

THE VOICE OF DOOM

#78

May 17, 1983

Circulation: 122

by ERUX

Got the ditto machine tuned up. Notice an improvement?

There's lots of news to report about various zines in the hobby. Still no word from the editors of Damn the Torpedoes and Lone Star Diplomat.

Snafu! is now being (beautifully!) reproduced on the word processor of Ronald's wife's place of employment. (Okay, John Kador, so I'm no master of the prepositional phrase.) Last issue had about the best repro I've ever seen in any zine, and the content is right up there with the best as well. Send a sample request (no U.S. stamps, please to Ronald Brown, 1200 Summerville Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1Z 8C4.

Kathy's Korner, published by Kathy Byrne, 160-02 43rd Ave., Flushing, NY 11358 also deserves a look as it contains some of the best fiction about me the hobby has to offer, outside of Alex's Column. Last ish was great, she accused me of threatening to attack her in every zine in North America. Not true, and like the rest of her zine, not to be taken seriously; but entertaining nonetheless. Write for a sample and tell her I sent you! (w)

The Modern Patriot, pubbed by Billy Highchair, 2012 Ridge Road East, Rochester, NY 14622 is another fun zine not to be taken too seriously. Bill is planning to set a modern-day record with a 100+ page issue in a few weeks. I consider TMP to be the most underrated zine in the hobby. Don't ask me where he gets the energy.

Last issue, I mentioned Raging Main. James' first issue is out now, and it looks good, though it's only 4 pages long. Write for a sample to James Woodson, NACS, AI-32, Building 633, NAS, Pensacola, FL 32508.

Judy Winsome has finally admitted that she is Jerry Lucas in disguise. Last issue of Winsome-Losewome contained the first episode of Meet the Heads, published by Judy's 14-year-old daughter Leslie. I really enjoyed reading it, and look forward to more. Write to Judy at 3902 Lakemead Way, Redwood City, CA 94062. W-L has lots of good stuff.

Alex's Column will not appear in this issue. Alex is in Toronto this weekend with the school band, at the Toronto Music Festival where she has a solo on the piccolo. She has been very busy preparing for this, and didn't have time to do her column, but she promises to be back with more entertainment next issue. In the meantime, you'll just have to make do with Billy Highchair's poetry.

Congratulations and best wishes to Mark and Mona Berch. They are expecting a baby in August. Please, Mark, name him ERUX. If you don't, no one else will...

The Voice of Doom is a journal of postal Diplomacy published by Bruce Linsey, 24A Quarry Drive, Albany, NY 12205. Publication is usually monthly with an occasional mid-monthly like this. Phone (518) 459-9250. Subs are 10 issues for \$5.00. Standbys are wanted. There are no game openings.

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The Wild Life

by Aline Thompson (Flumph's wife)

Something was nibbling noisily on popcorn -- or beans, kidney, small white limas -- in the kitchen drawer. And some barley. It tasted the onion soup mix, opened a plastic pack of tartar sauce and one of yeast.

When I pulled the drawer out something rustled. It left turds too big for a mouse. Omigod, the rats are in the house!

My husband, Gerry, had a pet squirrel some years back. She was blind when we found her, shot with a be-be gun by some idiot. We bought a large wire cage and hung it outside the window of Gerry's den. Her nest was a blue plastic bucket with a round hole cut in the lid. Her supply of rags came out and went in like a housewife's being aired.

Squirrel (what else) liked her walnuts cracked in her dish and presently she was sharing her meals with some roof rats.

Squirrel died of old age about three years ago but Gerry continued to feed the rats.

The dogs were fascinated. They would stare from beneath the cage. In the den they stood, paws on sill, and stared out the window.

The rats ran up and down the support chain. They ran across the vine that traversed the rear of the house. They ate stale bread and mouldy cheese. (No walnuts but they weren't picky.)

The dogs stared, barked, charged back and forth. Inevitably they caught a rat or two. Never mind, the babies came, a pair of tiny beady-eyed fraidies who took a while to get nerve enough to join the big folk.

Okay. I could live with that.

Then the bees came. One day there seemed to be a lot of bees in the patio. Then they were coming down the chimney!? No, they were coming through the wall by the fireplace. They had picked our house to swarm.

Oh, dear. Call the bee people.

Oh, heck. They were in the walls up by the roof.

Oh, shoot. Exterminate them.

The bee man, looking like someone from a bad space movie, climbed a ladder and pumped some poisonous powder into the hole where the swarm had entered.

Bees died all over the patio. The dogs ate them!?

I like bees but you can't keep bees in your attic.

Time passed..... The light in the dining area of the kitchen went out.

Gerry took it apart and discovered the wires were chewed up. The rats were in the roof. Was that why they are called roof rats? They must have gone after the comb where the bees had been.

Then the mouse got loose in the kitchen.

A dear friend had a mouse problem. We loaned her a human mousetrap. She caught a mouse and gave it to Gerry who has a pet gopher snake.

You following me?

Snavelly (what else) doesn't eat in the winter.

Gerry puts mouse in cage to save it until Snavelly is hungry.

Mouse gives birth to six babies. (Thank you God that she did that before she got away.)

Mouse gets away. (Babies died, toh toh.)

Nibbling in kitchen.

Get supersonic or is it subsonic pest repeller. Plug it in on kitchen counter.

Nibbling in kitchen.

Then yesterday morning we find turds -- big turds -- in drawer.

Stunned, disturbed, dismayed, I go to work.

I come home last night and Gerry, with big smile, (idiot) says "Big rat. I saw it."

We examine drawer which is sitting on counter. Big mess. Sort out bags which haven't been nibbled. What about other drawers? There are four in this stack.

Pull next higher drawer out. Rat has been there.

Rat is there! At least her tail.

Push drawer in. Pull next higher drawer out.
 Rat runs to next lower drawer.
 By this time the dogs are wondering what's happening and are sniffing at space where bottom drawer goes.
 Gerry says, "Don't get the dogs excited...." too late.
 Rat leaves kitchen and goes into front room with dogs in hot pursuit.
 Dogs say (in clever dog way) that rat is under couch.
 Move couch. Rat goes across room with dogs in hot pursuit and vanishes under the piano.
 Put dogs out. Open glass door a crack so rat can go out.
 Bang a lot on piano. One key sticks. Then it doesn't.
 Rat is in piano.
 Bang a lot on piano.
 Pull piano away from wall and look. Rat looks back. Hamm.
 Put cartons and things to make path from door to piano so rat will exit.
 Bang a lot on piano.
 Peer behind piano. Rat is climbing up.
 Poke with long stick.
 Rat jumps over piano and runs across room to record cabinet and behind.
 Gerry says, "Maybe it doesn't want to go out with the dogs out there."
 Okay. Get the dogs in.
 Put things all over the place so rat will go out.
 Lift cabinet and poke with poker.
 Rat goes out door with dogs in hot pursuit.
 Yell at dog!
 Dogs catch rat and all disappear into tangle of vines.
 Gerry and I look at each other.
 I say, "I was hoping it would go back to the tribs and say 'For God's sake don't ever go in that house!'"

((BRUX says thanks to Flumphier for having wife funny enough to write funny article. Flumphier beams. Wife beams. BRUX gives five free issues.))



My Toadymaster

by Midshipman 3c William S. Highchair, USN NROTC

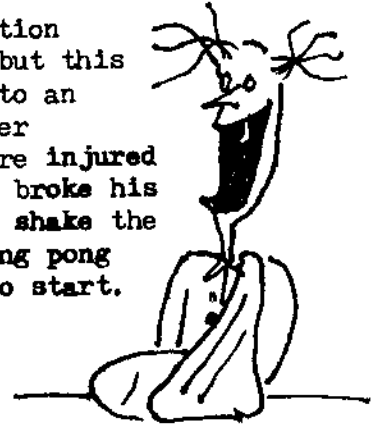
As beautiful as the stars above,
 As gentle and pure as a white dove,
 Witty and smart as all can see,
 That's what Alex is to me.
 She'll knock you down and kick you toere,
 You'll laugh from pleasure and judge her fair.
 She'll degrade you often and mock you too,
 You'll grin and bear it, and say "Thank you."
 You'll adore and love her like a good little toady,
 And those who don't will be labeled "GRODY!"
 When Alex leaves you you'll long for her dearly,
 You'll miss her so much that you won't think clearly.
 I today to Alex and so does Bruce.
 You'd better, too, or she'll cook your GOOSE!!!

((Thank, and two free tissues to Bill for this inspired bit of verse. I agree with everything except the second verse. Now, let's have Alex's Column back instead of this ~~stupid~~ literary genius!))

AFTER ATTENDING SEVERAL GAME CONVENTIONS I HAVE NOTICED SIX TYPES OF PEOPLE THAT SEEM TO KEEP SHOWING UP FOR THESE EVENTS. SOMETIMES I WISH I WAS GOD SO THAT I COULD WEED THEM OUT AHEAD OF TIME. FOR EXAMPLE.....



You would think that a game convention would be a relatively safe event, but this type seems to find a way to get into an accident. I remember a Squad Leader tournament in which the players were injured more than the pieces. He probably broke his arms after jumping over the net to shake the hand of someone he was playing ping pong with while waiting for his round to start.



This is the type of person who wouldn't eat M&Ms because they are too hard to peel. He signs up for a game that he has no idea how to play. You won't find him playing Dune or Cosmic Encounters either. He'll no doubt enter a Third Reich tournament.



This is the guy who had a party in the hotel room the night before. He brings to the game all the excitement of a semi-coma. He might get the needed shut-eye if he attends the meeting of fanzine editors or a seminar on the future of Napoleonic Miniature games, just before his round starts.



This is the guy who complains about everything from the lighting to the food served. As he starts losing the game he'll no doubt complain about how the dice are falling too.



This is the seminar leader who always seems to look like death on toast. He is no doubt speaking on some important topic like "The Moral Implications of the Louisiana Purchase as it Pertains to Fantasy Role-Playing Games."



This is the one who always amazes me. This is the demonstration leader who has no idea what the hell he's talking about. What is even more amazing is that some company spent the money to fly him here in the first place. If the game was darts he would no doubt recommend that you play goalie.

None of them would be missed.....
--Mark Paul

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The Gossip Column

From Paul Rauterberg (4/24/83):

Dear Bruce:

Just a couple of quick points to make, on the record.

First, Highfield has asked what pacifists are doing playing in a game such as postal Diplomacy. As a bona fide pacifist in the Gandhian, "turn the other cheek" tradition, I can still confess to an aggressive nature. We can't just reason natural instincts away, although we can learn to harness them. Through the practice of game playing, I am able to do the things which I abhor in real life. I can lie, manipulate, and even attack people with impunity. After getting it all out of my system, I can better handle myself in "reality".

Some GMs (they know who they are) have recently taken up the practice of arbitrarily separating seasons that they, in their wisdom, feel are overly complicated. This I feel is a usurpation of the role of the players, and could be loosely construed as GM interference in a game. Although it is the right of players to request a separation of seasons, provided of course that the zine's house rules allow them at all, I don't see any reason for the neutral arbitrator to get involved in determining the course of the game. If a player is faced with six sets of conditional orders, one should deem him qualified to judge whether or not he can cope with the combined seasons situation.

As a player, I detest separations of seasons, and avoid them like the plague. The only time I have supported one directly is when I needed an excuse to extend the negotiating time which I had with several Canadians. As you all know, it takes forever for a letter to get to Canada and for the answer to get back to the USA. The separation was up for a vote for an unrelated reason, so I took advantage of the delaying tactic.

In my own zine, any one player shall be permitted to request, and get, a separation of seasons. He need not have, or give, any reasons to me as the GM. Perhaps other GMs feel differently, and I'd like some feedback on the issue.

((For someone who dislikes separations of seasons, I think you're going to get an awful lot of them if you separate on the request of one player. My own opinion is that this matter is best left to the GM's discretion, with the added stipulation that a separation will occur automatically under certain circumstances. (My recent house rules amendments contain my procedure on the matter.) But I don't view such an action as GM interference.))

From Linda Wightman (4/8/83):

Dear BRUX,

I just wanted to take a few minutes to tell you about our computer. It is normally a rather modest, unpretentious little thing, but it does have its feelings, and would not let me rest under I wrote to clear up a small matter concerning its name. You see, what with running Dippy Daddy's adjudication program, and doing the word processing for The Modern Patriot, it has taken a bit of interest in Diplomacy. Thus, when I left Porter's copy of Voices of Doom on top of the computer, it naturally read through it. When it came to Tom Swider's letter, it uttered a polite howl of protest, and requested that I let you know it is not an Osborne, but rather a NorthStar Horizon.

I also want to second Tom's comments re Bill Highfield. It is true that many people have gone too far; Bill is an enormously fun person to tease and I do a lot of it myself. He really is a very nice guy, a bit eccentric, but who isn't in this hobby? I admit to some bias, but I must also say that TMP is a pretty good zine and deserves better than the rating it has been given in recent polls.

I think your ditto is quite readable.

((Thank you. You're correct in saying the The Modern Patriot is underrated, but who cares about a poll rating anyway? I score low just about every year, and while it'd be nice to do well, a low score doesn't take away any of the fun of publishing.

Please give my apologies to your computer.))

From Ronald Brown (4/14/83):

Dear Bruce,

Enjoyed the Zoo issue. It'll make a great colouring book for Christopher when he's a bit older.

Could you please send me Bob Blum's address? I could use more players in my Bourse.

Re costs: I can believe it when you say you've been spending a third of your income on Dippy. For your own good, I strongly urge you to cut costs wherever you can. This is a hobby, not a life-time commitment. You're not always going to be single with money to burn and it's going to catch up with you someday.

True, issue #76 cost only paper and ink to produce, but it arrived with 71¢ postage on it! I think you owe it to yourself to at least recover postage costs through subscriptions.

An example: about a year ago my costs had gotten so out of hand that I had a choice of folding or reducing my costs drastically. After all, I have a family to worry about and how do you tell your kid that he can't eat this week because daddy needs \$150 to produce a zine? ((Very easy. Just put it in the houserules, and then if he doesn't read it, it's his own damn fault.)) It's been a struggle, but now my total costs are about \$100 for a 20-page issue. I've about 90 subbers paying 80¢ an issue, so that's pretty close to even -- and is entirely more reasonable. But that \$100 per issue covers only printing and mailing and does not include all the peripheral costs (office supplies, capital expenditures, office space). On paper, I lost about \$1,800 last year (1982). That's okay, as I said, that's on paper and is a tax write-off. But the point remains, subbers have to cover most of the basic expenses else I fold. I can't see how it can be otherwise for someone with a family. (Besides, I haven't had a paycheque since last June -- which makes my breaking even, more or less, even more important.)

Anyhow, 75¢ per issue for YD is not unreasonable. In fact, I would still consider that a bargain -- and it might make your banker feel a lot better.

Good luck with the ditto machine. I know how frustrating they can be -- for both the publisher and reader. (I couldn't read the last few paragraphs of Rod Walker's article, but trust you'll get better as you learn the quirks of your machine.)

Anyhow, I wanted to write in response to Rod Walker's article, so here goes:

What Rod says about houserules makes a lot of sense and I agree with him. I have one GM I'm playing under who has no houserules and I never know from one season to the next how he's going to handle retreats. One time, I'll get to order my units, another time, he'll do it for me. I'm playing Germany, allied with England. One season I got the game report back with one of my fleets in the North Sea (it had been dislodged in the Lowlands). I had a bitch of a time reassuring my ally and trying to get it out of there. I'm sure the GM isn't even aware of the problems his lack of houserules are causing -- at least he's never responded to appeals to correct the situation.

Another GM, Don Horton, threw out his houserules when he folded (continuing the games via flyer). As a result, my one win to date ('80AC) was declared irregular. I've always felt somewhat bitter to be robbed of a win like that. He was so anxious to end the games he started, he didn't care what harm he was doing to his games.

However, I do disagree very strongly with some of Rod's other statements. In an example, he says if a player has F Bel and orders "A Bel-Hol" he would allow it, actually changing what the player wrote to "F Bel - Hol". If any of my GMs did that to me, I'd start screaming GM interference in the game. I'm serious about that. How does Rod, or any GM, know what I intended? I may have wanted that order to fail! And, once a GM starts making "corrections" like that, where does it end? Suppose a player had an A Mun and wrote, "A Mun-Bur". The GM decides it must be a typo, as "A Mun-Pur" would be a better move and so he corrects it! Before Rod starts saying that's a far-fetched example, what's the difference between the two? One letter! If a GM can change one letter in a set of orders in one case, why not in another? As a player, I say to all GMs: keep your meddling out of my orders! If I make a mistake, that's my tough shit. I can live with that, but I will not tolerate a GM who decides what my intentions are!

In the other case of the double orders. Ed quotes the rule: "A unit not ordered to move (i.e. one ordered to support...) may receive support in holding." It says "may receive" it does not say, "may be ordered to hold as well." Rule VII. 1, states very clearly: "A unit may be ordered to do only one thing on each move; an army may be ordered to move, hold, or support; a fleet may be ordered to move, hold, support, or convoy."

It is very clear that an order to hold and an order to support are two different orders, and that a unit can be ordered to do only one of them! It's such a basic rule that there can be no exceptions, no matter what the intention is! In many cases it wouldn't make any difference, but it's the GM's duty to apply the rules of the game and, if he intends to handle such situations differently, they must be spelled out in his houserules before the game begins. If he has no houserules covering a given situation (and most would not have one for this case), then the Rulebook must be followed. Otherwise, what's to stop him from arbitrarily changing other rules?

In the Ed Wrobel case, it's not a matter of BRUX being a strict GM. I would expect all GMs to follow the rulebook and their houserules. The fact that BRUX is, or is not, a strict GM, is a red herring that has no bearing on this case at all. Wrobel should be arguing with the author of the Rulebook, not with BRUX.

Love and kisses,
Ron

((I agree with your comments 100%, though several other people have expressed their disagreement. I was also in a Glaw and Fang game at the time it folded, and had no problems. I don't remember Don telling us that he was getting rid of his houserules. But you are totally correct to observe that incomplete HRS cause problems.

I don't see why you should be at all bitter about your win being declared irregular. The "irregular" label is merely something imposed by the Boardman Number Custodian when, in that individual's opinion, there was something improper about the way the game was run. If you know that you got the win fair and square, what does it matter that the game was declared "irregular"?

I agree, too, with your comments about GM interference. This is why I call myself a "strict" GM -- because I won't interfere by fixing a player's moves for him unless there is only one legal possibility and the move is not clearly illegal. I heard this referred to as "screwing the players" or "silly" -- take note, Eric Kane -- but to me there's no other way.

Maybe I'm just being stubborn, but I will prefer to keep VD's price at 50¢ per issue. I don't care whether every other zine in the hobby costs twice that; I think my loyal, screaming subbers deserve the best deal I can give them. Thus this rag stays cheap.))

From John MacFarlane (4/16/83):

Dr. Breuss:

I guess it's about time to write and tell you how much I enjoyed your last two issues. "If I Ran the Zoo" was superb -- probably the most humorous single issue of a zine I've ever read. And your monster #76 had some of the best reading material I've seen in a long time. I especially liked "Watt Versus Dambi", though the Walker Kate Sheet is not far behind.

I'm glad you finally decided to go ditto. I like it for the same reasons you do -- namely cheapness and freedom to publish at will. I put out several issues of Negotiate by ditto, and really enjoyed doing so because of the freedom I had. No more waiting for the xerox machine to get fixed, anxious players postering you every five minutes -- with ditto, you can just print the thing! Plus, I could print whatever I wanted and in any size without being curtailed by school restrictions. Covers, large cartoons, things like the "Walker Kate Sheet", etc., all became possible through ditto.

On the other hand, ditto is rather messy, not as easy to read, and as you said, nearly impossible to correct. What I hate most is the tendency for masters to crease as you print, scrambling up the whole page. It doesn't look like you had this problem, though... you must have a decent ditto machine.

Black theippers and So what's what happened to Bob Olsen'

((Glad you enjoyed the last two issues. Thank for writing.))

From Mark Berch (4/12/83, excerpts):

Dear Bruce:

...Rod is entirely wrong in his comments when he says that "A unit which is supporting is also holding" and "It is of course not necessary to order the unit to both hold and support", and later he calls orders to both hold and support "redundant orders, not double orders".

VII.1 clearly states. "A unit may be ordered to do only one thing on each move: an army may be ordered to move, hold, or support." Note that hold and support are listed as separate items, and you can only do one. Rod quotes IX.6 but in a misleading way. The full quote, with material omitted by Rod now underscored, is "A unit not ordered to move (i.e., one that is ordered to hold, ordered to convoy, ordered to support, or not ordered at all) may receive support in holding." But this is talking about receiving support, not giving support. Is Rod going to seriously argue that a player who has ordered a piece both to support and not to is not double ordered? If Rod is going to use IX.6 to try to overrule VII.1, it seems to me his answer must be yes to both questions. After all, he notes only the "ordered to support" choice, but actually, the list has convoy on it as well.

Rod's idea that hold is just an aspect of the support order (and, it would seem, the convoy order) is directly contrary to VII.1.

With regard to James Keeley's letter, a number of people have tried to apply game theory to tactical decision making in Diplomacy, and have found it difficult to come up with any practical advice, although it is not hard to create a theoretical framework. When dealing with largely tactical, but complicated decisions (i.e., where you have at least three realistic approaches) you must face the inevitable question: Do you want to maximize the gain or minimize the "risk" (risk is not so much in the sense of losing ground, but losing a probably modest gain in gambling for a larger gain). This is of course a standard question in game theory, but here in Diplomacy, the relative importance of those two goals is inevitably linked with strategic factors. You must decide what rate of growth is acceptable, and that depends of course on how the opposition is shaping up. In many cases, the best move that Keeley refers to is not so much based on a "no matter what your opponent does" basis, but on what your country needs to have.

I think Kador is being entirely too rigid in insisting that "there's no such thing as an unpleasant aroma. If it smells bad, it doesn't have an aroma. It has a stench." I've checked with three dictionaries, and none of them have been so dogmatic (e.g., the American College Dictionary: "An odor arising from spices, plants, etc., esp. an agreeable odor.") Moreover, relying on subjective factors in a definition can lead to paradoxes. Does coffee have an aroma? I find the odor of fresh coffee nauseating; you might find it delightful. And we'd say that coffee both has and has not an aroma.

((Why not say that it has an aroma with respect to Linus, and none with respect to Berch? (That's the only way I can get any respect!))

Your analysis of the hold/support problem makes it very clear that my ruling was the correct one. I still think the wording in IX.6 could be changed to "supported in place" to avoid confusion, though.)

From Flumpha:

Broo-
Give Voo Doc some class. Instead of LOW by the sub number, say MUGIENT. Might even give Kador pause to reflect

((MUGIENT??))

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From Bob Olson (4/8/35).

Dear Shep,

In accordance with my new principles of stopping hobby feuds before they start I would like to intervene in what I see as a developing problem even before it starts. I refer of course to the soon-to-begin Linsey-Berch feud. I know of course that you must be furious with Mark for his DW article, "The Sleaziest Player of All Time" -- I knew as soon as I saw the title that this had to be an exposé of your methods and tactics, and though the names were changed to protect the guilty, it was instantly obvious that the article was about you and you alone. Dear Stafford may be "the sleaze" but you are THE Sleaze. I don't know what led Mark to write such an article, and even less why it could have appeared in the early days of Swedish Roundabout, but I hope you will not decide that Mark was (shudder) "limited your diplomatic options" with the article. Hey, he was just trying to make a buck, really.

You know, it's impressive that you wrote and received 242 letters in Spring '01 of Swedish Roundabout, but have you considered what a monumental waste of time that actually was. Judging from the confessions in the badgame statements I've seen, all that was really required on your part was the following--

France to England: I have preconceived an EF alliance in this game and if you're with me, let's ignore all the other players.

England to France: I've preconceived an EF alliance too. I don't want to negotiate with anybody either. What about Germany?

France to Germany: We will permit you to live for a while if you obey my commands in every particular and never, never negotiate seriously with any other player.

Germany to France: Yassuh Boos!

Four simple post cards -- total expense, 52 cents. Or 242 letters, total expense, something like \$30. Which makes more sense to you?

I don't think Ben Schilling made a mistake. In my opinion, a communist is nothing but a Nazi with a press agent, so when Ben says "fascist" in today's world, everybody knows what he's talking about. After all, who played kissy face with Hitler in the Thirties?

I had a chance to hear Theodore Sturgeon, big-time SF writer, speak several years ago and he had some things to say about hunting. His point was that the difference between hunters and such other hazards as disease, natural predators, weather, etc., was that the hunters selected the best stock for killing, rather than eliminating the weaker animals in the manner of natural selection, the hunters go for the biggest, strongest, most impressive specimens, the ten-point bucks or whatever. And to the extent that this contributes to eliminating the best genes from the gene pool, it's a terrible assault on the integrity of the species.

I was most surprised by John Kador's article, which says that "dardimonious" is a valid word. At least that's what it seems to say -- "If the Oxford English Dictionary (unabridged) fails to list the word (and it doesn't)..." Hmm, if it doesn't fail to list the word, then I guess, just this once, BRUX has come up with an acceptable word. Well done, BRUX!

Uh-oh, now Kador will start analyzing my stuff. Fortunately, it's now plain for all to see that if he does so it will only be from a desire for petty revenge.

I was shocked at Berch's savage attack on me in his "Diplomaster" piece. Good thing I just recently sent off an attack on him first...hasn't seen print yet, though. Actually the Bob Olson that Scrop ((Berch)) is pleased to rake over the coals is long dead now. I'm but a shadow of the letter-writer I once was, thanks to two games where I learned that negotiating is by and large a waste of time. Actually I seem to be doing better since I gave up reliance on negotiations. I did notice, BRUX, that the more you wrote me in Swedish Roundabout the more I distrusted you, and likewise, the less I write, the better I do. BR was the nadir of my career, a game wherein I negotiated frantically and never found an ally. It's a sad day for this hobby when Bob Olson can't find an ally. I'll tell you.

Anyway, getting back to the subject of Mark's article, it puts me in mind of a possibly apocryphal tale of some ancient king or other, who had a courtier whose job was, when the king got too carried away with his conquests and glory, to whisper in the king's ear that he too was a mere man. Just when I thought I had lived down my blunder, here comes Mark to dredge it all up again. Thanks, Scoop, I'll remember you in my will, but no crown jewels for you.

On the subject of your new look -- most pages were legible. The best page was 23, but that apparently was because my copy was blank on page 24 -- I guess the second time through washes out the first time. Actually, it was overall decent, though a far cry from the old way. Just stay away from the odd-colored stuff Dick Martin has experimented with, the green and red, those seem to come out much worse than blue.

((Sorry about the blank page -- I've sent a replacement. And I stand corrected regarding my correction to Schilling's comment.

You're right in your description of Swedish Roundabout. Boil away all the excess words in the game, and that's just how it went. Oh, what fun!

I like Sturgeson's point regarding hunting.))

From Ruth Glaspey (4/25/83).

Dear BRUCE,

Joke -- right? April Fool and all that? I refer to Rod Walker's so-called reaction to your special issue, alleged to have appeared on the supposed "page 36" of VD #76. Or was his reaction really ? (I didn't get no page 36!) (Had some good chuckles over the special issue, though.)

Hah -- caught you this time, John Kador! A mixed metaphor is not made up of two complete metaphors strung together, however mismatched they may be. It is, rather, a single metaphore ((let me try that again...)) single metaphor which suddenly changes its mind in the middle, like a chameleon changing the color of his horse in midstream. It is Hamlet, taking arms against -- what? A host of troubles? No -- a sea of them. One envisions the poor sod beating wildly away at the surf with his sword. It may be -- often is -- compounded of the beginning of one metaphor and the end of a different one which relates to the same situation or object, as when an opponent in a hotly-contested game of Civilization last week informed me that he had an ace up his hole. (Ouch!)

Bruce, have you tried Civ yet? It's a fascinating game! Not as cutthroat as Dip, it presents a wider variety of factors to be weighed in deciding what course of action to pursue in movement, trade, and acquisition of Civilization cards. If you have the bad luck to fall victim to a calamity, you may also have the opportunity to make the situation even more devastating to someone who's been nasty to you, so everybody soft-pedals aggression most of the time. ("See, Dick, I'm really, REALLY sorry I have to attack your city, but as you can see, there really isn't any other option open to my surplus population...") And even if you're squeezed out, you can still get back into play, often with quite good prospects, thanks to the effects of civil war on another player. It is a sorry...well, civilized game.

Ditto, huh? Well, I can understand your decision from the financial point of view, but that doesn't make it any easier on the old eyeballs. But then, taking a darcimonorously lo-o-ong time to read VD ain't all bad, either -- I'll try to think of it as pure pleasure prolonged. I don't really care if you use hectograph, or smoke signals, or what -- as long as I get my monthly fix!

((And get it you shall! I played Civilization at Byrne@on on New Year's Eve, and enjoyed it, though I'm not very good at deciphering the rules for anything more complicated than Dip. John Caruso and I were allied in that one, but we were both pretty new to the game and didn't get very far.

Enjoyed your discussion of metted mixaphors.

Sorry you got a blank page -- you should have your replacement by now.))

From John Michalski:

Hi Bruce,

Did I tell you that I found a temporary job cutting meat at the Tinker AFB Commissary? I cut meat in school, 65-67, and it was enough to wrangle me a temporary WGS for now. I'll take it.

Anyhow...

I have to disagree with Walker's eloquent letter in VD#15. The criticism he gave of Reinsel is wholly out of whack. Reinsel was running Fast Games. He ran them in that spirit, and while premature adjudications seem odd by current standards, when average deadlines are 4 announced weeks and 5 in practice, such actions are not that inappropriate in a fast-paced game. As you know, I've run a lot of those myself. To me, my 2-week deadline games were the slow ones, 10 days were average, and the two 7-day-deadline games were MY last ones! And, unlike Reinsel, I ran them in the near-current era, not in the misty past (before I joined the hobby). So while I would not do what he did, I can in fact say that the effect of not doing would not adversely affect a game the way Walker skillfully implied. His error was in judging Reinsel's fast games by today's slower ones, which is totally wrong. Players in slow games dawdle, ponder, lose interest, regain interest, wait, respond, re-respond, change their minds...and THEN comes the next deadline. Not so at all in a fast game. There you must think and plan ahead, where the current season requires only an acknowledgment to your ally that "Situation A we discussed has occurred, so we'll go with the convoy?; or "one if by land, two if by sea" if you will. The point is, the spirit of a fast game is different, and like you pointed out rightly, Reinsel always did manage to find people willing to play under his deadlines and policies. And I for one could venture to say they had a good time. Of course, you personally know MY game preferences, so Rod's description of Reinsel's policies sounded great to me, and was especially endeared to me by referring to him as Boardman might have, as a "Naziist". Now, someone like that couldn't be all bad, could he?

But seriously again, it isn't fair to judge a fast game by the standards imposed by today's lethargic pace. Much of what was said against Reinsel was that he just ran his games differently than Rod would/did. So what? If you want to criticize people who run their games differently, what about Guerrier, or Smyth, or even Lanzelene? Mark recently concluded "C14" (with which I was not connected) in which the Turkish player was eliminated in '04, then reentered a 3-center Germany in the same game in '08 and survived as a 1. Mark defended this by saying Germany was a "minor" position, so it didn't matter, and the guy was already familiar with the game, so why not? To me, this is incredible, and to add insult to injury, Ditter, avoiding any "irregular" controversy potential, went along. (BICK was listed as regular in Everything #55, when I would have called it irregular without blinking. I myself feel the whole spirit of the game of Diplomacy is violated by having even 'minor' positions played by the same individual. To me, this goes from a "different" policy to outright "wrong", although others clearly disagree. But if this sort of thing passes, we can hardly criticize Reinsel...

I absolutely agree with you that having two countries played by the same player, even at different times during the game is wrong. I don't question Mark's right to do this provided all players concerned agree, but I see no way that such a game should be regarded or noted. Heck, in VD even a player who is called to standby for one country can even be called for another in that game, even if he didn't get in the first time.

The reasoning for this, and I presume your basis for saying that this action violates the spirit of the game, is that once a player has been asked to stand by for a given country, he sees the game from the perspective of that country. That is, he may have been told secrets which only the head of that country is supposed to know. Calling him later for another country is totally inconsistent with the way the game is designed, and it would never happen in VD.

Lest you think I blast Lousy too hard, though, I have written to him to get his comments for this issue and he gets his say on the following page.

In granting your comments on fast games, let's just say that our tastes differ. I won't

go so far as to say that your way is "wrong", but in a fast game there is less scope for diplomatic connivery. There just isn't time, for example, to write your ally suggesting that he lie in such-and-such a manner to a third party, so that this third party will persuade his ally to make certain moves for that season. No time to forge a letter, send it to another city to be passed on to your enemy so that he will move a certain way this turn. A fast game precludes players from taking advantage of all the potential, subtle nuances that the game has to offer. I admit, though, that if your preference is to keep the game moving right along at the cost of forfeiting some of these options, then a fast game may be ideal for you.

As for Reinsel's games, they sound too strict for me (especially the rule about not accepting changes of orders if all players' moves are in), but I don't think he was wrong to run his games that way if he could find the players to fill them.)

Barzelena (4/19/83):

Dear Bruce,

Without a courtesy copy of Michalski's comments, I can't really respond to him. But I will say this about '81CZ:

- 1) Neither the BNC nor any of the players objected to the way I handled the game. So it shouldn't bother anyone else.
- 2) I don't intend to let it happen again. Ideally, nobody should play more than one country. The countries involved in '81CZ were minor and were not played by Kurtz simultaneously. If someone had complained, I would have delayed the game and had a new standby.
- 3) The game ended last December. Why anybody is mentioning it now is a mystery to me. I doubt if Michalski is saying very much. It doesn't sound like him.

(I have the impression that John was simply comparing unusual GMing practices, not really complaining about your handling of the game. I personally would object if I was a player, but don't fault you for doing what you did. I'm glad to hear you don't plan to do it again, and in my opinion the fact that the countries were minor is totally irrelevant.)

From A.F. Ross (4/27/83):

Dear BRUCE,

OK, OK, you win -- take my hard-earned bucks. What other response could I have after being inundated with VD #76? I trust that as a pubber, however, you will not feel totally justified in killing me if I fail to resub at the end of 10 issues.

Please also send your obviously useful Supernova. I happened to get a hold of an empty several years ago during one of the PA Origins (and I am just now getting into the hobby -- hoo boy, can you believe it?) and it mentioned a Big Mexican -- I assume Supernova is what came of that.

I would like to say that Rod Walker and you make it very easy and pleasant to get started full blast into the hobby. I also know that the first time I am stabbed I shall curse both of your graves for all time.

One last question... what is the insidious Walker Hate Sheet, what does it mean, and is it true that if you stick it in the dryer your clothes come out static-free?

(Welcome to the hobby! The Walker Hate Sheet was Rod's response to my crack in VD #75 (which you will be 'receiving' that he is an earthworm. After sending it to me, he crawled back into his hole.)

The Mexican of Diplomacy is different from Supernova. It is a very interesting and useful publication available for \$1.25 from Mark Berch, 492 Naylor Place, Alexandria, VA 22304. I recommend it to you and any other interested readers.

Appreciate your comments, and good luck. If you write to Mark you'll find him to be very helpful as well.)

From John Kador (4/1/83):

Dear BRUX,

Sir, I'll admit your general rule
That every poet is a fool.
Yet you yourself may serve to show it.
Every fool is not a poet.

Often your verses seem to me
An upward-sounding melody,
And then your tongue, acid and base
Hits in the face like a face full of naces.

But when you put your verses in venom,
Our bootless cries are ignored in heaven.
There's nothing like your hitting flattery
To remind us of assault and battery.

((Oh yes, I wrote the Dec issue.
I wrote it 'specially for you.
But if by chance you didn't love it,
Why, buster, you can just go it!))

From Plumptre P. Quiddipco, Jr.:

Broo;

I'll bet my month's pension check you're reluctant to remove your shoe in public
because your foot has more bullet holes than toes.

You fling doors open wide and walk into the doorjamb.

You feel up that cute broad in the dark theatre and she's a dike.

You send a flyer soliciting votes for VD in the first issue you've dittosed -- some
sections handprinted to near illegibility and a few pages so faint they can be puzzled out
but not read. And guess which page is most ghostlike? Yup. Page 38. About how to vote
in the -- Branstone Hall, is it?

Ah, well. I'll vote for you anyway, Voodoo. Any rag that survives a publisher like
that deserves all the help it can get.

Alex's Column a subline? Pretty Broad definition. OK! OK! I'm voting!

Anyhow, VD #76 made up in quality and quantity what it lacked in legibility. Alex
and Mack paid up to 2 mm. You have a large stable of interesting correspondants. And a
few scattered flakes. (Please, don't point.)

HEY! Did you know that Mark Larzelere won \$100 in the questness contest? Whoever
is a talented guy like that hanging around a bunch of dips?

Our favorite typewordies Kador is amusing and instructive as usual. The occasionally
one of his expositions is a bit didactic. Franstince, his contention that nasty feet
cannot have an aroma because "aroma" has "pleasant" connotations is a nonsequitur. As
any of you foot-fetishist friends (ped-agog? No no. Sorry.) will happily attest, some
derive a great deal of pleasure and reward from the sniffing of nasty feet. I mean, they
really snuggle up and turn on. (No names, please.) Of course, Kador probably hasn't had
much intimate experience with Toadies, since he openly and unashamedly admits to a preference
for penis. In a dippy pack, I ask you! Got straight, Kador!

New York City must be a real downer. According to the news reports, King Kong has
been hanging out there for five days but can't get it up.

And the opposite of darcimonorious is not UNDarcimonorious. It's INDarcimonorious.
Was that another typo? Or were you confusing it with undarcimonoric?

Notice how any controversy on "sport hunting" inevitably gets mixed in differing
receptions of "animal", "killing", and "life"? Some believe that since man is the only
being to possess a "soul" (whatever that is) other "life" is irrelevant. Others say a

...of animals die of starvation or disease, so why not shoot 'em. (Hunting or not it can't live long enough to will expire in mindless, drooping senility. No, boys, I mean do you a favor. Kill.)

Do I like to accompany "Wanna bump?"

James
Chicago
XXXXX

(I've heard all the rationalizations for hunting, too.

As for carleousness and its variations: it's my word and I can do whatever I want with it (no - wait a minute - not that, it doesn't fit!))

From Barry Binko

Dear Bob,

I owe you an apology. I should proofread my letters. My last letter was a jargon "mind fuck" ((I think I got that right!)) Someone should never tell someone else what they feel like.

I hope you're actually done with the ditty. However, please excuse some of the material that is a part of your work and readability. However, some pages were reproduced so badly I couldn't read them.

Have fun at Lake George. I've met several people that work here in the winter that Lake George in the summer. In a year or two Karen and I might do the same. Either that or Cape Cod. There's a third "love" sign off.

(And they're pouring in ever since I complained recently that only Judy Williams and Bob Beach ever show any affection. Now Barry, Donald Brown, Memphis, and Dick have all sent me "love" letters. Maybe I'll write one to myself, too.)

I've found some replacements for the pages you said you couldn't read.

No apology necessary for your last letter, I enjoyed it.)

From Ty Hine (A/N/B)

Dear Bob,

...of animals die of starvation or disease, so why not shoot 'em. (Hunting or not it can't live long enough to will expire in mindless, drooping senility. No, boys, I mean do you a favor. Kill.)

Also, Bob Binko's letter hit the nail on the proverbial head. Killing is killing no matter what the reason is in terms of survival (as all of us who eat meat die, or you eat your plants, etc.). Killing isn't any more right or justified because you're eating your children or pigs with the sole intention of eating them, as Jack Halverson's my wife would say, "I've never seen a female prostitute say 'No' (sic) I told you that he likes to have sex with her, so why not have sex with her?" Here and try to get picked up. I think I'll be a little more respectful to get over some of the stuff I write.

(I hope you believe it. At least someone does!)

From Michael Binko (A/N/B)

Dear Bob,

...of animals die of starvation or disease, so why not shoot 'em. (Hunting or not it can't live long enough to will expire in mindless, drooping senility. No, boys, I mean do you a favor. Kill.)

...of animals die of starvation or disease, so why not shoot 'em. (Hunting or not it can't live long enough to will expire in mindless, drooping senility. No, boys, I mean do you a favor. Kill.)

now well on his way down the road to fame, having been noticed by the Dipl Master himself. Of course, there are other ways to get a reputation; if you're a notorious stabber and make a big deal of it people will start to notice you. Or if you publish a zine, you are automatically guaranteed of becoming well-known. But the best way is to write for print. You're invited...

Good luck in postal Dip!))

From Mark Paul:

Hi Bruce,

The biggest news in adventure gaming for southern New Hampshire and parts of Massachusetts is the game Titan which was recently released by Avalon Hill. Titanmania has struck several high schools and college campuses around here and it's hard to tell whether it's just a passing fad like the Rubik's Cube or is it the beginning of a more permanent fad such as Dungeons and Dragons or Squad Leader. I did join a monster slugathon at a local high school and I must admit the game is a real blast if you leave your brains at the door and accept the fact that it doesn't make too much sense. The game involves traveling to different lands on a "Masterboard" which is a completely abstract and uniform representation of several types of lands. The lands have several types of gates between them, some of which regulate movement. Rather than trying to make sense of this by telling some half-baked fable, the designers wisely just admitted that it's not supposed to be realistic. When opposing monsters meet on the same land they slug it out until one is eliminated. The game can last for many hours, but the action is constant and it's a lot of fun. The owner of several hobby shops told me that it is their best-selling game recently. I notice that it made Avalon Hill's "what have you been playing lately?" top twenty. It seems to be taking many D&D fans, it's easier to learn, you don't need a dungeon master, two people can play it, and there is much more action. TSM may finally be challenged on its Fantasy monopoly. I'm not sure how I feel about the game. There are so many great Fantasy games around that I think they should be given more attention; however, the game is a great deal of fun and I guess that's what it's all about.

((Thanks for the info. I personally don't get much into Fantasy games, though I know that quite a few of my readers do.))

From Jim Williams (4/26/83):

Dear Bruce,

Again, as it always seems to be, it has been too long between letters. Thankfully, you have many other loyal scrambling boomies to entertain both of us in the meantime. I have a few reasons for writing to you now. One reason is that I wanted to write anyway, and the other reason is that I had to write.

You may recall a lengthy telephone conversation we had some months ago about origins and sharing living quarters during the Con. Well, I have my vacation all set now and I'm back in the go. I've sent for information about the event, but I was wondering if you had all the maps by now anyway.

If you haven't changed your mind (God forbid) about being weekend resident, perhaps we could get the ball rolling on reservations and that sort of thing. What you say, son. I will do nothing in that regard until I hear from you one way or the other. We don't want to create clutter our units, if you know what I mean.

On your new ditto format, bravo! Anything that will save you a few bucks is OK in my book. Besides, I think you put enough time and effort into the hobby without chanking away 1/3 of your bucks on top of it. The way you're going now, you need all of your money to keep winning and dining out dear Alex. Don't let her slip through your fingers now, Bruce! As for the light page or two that results from ditto, who cares? A little eye strain never killed anybody.

Hey, I have a proposition for you. If you explain to me just what the hell is going

on in the JUPITER game, I'll be a standby. I have watched the happenings from afar, and to say I'm confused would be understating the obvious. What is the objective there? Will the game ever end? Anyway, fill me in if you really want a loyal, screaming standby.

Congratulations on your well-timed 2-way draw in Swedish Roundabout. I spent the weekend going over the endgame statements. Garry Kasparov must have set a modern day record with 5 pages of assorted ramblings. He's a real nice fellow, though, and I hope we'll meet up with him in Detroit.

I am planning on entering your Diplomatic Coup contest and I hope Garry does too. His is the best I've ever heard. It's a shame that he'll be playing no more 10y games. It's our loss. I'll be sending along my entry a bit later, unless I don't, in which case I won't be entering because I forgot. OK?

I'd like to prattle on here, but I really must go. It's almost time to go home. Take it easy and let me know about the arrangements in Detroit.

((Jim's letters always brighten my day! He and I will be rooming together at Origins this year.

I agree 100% with the praise of Garry Kasparov. He is one of our best players, best writers, and nicest people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting in this hobby, and I hope he'll become active again.

Don't forget to enter my contest!

JUPITER is a Proxy Diplomacy game. Proxy is a variant in which the players order their own units in the Fall, but in the Spring they order those of another country on a rotating basis. From what I've seen, this makes it almost impossible to accomplish anything beyond getting all the other countries angry very fast. I don't know if it will ever end.

Thanks for the kind words regarding my switch to disks, and I promise I'll try to keep your eye strain to a minimum.))

From Terry Waldman (3/8/83):

BRUX:

Due to being severely unemployed I can't afford to sub to anything now right now. I'm actually thinking quite hard about cutting some of my trades to bring my sub list down. I can't afford the ego-boost a high-circulation zine gives some people.

I was rather interested to see that in your March 8th issue you appear to have given up feet in the mouth for Lent.

We hear vague rumors out here about your latest faux pas from time to time, but now if anyone from the west coast mentions your name to anyone from the east coast we get cut off somehow. ((They hold me in awe out here, that's why!))

My own experience indicates that if someone sends me something particularly hilarious to print I call and ask them what drugs they were on when they wrote whatever it is that's caught my attention. In each case they agreed to edit out certain lines or material.

But this is only how I run my zine. I figure we each have to print what we're comfortable with. But regardless of where you head with your zine it won't affect your sub to mine. If I can have Bernie there I doubt you'll cause me much more heat now from the hobby's arbiters of what's right and wonderful.

One request I would like to make -- please don't plug my zine. I have too many subbers now. I'm going to cut a few of my diller trades and not press a lot of my deadwood to resub. Anyway, keep 'em flying.

Oh yeah, I felt the caricatures were worth maybe four pages of reduction but certainly no more.

Hummm, I just noticed Hithumper's letter to you in your March 8 issue. I feel that I should lay out something here that has troubled me for quite a while about the Modern Patriot. Bill is constantly trying to convince the rest of the hobby that he's constantly trying to follow in the footsteps of the old Hutus Bulletin, as the hobby right-wing, let-it-all-hang-out rag. I applaud his efforts but sadly he doesn't have the background or finesse to pull it off. John Michalek has the ability to apply solid reasoning and observation to the current problems facing the hobby. And he is able to utilize the administration when it comes to putting up with the embarrassing boundaries. It should be his that ability to attempt to solve the problems of the hobby.

Bill, however, gets to ranting about some issue like how people like Barno, Caughan and myself -- according to him we're pacifists -- get into the hobby. Yet he offers no reasoned argument to support his own views.

It causes me a great deal of pain to see familys who can't feed or keep a roof over their children's heads. Bill is against welfare and more social programs. He's "got his".

D & D is a plot by the commies? Gary Gygax, the mind behind TSR games, is a hard-core Jehovah's Witness and perhaps the most militant capitalist in commercial gaming today. He's quite possibly more conservative than Bill.

This all comes back to why so many of us are, at the very least, bemused by The Modern Patriot. We listen to him saying it's meant humorously. Fine. Show me the light side of civilians dying in Latin America. Show me the fun and games of American G.I.s going down there to help defend the holdings of a military junta that has all the charm, appeal and interest in the welfare of its people that is mirrored in American organized crime.

If we spent the money we're pumping into El Salvador and Nicauraga into fighting crime, training New York City's hard-core unemployed, and upgrading our steel industry so we could compete with Japan, where would we be?

I am not saying Bill has not thought all this out. But Michalski did and it showed in his writing on the subject. If Bill is going to champion the cause of the right he's got to be able to do so intelligently.

I still picture the cover of the fake TMP whenever Bill gets really cranked up. Not fair perhaps, but there you are.

A final note before I wrap this up. A letter like this would make me very uncomfortable in my own szine but I have no real compunction about sending it to you. Your szine has a history of publishing people blowing off steam.

((Thanz for a nice letter. From your opening paragraphs, it sounds as though you've been listening too much to my, uh, friends here on the east coast. Not being a subscriber to VD, you are of course getting only one side of the story, it appears.

I too am bemused by TMP -- and very entertained by it. I like Bill and his views, and appreciate the humorous, overstated manner in which he expresses them. As for the "light side" of people suffering, I can only repeat my oft-expressed view that it is helpful and good for people to sit back and laugh at the world's injustices from time to time.

I don't see anything about your letter that makes me "uncomfortable" with it.))

From James Woodson (5/5/83, excerpts):

Dear Brux (or does that have to be BRUX?) ((Yes!)),

...I'm scheduled to start Aviation Indoctrination, which is a six-week course for all Pilot and NFOs (Naval Flight Officers; they go along but don't fly the plane, usually due to imperfect eyesight. They do things like navigation and weapons control.) on 31 May. I probably won't start on time, because I tore some ligaments in my ankle 3 weeks ago and have my foot in a cast now. AI includes an obstical course, 1 1/2 mile run and some swimming quals. I probably won't be ready (my foot, that is).

Tell me, is this boring you? Thank you also for the plug. First question: what is/was the Bruxus Bulletin? I've heard of Brutus Bulletin, of course, but please explain your version of BB.

About the article (?) "Fuck". I'm the sort of person who doesn't like profanity or vulgarity. I think that it paints the user as uncivilized or stupid. I tend to use more of it than I used to and this sometimes bothers me. In spite of this, I thought the article was hilarious. I chuckled throughout reading it in spite of myself. I don't know why.

((Letters never bore me! (Else I wouldn't be doing VD.)

Brutus Bulletin was simply John Michalski's way of misspelling Bruxus Bulletin. Strangely, he spelled it wrong on all but his 69th issue. In its day, it the was the best zine around.

I like profanity and vulgarity, so long as they are used with a touch of class.))

Simplified 1040

18

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1040

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1982

07

Your Social Security Number

Part I Income

1. How much money did you make last year?.....



() (

2. Send it in.....



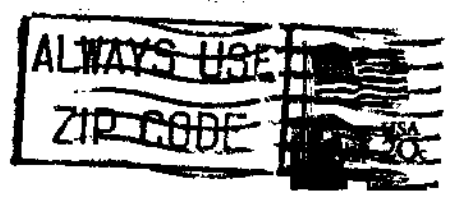
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...you learn that someone's been mis-
writing his orders for 132 years! cheers,
Chuff

The province of Burgundy presents a ticklish situation for France and Germany in 1901. At the root of the problem is the fact that a German army there in Spring 1901 can really prove devastating to the French position. So the burden of initiating negotiations concerning this province lies squarely on the shoulders of the Frenchman.

It is my opinion that if France plans to leave Burgundy open in the Spring, he should not inform the German of this fact. Occasionally, in the event of a very certain alliance against England, an exception can be made. But it is generally a good idea to leave Germany with the impression that he will be stood off if he opens to Burgundy. That may well discourage him from slipping in. Consider Germany's point of view. He may reason, "Well, I'd like to gain that powerful position in the Spring. But I cannot, since France will be moving there anyhow. So why should I commit myself to a war with him if I can't take the upper hand? I think I'd rather not move there." But if he knows that Burgundy will be empty, he may well decide to take the chance and move in. So, as a rule of thumb, France should not inform Germany of his plans to leave Burgundy vacant. Germany should realize that France has to play it safe regarding this crucial space; he should not take exception or offense at a French opening to this province, or to a French announcement that such an opening is in the offing even if it doesn't materialize.

Suppose France does wish to move to Burgundy, though. Then there are several options. He could elect to inform Germany, and arrange a standoff from Marseilles. This will allow Army Paris to move safely to Picardy, while if Italy stays out of Piedmont, Army Marseilles can pick up Spain in the Fall. A problem could occur if Germany doesn't follow through with the bounce, because then either Spain or Portugal must be sacrificed until 1902. But Germany would most likely move as promised; why would he want to allow a French army into a province that borders on Munich, Ruhr, and Belgium if he antagonizes France in the process?

However, Germany might inform France that he doesn't want the standoff, and that he will opt for a move to Ruhr instead. If France really believes this, he should possibly consider moving A Par-Bur, A Mar-Spa. That way, if Germany proves to be treacherous and opens to Burgundy, he will fail. The drawback in this case is that Army Paris will be left in a poor position in the Fall. It will be forced to defend Burgundy again, and if a second bounce occurs Paris will not be open for a build. So if France suspects that Germany is attempting to set up a stab from Munich, a far better option would be to support Army Paris into Burgundy with the army in Marseilles.

Once France has taken Burgundy with support, he has a couple of options. If Italy is friendly, Army Marseilles can take Spain in the Fall while Army Burgundy supports England or Germany into Belgium, or moves there itself. Alternatively, France can forego either Spain or Portugal, and use some clever negotiation to permit himself to slip into either Munich or Ruhr, with Army Marseilles trailing into Burgundy for added strength. If Germany outsmarts France, though, and keeps him out of German territory, both moves will be stood off and France will find himself in a rather embarrassing position (ah, he!) -- especially if the standoff occurs in Munich and Germany builds there. So such a weak French attack must be preceded by some fancy misdirection, often through a third party such as England, to ensure success.

The support into Burgundy can also be used if Germany does agree to a bounce. However, France may then be more or less committed to war with Germany after the Spring, since Germany can rightfully claim that it was unnecessary for France to break his deal and actually take Burgundy. All that was needed was the agreed-upon bounce.

I don't intend to go into detail in this article concerning the defense of Marseilles from an unfriendly Italy. Suffice it to say that if Italy opens to Piedmont, France's use of both armies will likely be defensive rather than offensive, and the possibilities will thus be more limited. Similarly, there is the possibility of a joint Franco-Italian attack on Munich (or even Franco-Austrian or Russian). Again, this article's intention is simply to concentrate on France's 1901 relationship with Germany, so these are not discussed here.

So there are many options available to France concerning the use of Burgundy in 1901. It's a touchy, delicate situation; and the only sure thing is that regardless of French intentions, some discussion of this province is necessary in pre-spring negotiations with Germany.

REMEMBER A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN PANZERBLITZ CAME OUT? IT SOON BECAME A FAD AND EVERY GAMER I KNEW WAS PLAYING IT.



THEN EVERY GAME COMPANY FLOODED THE MARKET WITH SIMILAR TACTICAL WARGAMES.



"YOURS TRULY"

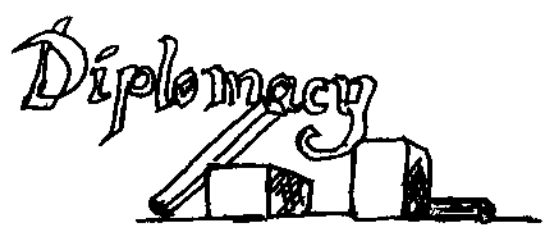
I would go to by friend's basement with Diplomacy in hand, but would end up playing some detailed tactical simulation. But the fad soon wore off and we were back to Diplomacy.



Then came D&D and I was forced to go through dungeons to steal gold from monsters. But the fad started fading and we returned to Diplomacy.



The newest fad is Titan. Every game club, hobby shop and campus seems to be hit by a mania that adventure gaming has never seen before. In the past two weeks, I've seen several clubs organized, one of them complete with T-shirts and a newsletter. And so my friends have jumped on the bandwagon and I've had to take part in many slugathons lately.



But I'm not worried. Diplomacy is like athlete's foot, it grows on you after a while. Like the Hong Kong Flu it will be back and Titan will be like PanzerBlitz; a great game but not a classic....

...at least I hope

--Mark Paul

One of VD's most prolific contributors for the past couple of years has been Gerry Thompson, a.k.a. Flumphar T. Gaiddipoo, Jr. To honor him, I am hereby declaring this page to be the Flumphar Page. Below are a few excerpts from some of the stuff he's sent me lately. The first item is from the editorial column of "Fire and Movement", April '83.

"Unbeknown to many, Alexander the Great owed some of his most brilliant military successes to his ingenuity in technical matters as much as to his strategic and tactical talents. One of his inventions -- which his successors were unable to reproduce -- was a chemical dye, allegedly prepared from cabbage extracts, which changed color slowly and gradually when exposed to light. On the eve of the battle, he had his soldiers soak strips of cloth in a solution of the dye and tie them around their sleeves, so on the next day they would be able to tell time from the color of the arm bands. This greatly helped Alexander in synchronizing the maneuvers of the often widely separated portions of his huge army in his later campaigns. To military historians, the device is known as Alexander's Rag Time Band."

What was purple and conquered the world? Alexander the Grape!

Well, it seems that California is, after all, in no danger of sliding into the sea. Why? Nevada sucks.

Many thanks to Flumphar for his numerous humorous thoughts! He, among others, helps to keep VD the hobby's number one funzine, which will be much more funny once our Alex returns in two weeks. Keep sending the interesting garbage, Flumph (and that goes for the rest of you, too!).

BRUCE

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