWEDEN, AND ASKS YOU TO KEEP THIS INFO OFF THE RECORD. IF IT WILL IMPROVE YOUR OWN CHANCES IN THE GAME, DO YOU VIOLATE HIS REQUEST AND TELL RUSSIA THE BAD NEWS?

John Michalski: In a game, anything goes.

Mark Keller: Yes, Germany has no right to expect any diplomacy in a game to be off the record.

Bob Osuch: "Respect" in a Diplomacy game? Be real.

John Pack: There's no such thing as "off the record" in a game. I would xerox the letter, but I'd feel free to inform Russia of whatever I choose; however, I wouldn't criticize a letter copier either.

Mark Johnson: This looks like the first exchange of letters at the start of a game. By this time, I would already have mentioned possible action against Russia by England, Germany and Austria in order to distract Russia's attention away from an attack on Turkey. But if all else fails, I would tell Russia of Germany's plans.

Bob Olsen: Germany is an airhead. There's no "record" in this case. You're another player, not his private servant, and are allowed to say whatever you please. Do what you want; if Germany objects, kill him.

John MacFarlane: This is strictly a matter of your honor in a game. Diplomacy is a game where lying is encouraged (supposedly) and if you want to violate the player's request -- fine. Remember, though, that if it leaks, your reputation is at stake.

Al Pearson: What does he mean it "is off the record"? It's a game letter. There is no question about printing it. If you are a letter passer, use it. I'm not, so I wouldn't. I'd probably paraphrase it in a letter back to Russia.

Kathy Byrne: In a Diplomacy game, anything goes -- and anyone stupid enough to hold info as sacred because another player says so -- deserves to die! Hint -- Dip players -- LIE!!

Jeff Noto: Tell the Russian Germany's moving to Denmark. Any correspondence that pertains to the game cannot and should not be censored.

Konrad Baumeister: In the play of the game, "off the record" situations don't apply. Send the letter with a clear conscience if you like.

Mark Luedi: Depends on how I feel about Russia and England ((I think he means Germany)) in the game. There are ways of dealing with this other than attributing the "information" to England. (I'll not elaborate here on this!)

Pat Conlon: Easy. Anything goes in a game. Whether or not I would pass the letter would be based on probable advantage gained vs. reputation marred.

BRUX: I think several respondents confused this question with some of the later ones. In this question, I wasn't concerned with passing a letter; only with using "off the record" information from it.

Jim Williams: Nothing regarding Diplomatic negotiations is "off the record". I would use this information as it best suits me, even if it means telling the Russian of it. If on the other hand, the letter said, "I have decided to attack Russia because the Russian player is Italian," I would not tell Russia the reason, because that would be personal. Personal references have no place in Dip negotiations.

Mark Berch: This is purely a game question, and the circumstances of the game determine whether you must keep it secret or not. You must judge, for example, whether Germany will believe Russia's story that you have tipped him off. There is, however, nothing unethical about spilling this kettle of beans.

Ronald Brown: I'd tell the Russian player of Germany's intentions. Oh, I might do it in a low-keyed way (e.g. Watch out for Germany!). In Diplomacy friendship doesn't count -- it's every man for himself.

Steve Langley: I do not consider "game information" to be DNG. However, I wouldn't pass the German's letter. I'd simply lie to Russia about the source of my information, and I'd tell him the truth (insofar as what I got from Germany was true) about the German's plans.

Mike Barno: I'd just tell the Russian I'd "heard rumors suggesting Germany was bouncing (him) in Sweden" if I wanted Russia to send his units up there. In fact, anything (except maybe passing the letter) is perfectly acceptable negotiation. Who says Russia has to know or believe Turkey actually got that info from Germany.

Garry Hamlin: Break the confidence if you conclude it will work to your long-range advantage. Gaming matters cannot be kept confidential, simply because of the nature of the game. To think otherwise is to be playing something other than Diplomacy.

Judy Winsome: In this case, the off the record request doesn't hold much water and may even be reverse psychology on the part of the German player. I would use or not use the information as I think it would best work to my advantage. The information is material to the game and would not hurt the German player other than as he relates to the game. I feel no stigma here. I would hope that my friend realizes this is a game and doesn't take the game too seriously. I would also consider what kind of reputation I would like to have.

BRUX: Pretty much unanimous here, hey? Game info cannot be considered confidential and you are free to tell Russia whatever suits your needs in the game. I don't even think you need to lie about your source of information as Steve Langley says.

SITUATION 5: IN A GAME WHERE YOU ARE ENGLAND, ITALY SENDS YOU A THREE-PARAGRAPH LETTER IN WHICH THE FIRST AND LAST PARAGRAPHS DISCUSS AN ATTACK ON FRANCE, AND THE MIDDLE SECTION DISCUSSES PERSONAL MATTERS AND IS LABELED CONFIDENTIAL. YOU HAVE PASSED A COPY OF THE LETTER TO FRANCE AFTER BLANKING OUT THE MIDDLE PORTION, BUT HE DOESN'T TRUST THE LETTER AND WON'T COOPERATE UNLESS YOU SEND HIM THE ORIGINAL LETTER IN ITS ENTIRETY. DO YOU SEND HIM THE ORIGINAL?

John Michalski: No, turn on Italy instead. He's an asshole.

Mark Keller: You're stuck with trying to convince France as it stands, you shouldn't show him the middle paragraph. Explain that if this was a conspiracy you could have just come up with a "clean" letter to photocopy.

Bob Osuch: Do what Linsey would do, forge the middle paragraph.

John Pack: I'll stick with the no "off the record" stuff in games. Cross out as much of the paragraph as will leave France knowing the copy is legitimate (i.e. the name of the zine, and the part from folding to the period). In this case, it'd just be better to tell France that Italy says rather than copy the letter. Italy has few if any rights -- confidential stuff should stay out of the game negotiations (after all, who wouldn't put confidential stuff in the letters if it could keep it from being passed?).

Mark Johnson: I would not send Italy's letter to France, nor would I tell Italy anything about ((what had happened)). But I would guard against a French attack and may even join Italy.

Bob Olsen: After passing a letter in a game you are now the scum of the earth so who cares what you do as long as you die very quickly? Whatsa matter pal, get yourself in trouble? Since you're already a leper you can do whatever you want, pass France the whole letter, pass him the telephone book if you want to. Or conserve whatever small shred of decency is left to you and take your medicine like a man. In other words, die, and resolve to play like a respectable human being next time.

John MacFarlane: I would not, under any conditions, send this letter to the French player. He must accept your word on the "personal facts" beneath the cardboard. Either that, or don't send it at all. I believe that personal facts deserve to be kept confidential, even at the expense of an ally.

Al Pearson: Forget it. Seems a rather strained situation to me. Do you value friendship above a good start in a game? That might be the question here that isn't in situation 4. I wouldn't send the original, but I wouldn't send the letter anyway.

Kathy Byrne: Since I don't pass letters and since I find those who do the pits -- this problem would never arise for me!

Jeff Noto: Do not send the original. It is information of a personal nature and you have no one to blame but yourself for this situation.

Konrad Baumeister: No, you cannot send the whole letter.

Mark Luedi: ((Mark has requested that I not print his response to this situation.))

Pat Conlon: Again, an easy one. If Italy ((France?)) won't believe me the first time, he can get ducked. I won't pass the personal info.

Jim Williams: In the first place, I do not believe in passing letters or copies of letters used in Diplomacy negotiations. Because I would never have sent the partially-covered copy, I wouldn't have a dilemma.

I would have told France that I received a letter from Italy, dated \_\_\_\_\_, and that the Italian hopes to move to Piedmont and Marseilles in 1901, and figures to have Spain and Portugal locked up by 1904. If I cannot convince France that I'm telling the truth, then I simply did not do a good job of negotiating and I should practice up.

Mark Berch: There is no need to blank out the entire second paragraph. In the first sentence, just blank out "\_\_\_\_\_ a zero". In the second sentence, from "I'll" to the end of the sentence. The third sentence ((the one requesting confidentiality)) is optional, and you could leave it in, take it out, or just take out the last part of it, all depending on how cautious you want to be.

Ronald Brown: Tricky, but I wouldn't send France a xeroxed letter to begin with, especially with a piece of it blanked out. If you're that dumb you deserve to squirm. Anyhow, the damage is done, so all you can do is stall until France is wiped out. (He'll see the attack next season anyhow.)

Steve Langley: Assuming I copied the Italian letter, I would tell France that he could not have the original. I would do my best to get the Italian to hit France, and I'd still gain the advantage. The problem with letter passing is that it doesn't leave room for invention. Rather than copy the Italian letter with the DNG material masked out, I'd try to rouse France's distrust of Italy through negotiation.

Mike Barno: I wouldn't send the original. That information that Italy wanted kept confidential is far more important than someone's trust in a game. I'd just tell France that, and take my chances.

Garry Hamlin: My first reaction would probably be to call the objecting recipient, tell him to take the copy he had already received, hold it at arm's length, fold it three times, then stick it where the moon doesn't shine. That, of course, is a strictly personal response, which I would probably have the good sense to keep to myself.

Really, I think we have to establish some priorities. What is really important? Or rather what is of greater importance, our personal lives or the game we are playing ostensibly for recreation? For me, personal matters take precedence over gaming matters. In fact, I try to maintain an admittedly artificial distinction in my mind between such matters: namely, that there are no friends at the Diplomacy table and private matters should not be allowed to intrude on the game. The distinction, as I say, is artificial; we can't help but to get to know each other, and our actions are inevitably influenced to some degree by that knowledge. But even given that, there ought to be some effort on our parts to remember what really matters; on the one hand, we're dealing with a game; on the other, we're dealing with someone's life, and potentially his reputation.

Obviously, it can be objected here that I've now left myself open to every con man who wants to insert a bogus piece of confidential information into his correspondence to prevent my passing his letters. And my objection that only a truly aberrant personality would do such a thing is obviously extremely weak; there are too many current examples that lead us to believe that this game tends to draw a certain subgroup with pronounced emotional difficulties for us to conclude that such a thing would never happen.

So we're faced with the classic 20th century military problem. The enemy won't fight fair; instead he organizes himself as a guerrilla force and infiltrates the civilian population, in this way insuring that he can't be eliminated without causing massive civilian casualties. Do you bomb Lebanon, or do you let the enemy proliferate? Do you pass the letter, or do you risk letting yourself be taken advantage of?

Obviously, in extreme cases, it may be necessary to risk civilian casualties in the pursuit of the greater good. That is an extremely problematical matter and cannot be legitimately taken lightly. In the same sense, it might be necessary to break a confidence if the matter is sufficiently pressing. (Example: my ally tells me he intends to murder his girlfriend in revenge over her infidelity, etc.) Diplomacy is not, after all, a confessional booth. But seldom is a matter likely to be of pressing enough significance to justify breaking that confidence, even a confidence unasked for. And to my mind, it is never justifiable to break a confidence on personal, non-gaming matters, in order to gain some advantage on the board. Admittedly, this might leave me at a disadvantage in some game in the future. If so, so be it. Anyone who pressed me to reveal confidential material in a game can take a long walk off a short pier.

In summary, my argument is this: anyone who breaks a personal confidence on non-gaming matters for some advantage in a game is, to my mind, taking the game too seriously and life too lightly. To me, in such a case the priorities seem misplaced. The same goes, double, for anyone who would deliberately use confidential material to conceal gaming negotiations. While this arguably might be simply an extension of the spirit of the game, having taken one step, why not carry it further? Why not use confidential material to blackmail another player; threaten to tell his employer about the time he wastes on the job writing letters for games; send an anonymous letter to his wife or girlfriend about the wild time he had with some blonde at the last con; or why stop there? Hire some thugs to shadow his children; make obscene phone calls in the middle of the night; send his name in for mail order book club deals; call the local Pizza Hut and order 20 deep dish olive/onions/& anchovies sent to his house; call his parents and make innuendos about latent homosexuality. In five minutes time, you could find a hundred ways to put pressure on your opponent or exact your revenge. Obviously, if you did this over a game, you would be advised to seek professional help and therapy, and rightfully so. The game was originally intended as an enjoyable pastime, an intriguing hobby, not an activity of such magnitude that personal confidences are justifiably threatened and individual reputations are at stake. That perspective ought to be maintained; unfortunately, all too frequently I feel it has been lost.

BRUX: Thanks for an interesting response, or more accurately, essay, to this question. You make your points very well, but I still disagree. As I've mentioned to you over the phone, I am one of the emotionally disturbed, aberrant personalities you referred to since if I truly wanted to make you think twice about passing one of my letters, I would consider lacing it with confidential info to keep you from doing so. However, before you prescribe professional help and therapy for me, read what I have to say in my summary statement. First let's let Judy Winsome have her say...

Judy Winsome: I would not send the omitted material in any event. Unlike situation 4, the confidential information is not material to the game. Again I am not here to hurt and would keep the information confidential.

BRUX: First of all, I have never out-and-out passed a letter, though I would if it would help my board position. I have forged a letter and committed numerous other diplomatic ploys that I won't go into now.

In this question, as well as a later one, it was supposed to be a premise that it's OK to pass a letter generally. Obviously, some people like Kathy Byrne and Bob Olsen so despise this practice that they can't relate to it at all and therefore can't really answer the question I intended to ask. I probably should have made this more clear when posing the problem.

Anyhow, to the meat of the matter. I'm going to play devil's advocate, since nobody said it is OK simply to pass along Italy's letter, and take that position myself. Not

only am I taking this position for the sake of argument, however; I actually believe it is correct.

Briefly, I believe that Italy has unfairly taken advantage of the hobby dictum against repeating confidential info in order to prevent you from passing his letter. Undoubtedly, he did not do this on purpose, yet nonetheless, he has unfairly taken a diplomatic option away from you.

The circumstance mentioned is incredibly unlikely. It is almost never advisable to pass a letter anyway, in my opinion, and the letter in this problem just happens to contain confidential info. Not only that, but we're dealing with a stubborn little twit as France. But in that one-in-a-million situation where all these factors come together, if I still felt it would improve my chances in the game, I would pass the letter as a last resort. If Italy found out about it, I would explain to him that passing a letter is a legitimate diplomatic ploy on my part, and that he cannot take away this option from me by including off the record material in his letter. I'd also feel very bad about it; it probably could not have happened to a nicer guy and all that, but he really should keep his not-for-quote stuff in a separate letter. (Next step I can already see, though. France: I want the envelope it came in, too. BRUX: OK, here it is. France: Wait a minute, this envelope had enough postage for two ounces. What else was in it? BRUX: A five-page confidential letter. France: That "confidential letter" might for all I know have been a cover letter for Italy's other letter that you sent me. I want to see that, too!) There's an easier way for Italy to communicate all this sensitive information to me, anyhow; he could have called. (France: thanks for this tape recording of your phone call from Italy. But why is the middle 18½ minutes erased? I want the whole tape...)

Anyway, for the reasons above, I would consider passing the letter if it was the only way to affect the game the way I wanted to affect it. I fully expect the hobby to let me have it with both barrels for this one! (Good, I'll love the controversy.)

SITUATION 6: JOE TELLS YOU THAT HE'S NEVER BEEN STABBED. SIX MONTHS LATER YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A GAME WITH HIM, AND FOR SOME REASON YOU FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE TO TELL ANOTHER PLAYER ABOUT JOE'S RECORD, EVEN THOUGH HE TOLD YOU IN CONFIDENCE. HOW DO YOU HANDLE THE INFO?

John Michalski: In a game, anything goes.

Mark Keller: Present it as your own research or better yet just say I don't think...

Bob Osuch: If Joe is in more than one game, he couldn't possibly go 6 months without being stabbed, so you wouldn't have to worry about it.

John Pack: I doubt this could occur with any researchable information -- just say, "I'll bet if you researched "this" you'd find "that". Anything like a perfect record would usually be known hobby-wide anyway.

Mark Johnson: It would depend on when Joe told me. If it was outside the present game, I'd keep my mouth shut. But if Joe gave me the information diplomatically during negotiations for the present game, then I would not feel honor-bound not to repeat it.

Bob Olsen: Can't see how something which is a matter of public record can be held "in confidence". Perhaps next he'll want the positions of his units held secret? Ignore him.

John MacFarlane: This is a toughie. I suppose I might see fit to disclose the information, it is a game, and the fact that Joe had never been stabbed isn't really anything too personally crucial (or is it?). Again, a matter of ethics, but that's what you are asking about, no?

Al Pearson: Gee, you really have this "in confidence" problem. Why would anyone care, one way or another, if Joe had ever been stabbed? Why would he want it kept quiet? Why would he tell you if he did want it quiet? Aren't most of us very gossipy? Don't we expect some of what we say to be remembered or repeated? If it was really useful info (and I doubt it), I would probably use it.

Kathy Byrne: Again, use your best diplomacy!!

Jeff Noto: Repeat the info. Whether or not you lie about the research part is up to you. He has taken a diplomatic channel away from you.

Konrad Baumeister: You can use the info in the game. His record is entirely in the public domain; anyone has a right to it, including you and the other players. You needn't say that he told you this -- but the statement can still be made.

Mark Luedi: Sheett! How deep did you have to dig for this one? ((Not very. It just so happens that this situation is quite similar to one I have faced. See my comments at the end.)) Yo, I would hold the information in confidence, I think. Now, if one of the other players asked me, well, I'm not one to lie...

Pat Conlon: Do the research and use the info any way you want. Although this particular "confidence" doesn't seem important, it does breach the concept of a game as an entity not affected by anything outside the realm of that game.

Jim Williams: Information about a player's past record is a part of the public domain. The records are there for anyone to look at. Therefore, I would use this information to my advantage, if possible, however, I would not give Joe as the source of this knowledge.

BRUX: But it might only be credible if you did name Joe as your source!

Mark Berch: Information given in confidence does not lose this protection just because it is useful in a game context, so you cannot say or imply that Joe told you that. If you're willing to lie, you could say that you did the research yourself, although such a statement is going to be difficult to believe -- how could you know of his FTF, tournament or telephone games? Moreover, what is a stab and what is not a stab is very subjective and often cannot be determined just by looking at the published moves. As a result, unless the person has been in only postal games, and all of them have been unambiguous, then your statement will not be believable on its face, and the reader will either think you are a liar, or will assume that you were told this by Joe. So, yes, you can say this, but only under a very specialized circumstance where your statement that you yourself have researched it is plausible.

Ronald Brown: Of course you can repeat it. How can Joe keep it "confidential" anyhow, when game records are public information?

Steve Langley: I'm not sure I understand the question. Six months ago Joe told me he'd never been stabbed? Who cares? As before, game information is not really subject to DNG. The question as to what is or is not game information is maybe a difficult line to follow. Anyway, back to Joe and his incredible record, I would mention to the other players that so far as I knew, Joe had never been stabbed and ask them if they knew any different. Let them do their own research.

Mike Barno: Is the possible benefit of repeating such a statement worth the hard feelings that might result if "Joe" hears about it? I'd let it pass.

Garry Hamlin: Break the confidence if you believe it suits your purpose, long-range. If you are a player in the game, no aspect of a player's involvement with that game, whether discovered through your own research or revealed to you confidentially, can be considered a legitimate item of confidential information. Anyone who requests confidentiality for such information is out of line. Gaming is a public act, and any action a player takes in a game, whether through moves, negotiation, dirty tricks, et. al., is legitimate matter for discussion.

Judy Winsome: I would relate the information to another player if I felt it suited my purposes. I don't see how I could take particular advantage of this information, however. The information is not harmful to the player other than how he relates to the game. I don't see how it would be particularly hurtful to him. It is more likely to hurt our relations with each other and may not be worth revealing from that standpoint.

BRUX: I included this situation in the survey because it is very close to one I actually have faced. A certain hobby member told me something about his playing record in confidence some time back. So far, having never played postally with him, I haven't told anyone. Were I to wind up in a game with him, I still would probably not tell anyone. But in the extremely unlikely event that the info would help me defeat him in the game, then as a last resort I would repeat it. My reasoning is that, again, he has taken a legitimate diplomatic option (albeit a very obscure one) away from me.

SITUATION 7: YOU ARE PLAYING AUSTRIA IN 1982YB, AND ARE GMING 1980ZA. YOU GET A LETTER FROM A FELLOW PLAYER IN 1982YB STATING THAT HE INTENDS TO ATTACK GERMANY IN THAT GAME. IN THE SAME LETTER, HE DISCUSSES HIS (OBVIOUSLY CONFIDENTIAL) PLANS TO STAB HIS ALLY IN 1980ZA. IF IT WILL HELP YOUR POSITION IN 1982YB, CAN YOU STILL PASS THIS LETTER TO THE GERMAN PLAYER? IF THAT GERMAN PLAYER IS THE ALLY TO BE STABBED IN 1980ZA, IS THE ANSWER ANY DIFFERENT?

John Michalski: You cannot pass the ZA sentence. Obliterate it and do as you wish.

Mark Keller: You'll have to blank out the 80ZA part of the letter.

Bob Osuch: Only assholes pass letters.

John Pack: Leave "By the way, concerning 1980ZA, which you're GMing" in and block the remainder out.

Mark Johnson: I would use the old cardboard over the end of the letter trick.

BRUX: I can see already that I didn't phrase the question the way I should have, darn it. This should have been another of those examples where the recipient of the passed letter won't buy it unless he sees the entire original. I doubt if that would have changed too many answers, though.

Bob Olsen: You sure are obsessed with letter-passing, aren't you old pal? Hmm, better get out my little non-photo-blue pencil again. Letter passing is never justified. If this is your practice, you should notify the other players to keep items separate for your convenience. If you're a letter passer then why this concern over ethics? A letter passer has none. None.

John MacFarlane: If he can figure out a way to keep you from passing his letter, great! Good for him. As a GM, I would definitely not disclose the info about the player's game. It does put you in a tough position, but it's something you must cope with if you're going to keep any sort of reputation as a GM.

Al Pearson: I have no reason to have a player tell me what he is doing as in this situation. I still don't pass this (or any) letter, but not because of the stuff about the game I'm GMing. I might warn the writer not to ever do it again.

Kathy Byrne: Believe me when I tell you -- this could only happen to you...I suggest you write a houserule to cover it!

BRUX: I already have! Houserule III.A., Sentence 2, says that, "Orders should not be on the same sheet of paper as unrelated personal correspondence, nor with negotiations for another game in which the player and I both happen to be playing." Hmm. Actually, that only covers orders, though, not all game-related material. Perhaps I'd better amend it...

Jeff Noto: You cannot pass the entire letter because there is confidential material on there. Whether the German in 82YB is his ally in the other game makes no difference.

Konrad Baumeister: The player should damn well know by now that he should keep orders on a separate sheet from negotiations.

BRUX: Not infrequently, I have to remind players to keep their game-related stuff separate. I can see where a novice, especially, might not realize the need for this.



Mark Luedi: ((Mark has requested that I not print his response to this situation.))

Pat Conlon: Another easy one. Pass only the info concerning the game you're playing in. Also, add a houserule: in order for anything to be protected by player-GM confidentiality, it must be on a separate piece of paper from all other messages.

Jim Williams: Again, I don't believe that letter passing has a place in Diplomacy negotiations, so I have no problem. I would simply relay the data from 1982YB to Germany, in my own words.

Mark Berch: This is basically the same as situation 5. It is not necessary for a player to label his comments to his GM as off-the-record. The material after the semi-colon would have to be deleted.

Ronald Brown: No, you can't pass the letter along. Statements made to a GM by players regarding their games are strictly confidential -- always. People who refer to more than one game per page are a pain in the butt. I have to get scissors and cut their letters into appropriate parts as soon as I receive them.

Steve Langley: No, I can't pass the letter, not with the last sentence. Of course, I could mask the final sentence as in situation #5. I could also simply warn the German without passing the letter, or I could remain silent entirely and try to figure out how to capitalize on France and England's attack on Germany.

Mike Barno: If you "must" pass this letter, do what you did in situation 5: blank out the offending paragraph. I don't like letter passing anyhow.

Garry Hamlin: The letter can be passed if the material directed to you as GM is deleted. I would imagine that everyone who GMs a game wants to keep his reputation beyond question. To pass such a letter without deleting the material directed to you as GM can only raise doubts (and to my way of thinking, legitimately so) on your consideration for your players. I admit my thinking is rigid on this, and the reaction is more visceral than intellectual, but an ally who could not respect a GM's need for confidentiality would not be an ally worth having, and no advantage on the board could compensate me for what I would regard as a breach of my own ethics and a violation of my duties as GM. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and to my mind, my duties as a GM supercede my rights and duties as a player.

Judy Winsome: I would only pass the letter with the superfluous information omitted.

BRUX: This situation is very much like #5, except that the confidential info has to do with a game you're GMing instead of personal matters. Here I go jumping into the fire again! First I try to persuade Germany that the player is about to attack him. Failing this, if I thought that seeing the letter might convince him (and if it was really important that I convince him that season), I'd blank out the part of the letter about 80ZA and pass the appropriate parts as some respondents suggested. But as an extreme last resort, if the only way I could persuade Germany not to attack me and instead to defend against the other player was to do so, I would pass the original letter. Again, it's a one-in-a-million situation that simply is too wildly improbable to come up. But if I'm not allowed to pass that letter, then a diplomatic option has been unfairly taken away from me. Afterwards, I'd give my regrets to the writer, and tell him that putting player-to-GM correspondence in the same letter as player-to-player correspondence is as stupid as putting private negotiations in the middle of a letter for publication. Pat Conlon's suggestion for a houserule (above) is not a bad one. As for Garry Hamlin's statement about priorities, I agree with him that both personal facts (situation 5) and a GM's duties (this situation) come before the position in a game. But I don't think a player can use those priorities to limit his opponent's resources.

Again I stress that it's a totally unlikely chain of events that would lead to this, and my players need not be alarmed that I'm suddenly going to start giving away any secrets. (I haven't been accused of such an action since the BLACK HOLE Affair!) So, does anyone out there want to let me have it for this response? Does anyone agree with my position?

SITUATION 8: DO YOU ANNOUNCE GAME OPENINGS THAT THE GM HAS REQUESTED IN HIS SMALL-CIRCULATION ZINE NOT BE GIVEN FURTHER PUBLICITY?

John Michalski: No. Just common courtesy.

Mark Keller: I wouldn't but it could be argued that it is OK to do so.

Bob Osuch: No way, Jose.

John Pack: Ask privately for permission and follow the wishes of the GM. After all, if the game is limited in publicity, it is probably restricted to present subbers anyway.

BRUX: No, it isn't. The question said that "anyone is welcome to play". If the game were restricted to present subbers, this would be a much more cut-and-dried problem.

Mark Johnson: No.

Bob Olsen: Obviously, the little GM is either a paranoid schizophrenic, or else he's a guy with a circle of friends and players (clique, if you will) and would like to run another game "kind of" what he's got now. Maybe he doesn't even want to mail back 20 gamefees. Respect his wishes.

John MacFarlane: If he doesn't want you to publicize it, fine, don't. He's welcome to invite whoever he wants into his game. There are usually enough game openings to satisfy any potential player, and if the GM doesn't want the players, might as well not even list him.

Al Pearson: No. I respect the request of the publisher not to publicize the opening. If he wants the publicity he can ask for it.

Kathy Byrne: Absolutely NOT! Believe it or not publishers and GMs do have some rights!

Jeff Noto: No. A GM has the right to limit game openings to his current subbers if that is what he wishes.

BRUX: True, but you misread the question.

Konrad Baumeister: No.

Mark Luedi: I would try to convince said GM to have his openings publicized. How many players is he going to get with a readership of 10 or 11? But no, I would not publicize the opening against his wishes. Of course, I'm not a hobby service organization either.

Pat Conlon: I wouldn't list his openings if he didn't want me to. Anyone who would be being childish. Likewise the person who complains about such a breach of confidentiality. It's all just a tempest in a teapot anyway.

Jim Williams: No, I don't believe that I would go against the publisher's wishes. Perhaps he only wants players already subbing to his zine to fill up the new game. Not publicizing the opening would accomplish that, and keep his total number of subbers the same.

The bottom line on this situation is that a pubber should be able to run his zine the way he wants, as long as his subbers and players are happy. If they're not, they can play elsewhere, so I would let them all alone.

Mark Berch: The GM is not being specific enough, and moreover is being somewhat two-faced. If he wants it held secret, put it in a letter, label it DND, and there is no problem. Since he hasn't done that, you cannot be criticized for listing the opening. Whether you should actually list it or not depends on how important it is to you that all openings be listed, in much the same way that a ratingsmaster must decide whether or not to honor a request from a player that his rating not be included in his listing. If the game were a restricted entry game, though, you'd be obligated to list the conditions.

Ronald Brown: If the guy doesn't want his openings published in a service zine, that's his right. It wouldn't occur to me to publish it in contradiction to his wishes. Same for any such situation.

Steve Langley: No, I don't list the GM's game against his wishes, even if I don't understand quite who he expects to play if all except a small handful are kept in the dark about the opening.

Mike Barno: Of course not. I still don't understand why Rod did this. It serves neither the GM nor the outside players. My letter a few months back offered several clear reasons why this might be the case.

Garry Hamlin: If the game is going to have a Boardman Number, I argue that it's a public act and can be announced by anyone. (By the same token, if the results of the game will not be publicly announced, then whether it's announced or not ought to be at the GM's discretion.) Obviously, in such a case (i.e. the former, not the latter) the announcer's zeal for service to the hobby may lead him to go against the GM's wishes. To do so is to my mind an act of discourtesy, though the announcer is still within his rights.

Judy Winsome: Even though I may be a publisher of a hobby zine devoted to game openings, I would honor his request and not publish the openings. I can sympathize with someone who is trying to limit his involvement in the hobby. I could cause considerable hurt if that GM was caused to expand his involvement faster than he desired. Like most GMs, he is probably reluctant to turn down someone who wants to play, but has conflict because he has other demands too, a wife, work, play, whatever. No, I would honor the confidentiality.

BRUX: For a change I side with the majority. What Garry Hamlin said was true -- I technically have the right to list his openings. However, since I possess a shred of common courtesy, I wouldn't.

SITUATION 9: A RELIABLE SOURCE WHO IS NOT PLAYING IN YOUR GAME INFORMS YOU IN CONFIDENCE THAT TURKEY IS ABOUT TO TAKE GREECE VIA A CONVOY FROM SMYRNA. YOU STUDY THE BOARD AND DISCOVER THAT, WITH HELP FROM YOUR ITALIAN ALLY, YOU CAN SAVE GREECE BY USING AN UNWANTED AND DISRUPTED CONVOY. THE SOURCE THEN TELLS YOU THAT YOU MAY NOT SUBMIT THE ORDERS TO SAVE GREECE AS THEY WOULD REVEAL HIM AS THE SOURCE OF YOUR INFORMATION. MUST YOU ALLOW TURKEY TO TAKE GREECE FROM YOU IN THIS GAME?

John Michalski: Absolutely not. You "knew your goose was cooked, so you went for the one long shot that could work, and lucked out". That's the defense for the snitch. (Next time, thank him and say nothing about what you see.)

Mark Keller: No, it's up to you but you could use the info. When you tell anyone your orders -- player or not -- you take the chance they'll get out -- you might even want them to in some cases. You could always claim your fortune-teller told you.

Bob Osuch: CONVOY! CONVOY!

John Pack: Since Turkey was fool enough to talk about his moves and the "friend" obviously cares very little about the misdeed he has done (after all, he did it), take the option to keep Greece. Turkey will be the wiser and so will the "source". It isn't unethical of Austria to keep Greece, it was unethical of the source to tell his knowledge. If there's no way to stop it, why depress the guy?

Mark Johnson: I would use the information to take Greece and allow the source, whose reliability would now be in question in his and my "real life", to suffer the wrath of Turkey. "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

Bob Olsen: This is the only one that's hard. But it seems to me that the leak is your informant's problem, not yours. Should you lose a dot to salve his conscience? I think not. Make your best move and the devil take the hindmost. Anyway, a certain amount of obfuscation after the turn will probably get everybody off the hook.

John MacFarlane: Since this is again a strictly game situation, I'd probably use the convoy. Whoever was foolish enough to write you about the other guy's moves in the first place probably deserves whatever will happen if the Turk finds out what happened.

Al Pearson: No. Whoever wrote you about the Turkish moves was as intelligent as a carrot or a born trouble-maker. It is his fault you know the moves; you do anything you want, and I might even tell Turkey how I heard. The letter-writer is a menace to the hobby and himself.

Kathy Byrne: Any idiot who shows his orders to an outsider -- deserves what he gets!

Jeff Noto: No. The outsider was not bound to secrecy, so his confidence cannot be broken. If he was a "guest commentator", this would be no problem. The fault is with the outsider and the Turk, not you.

Konrad Baumeister: The informer is an asshole, and you should save Greece. After the moves are due I would go so far as to write Turkey and tell him how you figured out the way to save Greece, and identify the correspondent. The whole idea sucks.

Mark Luedi: Obviously, the guy has no ethics (the informant); otherwise he'd never have sent you Turkey's intentions in the first place! Burn him. He might raise a stink and mail you a dead skunk ((Another one?! You must have dead skunk on the brain! Either that or somebody scent you one when you were little...)); but unless the informant was a good friend of respectable honor (which in this case he's not) (the only kind of good friend?), I would have no second thoughts about disgracing him. Also, I'd write Turkey a note suggesting that he not show this person his moves any more. (After the moves come out, of course.)

Pat Conlon: Go for it. Refer to Richard Sharp's book for examples of such "spy" tactics by people not in a game.

Jim Williams: I don't think that Turkey needs to be allowed to take Greece. If anyone was unethical here it was Mr. X, who informed me of Turkey's moves, while not being a player in the game.

I would tell our regretful pal that I intend to try and stop Turkey from getting Greece but as a favor to him, I would not tell Italy how I found out about the Turkish moves. If Italy is a good ally, he'll go along without needing that information.

In my letter to the unethical Mr. X, I would give this reason for my decision to use the information received from him.

Each country in Diplomacy has several combinations of moves available each season. The more units a player has, the more combinations he has to choose from. When I do battle with another player, I try to put myself in his shoes and figure out what his best moves are. Sometimes this can be simple; sometimes it's impossible.

If I had not found out what Turkey's moves were going to be, it is possible that I may have seen that there was one way that made it almost impossible to stop a Turkish move to Greece. It's possible that I may have decided, in my mind, that Turkey was going to try exactly those moves. Having decided this I would plan my moves accordingly, eventually discovering the disrupted convoy ploy. (Since I discovered this move anyway, this is not unlikely.)

By giving me information regarding Turkey's moves and not allowing me to use it, you would be denying me the chance to thwart him on my own. Since there is a chance that I would have made these moves, regardless of your letter, I will be going ahead and using them.

BRUX: One correction to Jim's analysis, good as it was: the Turkish moves were not the only way for him to almost ensure the capture of Greece. In the example given, F Aeg-Gre (A Bul S) would be 100% sure to take it.

Mark Berch: I'd use the orders submitted and save Greece. You can always claim that it was a good guess on your part. The Turkish orders are, after all, a very sensible set of orders, and you can always plausibly claim that you were going to guess Turkey's intentions anyhow. Thus, using the defense does not indicate that you knew what his orders were, and thus does not betray the secret given.

Ronald Brown: All's fair in love and Diplomacy. What a creep the guy must be! He tells you something he knows he shouldn't have, then because you figure out a way to beat the attack he asks you not to! To hell with him and his sensitivities! No way Turkey's gonna get Greece if I can stop it.

Steve Langley: No, I talk Italy into supporting himself into the Ionian. I write the convoy order. I write some press to the effect that I hope I outguessed the Turk and that I couldn't resist trying an unwanted convoy. I write my friend a letter telling him if he didn't want me to benefit he shouldn't have spilled the beans and that if Turkey ever accuses him of having talked I'll cover for him.

Mike Barno: So who says the only way you could have found out is through the outsider? Any intelligent tactician looks for his opponent's best and most likely moves, and plans countermoves. I'd make the move (and remember, the Turk may make other moves, especially if the outsider tells him what happened). I wouldn't pass the outsider's original letter to Italy, though; but I might possibly mention how I got the information. After all, if he didn't want people to think he repeated information, why did he do it, unless he wanted you to use it?

Garry Hamlin: Remind your acquaintance that there are no friends at the Diplomacy table. The fact that you are in possession of unsolicited information from him which he should not have revealed in the first place is not your problem. No appeals to friendship should be made or accepted here. If your acquaintance's reputation as a player is injured as a result, that's not your problem. Inform the GM of what happened, then proceed as planned. You cannot be held responsible for someone else's indiscretion in gaming matters, and it only stands to reason that you should make use of it.

Judy Winsome: The information is strictly about the game and doesn't violate a GM confidence, so it is free to use. The only consideration is the relationship between the spy and the other person. I wouldn't fret too much about that. If the spy was concerned about his relationship with the other player he was ratting on, he shouldn't have ratted. It's not my problem and thanks for the news.

BRUX: I'll make it unanimous, then. Order the convoy and tell Italy to dislodge your fleet. People who interfere in games ought to suffer the consequences. I'd even tell Turkey -- and the rest of the hobby -- what happened, after the moves are published.

This question was not well designed. What I was trying to do (and I still haven't figured out a way to do it) was design a situation in which it would become unethical for a player to use a certain set of orders; or failing in that, a situation where it would be unethical for a player to tell another player to use a certain set of orders. Can any Doogie devise such a situation? Construct a set of circumstances in which it is unethical for a player to write a particular set of moves?

SITUATION 10: YOU ARE GMING A BLACK PRESS GAME IN WHICH THE RUSSIAN PLAYER WRITES SOME NASTY AND UNTRUE REMARKS ABOUT ENGLAND, USING GERMANY'S DATELINE. GERMANY WANTS YOU TO PUBLISH THE FACT THAT HE DIDN'T WRITE IT. ENGLAND WANTS THE TRUE AUTHOR REVEALED, AND EVEN HINTS AT A LIBEL SUIT. RUSSIA DOES NOT GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO IDENTIFY HIM AS THE SOURCE, BUT SUGGESTS THAT YOU MIGHT PUT A DISCLAIMER IN THE GAME REPORT STATING THAT THE COMMENTS ABOUT ENGLAND WERE NOT TRUE. WHICH REQUEST(S) DO YOU COMPLY WITH?

John Michalski: You were wrong to tell the Russian player about any reactions; in a black press game indignation or hurt feeling are inappropriate. You should tell only the English player, "You're in the pigpen, enjoy the mud. Your options are to fling mud back, or resign. Your threats only make you look like an immature asshole."

Mark Keller: No, you don't say who it was or wasn't from -- you just point out what black press means. If England continues to give you trouble -- suggest he resign and play in no more black press games.

Bob Osuch: I happen to know that the German player is a member of the Nazi party, a thief, and a dishonest GM. Wasn't that Ozog?

BRUX: Uh, oh...

John Pack: In Politburo all the players would have had to vote for black press. With that foreknowledge, no information could be disclosed. However, as GM, one should think before allowing any libel to slip into the press.

Mark Johnson: In the first place I would not have printed the Russian press release. And my house rules would have backed me up. But given the situation as it is, I would back the Russian. England and Germany knew the rules when they signed up for the game. And I would open another black press game.

Bob Olsen: Black press = black press, simple as that. If the oversensitive Englishman feels that way he should get into a game more suited to his temperament. Your reply to him is, simply, "Black Press".

John MacFarlane: Russia's letter and request seem the most valid to me, although the others are very rational also. When the English and German players signed up for the game, they knew it'd be a black press game, so it's their problem. You can, of course, always make a house rule allowing you to censor offensive press, in fact, you have one already, no?

Al Pearson: It is not a sticky situation. It is a black press game. If the English player is that big a baby (and I know a few), dump him. He should have known what he was in for in a black press game.

I don't run Black Press. Never have, never will. Mainly for the above situation. Most people are not as mature as they like to appear to be.

Kathy Byrne: My only comment is a black press game should be run with some conscience and vicious personal attacks don't belong in a game!

Jeff Noto: This is a major problem with black press. However, you cannot reveal the source. Both England and Germany had equal opportunity to do something similar. England is forgetting the fact that this is only a game (but then maybe the Russian is too). Yes, you're stuck, but things like that often happen in black press games.

Konrad Baumeister: I don't come out and identify the Russian as the writer -- I do publish the fact that Germany didn't write it. Sure, it can be narrowed down to Russia, but even he can write in press saying that he didn't write it. As a GM for black press games (exclusively) for over 6 years, I have never guaranteed anybody anything. I have never received a release such as this, either. Most players like for the games to remain on the fun side. Those who insist on getting very personal elicit very little sympathy on my part.

Sure, I open another black press game.

Mark Luedi: I would go with the Russian's request of a disowner (or ask he write it as a press release). I don't know that I'd never run a black press game again. However, I would question my running that press release in the first place. Could always send everybody a dead skunk.

BRUX: Some of you may think my jokes stink to high heaven, but I'd have to say that Mark Luedi is definitely a middle-of-the-road person.

Pat Conlon: The Russian player has the right idea. A note from the GM in the game notes that all black press is just so much B.S. and that all players should take it with a grain or two of salt. And if I were Russia I might mail a packet of salt to England and Germany.

Jim Williams: First of all I would not publish the fact that the real German player did not submit that press release. I would inform him that it is up to him to convince England or anyone else that he was not the responsible party. I would cite the fact that the very nature of a black press game invites doubt over who did or didn't submit such and such press.

Secondly, I would not tell England who did, in fact, submit the libelous press. I would mention that, in signing up for a black press game, he willingly assumed the risk that false statements might be made about him.

Next, I would ask the Russian player to send in a press release with the next moves, stating that England is not a Nazi, a thief, or a dishonest GM to the best of his knowledge. The press could be datelined anywhere, keeping the identity of the writer a secret. If Russia did not agree to this, however, I would do nothing to force him to. I would leave it entirely up to him.

Last, I would put a statement in the next zine, with all of the black press adjudications, that the GM is not responsible for any statements made by the players in any press release. In the future, I would be certain that all players in black press games (yes, I'd still run them) knew exactly what they were getting into, and that under no circumstances would the origin of any press be revealed, and that by submitting Spring 1901 orders they would signal their acceptance of these rules. (Standbys would do the same with their first set.)

If England was still not satisfied, I'd tell him to sue. To win a libel suit, you must prove not only that a person said untrue things, but that as a result, you've suffered either personally or professionally.

Mark Berch: I see no problem at all. England has no cause for complaint at all. These are not "serious charges" and they are not "libel". This is press, not a letter column. It is part of a game and there is no obligation to tell the truth in a game. Press can be part of a player's propoganda, and this might have been done just to rile England. I realize that there are people in the hobby who get all bent out of shape by what they read in press, but that is entirely their own fault. As for Germany, no, you do not print his letter. If you guarantee confidentiality, you cannot eliminate the suspects, since Russia could be isolated if all the other countries, including England, had their denials printed. The German statement could be printed as press -- black press, so that it has equal weight with the original press item. As you know, I am opposed to Black Press in general, as I think it will usually degenerate into vulgarities and name calling, neither of which I find entertaining reading.

Ronald Brown: If it's a Black Press game, you've got to uphold the rules. No way do you give in to England. I'd write him a note telling him this is a Black Press game and he's got to expect that sort of thing. Period. I wouldn't even mention it in the zine. No, I don't run Black Press games. Don't like the idea of them. I prefer people willing to stand behind what they have to say. But, if you run them, you've got to accept the consequences -- like this case. England sounds like a crybaby who shouldn't be in a Black Press game anyhow -- maybe not even in Diplomacy at all.

Steve Langley: I tell the players that the game is black press and to climb down off it. If they weren't ready to play black press then they shouldn't have signed up for the game. I probably won't open a first black press game -- just an optional black press box, so labeled.

Mike Barno: If you guaranteed confidentiality, you're stuck with it. But you should publish the German's denial of its authorship. If the others also wish to deny authorship, that's legitimate, even if it does narrow it down to the Russian player. (After all, he could deny it too, though the GM might not publish that falsehood.) An apology for the release and a disclaimer of its accusations might be in order. Russia may be a bit of an asshole, but his actions were within the scope of the rules.

Garry Hamlin: Whatever you do in this case will be wrong, at least in my opinion. As a GM, you had no business printing libel to begin with, and I'm arguing that regardless of whether the game was black or white press. Regardless of who made the charge, you were responsible for disseminating it, and as such you are responsible both morally -- and legally, I believe. In the sole game I GM (non-Dip) the groundrules for press are that there will be no ad hominum material printed. In my mind, it's legitimate to say anything one wants about the Tsar or the Queen, etc., but personal assaults against the players handling those positions are out. I recognize that this stance differs from the majority of the Diplomacy hobby. I make no defense other than to say that there are plenty of games around without those restrictions, and those who prefer not to operate under those constraints are welcome to go elsewhere.

Judy Winsome: Ridiculous, I think the players are confusing a game with real life. A black press game can be more vicious than grey or white press, but the players should be ready for that. I would not reveal the source of black press. That is my responsibility in the game. The players have a responsibility to keep the game in perspective as a pasttime and not reality. The game is a simulation. But the problem with simulations is it's like masturbation, if you do it long enough, you get fooled into thinking it's the real thing.

BRUX: I vote again with the masses. John Michalski and several others said it very well. England and Germany don't have any reason to complain. It's a black press game. You don't reveal a thing, and tell them to play elsewhere if they don't like it.

I've always felt that any potential player should check the house rules before signing up, and play in another zine if they aren't to his liking. I'm having that argument with Woody right now.

FINALLY, SOME MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE "OFF THE RECORD" ARTICLE.

Mark Luedi: Situation 11 -- VD readers send in their answers to Bruce's questions. Are they now bound to them? Will they now be vulnerable because of their answers? What if they ask for confidentiality of their answers? If they all do, will BRUX defy them to print answers?

Really, I should get into some in-depth analysis, especially #10; that is a good one. I think, overall, a lot would depend on how I feel about the person involved. If it was somebody I considered a good friend, I couldn't; if it was somebody I didn't, well, so what, maybe. Obviously, one would encounter some tough decisions. However, labeling something CONFIDENTIAL to begin with implies a certain level of friendship and trust. And labeling something that way is a way of putting the other person on the spot. It's not a form of communication that one should get overly involved with in the first place, because, inevitably, somebody will not honor your requests. The writer's ethics in labeling things confidential should be scrutinized in addition to the ethics of those who are burdened with the correspondent's confidentiality. ((Now there's an interesting thought!))

Anyways, that's all not for publication!! (Just kidding, BRUX!)

Judy Winsome: I am pleased to be asked to comment on your very interesting article "Off the Record." Being relatively new to publishing, an article such as this one is very handy as a reference -- it may become a classic! But then you knew that.

Now to test your integrity, BRUX, I'm going to tell you who I really am -- off the record.

BRUX: For obvious reasons, I cannot print the rest of that paragraph, though I must admit I received the shock of my life. As for whether "Off the Record!" and this follow-up article will become a classic, time will tell. I do know that I've never had a more successful article in terms of reader feedback, so I guess a lot of Doomies were provoked into thinking and writing about the situations posed. Garry Hamlin has told me over the phone that he felt a lot of these questions needed to be raised. My thanks to all twenty respondents for their well-thought-out comments. This was fun and stimulating!



The Daddy Column

Congratulations to Craig Cameron, who (according to his NEPTUNE press) recently gave birth to a brand-new baby boy, Donald Wayne Cameron. Also, congratulations to Jeff and Lisa Noto who are expecting their first-born in (I think) April. Additionally, congratulations to Rob Lowes, who is expecting not only a baby but a new-born house as well, I understand! Finally, congratulations to Pat Conlon and his fiancée, who are expecting a marriage.

I have tried and tried without success to persuade several Doomies to name their new-born babies BRUX. So now I'm going to make an offer you can't refuse: the first Doomie to have a baby named BRUX (middle names do count!) will win three free issues!



The tenth most popular subzine in all of North America is...

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Alex's Column

Alex's Column is published by Alex Lord, Box 178, Hannacroix, NY 12087.

Dear Doomies,

Due to popular and traditional demand, I am and have been quite busy cooking for the last three days. Thanksgiving in our family means many gourmet dishes, a huge turkey, and many different desserts. I have made homemade pies right from scratch, just like your grandma used to do, so I have to make this article a smite shorter.

I know you love to hear bits of gossip pertaining to Bruce's life as much as possible. Well, you're in luck because this month I was lucky enough to see Bruce in his usual hyper, weird state.

One night last week, Bruce decided to chaperone for our school's roller skating night. Bruce doesn't skate, but he loves to stand in the corner of the gym and yell out sarcastic remarks and snicker. Well, as I was trying to maintain my balance (about four people were propping me up), Bruce screamed out something really obnoxious to me, so I whirled around and immediately took proper action. (I'm lucky Bruce didn't chop off my middle finger later!) Little did I know that my principal was standing with Bruce and talking to him at the time. Now I know why BRUX was laughing a lot harder than me.

Anyway, several hours before we even began to participate in that suicidal pasttime, I had invited Bruce over (not for Harvey's Bristol Cream...) for dinner. What a mistake. There I was, exhausted and weak, yearning to relax for a while, and I end up getting verbally and physically abused.

When Bruce and I first got home, he echoed a deafening burp off the mountains surrounding my house. Then he went upstairs to change from his status "teacher" clothes into a "normal" man's clothes. Well, as he was right in the middle of changing I had this fit of girlish obnoxiousness that usually overtakes me while I'm within a mile of Bruce's zone. I burst open the door with a bottle of my cheapest (would I waste anything good on him?!) sweetest-smelling cologne and splashed it all over Bruce. He was so stunned, at first he just stood there and almost appeared refreshed! Then, to my dismay, he lunged at me and I ran for my dear life. Poor BRUX! He even got some in his eye and whined for over an hour, trying to make me feel guilty. Weasel that I am, I lectured him and told him not to get me back since I am an innocent little girl and haven't grown up yet. Splashing perfume on people is just part of my immature sense of humor. Well, Bruce pretended to be affected by this emotionally involving story, and for several minutes he didn't dare touch me. Then, after I had gone downstairs and was sitting in my kitchen, BRUX snuck up and attempted to douse me with his beer, but missed entirely and got it all over the floor instead. I started yelling at Bruce for making my house smell like a brewery. Then my mother walked in and wanted to know what all that beer was doing all over her floor.

Well, I guess Bruce did smell like a fresh-picked tulip because my father noticed the minute he strolled through the door. Bruce was blushing from head to toe when my father asked, "Gee, Bruce, do you smell that nice, ol' buddy?" Many other funny things happened also. Bruce can elaborate on them if he cares to.

After Bruce and I got back from skating we gorged ourselves on hot chocolate and butterscotch sundaes. You know Bruce, he had to cover his with beer! We did have a fun time even if I was on the brink of a nervous breakdown the next morning when I woke up to BRUXie-poo, instead of Captain Kangaroo. As long as Bruce doesn't touch my toothbrush, leaves before I get out of bed (because I'm miserably grumpy in the morning), and doesn't wake me up ecstatically in the middle of the night and ask me if I want to watch the stars with him, he can spend the night. These are just a few of the stunts Bruce pulls when we are together. Bruce is a fun guy if you know how to handle him. After all any person who would obey my command to get down on all fours and eat cat food out of my cat's dish has to be an obedient, crazy, fun guy. Well, Bruce does have a thing for cats...

I speak the truth and nothing but the truth.

Alex

Thank you Ruth Glaspey and Judy Winsome for your nice, boosting compliments that Bruce passed on to me. I appreciate your extra comments and enjoyed them immensely.

((Alex speaks the truth and nothing but the truth, eh? And I'm a monkey's uncle! Thanks to Alex and her parents for dinner and for letting me spend the night; it's a long ride home to Albany when it's that late at night!

Seriously, I almost died when I read the last paragraph on the previous page. It is true that Alex made me get down and eat cat food out of the cat's dish; however, at the time I wasn't aware of what I was eating. She tricked me by telling me it was dog food! I barf in disgust to think how a normal, respectable human being like me got tricked into eating cat food. Yeccccch!

My thanks also to Ruth and Judy. Ruth, Alex may be entering your poetry contest; and Judy, Alex is looking forward to seeing her poem reprinted in Winsome-Losesome. Finally, Alex hasn't learned as I type this that she finished tenth in the North American subzine poll -- but she'll be very flattered to find it out. Thanks to the people who voted for her! (VD finished tenth in its first year of publication too!))

I have two quick corrections to make before I close. Last issue I claimed in my response to Woody that I had never lost a set of orders. Well, almost never. I once mistakenly used the wrong set of moves in the JUPITER game because a player had submitted orders for W '01 and S '02 on the same sheet of paper, and the spring orders were therefore thrown out along with the winter builds. See VD #32 for details -- that was an embarrassing situation, especially as the victim, Kevin Turner, dropped out of the game shortly thereafter.

Also, on page 1 of this issue, I said that the only thing a player can do concerning his game in VD as a protest, if no ombudsman is called, is to try to have it declared irregular. This is wrong; a player can try to get the game moved to another GM as well. Of course, I do not hesitate to call an ombudsman if the player may be correct in his protest. I haven't always agreed with my players (look at the situations in the past few months involving Ed Wrobel and Peter Ansoff, e.g.) but I'd be willing to bet the mortgage that a huge majority of them will agree that I go about resolving player-GM disputes in a fair manner. Clearly, Woody is not a member of this majority.

I don't know whether there will be a mid-monthly published in December, though I'd like to do one and think it is probable. But in case I don't see you till next year, have a happy holiday season!

BRUX

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Your sub expires with issue # Sample