

Oh, gawd! Not another issue of...

THE VOICE OF DOOM

#79

May 31, 1983

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by BRUX

It has come to my attention (ahem...) that there are certain people in the hobby who don't love me. Isn't this awful? A nice guy like me?

Anyway, all this reminds me of the situation a while back with Gary Coughlan, when Gary was under seige by people he (in some cases) had once considered friends. Some of the criticisms were valid, others were just plain vicious. At the time, it appeared to many people in the hobby that Gary was throwing away his friends and retreating into a shell. I even made some comments to that effect in VD, but now I think that I was wrong.

Gary didn't lower himself to the level of his attackers (in particular, Dick Martin) because he didn't have to. His zine spoke for itself and he took comfort in knowing that a few vocal critics could never outweigh his dozens of friends.

I don't think Gary is perfect, but then again who is? But he has my total respect for the way he handled himself when everyone and his brother was criticizing him. The most important thing is that he kept his dignity through some very hard times. What's more, he has managed to keep his zine fun for himself and for his readers. I appreciate that.

Sports prediction: I always seem to pick the loser. So, being a Laker fan, I've going to predict that the 76ers will go on to an easy four-game sweep in their NBA series (they lead 2 to 0 as I type this).

Summer plans: I'll be at Origins and CabinCon in July, and KaneKon in August. No other cons for me this season. And, I'll be looking for another job (see inside).

Inside this issue is an article which, I hope, will generate a nice response. It's Jim Meinel's piece (expanded by me) about the use of the telephone in GMing. Let me hear your opinions of the topics raised there.

Went fishing last weekend with Alex's brother Howie, and didn't have any luck. Howie caught a couple of tiny bass, one of which had little squirmy white worms in its guts when we cut it open. The other one provided four of us with about one bite apiece for dinner. Luckily, there were two pizzas waiting at Alex's house when we got back -- it appears that Daddy Lord had known we were gonna have a bad day on the pond and had provided for it. Praise the Lord!

Why am I rambling on like this? On with the show...

~~~~~  
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.

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The deadline for all games contained herein is June 24, 1983.

It's time to vote for the recipient of the first annual Miller Award, which is given for meritorious service to the Diplomacy hobby. Your vote should be sent to Larry Peery, Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102. Five people were nominated for this award, though I understand that one of them has (apparently) declined the nomination. The other four are as follows:

- * Lee Kendler Sr.; for his service as Miller Number Custodian during 1983, and for past service as Boardman Number Custodian and ombudsman services to the hobby.
- * Don Ditter; for service as Boardman Number Custodian during 1981-83, and for compiling statistics on completed games and arranging for their publication in Everything.
- * Mark Berch; for service as chief organizer for DIPCON XV and Tournament Director, for publication of Diplomacy Digest, in which many fine articles from the past are reprinted for the benefit of current hobby members, and for ombudsman services to the hobby.
- * Rod Walker; for past service as Boardman Number and Miller Number Custodian, for providing a list of game openings to players, and for editing Diplomacy World from 1981 to present.

My choice? (Must I choose? All of these nominees have given generously of themselves to the hobby, and we owe them all a debt of gratitude.) I think that Rod Walker deserves the award. He stepped in and took over Diplomacy World at a time when it needed a competent publisher. And a damn good job he has done ever since. I'm voting for Rod. Whether or not you agree with this choice, I urge all Doomies to send in their votes. You may use the ballots I have enclosed with this issue. Write-in votes are permitted.

Somewhere in the deep dark bowels of this issue's Gossip Column, one of my readers asks about upcoming cons in Denver. I've just checked, and discovered that Gengis Con will be held there June 17-19. Alas, that's all I know; Jake Halverstadt or Don Burd might be able to provide more details. Jake can be reached at (303) 482-4058, and Don at (303) 258-7214.

Voice of Doom needs your ideas for house rule amendments! That's right, I want to hear from anyone who feels they have a specific suggestion as to how my house rules can be improved. The reason for this is that Steve Knight will be editing my house rules for me, using a word processor, to get them into a more organized format. If any changes are to be made, now would be a good time to do it so that Steve can include them in his edited version. Send your suggestions to me, not Steve.

I have decided to give notice at Greenville School and seek another job, not necessarily in teaching. I actually made this decision some time ago, but didn't want to say anything publicly till notifying the school. 33 miles each way is just too far to drive each day, and I have come to dislike having to control 30+ 7th graders day in and day out. So, BRUXIE will be looking elsewhere.

Has anyone heard back from the people organizing ORIGINS? I sent them a SASE for info and registration forms almost a month ago and have yet to get a response. Anyone know what's up?

I'm sorry to report that Alex's Column is once again missing. Alex has just been very busy lately and simply couldn't get her article done this time. I know you're all looking forward to her return as much as I am.

There has been much discussion of how "not for print" material ought to be handled in certain zines lately. I am of the opinion that "not for print" means just that -- it should not be printed. I have never printed a "not for print" letter. I think there is a large distinction between "not for print" (synonymous with "not for publication") and "off the record" or "do not quote" or "confidential", all of which mean, "don't share it with anyone!". Some people have differing opinions; for instance, there are those who think that "not for print" should be treated the same as "off the record", there are those who think that all letters should be treated as confidential unless they specifically state otherwise, and there are even a few who think it is OK to quote or publish from any letter, regardless of how it's marked. Just wanted to let you all know where I stand.

This issue of VD contains letters from three of my four European subbers. I am pleased that VD has become international again, as players from other countries often have diverse and interesting views of the hobby. I am still trying to expand VD's foreign circulation.

J U P I T E R

1980 JK

TURKEY OWNS IBERIA!

Summer 1913

GERMANY: F Nth = YOR

FALL 1913

AUSTRIA (Carter): A MAH-Spa, A Lon H (arn), A ROM H, A ROM S TURKISH F Bla-Sev, A BUL H, A Tyc-VEN, A Tri-SEN, F Alb-ADR

ENGLAND (Barno): F NWG-Edi, F Nth-LON (F WAL S), F HOL-Bel, F TYR-lon

FRANCE (Leritte): F ENG-Bre

GERMANY (Rautenberg): F SWE-Nwy, A STP-Nwy, A DEN H, A KYR-Hoi, A EUR-Bel, A FAR-Bre, A GAS-Spa, F YOR-Edi

RUSSIA (Davies): F MID-Bre, A MOS-Sev (A UKR S)

TURKEY (Olsen): A Spa-POR, F GRE-Bul(sc), F ARG-Lon, A Smy-ANI, F BLA-Sab

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA:	Home, Ven, Nap , Nap, Mar, Ser, Bul, Rum, ROM	10, build 3
ENGLAND:	Lvp, Edi, LON, Pan, HOL , HOL	5, even
FRANCE:	Par	0, remove 1 (out)
GERMANY:	Roma, Swe, Den, Nwy, STP, Bel , Bel, Par, Bre	10, build 2
RUSSIA:	War, Mos, Sev	3, even
TURKEY:	Home, Gre, Spa, POR	6, build 1

Game Notes: All proposals made last season failed. Proposed for next season is an A/G draw. Please vote by next deadline. GOA for Mike Barco. 2811 Robins St., Endwell, NY 13760.

For the upcoming winter and spring, the units should be ordered as follows: Barno orders the Russian units, Rautenberg orders the Turkish units, Davies orders the Austrian units, Olsen orders the English units, Carter orders the French removal and the spring moves for Germany, and Leritte orders the German builds before his fleet sinks to the bottom of the Channel. Remember to submit backup orders in case your proxy misses his moves!

Press:

AUSTRIA: Sherwood leaves the game and the sick jokes dry up. Any connection, I wonder?

BARNO to BRUX: Does your girlfriend have five leaves?

BRUX to BARNO: Yes, but we still don't call her Twiggy!

FRANCE to BRUX: In the English Channel.

BRUX to FRANCE: You mean, beneath the English Channel... blub, blub, blub...

TURKEY: No press this time, but I would like it known that I am joining the ever-widening protest against Paul Rautenberg's face, specifically, his beard. It's too bad that Barno can't follow MY proposals but that's no reason for me to stand in the way of such a worthy cause as this.

GREAT ENGLISH DIPLOMATIC COUP: Finding a way to toady to (Godzooks) Olsen and declining the chance.

TUR: Stand by for an important announcement!

F TYR to A ROM: Get back!

BERLIN to THE PEACEMAKERS: The only rational draw is A/G. How bad you guys aren't rational. What? I should speak for myself? Naw -- too complicated.

Players: know your notation! In VD, NSO means "no such order" and NSU means "no such unit". The final location of a unit is capitalized. Thus, A MOS S F Bla-Sev (NSU) indicates that there is no F Sev, while A Mos S F Bla-Sev (NSO) means that there is no A Mos. (Or else that A Mos was dislodged, in which case the retreat spaces would be listed.)

LARZELITHER, LARLEENCE: THIS GAME'S MAKING LITTLE SENSE!

Autumn 1906

ENGLAND: F NWG r OVE

Winter 1906

AUSTRIA: even

ENGLAND: Build F LON

FRANCE: even

GERMANY: Remove F Hlg

RUSSIA: even

TURKEY: Build A CON, A ANK, F SMD

Spring 1907

AUSTRIA (Gorham): A ROM-App

ENGLAND (Hallam): F SWN-Eng, F WHL-Hol, F Dea-KIE, F NAP-LEA

FRANCE (Gauch): A TUS-Rom, A PIE-Tyo, A NON S GERMANY F Hol-Kie (ASU), F MED-TIT, F WIS-MLI, F TUR H, A Bal-WAL (F ENG C)

GERMANY (Jackowski): A Ruh-BEL (A HOL S)

RUSSIA (Ditz): UMBA F NWG U, F NWY U, A SWE U, A PIN U, F BAL U, A BOH U, A TYO U, A DEB U, A SCL U

TURKEY (Larselere): A Con-BUL, A Ank-CAN, F Sny-ASG, F NAP-Rom, A VEN-App, A TRI-Ven, F ADR S A Tri-Ven, A MLD-Tri, F Ion-ALB, F Apu-ION

Game Notes: All proposals made last season failed. Proposed for next deadline are a concession to England, an A/E/G draw, and an F/T draw. Please vote by next deadline.

Will John Burke, 409 Clay Ave., Rochester, NY 14613 please submit standby orders for Russia? Thank muchly, John.

Exes:

OSUCH to DITZ: You will never take me alive.

ION to MOS: Be moi guest. Just help me get out of the way!

LUNA to PICEL: I propose a T/F draw, as it's obvious from here who will be collaborating with whom soon enough.

LUNA-TIC to LARZE-LEECH:

You suck my blood like a leech

You break the law and you breach

Scow my brain till it hurts

You've taken all my centers -- you still want more.

Misguided old mule

With your pigheaded mules

With you narrow-minded cronies who are fools of the first division.

Death on two legs

You're tearing me apart

Death on two legs

You never had a heart of your own.

FAR to GER: Sorry about this.

RUSSIA to GERMANY: I told you Osuch was nothing but a liar!

ROME: Today all the Austrian forces have joined up with the Swiss guards of Vatican City and Rome is declared a neutral open city. Whoever attacks Rome now will be a barbarian of the foulest type!

((LUNA continues next page))

LUNA (continued)

LON to PAR: You had your chance. I gave you more excellent reasons than you could thumb your nose at, but fools will be foolish.
 TURKEY to FRANCE: Your death will be soon enough.
 PAR to CON: How can you support A Tus-Rom? Gee, I guess you have to write it in your orders. That's the only way I know how to do it.
 TURKEY to FRANCE: Your death will be soon enough.
 EDISON to BRUK: Know anyone who smokes a pipe? The axiom of the pipe goes like this: A pipe gives a wise man time to think, and a fool something to stick in his mouth. Osuch isn't a pipe-smoker, is he?



MILKY WAY

1982W

WILD SHUFFLE OF ALLIANCES PROMPTS HUGE EXCHANGE OF CENTERS!

Summer 1907

AUSTRIA: A Mos r UKR

Fall 1907

AUSTRIA (Arnawoodian): A Arm-SEV (A UKR S), F CON-Bla, A Mun-Tyo (d; r Ber, Sil, OTB),
 A Ber-KIE, A Gal-VIE (A BOH S), A Sil-GAL
 ENGLAND (Mazzer): F Bal-DEN (F NTH S), A Nwy-STP, A Nwg-NWY, F POR H, F Eng-BRE
 GERMANY (Kador): A Kie-MUN (A BUR S, A RUH S)
 ITALY (Angle): F Tyr-ION, F Sev-Bla (d; r Rum, OTB), F Bul(sc)-AEG, F Aeg-EAS, A Ser-BUL,
 A Tri-SER, A Vie-BUD, A TYO-Vie, A MAR-Gas, A PAR-Gas,
 F SPA(sc) S ENGLISH F Por
 RUSSIA (Saleski): A StP-Lvn (NSU), A Lvn-WAR (A MOS S), F Den H (d; r Hlg, Ska, Swe, OTB),
 F BOT H
 TURKEY (Blitstein?): NMR! A SMY U, A ANK U

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA: Vie, Bel , Por , Gre, Den , NWY , Con, STP , SEV, KIE	5, remove 3
ENGLAND: Home, Bre, Bel, Por, DEN, NWY, STP	9, build 3
GERMANY: Kie , Hol, Ber, MUN	3, even
ITALY: Home, Tun, Bul, Mar, Spa, Rum, Par, Tri, Sev , BUD, SER	12, build 1
RUSSIA: StP , Swe, Lvn , WAR , MOS	3, remove 1
TURKEY: Ank, Say	2, even

Game Notes: The concession to Italy, proposed last season, failed. Now proposed are a concession to Italy and an E/I draw. Please vote by next deadline.

In the last adjudication, the Austrian's attempted builds should not have been capitalized, as Austria was even. All players were notified.

Would Rob Wittmond, 2033 Calle Salto, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 please submit standby orders for Turkey? Thanks hugely, Robbie mah boy...

Press:

LON to LANSDALE: Pityful, pityful.
 LON to STP: In case you hadn't noticed, this is a stab. A clumsy, ineffectual stab, true, but a stab nonetheless.
 RUHR: What is "10, 9, 8, 7, 6..."? Bo Derek getting older.
 LONDON to AUSTRIA: Lay off BRUK, will you? He can't help the way he is. "Mentally retarded antelope?" That's a good one!



N E P T U N E

1982X

EVERYONE ATTACKS RUSSIA -- LET'S CALL IT THE KANE MUTINY!

Fall 1906

- ENGLAND (Duarte): F Nwy-Swe (d; r Ska, Bar, OTB), F Nth-NWG, F BRE H, F Eng-NTH
- FRANCE (Conlon): A KIE-Mun (A RUH S, A RUR S), A HOL-Kie, F BEL S ENGLISH F Eng-Nth, F MID H, A TYO S ITALIAN A Ven-Tri
- ITALY (Jedry): A VEN-Tri, F Rom-NAP, F Tyr-ION (F TUN S)
- RUSSIA (Kane): A Sev-RUM, A Ser S A Sev-Rum (d; r Alb, Bud, OTB), A TRI S A Ser, A VIE-Tyo, F HLG-Nth, F StP(nc)-NWY (F SWE S), A DEN-Kie, A SIL-Mun (A BOH S, A BER S), F Bla-ANK
- TURKEY (Schaunk): A Gre-SER (A BUL S), F Ion-AEG, F Eas-SMY, F Aeg-CON

Supply Center Chart:

- ENGLAND: Home, ~~Wyt~~, BRE 4, even
- FRANCE: Par, Mar, ~~Wyt~~, Spa, Por, Bel, Hol, Mun, ~~Wyt~~, KIE 8, build 1
- ITALY: Home, ~~Wyt~~, TUN 4, even
- RUSSIA: Home, Swe, Rum, Ber, ~~Wyt~~, Den, ~~Wyt~~, Vie, Bud, ANK, TRI, NWY 13, build 1
- TURKEY: Con, Smy, ~~Wyt~~, Bul, Gre, SER 5, even

Game Notes: Thank to Rob for taking over the Turkish position in this game.

Press:

- FRA to EJ: Welcome to the game. You've already proven to be a valuable addition.
- FRA to ROB: If you're anything like EJ, we've got a whole new game here. Welcome aboard.
- FRA to KANE: You will soon be afflicted by a strange malady; one no doctor will be able to diagnose or cure. Symptoms include sudden bursts of irrational fear and a faint buzzing in your head, which will sound ominously like, "Here cum da Judge, Here cum da Judge."
- FRA to LUNDI: Do you read all the press? Looks like you cannibalized gullibized. Does one have to be a vegetable and take drugs to get "leary"?
- FRA to LUNA LENNON: Par-freakin'-out! "I'm balding"

O R I O N

1982Y

IT'S RAINING, IT'S POURING, ORION IS BORING! ZZZZZZZZZZZZ...

Fall 1907

- ENGLAND (Ansoff): F MID H, F Nwg-NWY, A Nwy-SWE (F SKA S)
- FRANCE (Bennett): F ENG S ENGLISH F Mid, F POR S ENGLISH F Mid, A GAS S A Mar, A MAR S A Bur, A BUR S A Mar
- GERMANY (Wittmond): F Nth-DEN, F BAL S ENGLISH F Ska-Swe (NSO), A MUN H (A BER S, A RUH S), A PRU sings its death song (H)
- ITALY (Howerton): A PIE-Mar (F SPA (sc) S, F LYO S), A VEN H, A TRI S TURKISH A Tyo, F TYR H, A TUN H
- RUSSIA (DeLuca?): NMR! A Swe U (d; r Pin, OTB), A STP U, F BAR U, A WAR U, A SIL U, A LVN U
- TURKEY (Leritte): F ION C ITALIAN A Tun-Alb (NSO), F WES S ITALIAN F Spa(sc), F NAF-Mid, A GAL-Sil, A TYO S RUSSIAN A Sil-Mun (NSO), A BOH S RUSSIAN A Sil-Mun (NSO)

((ORION continues next page))

ORION (continued)

Supply Center Charts:

ENGLAND: Edi, Lvp, Swe, Nwy	4, even
FRANCE: Home, Por, Lon	5, even
GERMANY: Rome, Den, Hol, Bel	6, even
ITALY: Home, Tun, Cre, Tri, Spa	7, even
RUSSIA: Home, Rum, Vie	6, even
TURKEY: Home, Bul, Ser, Bud	6, even

Game Notes: COA for Rob Wittmond, 2033 Calle Salto, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. Rob, please be careful to date orders sent in.

Proposed for next season are an E/F/G/I/R/T draw and concessions to England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Turkey. Please vote by next deadline. Please stand by for Russia: Doug Beyerlein, 640 College, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Pete, I need orders and a sub removal if you are going to keep playing.

Press: TURKEY to WHOEVER GIVES A FLYING LEAP: The game has degenerated into a nice stalemate. Yay!



PEGASUS

1982Z

GERMANY'S LIFE IS OH SO VENIOUS!

Winter 1906

- AUSTRIA: Build A TRI, A VIE
- ENGLAND: even
- FRANCE: even
- GERMANY: even
- RUSSIA: Build A STP, A SEV
- TURKEY: Remove F Eas

Spring 1907

- AUSTRIA (Husk): F Rom-NAP, F BUL(sc) S A Cre, A GRE S F Bul(sc), A Tri-VEN, A Tyo-PIE, A Vie-TYO, A Ser-RUM (A BUD S)
- ENGLAND (Halverstadt): F Den-HLG, F Eng-BEL (F HOL S, F NTH S), A NAF-TUN, F Por-MID
- FRANCE (Chatfield?): NMR! A Mun U (d; r Bur, Pic, OTB), F MID U, F SPA(sc) U, F TYR U, A BRE U, F ION U, A ROM U
- GERMANY (MacFarlane): A Hun H (d; r Gal, Sev, OTB)
- RUSSIA (Melsner): A Nwy-SWE, A Ber-MUN (A KIE S), F BAL S A Kie, A Sev-CON (F ELA C), A ANK S A Sev-Con, A War-SIL, A Mos-UKR, A STP-MOS
- TURKEY (Punches): F Aeg-SMY

Game Notes: COA for Mike Melsner, 5604 York, Metairie, LA 70003. Proposed for next season are a concession to Russia, an F/R draw, an A/F/R draw, and an E/F/R draw. Please vote by next deadline. Last season I failed to list Russia's A KIE-Ruh. All players were notified. Please stand by for France, Michael Kettner, 1121 Church St. #312, Evanston, IL 60201.

Press: TURKEY: The death knell for Turkey began last season. Between the Sultan's buffoonery at forgetting to retreat and the Russian stab the lights will soon be out in Ankara. Does anyone out there care?

BRUX to TURKEY: I do! Oh, boo hoo hoo!
ENCLAND to EURAFASIA: You ain't seen nothin' yet!
PEGASUS ENGLAND to QUASAR FRANCE: Looking forward to Genghis Con. Hope you got my letter and hope to see you in ~~Spa~~ Denver. ((PEGASUS continues next page))

BUCHAREST (via GERMANY): The Kaiser wishes to express his appreciation to the nations of England, Austria-Hungary, and Russia for sponsoring his prolonged cultural awareness tour. After visiting nine different European provinces, including two capital cities, the Kaiser has determined that diplomacy as it is currently conducted in Europe is far too stale and stagnant for his tastes. In general, said the esteemed German commander, the "fun" of politics is being ruined by a select few national leaders. To remedy this, the Kaiser is offering a fifty million deutschmark prize to the first European leader who adopts his newly drafted policy of "Diplomacy by Coin Flip". Note: the French President Chatfield and all other leaders who similarly use the above tactic already are ineligible for the prize.

ENGLAND to GERMANY: Join the German Army and use the world!

LONDON to PARIS: What's the difference between a bowling ball and a Frenchwoman? You can only put three fingers in a bowling ball.

ROMANIA: In a one-hour press conference held early last week, the Kaiser repeatedly called for an end to the mayhem that ravages his homeland. "Let us put a stop to this carnage," said the illustrious German cultural hero. "The only hope for European survival is to stop the war now. Those leaders who continue for their own personal gain should be (and would be, if they lived in German territory) put to death (or better yet, tortured). End this tragedy!" Though no microphones picked the words up, the Kaiser is rumored to have muttered "or else..." at the conclusion of his speech. Unfortunately, it is not widely believed that the Kaiser could actually do anything to back up his ultimatum.

Q U A S A R

1982AE

ANOTHER EXCITING WINNER!

Winter 1905

AUSTRIA (Spector): Build A VIE. A TRI

ENGLAND (Glaspy): Build F BOI

FRANCE (Burd): Build F MAR

GERMANY (Howerton): even

ITALY (Paul): Remove F Nap

RUSSIA (Lansing): even

TURKEY (Sweeney): Remove A Pru

Game Notes: The seasons in this game were separated by player request. Under III Amendment #30, all press is held over till the Spring.

The standby list for regular Diplomacy in VD (which was used heavily this issue!) consists of the following people: Peter Ansoff, Dan Gerhaas, George Leriite, Peter Ashley, Jim Chatfield, Rob Schmunk, Randal Husk, Brent Bennett, Ty Hare, Michael Ditz, Eric Kane, Greg Ellis, Bob Howerton, Richard Edison, God, Peter Ishaka, Konrad Baumelster, Mark Duarte, Peter Elitstein, John Kador, Dave Carter, John Banke, G.H. Elender, Pat Gordon, Tim Lynch, Rob Wittmond, Paul Rauterberg, Jerry Lucas, Don Burt, Cathy Cunningham, Dudley Kidd, Mike Jones, Bob Sweeney, Dave Spector, John Davies, Jeff Patches, Doug Beyerlein, "Jane Proskin", Mark Paul, Larry Lansing, Edmund Judry, Mark Keller, Brian Orloff, Gerald Austin, Chuck Kaplan, Billy Highchair, Rick Bagdale, Michael Kottman, Rich Kelly, and Steve Knight. For JUPITER (Proxy Diplomacy), the list consists of Mark Larzelere (England only), Dan Stafford, Greg Mills, Jim Williams, and Jeff Note. Anyone wanting on or off either of these lists should let me know. Standbys play for free and, upon finishing, out their position, receive three free issues of VD.

"GET OUTTA MY HARE!" WALES SWEENEY, AS KLEIDMAN KISSES THE SOUTH GOOD KNIGHT!

Spring 1902

- AUSTRIA (Knight): A VIE-Gal, A Ser-RUM (A BUD S), F Tri-ADR
- ENGLAND (Sweeney): A NWY S GERMAN F Den-Swe (NSO), F NTH-Den, F Lyp-IRI, F Eng-MID
- FRANCE (Hare): A Spa-CAS, A Por-SPA, F Mar-LYO, F Bre-ENG, F Iri-WAL
- GERMANY (Heintzman): F Den-SKA, F KIE-Den, A Ruh-BEL (A HOL S), A Mun-TYO
- ITALY (Frick?): RMR! F NAP U, F TON U, A APU U
- RUSSIA (Kleiman): A STP-Fin, F SWE-Fin, A Mos-UKR, F SEV-Rus, A Rus-Tar (ann), A GAL-Bud
- TURKEY (Reilly): A BUL S AUSTRIAN A Ser-Rum, A Smy-ARM, F Ank-ELA, F Con-ABG

Game Notes: Would Dudley Kidd, 2421 Redmont Rd., Huntsville, AL 35810 please submit standby orders for Italy? COA for Dave Kleiman, 3530 Hyannis Port Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46224.

Press:

KAISER F.J. I to KAISER W. II ((via AUSTRIA)): "Emperor"? Was ist das "Emperor"? Wir sprechen kein Englisch in Oesterreich.

TURKEY to RUSSIA: Don't worry, ally, this is just a ruse...

SWEDEN: Admiral Kleiman reports that the First Russian fleet has sailed to secure the independence of the Finnish people.

VIENNA to WORLD: Apologies for the decline in the amount of mail from this corner. The pace will, I promise you, pick up after finals.

ANKARA: The Sultan, tired and nervous because of his recent move to the new palace, locked himself in his study for 3 days, from which he didn't emerge once, and only allowed his servants to enter. No one in the palace knew what he was up to, as he refused to speak to anyone, until finally he summoned his most trusted officers to the room, and told them that he had made a momentous decision.

"I am taking the offensive here--" he declared, smashing his fist on the map, "north into Sevastopol, and against the Russians in Rumania."

The surprised officers were silent for a moment, then burst into argument and objections.

"Silence!" the Sultan cried. "The decision has been made, and now we must have absolute secrecy. If word of this gets out, we shall fail horribly..."

"But if," he continued, leaning forward, smiling slightly with a wild glint in his eye, "...if the plan succeeds...it will be glorious."

ST PETERS: The general in charge of the First Russian army reports that the army has marched to secure the independence of the Finnish people.

VIENNA to LONDON: He who expects to be stabbed and never writes to ANYONE except his neighbors is in the wrong hobby.

MOSCOW: In a speech today, the Tsar commended the leaders of the Russian military. The Tsar emphasized that communication was the key to success and that his leaders always acted in conjunction with each other.

John Kador will be hosting a dippy barbeque at his place on June 4. Anyone connected with Diplomacy is invited to attend, though I regret that I can't make it. It'll be a chance to meet some people and have fun. If you will be going, since there won't be time to write John by the time this is published, call him at (301) 586-5282. He'll provide the steak, burgers, salad, etc.; but please bring a beverage. Rain date is June 5. I understand he'll be serving grammar crackers for dessert.

10

Lor. 'enry. 'ere Come Them Raytings an 'undred Times Hover!

by Rod Walker

Well, of course it was bound to happen. Bill Quinn announced he was going to (horrors, shades of Big Brother) actually put game results into a computer and actually make them available to people. I mean, really. What could be more evil, nasty, and cunnudgeonly than making public information available to the public? The very idea! Ought to be tarred and feathered, he should.

Thus we are writing another chapter in the "ratings war", if I may coin a name for it. Bill is of course not doing a rating system, but some of the arguments about what he is doing are similar in nature. So now seems to be a good time to discuss the whole question of game results, player records, and ratings systems.

To do this we have to take one of those boring excursions into the past which hobby Old Fogeys such as myself are wont to take from time to time. Those of you who think it boring can go suck an egg or something until we're through and then come back for Alex's Column or whatever's next.

Time was when the hobby was small enough that most people got all the zines anyway. There were very few games, and every few months John Boardman would print up the results in Graustark. It was nice to have a central source for that information, and people were genuinely interested in how other games turned out. There were no complaints then because it was certainly John's right to print the material and everyone else's right to read it (or not, as they chose). Besides, we all pretty much knew each other, and it was always interesting to know that John Smythe and John Koning had been in another game together and that one of them had won it. As a convenience for himself and his readers in keeping track of games, John gave them numbers. This assignment of game numbers and reporting results became the basis for what we now call the Boardman Number Custodian. In fact, in those days, every time a player was replaced or eliminated, the event was reported right then, in long lists of game roster changes...a BNC function right up until the end of my tenure in 1972 (when the sheer volume of games was making it too much work).

Then Norb Reinsel proposed giving points to people for how they did in their games... the first "rating system". That sort of thing got to be all the rage...everybody was designing a rating system and publishing the results. Some involved some quite complex and sophisticated mathematical formulae (and of course a lot of work keeping track of who'd done what).

And of course there were complaints. God knows, this hobby will never want for complainers. There are of course some real things to complain about, now and then, but mostly it's just gratuitous whining and carrying on. The main complain was that if you (through a rating system) pointed out certain players as "good", this would affect the play of the people who were in games with them. Furthermore, it was argued, people would "play the ratings" rather than the game itself.

Now it must be admitted that these arguments had some validity in the sense that they might have been true of some people. I can recall my own first postal game, in which I was Austria. It was my policy to get Italy to attack France, and one of the best arguments I used was that the French player (John Smythe) was one of the best, and therefore one of the most dangerous, in the field. But that was reputation, not rating...and I suspect that today the approximate skills of many players are known by many people who have never seen a rating system. And there were (and probably are) people who play the ratings, of which John Beshara was the most obvious example in hobby history. And I think it is true that nearly every player may, at one time or another, let questions of ratings or reputation or some such influence game decisions. Consider the players who vote for draws and concessions so as to avoid being eliminated.

Generally speaking, Diplomacy fen can be divided into two groups on this subject. There are those who think that ratings and such statistical stuff are important and interesting. And there are those who think they are a complete waste of time. It's the former group whose decisions might be affected by the results of ratings and polls...or the data in player records. I guess that I am unique to the extent that I am the only person in the hobby who represents a middle ground...I regard ratings and player records as irrelevant to the game, but I think they are interesting and devote quite a bit of my time

to compilations of that sort. And I believe that what Bill Quinn is doing is a great asset to the hobby. While I certainly respect contrary opinions, my basic reaction to them is that they are quaint...80 years ago, these same people would be saying, "If God intended man to fly..."

I suppose that what Bill is doing is potentially more "dangerous" than a mere rating system, which is a summary. He will make it possible for people to find out how each player did in each and every game he or she played. This would include not only games the player finished, but games in which he or she dropped out, resigned, or otherwise left the game. Of course, you can also get this information from Diplomacy World's rating system...when we publish it and if the player has accumulated enough points and games to be included. The beauty of Bill's service, once he has completed the data, is that you will be able to request a complete readout on every game a given individual has ever played in (and which has completed), up-to-date as of the most recent Everything. That's quite an achievement. But it can be viewed, as I said, as more "dangerous".

That's not true of people who play Diplomacy, genuinely, for fun. But there are "go for the throat" players who actually take a game almost as seriously as real life. They would probably object to having this sort of information about themselves available, but would be anxious to get it about others. For instance, let's say you ask for the record on a player and what you get back is a record of very strong finishes (wins, draws, second places) at one end of the scale, and drops and resignations at the other end, with nothing very much in between. What you have here is a player who, if he/she can't do well, will leave the game. That's nice to know, because it means that if you stab him/her, and it really hurts, the response will probably be a drop rather than resistance and you'll romp over a bunch of supply centers. On the other hand, if you find a record of mostly survivals in the medium-to-large range, you have there a good ally who will probably let you win in the end. If the survivals are in the medium-to-small range, you have a very tenacious player who might also make a good puppet. There are all sorts of things you might be able to deduce (rightly or wrongly) from a player record, and if you are in the game to play the other players, this information is useful. Which is why I say it can be viewed as "dangerous".

On the other hand, why should it be objected to? If you are the sort of player who has a playing pattern obvious from your public record, why should you object to people knowing about it? The playing pattern is your fault, not theirs. And what you do in your games is a matter of public record; you have no right to demand that it now be kept secret. Furthermore, Bill is not really putting out information which was previously unknown; rather, he is making available to everyone information which was previously known only to a lucky, privileged, or hyper-industrious few. These data are not of a personal or private nature, but part of the public and published record. Not only are objections to their publication poorly reasoned, nobody has a right to make any such objections.

In my opinion, Bill Quinn is to be commended for his public-spirited willingness to do all the necessary work. Probably 99% of the players in this hobby will not take advantage of his service, but it's nice to know that it's there. Let the paranoids complain! They should only be glad somebody is interested enough in them to find out what their playing records are.

((...Ain't it nice to know somebody cares about you?...as I asked in my Zoo issue. Seriously, your arguments make a lot of sense to me, and I'd like to change my vote from "neutral" to mildly in favor. I don't question Bill's right to do what he's doing, and now I don't even question whether some players will find it useful. As to whether I will, I don't know, but that's beside the point.

I must take exception to your comment on the previous page that players who vote for a draw or concession are necessarily letting ratings or reputations influence their play. I don't agree with this. Such players are simply trying to finish the game as well as they possibly can under the circumstances, which is entirely consistent with the spirit of the game regardless of your stance on ratings.

I know that I used Randolph Smyth's reputation and record greatly to my advantage in the recently-completed Swedish Roundabout, as part of my diplomacy to make sure Garry Hamlin stabbed him instead of me. But on the other hand, I despise players who simply play for a good rating. Five free issues for yet another thought-provoking article.))

The "Presidential Politics" Game

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by Jake Halverstadt

1. GENERAL OPERATION. The game is played over the course of 18 turns, each of which represents a week during the campaign of 1980. Players are candidates in the Democratic or Republican parties, seeking their party's nomination for the office of President.

As in a real presidential campaign, the candidate's goal is to collect delegates who will represent him and vote for his candidacy at his party's national convention. Each state is represented by delegates -- the number of delegates corresponding to the state's population and other factors -- most of whom are elected to represent the party by regular party members.

For example, California in 1980 was represented at the Democratic National Convention by 306 delegates. The Republicans sent 168 California delegates to their national convention. The delegates, in turn, were chosen in accordance with the presidential candidate they supported.

This selection process was based on a primary election. From early March through early June, party members in each state gathered to vote for their candidate for president. Delegates were selected as a function of this vote, with each candidate being awarded delegates in proportion to his success in the elections. For example, a Democrat getting 50 per cent of the California Democratic Primary vote would be awarded representation by 50 per cent of the California delegation, or 153 delegates.

The campaign process, because it takes place in widely separated areas over a series of consecutive weeks, can be quite interesting. Because of the changing locales and their different electorates, as well as the unpredictability of campaign issues as current events unfold, a candidate who seems the likely nominee early in the campaign may find himself powerless at the national convention. Eugene McCarthy in 1968, Edmund Muskie in 1972, Ronald Reagan in 1976 and George Bush in 1980 are familiar examples.

The "Presidential Politics" game takes its players through a series of 21 primary elections, the winner being decided by a unique "voting" system based on the actual attitudes of voters in each of the states.

2. ISSUES. The single most important aspect of the game is how the candidate stands on real issues that faced the candidates in 1980. Players make up their minds on 21 tough decisions like the MX missile, the military draft, fair housing and nuclear waste policy. Taking a particular stand on an issue may help them win votes in one state, while that same stand costs them votes in another state. At times, taking the right stand will help them raise additional campaign funds. Sometimes the candidate will find it prudent to "stonewall" the issue, buying time in hopes that a rival will stumble with an unpopular stand.

3. CAMPAIGN FUNDS. A political campaign, of course, runs on money. Campaign trips to Albany and Akron and Austin...paying for advertising in Des Moines and Detroit...paying the staff in Miami and Milwaukee -- it's all part of the game. Each player starts with the same amount of cash, but how he spends it and how much more money he is able to raise is completely up to him.

4. CAMPAIGN VISITS. Shaking hands and kissing babies (or shaking babies and kissing hands) can have a lot to do with how the candidate does at the polls. Each "week" the candidate fills out his own travel itinerary, with the chance to visit over 100 cities in search of votes. It's the weekend before the Florida primary, and you're looking like a winner. Do you squeeze in one more trip to Miami to cement your win, or head to Chicago to get a head start on next week's Illinois election? As the candidate, it's up to you.

5. MEDIA SHARES. Money has been known to buy an election, and it holds true in the "Presidential Politics" game. A candidate can sink megabucks into a flashy media presentation, virtually buying himself bushels of votes. But, will it be enough to win? Or, will his opponent outbid him, and buy all the media available? Will somebody torpedo his bank account -- and his candidacy -- by overspending in the wrong state at the wrong time?

And, what about that budget-minded sharpie coasting along thanks to the "equal time" stipulation of federal law? Again, it's all part of the game.

And, when the last ballot is counted (in the "Super Tuesday" primaries of June 3 in California, Ohio and New Jersey) one candidate will probably be his party's clear choice to be nominee for a chance at those spacious digs at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. If not, the candidates retreat to those famous smoke-filled rooms for the negotiating that might make any dark-horse the next occupant of the Oval Office.

A quick second round between the two candidates will decide the winner of the presidential election.

((Sounds great to me. I'd like to see the rules, and I'm interested in playing. Four free issues, Jake, for presenting this game in the pages of VD. Doomsies who want to join me in the game should write to Jake at 1106 Castlerock Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80521.))

A letter home from a college coed...

Dear Mother and Dad,

It has now been three weeks since I left for college and I have been remiss in writing and I am very sorry for my thoughtlessness in not having written before. I will bring you up to date now but before you read on, please sit down. OK?

Well then, I am getting along pretty well now. The skull fracture and the concussion I got when I jumped out of the window of my dormitory when it caught fire shortly after my arrival are pretty well healed now. I only spent two weeks in the hospital and now I can see almost normally, and only get those sick headaches once in a while.

Fortunately, the fire in the dormitory and my jump were witnessed by an attendant at the gas station near the dorm and he was the one who called the Fire Department and the ambulance. He also visited me at the hospital and since I had nowhere to live because of the burned-out dorm, he was kind enough to invite me to share his apartment with him. It is really a basement room, but it is kind of cute. He is a very fine boy and we have fallen in love, and are planning to get married. We haven't set the exact date yet, but it will be before my pregnancy begins to show.

Yes, Mother and Dad, I am pregnant. I know how you are looking forward to being grandparents and I know you will welcome the baby and give it the same love and devotion and tender care that you gave me when I was a child. The reason for the delay in our marriage is that my boy friend has some minor infection which prevents us from passing our premarital blood tests, and I carelessly caught it from him. This will soon clear up with the penicillin injections I am now taking daily.

I know you will welcome him into our family with open arms. He is kind and although not well educated, he is ambitious. Although he is of a different race and religion than ours, I know your oft-expressed tolerance will not permit you to be bothered by the fact that his skin is somewhat darker than ours. I am sure you will love him as I do. His family background is good too, for I am told his father is an important gunbearer in the village in Africa from which he comes.

Now that I have brought you up to date, I have to tell you that there was no dormitory fire. I do not have a concussion or skull fracture, I was not in the hospital, I am not pregnant, I am not engaged, I do not have syphilis, there is no schvartze in my life. However, I am getting a D in History and an F in Chemistry, and I wanted you to see these matters in their proper perspective.

Sincerely,

Your loving daughter

((Thank to my brother SHRIV for submitting the above to VD.))

From Rob Schmunk (5/12/83):

Dear BRUX,

Thanks for letting me into the NEPTUNE game. It's nice to become an active Doomie, though I can see why Ed Wrobel resigned now instead of waiting a little longer.

As you've noticed, I've enclosed the rules to Gaiko, a medieval Japan variant of Diplomacy. I'd like to get a game of it going, but I'm a little hesitant to use the rules as they currently read. I'd appreciate your opinion of them... A little background might help you understand the reasoning behind the formal alliances. The fellow who wrote the game (this is the gamer that I mentioned in my last letter) hates the double-dealing, lying and backstabbing of regular Diplomacy and sought a way to limit it. I'm not sure if I like what he came up with. Ironically, four months after he wrote up Gaiko, he was hit with one of the best backstabs I've ever been indirectly involved with in a PBM Diplomacy game. He subsequently resigned. While I'm on the topic, could you announce in VD that I'd like to run this? I don't know enough players to get eight people that haven't already dealt with each other pretty extensively.

The last VD was pretty interesting. The essay on the uses of the word "fuck" still starts me laughing when I happen to think about it. However, are you sure that "The True Story of Creation" didn't qualify as a personal attack on every male reader of the zine?

Seems to me that I saw some mention of a convention in Denver soon, but I can't find it now. Could you clear this up for me?

You wouldn't believe the weather around here. Up until a week or two ago we had massive amounts of sunshine and the shorts and bikinis were becoming crowded on the beach. Now it's been snowing for five days and the temperature hasn't smuck above 40F. Montana can be beautiful but the weather sure is a pain.

((I enjoyed reading the rules to Gaiko, but didn't like the provision for "formal alliances" in which a player is rewarded for honoring his agreements and penalized for stabbing. Different tastes, of course, but I prefer the lying and backstabbing of regular Dip. I also think that it's an act of extremely poor sportsmanship to resign from a Dip game because of a stab.

Doomies interested in joining Rob's game should write to him at 1924 Avalon, Idaho Falls, ID 83402.

Maybe Jake Halversatdt or Don Burd can help you out regarding con info for the Denver area.))

From Dick Martin (5/17/83):

Dear BRUX,

I wonder how Ronald Brown knows that I sent him pointless attacks on his character, he evidently hasn't read them. I couldn't care less that he wrote to Gary, I do care when he calls me insane, a crook, or both, and those "pointless attacks" told him as much. If Ron had simply written "a few letters to Gary Coughlan" I never would have even thought twice. Plenty of other folks write Gary, and I really couldn't care less. It's when folks like Ronald Brown, who doesn't know me, start writing for print what my motivations are, that I react. How does he know? And he's been writing to more than just Gary, too, I've seen similar remarks in at least one other zine as well. If poor, innocent Ronald Brown had just minded his own business, there would be no negative feelings. If you feel the urge to blurt out uninformed opinions, retract them, and then they pop up again, well, that invites trouble.

What's the problem with Robert Sacks? He has no power, and little influence. I like the guy. Then again, I like Boardman and Michalski, too.

The above goes into VD #78 or not at all, please, or any VD before the end of May, '83.

((OK. Dick, you're right as always. Back to the fun letters.))

From Dave Carter:

Bruce,

Your old style of repro is much better but I hardly blame you for changing over to keep the cost down. Since the content is what counts and not the pretty packaging I won't be too upset over the change.

I don't know why you are too so hard on your Post Offices. At least the US PO made a profit. Canada's PO is hundreds of millions of dollars in the red...and that's with 3 cents postage. The thing that really bothers me about the high postage rate is that even if I send one line of correspondence on the back of a post card it still costs me 37¢. I've often thought of buying some US 13-cent post cards and mailing them to somebody trustworthy in the US to mail for me. So far I cannot think of anyone I would trust to read my Dip orders/correspondence.

How would I handle the incident referred to as '79IId? I would, of course, have informed the GM immediately. It's an unfortunate situation, but can you imagine how a GM would feel at the end of a game when you inform him that all the hard work that he put into the game after the disclosure may have been in vain? Far better to let the GM cancel the game (as I would have done as GM) and consider it a bad experience.

((I disagree still with your solution, though of course it is just as reasonable as mine. As it turned out in 79IId (the Blind Madman game in which the GM mistakenly sent me the board position part way through the game), no one at all expressed any resentment toward me or John Michalski. I figure this was probably due to the fact that everyone in the game was a good sport, and that Michalski's GMing was generally superb. I still feel that to tell the GM right away might have spoiled the fun -- if John had cancelled the game, it definitely would have.

Sure, the US Post Office made a profit. They made a handsome profit on me very recently. A few weeks ago, I sent Jim Meinel a bundle of old zines in the mail. A couple of days later, I got back the wrapper I had sent them in (or, more accurately, part of it). I was asked to describe the contents and then I was supposed to hope that they could find them somewhere in the deep dark bowels of the postal system. I explained the situation, that the lost newsletters were too diverse to accurately describe, and that I'd simply like my \$2+ in postage back. I got back a form letter indicating that I couldn't get my money back because the package wasn't insured. The USPS is a sick joke, especially lately.

The reason I'm going into so much detail about the above is that I can just picture, with a hearty chortle, about 30 or 40 different publishers and ex-publishers getting back some old copies of their zines in the mail because most of them had return addresses. So, if anybody reading this gets back an old copy of his zine addressed to me and with a cancelled stamp, that's what happened. Send it along to Jim Meinel, OK?

I'd be willing to volunteer my services as an official post card passer for anyone living in Canada, with confidentiality guaranteed. Only exceptions would be for correspondence about VD games -- I wouldn't do that at all. Heck, a Canadian could even write to another Canadian more cheaply this way! If there are any Doomies in Canada who want me to do this for them, let me know.))

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

Dear BRUX,

...One comment for Bill Highfield: please inform him -- and the whole hobby, of course -- that he has incorrectly stated his rank. Being once in the same position he was, I know that he should have written: William S. Highfield, Midshipman 4/c USNR. Tell Bill to look at his ID card and I can be sure that it is pink (if he's got a scholarship) or brown (if he doesn't), not green (like mine, stating USN-active status). He hasn't earned that yet.

((Well, Bill, what's the word?

I do know that Bill's status in real life is hyperactive, but I don't know about his military status.))

From Geoff Challinger (5/15/83):

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Dear BRUX,

Since I just received VD 76 I thought I'd better get down to writing to you before the production of Home 26 intervenes. I wrote you a letter before but I just discovered it the other day, serving as a book marker. The road to hell has a nice pavement.

I heartily approve of the change to ditto, though I see that the strange American dislike of mimeo continues. The ultimate appearance of mimeo zines is far better than ditto and has roughly the same costs of production. Home is not the best in this context but you've only to look at Denver Clont to see how well mimeo can be handled. It is also a myth that it's a dirty process. Yes, the ends of your fingers do get a little dirty but no worse than ditto carbons. And you can easily make corrections.

But ditto it is in any case. I like it because it feels like some of my older American zines -- Conrad's zines and Hoosier Archives, etc. In a strange way, the zine feels more personal. The editor has been involved in the actual production and the copy I receive is somehow more personal than when prepared, printed, and centre-stapled by some soulless printshop.

Trading seems fine to me, I've no objection and we seem to be heading towards zero at roughly the same speed. I'd still be interested in why you were so hot on mutual scribbling. Could it have anything to do with your means of production? I presume an additional copy of VD is one one hundred and twenty-fifth of the total, whereas the marginal cost under a mimeo/ditto system is really the cost of the paper alone, all remaining costs having been absorbed by the earlier copies.

I enjoyed Rod's piece on good ol' Charlie Reinsel. So much so, I've dug out the enclosed piece. You may receive it from some of your slightly older subscribers anyway but just in case... Quite what happened to Conrad's crusade I don't know, maybe Rod could clue you in. Perhaps Rod also might know what happened to Conrad who really fulfilled a Coughlanesque role in the early seventies in terms of the links between the US and British hobbies which were far stronger then. Hannibal, a zine I was associated with around 1973/74 used to trade with 7 or 8 US zines which was pretty much standard at the time. Now most UK zines will trade with Chantecler and Europa Express and call that internationalism.

Conrad's success in the UK lies partly with the fact that he was quite the best writer the American hobby ever produced, but that he had a slightly crazy (Pythonesque, although pre-dating Monty Python's appearance in America) sense of humour. Whilst Lon Lakofka was slogging through turgid, obvious strategy articles, Conrad was putting out "Allan B. Callhomer is a Phallic Symbol" (see Home 23 when it gets there). I'd love to know what happened to Conrad when he scaled down his hobby activities.

I nearly fainted when I found out that dear old Hyperac is still in motion. I really must get in touch with Pete Ansoff if only to find out how the game's going. I used to play in that game and ran my own in the UK until it (messily) folded in 1976. Running a zine when you are homeless and jobless is a bit tricky and tends to sap drive. The very fact of this dubious backdrop is what caused me to call the zine Home of the Brave. Nothing to do with American anthems or any such.

Drifting back to the point of Rod's article, I think your approach on house rules is, as not quite the way I like to GM. There now, that put it nicely without even being vaguely insulting about your crazy approach. It does seem to typify the "American approach" to playing. There doesn't seem to be any sense of Diplomacy as a game rather than a contest. This gladiatorial approach also spills over into the hobby of zine production (different hobby) and nowhere have I seen examples of criticism being well-taken.

I and most of the other British GMs adopt a totally laid-back approach to running games, to their benefit it seems. Perhaps I'm a bit more laid-back than the rest; I'll take late orders, sloppy orders, ambiguous orders (so long as...), and nobody bats an eyelid. There are British GMs who are strict but they are few and far between. Ultimately what the GM says goes and most British players are happy to accept that in the knowledge that we have yet to come up with anyone sufficiently like Charlie Reinsel to make legislative precaution necessary. Perhaps the finest way of expressing my approach to the house rules is drawn from the Hyperac rules (unless Pete has changed them recently). This states that anything not expressly covered by the rules will be resolved by the GM in the "spirit of the game".

Of course, I suspect that your house rules ceased to have any relevance long ago and you are now just playing the thing as a game. If one were to be legalistic about it then the rules would be invalid since they are rendered so by the volume of amendments. If you can't use them as a sane piece of writing without digging through seventeen supplementary sheets then the whole thing is useless.

Right, I'll try and find out how much this is to put in the post, allow myself a little smirk at the good intentions of Dave Kleiman, and sign off.

I'll publicise your new trading with European zines in Hous if you're after European zines. I think they're more likely to respond that way.

((Please do...and that is the reason I've broken down and decided I'll trade for reliable European zines. Mutual subs are just too much of a pain to figure when one has to convert to foreign currency, and I should get more response by trading.

I tried mimeo (as well as ditto) when I first began publishing, and had a lot of trouble with the machine (VD #1 was one of the few issues that was almost late). I ended deciding to use offset printing, and only recently gave ditto another, more successful, try. I'm still not familiar enough with mimeo to judge it, though I know it does look a lot better than what you're reading here. Why Me? is a good example of an American mimeo zine.

I found your approach to house rules different than mine, but similar to that of many American GMs. Several of us over here adopt my approach (Coughlan, Ronald Brown, and Randolph Smyth are good examples, I think) but we're in the minority. I was amused at your observation that my house rules ceased to have any relevance long ago, though. No, I still use them and always have, as a fairly strict guideline to running my games. You're right that they're cumbersome, though, and this problem is one I hope to rectify with the help of Steve Knight, who has generously offered to do some editing on them this summer.

I tend to agree with you that we Americans seem to take the hobby much more seriously than our British counterparts, but quite a few of us can take a good deal of criticism without becoming offended.

I was intrigued by the enclosure you sent regarding Charlie Reinsel. It doesn't appear that I will have room to print the whole thing, so (for the sake of the readers) it was a dittoed circular letter from Conrad von Metzke which went to all active game-masters in 1973, protesting Reinsel's practice of expelling players from his games for (apparently) no good reason. Conrad was attempting to persuade all these GMs to write to Games Research, Inc., to ask for the removal of Reinsel's name from the leaflet accompanying all copies of the game sold back then.

Reinsel sounds like quite a character, but there are people just as upset with me today as with him in 1973, so maybe he wasn't all that bad. I'd still appreciate hearing from anyone who has his address, so that I can send him copies of these discussions...

And now another British publisher checks in...))

From Glover Rogers:

Dear Bruce,

Yeah, we are trading! I think I've sent you a couple of Denvers -- the idea was that VD was going to go to Kim. However, I'm enjoying it too much now, so I shall keep it for myself if that's all right by you.

You are now the third U.S. zine I get -- EE was the first, No Fixed Address (Canadian! Sorry.) second, and now VD. I suspect that Thirty Miles of Bad Road will be the fourth. Plus, I expect to see a few issues of Guthy's Ramblings...and all this after I said I'd never take a foreign trade. I find the U.S. zines to be almost totally different in feel to the British. Firstly the level of personal invective -- even if meant to be funny -- just doesn't occur over here. Perhaps that's a cultural difference. Secondly, the level of commitment to Diplomacy seems much higher. Both VD and EE treat Dip with a great deal of reverence, and the GMs seem to put an incredible amount of effort into making the games work. I suspect that your average U.S. player is better than your average Brit; though whether this is a cause of dedicated GMs or a result, I don't know.

You were losing \$100 an issue? Now! In that taking into account the value of the

trades you receive, or is it just a pure financial loss? It seems an incredible amount to me. I reckon on about 5 to 10 pounds on a production run of 115, but I take in around 12 pounds of trades per month.

House rules: I confess, I'm one of the "sort it out as it comes up" brigade -- once again it's a topic which I couldn't see ever taking any sort of hold in a British zine. Nobody seems that worried, though I do know that quite a lot of GMS over here do have strict and fairly comprehensive sets of house rules. In Denver you rely upon my honesty, I guess -- and by now, I hope, my reputation. I can't think of an occasion when a player/GM conflict has arisen because of house rules (or lack of them) in the UK. But this seems to come back to my earlier point, that in the states you treat your Diplomacy more seriously than we seem to. (I don't mean to imply that we don't play to win, but just that we don't seem to put the same effort into it.)

OK, coming to the end now. Time to disappear. Time to point out that you sent Voice of Doom to the wrong address, but don't let it worry you too much -- correct address is on the back of this...

The "zoo" issue was ace: although few of the names are "known" to me, it was easy enough to get the idea. Chalk up one impressed person...

Hunting: I can't see a morally sustainable argument against someone killing something and eating it, in order to stay alive. And in those circumstances, better to kill and eat, than let some butcher kill for you. Of course, vegetarians can have a moral objection to hunting, and pure "sport" hunting is just a waste, but I don't think you can generalize on all hunting. Rats, out of space.

((I agree that hunting for food is OK, but hunting is killing and doing it for sport is in my opinion tantamount to murder.

My loss of over \$100 an issue before going ditto was purely financial; I didn't have any trades back then.

Your comments about house rules and the degree of commitment to Diplomacy in the U.S. versus Great Britain are strikingly similar to Geoff's in the previous letter. Keep in mind that the level of commitment in most American zines is not nearly as high as in the three you receive (he said modestly...), but overall I still agree. British zines seem bigger and much more chatty; there doesn't seem to be a whole lot of feuding going on over there either. I would guess that this is due not only to a cultural difference between our two countries, but also to the size of yours. Most British publishers live within a days drive of each other, I suspect, and therefore probably know each other personally (though that doesn't seem to inhibit feuding in the states, come to think of it...).

I'm glad to be trading for Denver Glont, and hope that you, like Geoff, will publicize my quest for European trades. Thanx for writing.

Hey, all three of the British publishers I'm trading with wrote in this month...))

From Pete Birka (5/15/83):

Dear Bruce,

Only received VD 76 today, with the "are we trading?" question on the back. I suspect that since then my copies of Greatest Hits have begun to arrive. Interestingly, I have not yet received VD 75, either.

Ditto printing has certainly meant a reduction in the quality of printing, although that doesn't particularly worry me. It's a method which has never caught on in the UK, although the cost of a reasonable duplicator has meant that those without access to an office or college machine are increasingly resorting to lithe.

15 year old girls writing columns? Bill Highfield: only 12 years old? This is all one of your gigantic hoaxes, isn't it, Linsey? Nice to see someone meeting Joe Jackson, though. I saw his last concert in Britain before he, it looks like finally, departed these shores for good and for fame and fortune. I've been a fan of his for some time, and it's always nice to see someone make it big in the USA. "Night and Day", doubtless, was written by him with precisely that in mind, and doesn't quite live up to his first two albums ("Look Sharp" and "I'm the Man") but is superior to "Beat Crazy" and his Forties sidestep period album, the name of which I forget.

I see from Halverstadt's letter that there is greyhound racing in the States. I must admit I was unaware of this. Dog racing is something I always enjoy going to see, although I must admit that I do it far rarer than I would wish because of time and money. However, it's significantly cheaper than a day out horse-racing. Mind you, how anyone can enjoy racing when all you do is back dogs/horses on the tote baffles me. Then again, that's something which has often puzzled me about the States. For a free country (in so far as any country can be called "free") the USA has far more regulations than Britain on virtually every matter of personal living. Some of them are excellent, of course (lead-free petrol, for a start), but others seem remarkably petty and/or restricting on people's freedom. The Tote monopoly is one such, I feel. Of course, speaking as an off-course betting-shop manager, I might be construed as being biased. And as for a 55mph speed limit. Farcical. I suppose most people in the States feel the same, which is why any Presidential candidate who promises to "get government off the backs of the people" (Carter, Reagan) has a lot going for him. People are just voting against all those regulations which get them down, year in, year out.

I like John Kador's writing, partly because bad English offends me as much as it obviously offends me ((him?)), partly because I often think "there but for the grace of God..." (typing 30 or so pages a month, mostly first draft, a number of errors are bound to crop up) and partly because by writing this I hope he chooses not to pick on me...

Enough. Look forward to VD 77, which you have doubtless already typed and posted. Let me know if CH hasn't arrived yet, as well.

((As I type this, I've only received one issue. I look forward to more.

You're right about the limits imposed on our personal freedom in the USA. For instance, it is illegal for us to bet here, except when the state takes out a chunk of the money. The 55mph speed limit is silly (and also generally not obeyed by many people).

Billy Highchair is widely known as a twelve-year-old due to a "twelfth birthday party" we held for him at a pizza parlor near my house when he visited last winter. On the other hand, Alex really is 15. She got to meet Joe Jackson in his hotel room after going to a concert of his recently. I wonder if he knew the privilege was his...

I haven't liked dog racing ever since I heard that they still use live rabbits in training them. I think they're just nice to have as pets.))

From Ig Lew (various excerpts):

Sorry they don't like ditto. I do. If you tried digest, I doubt I'd reub. You think I'm kidding--

Looks like Alex doesn't mind killing fish as much, poor deer. I met a charming 12-year-old named Alexandra.

I've been told there wouldn't be such a stick about killing seals (in my home state!) if they weren't cute. I believe it; so what. I wouldn't watch TV if life weren't pretty. I've taken a renewed interest in chess. I used to play like everyone else because I knew how the pieces moved and I had some idea of strategy, but now it's genuinely interesting. I've got a horrible rating because for some reason I don't recall I got in a tournament when I was 9? 10? and was slaughtered for a provisional rating of six hundred some. Now I come back and it's still there dammit.

I wouldn't call myself knowledgeable 'cept compared to VD readers -- the one-eyed man is king in the land of the blind, no? Near as I can tell Ouroboros is saying "Adolescent humor is typical of Linsey and his cohorts, but we, the management of Boardman Inc., are not amused." Stuff like that makes me like Boardman. You think I'm kidding?

Glad to see dated letters. Don't give a shit about controversy or lack of it. These novices would know a good feud if they stepped in it. Anything that makes a novice not real eager to get involved must be good. Don't forget today's novice is tomorrow's old fart. Could you imagine if they weren't screened?! (Shudder.)

In all the phone calls I've had with BRUX, only once has he come close to being "chatty". If you want a good time, don't call Bruce.

Couple years ago some local greenies (= environmentalists here) put on a show of

short mostly political skits &c. One of them had Watt as a little boy attacked by a bear which destroyed his home and killed his parents. Cute.

Leader Poll already, huh? Your "vote now" is utterly ridiculous. Wait till mid June and the results will be two months faster.

Rating subzines is ridiculous. Too fuzzy on what constitutes one. Alex's Column was called a subzine in some poll. Besides all subzines are shit.

Well, there's your letter. Ouch makes VD worth my 50¢ (45, whatever). Suppose I can do the same for someone else...
Nice issue. Still like the

((Ig still has the bad habit of making the more interesting parts of his letters not for quote, so this is all I could print of his latest.

I think that Alex's Column qualifies as a subzine, every bit as much as, say, Kathy's Korner or Mos Kisley Spaceport. (Readers who disagree are asked to provide a reason.) Mid-June is too late for mail from much of the US to make its way to Alberta.

I'm not usually too chatty at 6 in the morning or on deadline days, and these are the too times you generally like to call, though not much lately. Also, I prefer to hold long conversations on your nickel, so when I call, I'm never too verbose.

Thanks for your explanation of Boardman's note.
My Alex is better than your Alex!))

From Billy Highness (5/18/83 and 5/20/83)

Dear Loose Bruce,

I find it necessary to comment on Tailman's letter (enclosed is the book I want doing it!).

First of all, those who bitch about Ronald Reagan and the economy are receiving hand-outs or are unemployed. I'm employed and love the present state of affairs. I think that Ron's doing an adequate job.

Second of all, if he wants free money given to lazy alphas, then get the bucks from the assinine churches. Most people are just too lazy to find jobs. I'm all in favor of wetbacks because they do jobs Americans wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole!

Thirdly, our presence in Latin America is essential. The El Salvadorian government is a government trying to become a democracy while communists from Cuba, Russia and Nicaragua kill civilians. Oh sure, some ignorant Salvadorans are involved. What he's saying is that we should look the other way to communist involvement and let a fellow American country fall into the crazies' hands! NO! We must stop them. The American liberals will eventually force this country to collapse into isolationism. The communists would take over our fellow nations and surround us. Eventually, we would be invaded.

During Viet Nam the government said to fight them there so that we won't have to fight them at home. We failed and now they're off the streets and in our back yard!

Pacifism is nice but let's be realistic! We've got megabucks (mucho money!) and they don't. The communists live only to conquer the world. Therefore, sooner or later we will meet in battle and the whole world will tremble. We might not get lucky like WWI and WWII! They want the United States -- body and soul. They'll never stop until they're dead.

While America watches its TV and reads uncensored newspapers and eats like a pig, remember that they want it!

We must re-awaken the dormant survival instincts in Americans who have gone soft and liberal. I want to live in peace in the greatest republic (we are not, for should not be) a democracy) in the world! I don't care who I have to kill to resuscitate (true, commies, Rusksies, Jews in Israel, Arabs, Europeans, Africans, or Chinese!). It's a violent world out there -- if you don't play by the revised rules they drop out of the game and hope there's a heaven!

Hitler was not a nice guy but at least he knew the rules to the game: total war, no mercy to the enemy, and fight to the death!

I admit I'm sounding severely right wing, but I'm just saying that when the battle is brought to you, FIGHT! Fight terrorism, fight communism! Damn it, I'd rather dump money

into El Salvador to stop communism than wait and end up fighting on our land!

To those who wish this country to be a quiet democracy, forget it! We are the #1 Western power and we should not be a democracy! We should be a republic, like in the pledge of allegiance. What's the difference? Well, a democracy is when everyone votes (even mental peons!). Democracies don't last because they either turn into chaos or a police state. A republic is when there are restrictions on voting rights. Then, we could re-institute the literacy test to voting. There's no reason why someone should not be able to read! There are public schools, tutoring, programs, etc. for them to use. If we keep peons in the voting system then corruption will spread.

Back to welfare. I'm in favor of aiding severely poor persons. However, they should work for the money! Restrictions should be placed on the number of kids allowed and no more money should be paid for a kid if you have, say, your third kid while you're on welfare. The recipients can work on highway clean-up, street clean-up, etc.

For example, if all the recipients of welfare in NYC had to clean up during the day for 6 or 7 hours, then NYC would not have so much shit all over the place (remember our trip, Bruce?!).

I don't claim to be the next messiah. I just claim to be an American who is sick and tired of seeing the greatest nation on earth shit on! I don't know about you, but if I was asked to give my life to save this country, I would. Think about what you take for granted: freedom, TVs, food, shelter, money, peace, etc. Think of those who died to protect it and think of the scum trying to destroy it! If patriotism is a sickness then I'm terminally ill! Patriotism goes beyond supporting our Olympic Hockey team. I'd love to see everyone scream USA! USA! just in thanks. Not because they like a hockey team! I thank America every day when I wake up and I pledge allegiance to the giant American flag which covers an entire wall of my bedroom. How many Americans still know the pledge or the words to our national anthem? How many of us thank our forefathers or those who died so that we could be free? Think about it.

((Different letter...)) Amerks are #1! The Rochester Americans have won the Calder Cup in the American Hockey League championship. The entire city is rejoicing! Thousands turned out for a special victory day parade for our Amerks today (yes, me too). A friend commented on the Islanders and we said, "Who cares about those wimps? Our Amerks won the Calder Cup!" It's the beginning of a hockey dynasty! Yahoo!

Oh well, it'll be a week before this city calms down. Let's get on to talking about another champion...

How's Alex? I hope she's OK. I wouldn't want nothing happening to her, you know? What does she think about Judy Winsome's personality crisis? How are you and Alex getting along? I wouldn't want you to lose Alex's Column, you know? She should start a "Dear Alex" section.

You know, I really get ticked off when people rock out you, me and/or Alex. I mean, sure, I've thought of asking Alex out and yeah, I'm still a teenager (19years). I guess I think of Alex as more of a sister to me, you know? Of course, you never know when things might become a little incestuous. (Ha ha, just kidding folks!) Seriously, though, I really care about Alex and I don't enjoy being called a "childish zit-faced teen". Christ, my 11-year old brother is more mature than Tallman...

I continue to stumble upon cretins who think I worship Reagan! Sure, I think he's only adequate. I agree only with about 50% of his policies. It's just that all politicians are scumbuckets. They are all full of shit; it's just that Reagan doesn't smell as bad as the rest!

Well, time to go. I've been working 8:30 AM to 9:00 PM every day except Sundays and I need SLEEP! See ya later!

PS. It's Highfield, not Highchair! Don't mangle my signature or I'll ~~re-arrange~~ re-arrange your face (again!). Somebody goofed the first time (just kidding).

((Re your writing on the virtues of America: are you sure you're not related to John Boardman?

Alex is fine, thank you, and just goes around being her usual lovable self.

For the record, I agree with the idea that a literacy test should be a prerequisite to voting. How's that for a remark to generate a response?))

From Ronald Brown (5/15/83):

22

Dear Bruce,

re your article called "Fuck" in VD #77. I am appalled at the grammatical analytic skills of the author. As a former English teacher, I can't let that go by.

<u>Sample Sentence</u>	<u>You Said</u>	<u>Correct Answer Is</u>
John fucked Mary.	transitive verb	correct
Mary was fucked by John.	intransitive verb	transitive verb in passive
John really gives a fuck.	active verb	It's a <u>noun!</u>
Mary doesn't give a fuck.	passive verb	Ditto. <u>Noun.</u>
John can fucking run.	adverb	correct
Mary is a terrific fuck.	noun	correct
Mary is fucking beautiful.	adjective	It's an adverb.
Score: 3 out of 7 = 43% (F)		

Here are sample sentences using the word the ways you indicated.

1. Transitive verb: John fucked Mary.
2. Intransitive verb: They fucked all night.
3. Active verb: Mary fucked John.
4. Passive verb: John was fucked by the insurance company.
5. Adverb: That was a fucking beautiful sight.
6. Noun: What a great fuck!
7. Adjective: The fucking hole gaped open.

Now, what about all the derivatives of this word?

fuck can be all of the above.

fuck around: vb intransitive; promiscuous or acting aimlessly

fucked-up: adjective; confused, disordered

fucker: noun; a disagreeable person

fuck off: vb intransitive; leave forthwith

fuck over: vb transitive; to exploit

fuck up: vb transitive; to ruin; intransitive; to act foolishly

fuckup: noun; one who blunders

By the way, "fuck" comes to us from Norwegian *fukka* (to copulate) or Swedish *focka* (to copulate), *fock* (penis). It's been in the English language since at least the Middle Ages (pre-Norman conquest). Like many Anglo-Saxon words, it became associated with peasant speech, in contrast with the Latinized speech of the Norman (French) ruling class. The class structure of the English language still persists, after 900 years of development. For example, "polite" people say copulate (derived from Latin), and only the lower classes say "fuck." Same for "penis" versus the Anglo-Saxon "cock" or (horrors) "pudenda" versus "cunt." Strange that the "older" forms of English words should develop such bad reputations and that the forms imposed by the Norman conquest of England should be regarded as more "acceptable". We go even further when we can't find Latinized equivalents, and have to invent awkward constructions to avoid saying Anglo-Saxon words for common bodily functions. "Passing water" instead of "piss"; "having a bowel movement" instead of "shit."

The French have no such problem. In fact English-speaking tourists in Québec are sometimes shocked to see the word "Toilet" marking a "public convenience." But, that's the word in French and they haven't found it necessary to disguise it with terms like "washroom." (How often do you go to that room for the express purpose of "washing"? More often than not, you have another objective in mind.)

As a teacher in the classroom, being responsible for developing "acceptable" speech patterns in my students, I gave mild reprimands to students who made excessive use of "four letter words" and generally would ignore their occasional use. Severe chastisement was reserved for those who used genuinely obscene speech. To me that is racist slurs. Being words like "nigger," "frog," "wop," or "Fack!" was likely to lead to a demand for

an apology and possible expulsion from the classroom. I wish there was some way to convince zine publishers that the word "frog" is far more offensive than "fuck." "French Fucked" is more acceptable as a headline for a game report than "Frogs Eliminated." I guess part of the problem is that North Americans generally do not come into contact with other nationalities and so are insensitive to the effect of their racial insults. Oh well...
Gone on long enough.

((How about "Frogs Fucked" for a game report?

Seriously, I agree with your opinion that racial slurs are more offensive than four-letter words, as the latter category does not degrade any group of people. And I enjoyed your dissertation on the word fuck.))

From Richard Edison (5/19/83):

Dear Bruce,

Everyone knows that darcimonorious is your, but are the roots of the word yours as well? I'm sure you'll be glad to hear that upon investigation, I learned that darcimonorious comes from "darco", meaning "many", and "monorat", meaning "much". Ergo, if you have a darcimonorious number of things, you have many much of them.

I'd like to tell you a story about my college, and the people who work in the housing office. My housemate, Ty, had a couple of friends on his freshman wing, Sam and Ray. Sam and Ray went to high school together in Denver, and were close friends. They decided to try sharing a room at Colorado College, where they were both going in the fall of 1977. They didn't think that the college would let them room together if they asked outright, so they decided to try and fool the housing office. What they did was, on the application for what kind of housing they wanted, they both wrote exactly the same thing. It went something like, "I am a very messy, dirty person with a lot of bad habits except for smoking, and I want to room with someone exactly like myself." Fortunately, it worked. I guess the housing office at CC really tries to do its best. They also have a sense of humor. Ty Hare's freshman roommate was named Kurt Bunny.

By the by, Ty and I are splitting up (cheers from the uh-oh squad!). The break-up began when our third roommate, Maura, got transferred to Phoenix. We decided that the house was too much for two people, so Ty, who got accepted to grad school, is moving to Monterey, where prices and rent are three times as high as Berkeley. I plan on staying in Berkeley. This may help to stop the nasty rumors that Ty and I are 1) lovers, 2) one and the same person with a psychosis, 3) a pair of gerbils owned by Maura Huber. Now, Walker can send DW to both of us, as can vous, and Konrad, and Judy W., and Ron Brown (Calif.). Although I expect that you don't mind being redundant, Brucephelus, as long as you can add another number to your circulation statistic.

Sincerely,

Tom T. Hall

and my Ford pick-up

((Sorry, but I cannot send DW to both you and Ty without feeling redundant, as I don't publish DW.

I once knew a guy who Ty and Kurt would have loved to have as a roommate. His last name was Pray, and we called him Lettuce.

So sorry to hear you and Ty are breaking up. Who's getting custody of the kids?))

From Mark Berch (5/24/83):

Dear Bruce,

On the topic of season separations, my view, as on many GMing matters, is this: simplest is best. A single player request will separate seasons. There's no need for a GM to impose a separation; after all, if no player requests one, why delay the game? As a secondary point, I'd also be lenient in defining a request -- a player submitting only winter orders would be making an implicit request for a season separation. This will of course produce a lot of separations, but so what? This is just a game, not a race. People such as Michalski often present separations as just a mechanism for gaining additional

time, which wouldn't be needed if the player were prompt and foresightful. But sometimes it's not that simple. To give a simple example, suppose you are France, starting at the '01 results, trying to decide where England will take his build. If it's F Lvp, and a war with England is coming, and you'd like a German ally unencumbered in the east. In that case, you'd write him saying what a great guy the Russian player is, how much he can be trusted, how bad an early R-G war is, etc. But if England builds F EdI, then R versus G looks good, and in that case you want to sucker Germany by urging him to go east. Russia will then be painted as either dangerously strong or ripe for the pick-off, definitely not to be trusted, etc. But you can hardly write a contingent letter ("If England builds F Lvp, then Russia is a nice guy; if England builds F EdI, then Russia is a bastard."). Before you can write proposals to Germany, you'll have to actually see the builds, and that means a season separation.

Ronald Brown feels that if a player has F Bel, but orders A Bel-Hol, the order should fail, and to do otherwise is GM interference. I disagree, and feel that his objection arises from 1) a misunderstanding of the Rulebook and/or 2) a feeling, common in GMs, that the Rulebook isn't good enough and must be improved upon. The Rulebook is extremely specific about what is required for writing an order, and even has a section called "Mechanics of Writing Orders". For a move order, you need 1) The province you are moving from 2) a move symbol, e.g. "to" or "-" 3) The province you are moving to. In certain circumstances, the coast must also be given. THAT'S IT. The notion that the A/F designation is also required, and that the order is void without it (or with it if it appears nowhere in the Rulebook. If this is an essential part of a unit's order, why doesn't it appear in the list of things an order must have? If a player said "F Bel" (which I originally built in Bre) - Hol", and that fleet was built in Mar, we'd have to disqualify the move, because where the unit was built originally is not required. If a player writes A Munichh-Ruhr, few if any GMs would disqualify; again, the Rulebook does not require that the entire province name be spelled out correctly. Please check out the

Two arguments are usually given in rebuttal. The first is that the examples are always labeled as A or F, and thus this is required. This is logically a non-sequitur. Moreover, all the examples are in black ink; do we require that too? All the examples use "stands" in place of "holds"; does that make "holds" wrong? Gif of Bosnia is given as Both, not Bot.

The second is, as Brown put it, "I may have wanted that order to fail." Who cares what you may have wanted? The GM is NOT there to consider the player's intent, but to adjudicate what the player wrote down. Moreover, IF the GM even considers the possibility that the error might have been deliberate, THEN ALL ERRORS ARE FATAL, because any error might have been deliberate. A Munichh-Ruhr might have been deliberate. Because of the I-might-have-done-it-deliberately argument would naturally completely throw out the badly written order section of the Rulebook -- it might have been badly written on purpose. The mere presence of the "badly written order" rule to me (the chief intention behind it) "it might have been deliberate" reasoning is worthless.

Of course players should include the A/F designation, and GMs can penalize players who don't. But the Rulebook gives no grounds for voiding an order because this piece of superfluous information was wrong, and I see no compelling need to override the Rulebook on this matter. It is simply a matter of some GMs (many GMs will not void such an order) feeling that the Rulebook just isn't strict enough for them.

((I admit that the Rulebook does not require that the unit be correctly designated, but I do. I feel, as do many other GMs, that it's an essential part of an order.

Your argument for separation of seasons on one request is very well stated, and I tend to agree with it despite my dislike for games that move too slowly. I may have to word my house rules on the matter...))

From John Falley (excerpts):

Prute,
 So how's life? Pardon me for being out of touch for so long. I've been out of touch to keep in communication with one's friends. My fault.
 I trust all is well with you. I'm not doing badly, by any means. I've been out of

Diplomacy circles for effectively a year now, maybe more -- can't even remember any more. I've been getting DD, and have some idea of what's been happening in the hobby. Lots of new zines, a few folds, the same old arguments in which I used to participate so vitriolically. I guess it hasn't really changed. But I have.

I entered the hobby in late 1977, at age 14. Now I'm 19 and have seen some of today's established zines teething in their infancies. Shortly after I reduced my hobby commitments to a minimum, I lost a lot of the excess energy I once had. Now I have no stomach for getting too excited over things like hobbies any more; they should be just that, hobbies.

It's probably due to heading off to college. I like the UW almost as much as I loathed high school. I'm majoring in ancient history now (refugee from chemistry) and am happier than I've been in ten years. And in two years I'll join the Army, and look forward to that; I'm still the virulent patriot I always have been. Politically, I have only mellowed enough to accept anyone save rabid radicals who have nothing positive to say (having gained a positive outlook since) about anything. For them, I still marshal undying contempt, but for different reasons. Time is an odd process.

So tell me what's been going on, guy! Is Michalaki still around? Guerrier? Sacks? Boardman's been around so long it'd be hard to imagine him being gone. Arnett? Coughlan? Mills? Conlon? Grabar? I knew all these people to some degree or another one time, and am anxious for an update.

One day I'm going to pick up The Beholder where I left off. Probably be years before then, but I'd like to do it again. A few definites: it'd be by invitation only, with a flat-fee gamefee, one or two games, 8 to 10 pages long. Upper sub list limit would be about 25 folks. House rules? Yes. I would not accept a gamefee until the applicant had a) been sent HRs and b) admitted to a clear understanding of them.

Please respond if you've time. You are welcome to publish this. Speaking of publishing, enclosed is enough money to keep me getting VD for a long time. Until we meet again -- hang in there!

((This is one of the most welcome letters I've received all year! John Kelley is an ex-Doomie who left the hobby a while back, and has now returned to VD. In his day, he was one of VD's staunchest supporters and most active participants. He also used to publish The Beholder, an excellent zine except that it used ditto (what self-respecting publisher would ever do that?). I am looking forward to John's comeback. I referred to Billy Highchair a while back as "the John Kelley of the East", and indeed, I think they are alike in some ways.

If I sound sentimental, I am. A great friend doth returneth...

Michalaki is still around, publishing his roving subzine Mos Eisley Spaceport. Guerrier folded his Passchendaele very messily some time ago, causing a lot of hard feelings. Sacks is still around, though not heard from often, and Boardman is about to come out with his 20th annish. Arnett I'm not sure about; if he's around he's been blissfully quiet. Coughlan still puts out the best zine in the hobby. Mills is back with Euhain Macna, though I don't sub to it. Conlon and Grabar are still here, with Pat being a fairly active Doomie. And, in case you hadn't heard, Tretick has folded Le Front de Fraud! And Alex Lord, who was just starting when you left the hobby, is still publishing her cuteness in these pages. Randolph Sayth is running the Rumestone Poll now, and Masters has pretty much driven himself out of the hobby. And...oh, what the hell, I'll give you a call one of these nights if you'll send your phone number and catch you up on all the latest gossip. Welcome back!))

From Mom (4/31/83)

Dear Bruce,

I left the turkey on the counter. Put it in the oven at 4:30 at 300°. There's gravy in the refrigerator. Go ahead and eat if I'm not home by 5:00.

Love,
Mom

((How'd that get in here?!))

From Rod Walker (5/19/83):

26

Dear Bruce:

Quick letter on various things in VD 78.

1.a. Paul Rauterberg's letter. Paragraph 1 is well put. Wargaming is in fact true pacifism. No one who is a well informed person doubts H.G. Wells' credentials as one of the most important pacifists of the age. As he put it (he was an avid wargamer), "Good soldiers create no widows nor orphans."

1.b. Rest of Paul's letter not so good. The separation of seasons is not merely implied in the Rulebook, but required by it. It requires that the players know the results of each season before sending orders for the next. Things such as "Winter" are hobby conventions which recognize that this requirement results in more than 2 actual "seasons" in the game year when the game is played by mail. Players must know the results of Fall before sending in adjustments. They must know the adjustments before they can be required to send in Spring orders. Of course the GM may combine seasons (Winter with Spring, e.g.) in simple situations, but the notion that the seasons should be automatically combined unless broken apart by special action is contrary to the rules of the game. There is no way to argue that the adjustment phase (even if you don't call it "Winter") can ever be part of the following Spring. And to require players to send in adjustments with Fall orders, as the British usually do, is ridiculous. Tarring and feathering is too good for GMs who require it. Players have a right to see the results of one season before going on to the next.

2. Ronald Brown, normally very level-headed, certainly went off the deep end regarding how I treat badly-written orders. Certainly he did a great job of setting up an irrelevant straw man and evading the real issue entirely. There is no way to read my comments reasonably and come up with the far-fetched notion that I would or could "interpret" A Mun-Bur as A Mun-Ber. This has nothing to do with "badly written orders" and the specific rule pertaining thereto. I have said nothing about "intent" and I don't give a damn about "intent". What a player said is irrelevant. What he ordered is all important and the Rules require that if an order has only one possible meaning, it must be followed. If a player has F Bel and writes "A Bel-Hol", the order has only one meaning: an order to the unit in Bel to go to Hol. Whether the player intended the order to succeed or fail is of no importance. My rules for interpreting the "badly-written order" Rule are automatic and have nothing to do either with my preferences nor the player's intentions. Ronald really should have read my comments instead of just skimming them and deciding I was saying something which I did not say.

3. As to "hold" and "support" orders generally: I do not object to people who want to be nitpicking and obtuse about the Rules. However, the argument that regarding H and S as not a double order requires me (or anyone) to regard S and C as equally not a double order is so silly I will not dignify it with further reply. The issue involves hold orders in accidental combination with other orders and not anything else. A unit which is supporting or convoying is regarded as holding for purposes of receiving support; therefore the order to S, combined with a redundant order to H, is not a double order, but simply a redundant one. It is an unnecessary attempt to make the implicit explicit. (Or it is somebody who changed his mind but forgot to cross off the discarded order.) In either event the two orders do not conflict in any way and therefore succeed under the "badly-written order" rule. The redundant order can have only one meaning, regardless of the intentions of the player. Ruling it the other way in fact allows the "H" order and disallows the "S" order, even though you may pretend to disallow both. This, I think, clearly shows the logical poverty of that ruling.

4. Michalski: I'm so glad to know that I was comparing Reinsel to today's GMs. Since I was Reinsel's contemporary in the hobby, I could have sworn I was comparing him with the GMs of his time...which in fact I was. It is a fact that Reinsel's GMing policies were criticized widely, in and out of print, by nearly every GM in the field at the time. That includes the normally affable Charles Wells. John also ignores the fact that I did not single out Norb's fast pace for criticism, but rather the fast pace combined with other factors which made all of Reinsel's games peculiar to say the least. If the

were familiar with the hobby literature of the time, he would find me just as critical of Norb then as I am now (although now I'm reminiscing rather than criticizing). In fact, I was the author of the often-quoted summary, "I look forward to the inevitable day on which one of Reinsel's games is won by a Power in civil disorder."

5. Speaking of Michalski: I have never understood by what reasoning it is declared "bad" for a GM to use a person as a replacement player who has already played in that game and been eliminated. In the earliest days of the hobby, this was almost a necessity, given the very small rosters of standby players GMs had to work with. Until recently, the BNC would never have given serious consideration to the notion that any such game was "irregular". The notion still seems silly to me. In fact, regardless of the BNC's determination, a game which doubles-up a player in this fashion will be rated by me. Naturally, it's always been considered better to avoid doubling-up of a player, but that's not always possible. Now that standby lists are usually more extensive, this is usually avoidable...but I would never say it is wrong *per se*. Where the GM has no other choice, it is always preferable to recycle an eliminated player than to let a position go into civil disorder. (And, by the way, this doubling-up is very, very common in FTF play and is very consistent with the way FTF games are set up.) The notion that a player has been told "secrets" has only marginal validity. A "secret" could as easily be a lie as truth; and if even a couple of seasons have elapsed since his elimination, all these wonderful "secrets" have probably been obviated by the progress of the game. This argument is no doubt very impressive in the abstract. As a practical consideration, however, I find it tenuous and unconvincing.

6. A.F. Ross' letter: If you stick the Insidious Walker Hate Sheet into your dryer, your clothes will never be free of static again. Your socks will not only cling, they will cut off circulation to your toes, cause your shoelaces to tangle, and attract unwanted objects such as iron pyrites, dead sparrow eggs, and BRUX.

7. Re Flumphens: Feet??? Frankly, I can't see getting excited about dirty anything. On the other hand, having your toes orally manipulated is rather a turn-on. Anyway, BRUX, I hope he gave you a "10" in the Leader Poll. That will average out with the vote I gave you... to a "2".

8. Hunting in general. I have been looking for it, but there is a very good poem on the subject. It begins something like, "Hi, little hunting man." Ultimately the only thing hunting results in is death. I don't know nor care whether an animal has a "soul". It has life, and that in itself is important. To deprive a living thing of its life, and label it "sport", is disgusting. We may need to deprive a living thing of its life in order to eat, or for some other practical reason, but to do it in the name of leisure, of "fun": that is to show what the word "perversion" really means. I know, I know. Hunting is in our genes. Bloodshed and the chase are our heritage from long multimillenia of our evolution. But the murder of living creatures in the name of "sport" is still wrong; it is an evil which renders us essentially no better than the beetle-browed brutes who look at the roots of our ancestral trees. ((I love that sentence!)) There are some of us who look up from the spoor of prey toward the stars. If we fail to reach them, it is our hereditary blood-lust which will be the cause of that failure. We can, we must, overcome it. And to do so we must confront it in its most insidious form and say to the hunters that they are indulging in a wretched evil. Is there really that much difference between the slaughter in our forests and tundras, on one hand, and Auschwitz on the other? Not much, really. If we must kill, let us do so out of necessity only, in sadness. If we are to be truly human, we must rise above the brutish joy of murder.

((That was an eloquent speech if ever I heard one!))

I don't think I'd like the prospect of combining Fall with Winter, but for different reasons -- I think that Winter/Spring is just simpler. But if your argument that a player must be able to see one season before playing the next is to be accepted, then we can never justify any combination of seasons. Fortunately, players can "see" the results via the mechanism of conditional orders, though as Mack Berch points out elsewhere, this is sometimes not good enough when it comes to negotiations.

It is true that treating "hold" and "support" will result in a hold, but only because "hold" is the default for unorderd (or double-ordered) units. I don't buy your logic at all on this matter. If holding and supporting are truly "redundant" orders, then the

Rulebook would not explicitly state that they are mutually exclusive -- it could instead have to say that holding is part of supporting. But it doesn't

OK, so you are playing England in 1964PBU, and your negotiations with France and Germany lead to the following arrangement: "The three of us will remain allied with each other throughout the course of the game. Should one of us be wiped out by other powers, the remaining two will stay allied. This arrangement will not be revealed to any other players and we are each free to tell the eastern powers whatever we want (with the aim of furthering the progress of the western alliance." Six game years go by, and Russia and Austria succeed somehow in taking out Germany. The former German player is then called to stand by as Italy. Even if the western allies aren't going to stay together, what chance does France have of convincing Italy that this is the case? None -- the current Italian player has been told secrets as Germany which let him know otherwise.

OK, so this is an uncommon circumstance. But it could happen, and that's enough for me. So Dookie will ever be asked to stand by for a VD game in which he has played or even stood by for a different country. Period.))

From Jake Halverstadts

Re. BRUX.

Let's keep things confusing -- here's my Stocks and Bonds stuff, my Diplomacy stuff and a promo of sorts on my Presidential Politics game.

I think I misunderstood you on the phone last time -- I got the notion that you were saying you'd run a copy of the whole game in VD. What I'm sending you now can be printed if you like -- and feel like running a monster ad for me. Condense, by all means, if you wish.

I've written to both the copyright and patent offices, and I don't think I'm going to mess around with a patent, but I'm working my way through the copyright applications. Looking at it seriously, what chance do I have of selling the game, no matter how good it is? You don't pump quarters into it, it doesn't beep or flash, and, worst of all, you have to use your brain to play it! Absolutely no commercial potential!

I've also been looking into publishing some sort of zine to get my game played. I think I'll do it, and I'd like to throw in a couple of other games I've come up with. Play by mail sports games would be one possibility -- I have ideas for football, basketball, and possibly baseball. I like the Stocks and Bonds game, but would like to try another version. Diplomacy? I suppose that might happen too. After all, that's what got me into the PBM world. Seems as though there's always a demand for more games.

Yes, it snowed here yesterday (May 17) but damned if it's not all gone by now. The temp must be about 55° or so, mostly sunny. Glad I hadn't put the garden in, like I almost did twice. Oh, I planted a few seeds of corn and some sunflowers, mostly spermatites that the cold would be gone before the official last-frost date here of May 15. Maybe sunny. Going with corn, tomatoes, beans, spinach, and lettuce -- typical garden fare. I started some corn inside, hoping to have some of the first ears in town. Hope they transplant well.

Are there any other shortwave radio listeners in the PBM hobby? I know John Pachalinski does some. I run in spurts, depending upon how busy I am, and how busy I feel like being. I've picked up English-language broadcasts from maybe 20 countries, ranging from easy ones like Canada and England to off-the-wall ones like the United Arab Emirates. I've just begun sending reception reports to the stations, and have received replies from Australia and Holland. Taiwan, West Germany, Cuba and Brazil should be on the way soon. I'm ready to fire one off to Belgium, as soon as I receive them well enough to pick out their address.

It's a real kick to hear what other nations have to say about world events -- Radio Havana and Radio Moscow leap to mind. It's also amusing to hear them misuse the English language. Taiwan balls things up from time to time, and just last night the Voice of Germany (Radio Deutsche Welle) twice said "holy cow" when they intended to say "sacred cow."

But you're loving your Dodgers. My Indians are in the thick of what passes for a permanent race -- trying to stay above .500. As of this moment, they're one game up.

Think I'll call this a letter and get it ready for the postman.

((Shortwave sounds like lots of fun to me. It must be very intriguing to hear from such remote corners of the world. I'll look forward eagerly to your zine. PPM sports games don't turn my crank, but the others you have in mind do. And although the hobby is rich in zines, it is short on writers of your ability. Hope you take the plunge and do it!))

From Steve Knight (5/23/83):

Dear BRUCE:

Damn it, Bruce, why the hell do you have to publish a mid-monthly right in the middle of finals? Of course I'm gonna stop studying to spend a darcinomorous number of hours reading it. I'm amazed at the amount of material you publish! I do agree, though, with Ronald Brown about VD's cost -- after all, our loyal, screaming pubber deserves to be able to publish the rag without becoming destitute.

Anyway, I'm finished with finals this Tuesday, so I'm reserving the latter part of the week to start with editing in the amendments (I've already got 'em typed in). Soon as I get a first draft done, I'll mail it to you for review and editing. I'll also have some questions about various things, which I'll include in double brackets in the text. I expect we'll only need to go through two drafts at most before arriving at a final copy. I'm getting rather excited about this project -- even though the rest of the hobby's probably saying, "Who is this crazy sonofabitch who actually volunteered to edit Linsey's houserules?" If you want to take extra time to circulate the drafts I send you to others for review (Mark Barch comes to mind, as he's apparently had a hand in many of your amendments, but I don't know if his pre-parent status would allow the time), please do. Ideally, there'll be a minimum of typo-related and wording amendments after it goes to press. So anyway, be on the lookout for a largish envelope (delivered by a letter carrier with a hernia, I wouldn't doubt), in the next couple weeks.

Um... I don't know who originally wrote the "Fuck" article (which, by the way, had me rolling on the floor), but is it wise to give Kador such a large target? "John Fucked Mary," and "Mary was fucked by John," are not examples of transitive and intransitive verbs, but of active and passive. The examples cited in the article as "active" and "passive" ("John really gives a fuck," and "Mary doesn't give a fuck.") are just affirmative and negative statements. If you really want transitive and intransitive, try "John fucked Mary," and "John fucked up." Other than that, though, a great tribute to one of my favorite words.

I'd like to comment on some other stuff, but I'll save it 'til things settle down academically. Hope you're well.

Love,
The Crazy Sonofabitch who
Actually Volunteered to edit
Your Houserules

It takes all types to make a hobby! Some folks like cod liver oil, some like the aroma of nasty feet, and a select few even like editing my houserules!

I have some other good sentences for the "Fuck" article:
"Bruce really must have been fucked up when he wrote the houserules."
"I got fucked by the houserules."
"I got fucked on top of a copy of the houserules."
... (And so on.)

From Bob Schrank (5/20/83):

Dear BRUCE,

I think I'll take back that comment I made a couple of letters ago about the hold-support double orders. (Bob had agreed that it should be treated as a support.) Mark Barch's letter to STD convinced me of the error of my ways. Little seems to be working fine. I haven't received any unreadable pages yet, but don't take that as an invitation to send me one.

Dear Bob,

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Dear Bob,

Between the games I am in and finally, I have been too busy to write you. In your
journal in retaliation? Send out a mid-monthly and give me 10 more things to write
I would love to get a letter off now and cover what I can.

In retaliation to the incredibly vicious attack leveled at me by
some of the press, I am hereby signing up for the NARROW weekly list. I was told
it was in an effort, but since it is painfully obvious that some of the players in the
game want to go on any more than I do, I figured I would fit right in.

Everyone else is commenting on the ditto, so I had to put it at least one time
the word ditto in it.

I thought HIGGS was a novice game? It appears I am not familiar with your definition
of a "novice" game. Mr. Knight spilled the beans in issue 77, page 19, when he
admits to having "Med a game in 1982. Quite a novice. I did enjoy his comments in
the Quir files.

As for HIGGS's goal in 1979, I probably would have been more successful if
I had with the possible exception of having ever more fun with it. Since the game
has been ruined, along with my ability to claim the victory, I would start
around. Attempt incredible conveys involving at least three foreign words. Support
seven columns across the board. Things like that. (By the way, Mr. Knight, there are
all intentional sentence fragments containing an understood "I would" in the
I own Spanish for Flomper and his wife. I too have a problem with some words
in the house. We call them roaches. Mr. Highwater searched a lot of a friend's
wife was to take Mason oil and rubber sheets. Don't they call the "roaches" in
periodicals? That we know if anyone gets that.

I can't have anything to say about the North Star Horizon. Starting in
1980, that was a good one. I think I got three or four people and a magazine.
Unfortunately Mr. Olson is mistaken concerning the true identity of the game. I
should be fairly obvious to everyone that the article was an advertisement.

In this realization that I may be stepping on Mr. Zeller's toes, I must mention
the obvious grammatical error in YD #98. Mr. Clappay wrote, "The first part of
the title may have been a typo, but the word should have been 'and'." Well, that's
definitely not right, Mr. Clappay, pointing out other people's mistakes. Open
up a magazine and obvious method of getting a reputation in the hobby. Reading
of course this is not easy to do through the mail, but that's a different
subject of problem.

Please inform Highwater that I live in Texas, not him. I am sure to have seen
your nice Friday five soap that takes place in our great state. Please inform
him that he is living in California, Texas.

There are various stuff. Everything preceding this was a bit of a
rough approximation of it if everyone who reads this would keep that in mind. The
only thing I want to answer seriously are Terry Chalmers' letter and your
article about you wrote in article on French sporting stereotypes.

I will later be able to get a sub to The Modern Patriot yet. I am
not really content on the line of Bill's ability to express his views. I
"mean the" politics. Facilities in place for some time, but I am not
interested in walking to fight and die for someone else's political
cause. It would be great, unfortunately it won't happen. I have
enough to do about a political playing tip. In my old days, I
would be able to help, but that doesn't mean I want to help.

I am sure of a great deal of pain to see others suffer. I don't
want to see that. I am intelligent non-resistive don't believe the
"liberals" in that matter should be able to do that. I don't
want to see that. I am sure of a great deal of pain to see others suffer.

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to the recipients. I am not against the poor, only the social programs that don't work. Mr. Tallman could also say that "I have mine", but anything I have I have gotten for myself. I did have the benefit of a good education, and that is where I believe the emphasis should lie.

The other point I take exception to is Mr. Tallman's one-sided view of the situation in Latin America. He fails to realize why we are interested at all. It would be nice to say that we are there to help the people, but who is to decide what really helps them? By American standards the military junta is indeed barbaric, but how does it compare to the other alternatives? Does the U.S. have the right to decide which government is best for another country? If so, how could we possibly decide? This creates an obvious dilemma. Since it is impossible to guarantee that we do the right thing, then we must make the decision based on other criteria, namely our own interests. We should support whichever government best serves the United States' interests. Several thousand U.S. companies do business in Latin America. That represents American jobs, and American lives. That is why we are interested. As an example I give you Iran. The Shah was no prince. (I really am sorry about the pun but I really am tired!) Khomeini isn't all that great either. Under one government we had military bases, cheap oil, and a strong ally in the Persian Gulf. In the other we had the hostage crisis, oil embargoes, and we have lost our foothold in the Middle East. Was the U.S. wrong for supporting the despot Shah, or wrong for allowing the despot Priest to take over? It probably doesn't make much of a difference to the people of Iran.

I intended to write a response to the Burgundy article, but it would be rather lengthy. Look for an article of my own in the near future. In the meantime -- vote Republican!

Greg Ellis

Oops!!! I mean

Love,

Greg

((Boy, it's nice to feel loved! And of course I'll vote Republican. I agree with your comments that we should support our own interests abroad. Looking at it in that light makes it unnecessary to rationalize that we are always acting in the interest of the people we are defending.

I think that RIGEL is Steve's first game as a player, but I'm not sure.

Ah, but your suggested course of action in '79lid wouldn't have had the desired effect. The players didn't see the moves, so only GM Michalski would have been surprised.

I'll look forward to your article. Thanx for a hell of a hell of a hell of a hell of a hell of a hell of a hell of a nice letter. (That's a hint to Chuff Afflerbach that I want another article from him like his "Broken Record" piece!))

From James Woodson (5/14/83):

Dear Bruce,

...Not much is happening here for me. Mostly I'm very bored. I'll start my training whenever I'm physically able, which is probably three weeks away. My leg comes off next Monday. I can't wait.

Highfield's letter relating his experiences at a hockey game in Rochester remind me of what hockey is like in Minnesota. I wrote an article for Mike Conner's LSD which was printed last summer on the very subject. In short Minnesotans are bonkers about ice hockey. The state high school tourney sells out the St. Paul Civic Center for three days straight. In fact, Sports Illustrated had an excellent article on the HS tournament that was run in early March. If you're interested, the author did a great job of showing what all the hype is about.

Switching to another sport, I'm a baseball nut. How about them Padres!! I know they're not doing too well right now, but they're my team and I'll keep rooting for them. I've been doing it for 15 years now and they've always lost.

((I like the Padres, too, because they always provide a lot of wins for the Dodgers. I saw the article in SI and enjoyed it. Thanx for writing.))

From Jim Meinel (5/20/83):

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Dear Bruce,

Re Mike Conner: Lone Star Diplomat is alive and well -- I'm a player in one of his games and in his March issue he announced his next deadline as May 27 so he still has a couple of weeks to go.

I know it wasn't intentional on your part but I think it was highly inappropriate of you to cast doubts on Mike's reputation by announcing to your readership at large that you hadn't seen his zine lately and asking where it was. You really should have checked further yourself (either reading his last issue or calling and speaking directly to him) discreetly before implying to 100+ readers that LSD was becoming erratic. Mike's done a super job with the zine but lately has been extremely busy with other activities. He's made a lot of effort to keep the zine on a regular ~~times~~ schedule and I think he deserved the benefit of the doubt.

((OK, but I think you may have misread my comments. I didn't get the last issue of LSD, nor have I received one for several months. This might be due to my failing to resub, but I thought I had and when I didn't get a reply from Mike, I just wanted to find out if anyone was still getting the zine. I'm glad to hear that it's still being published reliably, so I stand corrected if anyone read anything differently into my comments. And for the record, I think LSD is one of the best zines around. I consider myself good friends with Mike Conner, and will continue to try and find out the status of my sub.

While we're on the subject, all is not so rosy with Damn the Torpedoes. I do have several issues remaining in my sub to that zine, and three inquiries to Greg Fritz have gone unanswered entirely. So I must conclude that either DTT has become very irregular, or that Greg isn't sending me my copies. Anyone out there seen it lately?

And while I'm at it, I've also been informed that The Shogun's Sword will fold with its next issue. Mike has told me that he will put out his final issue shortly. I'm very sorry to hear this, as Mike is one of the classiest guys around and his zine was always interesting.

Late note: I just read in Europa Express that LSD is also about to fold. Darn.))

From Dave Kleiman:

Dear Bruce,

First, could you send me a few more details concerning the Blinman's variant you mentioned? I have been wanting to run a variant, and I am intrigued by the idea of playing "blind".

Second, how would you handle the following situation? GM reports incorrectly the Russian orders -- the orders reported were conflicting, as well as not being the right set of orders. Secondly, A Bul was destroyed due to these incorrect orders, and its destruction was not reported. Thirdly, F Nwy is in retreat and this fact was not mentioned. I, being the Turk and noting that my Russian ally may have stabbed me, call the GM because of the inconsistencies in these orders. He confirms the destruction of A Bul and the retreat of F Nwy. I then proceed to write a nasty letter to Russia. I am interrupted, as the GM has called back saying that Russia did not order the orders that he had reported, and that he had indeed ordered the orders that I had expected. The GM says that he will republish the orders next issue and apologizes many times. Two weeks later, I receive a letter from Germany stating that the GM has decided to accept new orders for that season, and will announce that in the next issue.

I have written the GM and I have protested the action of replaying the season. Six players' orders have been published and a replay will damage the game and most certainly the victims of the first set of orders will issue new orders. The intent of 6 people has been announced -- there is no way replaying the season will allow the game to proceed in a normal manner.

If I were the GM, I would just publish the results correctly next issue, indicating that I had erred and apologize for the delay and errors. What would BRUX do?

((Exactly what you would do -- replaying a season is always harmful. Then I'd go soak my head.))

The Greatest Diplomatic Coup Results!

The results of the Greatest Diplomatic Coup Contest, announced in VD #76, are in. I enjoyed reading all four entries. Turned out that the winner was chosen on the basis of a clever essay rather than a clever coup. The best coup belonged to the second place entry. This was loads of fun as my contests always seem to be! First up is Billy Highchair.

My Great Diplomatic Coup occurred during a Diplomacy game played by telephone. It was the eighth game run by our organization, RADPO, in Rochester. I remember it well, because the coup insured that I would be in the winner's circle!

Our telephone games are run weekly with the deadline on each Thursday. Porter assigns countries (because he's the GM for this game). I think preference lists are better.

Anyway, I draw Russia. Yuch! Oh well, I immediately wrote off the game but decided to try anyway. My Spring 01 negotiations proceeded to show some promising advantages that I had. The Turkish player was a novice. At least, he didn't know tactics. The Austrian had the ability to be a good player, but not the will. I picked him as target #1. The English player seemed a competent type, and I figured I'd watch him closely. The Italian was a newly ordained postal player, and I knew he'd deck Austria. France was a veteran phone-gamer, and I was glad he was on the other side. I still owed him for the last stab.

I took both Rumania and Sweden, becoming #1 on the board in Winter 01. Of course, the novices looked and said, "Oh no! Russia's huge!" I figured that Eng/Ger would wipe up the French nuisance while I would clean Austria's clock. I'd taken Galicia but Turkey (who I was allied with) started talking of how important it was that he break our pact and move to the Black. I knew he was coming but couldn't stop him. Talking didn't work. In Spring 02, with England moving on me and Germany taking Silesia and Prussia, I cried. I've saved Germany till now because he is a scumbag. He stabs me every game and this time I could do nothing to stop him. ESPECIALLY when I thought the fool would hit France. Well, I didn't give up and I found out that England was pissed that his ally had deserted him and had hit me. I agreed to support him into German-held Denmark while he took Holland. I got the Austrian to hit the Turk and got the Turk to hit the Austrian. Amazingly, I lasted the year with 6 centers (much to the surprise of all!).

1903 proved the real challenge. Turkey was back again and the German was sinking -- fast. The Anglo-French alliance was gathering steam and BOY was I in trouble. England was readying an attack upon me in the North, Turkey was firing up everything he had in the South, Italy was thinking of hitting France (while a Turkish juggernaut was starting to roll over me and Austria) and Austria was preoccupied with taking Trieste from the Italian (who'd taken it in 1901). I needed help, and fast! In the Spring, Turkey took Rumania while Eng/Fra cleaned up the German mess. I watched. In the Fall, I tried a small gamble and lost due a German army's attack from Silesia to Galicia, which I hadn't figured on and which cut support. I lost Rum and Sev in one year. I had nothing in the North but F Sweden. The key to my survival was in one unit's move. France's A Mar tried to go to Paris, 30 seconds after I had talked to him on the telephone at Porter's. He was told to vacate Mar to build a fleet against Italy. I knew and foresaw an Attack on England. So to help him with his decision, I removed F Sweden, which made it look like England would get two easy centers. France told me that due to my removal, he had to attack England because "The Brit's getting too damn big, too damn fast!" So, I told England. I kept Sweden and St. Pete while France and England bashed their heads against the wall. Meanwhile, Italy and Austria saw Turkey (finally) due to his rapid conquest of southern Russia. They moved on the Turk who couldn't understand why he was suddenly the sick man of Europe. I regained Rumania and Sevastopol that year and also blew away the German in Berlin, his last center. The war was now a stalemate between England and France with my army determining who was going to win (my support would break the deadlock). Turkey was being beat up, and Austria decided that he still wanted Trieste back.

Turkey started on me AGAIN while Austria NMRed. Italy kept moving against Turkey but he wanted Bulgaria for himself. With all of my fleets destroyed, that move would cut me

off from the rest of the Turkish centers. I refused to let him into Bulgaria. France, meanwhile, wanted me to support him into Kiel. That would mean that I would only get Norway and Denmark while he would get 5 centers. I allied with England and we blew him away. A new Austrian took over and he agreed to help the Anglo-Russian alliance (he wanted to prove he could be trusted because he'd stabbed us in the last game). His added strength made the draw appear quicker and tipped the scales forever against the F-I-T alliance. Italy decided to start NMRing and I took Venice with Rome wide open. They vetoed us the draw and England and I agreed to include a 4-center Austria (we were at either 9 or 10 each) because of his great help.

So, the removal of Fleet Sweden in Winter 1903 caused a diplomatic "ripple" effect to spread among the English and French which forced them to go to war, while it also woke up the Italians and Austrians by showing them that 1) I was willing to fight and 2) that Turkey was indeed a menace. That one turn (Fall/Winter) turned around the game and allowed me to come out with a joint victory, my first.

((I don't believe in the term "joint victory" when it comes to Diplomacy. Either you win or you draw (or worse), but I don't see a two or three-way draw as any part of a "victory". Nice essay anyway, Bill. Next up is James Woodson.))

To explain this story I must first explain the relationship between the players. It was in a phone game that was played between some of my college friends last year. Most of us were from a group who had played a number of times face to face the year before. Two of us had had previous Dip experience and had taught the rest of them to play.

During the FTF games, the other veteran, Ed, was very successful at convincing the other players that I, the FFI player, was the danger to them all. As a result, he often won, and I was usually eliminated.

When the phone game began, Ed was Austria and I was Russia. We looked at things and thought, "Why don't we ally with each other, no one would ever expect that." Still not completely trusting each other, we did ally.

After destroying Turkey quite easily, the fight turned against Germany. We devised a plan in which he would stab me, and then after Germany had turned on his English ally the stab would be retracted and all would be well and good.

Ed informed the German that he would take Warsaw from me in return for aid against England. Germany passed this information on to me and I told him that I didn't believe that I would be stabbed, but if I were, I vowed eternal vengeance.

The Austrian army entered Warsaw in the Spring and publicly I was very upset. A few other players noted that it was really a stupid stab in that he should have taken it in the Fall. I agreed and set about to retake it.

When the Fall moves were revealed, the Germans had taken the North Sea from the English and Austria had vacated Warsaw. The Anglo-German resistance was permanently damaged and Ed and I rolled on to a two-way draw!

((A well-executed fake war can be one of the most devastating coups known to Diplomacy! Next entry, the runner-up, belongs to Porter Wightman.))

Despite being of an advanced age (according to Michair) I've not had a lot of postal experience. In fact, I've never finished a game. I've never been eliminated never won, never drawn. Now if John Kador only stays allied with me in 1981HW maybe all that will change.

To get back to the point, though, I do have lots of face to face experience, including a win at SIMCON, the University of Rochester's simulation gaming convention. My best game, however, is still in progress and is a telephone game. It is RADEPO (Rochester Area Diplomacy Player's Organization) #8. In it I am England; Don Sigwalt of Roof n Mouth fame is Italy; Mark Johnson, soon to be of Verbatim fame, is Germany; Matt Moore is Russia; Griffin Jones is Turkey; Derek "Scarlet Curse of Austria" is Austria; and Joe "Menza" Garafolo is France.

The game started in typical telephone style with large amounts of time being spent

telling everyone nothing. In this case, though, I used one player's rep to his disadvantage. Derek always plays Austria and in three separate games with Don, Griffin and Joe he had taken Munich in the Fall of '03. I therefore spread this all around the board, and since it was true it got the whole world -- including Germany -- paranoid of Austria. The next step was convincing the Italian that Austria shouldn't die quickly because Italy would be next.

You'll notice that I'm barely mentioning France and Germany. This is intentional. I've found that the games I've done best in I've been much more heavily involved in diplomacy away from the homeland than with diplomacy near it. Of course I talked with them, the same old stuff about Belgium and the English Channel. I did get them to argue over who should get Belgium so that they'd pick me as the eventual custodian of it. Somehow this is an old technique for you pros, I'm sure. In any case it's never failed for me. In every game in which I've been E, F or G except the second board at DIPCON where Bramer, as England, cleaned my clock; I've gotten Belgium by getting the other two countries to argue over it and offering it to me as a kind of "at least the other guy doesn't win" compromise.

Still, we're miles away from the Great Coup. After obtaining Bel and Nwy in '01 while Germany acquired Den and Hol and France acquired Por and Spa, with Russia getting Vie but NOT Swe, the stage was set for the beginning of the coup. The Russian called at the last minute, just twenty minutes before deadline, to say that he was afraid I might enter StP and that to avoid that problem he'd let me have Swe, a dot he didn't own yet, so that he wouldn't lose a dot he did own. I was certainly not about to look a gift horse in the mouth so I agreed. Then I tried to call Germany to set up a fake stab so that Russia would really think I was allied with him. It is here that fate made her presence known. I discovered that Mark was out camping for the next few days. Now I agonized, with my new builds of F Edi and A Lon I could keep with E/G's plan to hit Russia, or I could hit Germany and grab some dots. I decided on the latter plan, but with a twist. I'd let the rest of the board "convince" me to back off Germany. I took Holland, Skagerrak and Sweden.

"Why would they do such a thing?" you might ask. The Austrian, to try and convince everyone that he wouldn't take Mun in the Fall of '03, had moved south against Turkey and guessed wrong when Russia had taken Galicia. This had resulted in his losing Vie while the Russian had gained both Vie and Rumania. Most of the board wanted pressure on Russia, the notable exception being Turkey. In the first round of calls, just after the adjudication people were already telling me a stab of Germany was a mistake. Austria, not surprisingly, was of this opinion and so, to my relief, was Italy. Don is a good player and VERY persuasive on the phone. By playing "hard to convince" I knew Don would try and mobilize the western powers to convince me to lay off. Even with the Frenchman in Wes he'd talk to him about trying to convince me to lay off Germany and hit Russia.

By the time Mark returned I had already "visibly softened" to Don. Don told Germany this and told him not to be hard on me but, instead, to try and convince me that E/G versus R could still work. I heaved and haved a little, but on deadline night I finally agreed to lay off of Germany.

I layed off by moving Holland to Kiel, convoying London to Holland, and blowing Mark out of Denmark. Germany went from five to two in one fell swoop. I went from five to nine and yet, since Russia had antagonized the German by his brusque manner on the phone and I had pulled off the stab so completely that Germany would fall to me almost immediately if he resisted, Germany removed units such that he kept A Sil and A Boh to use against the Russian. At this point the Russian started calling me and begging for a pact. I heaved and haved and he swore. From here I went on to stay even in '03, using my German toady until he finally turned on me in one last flash of revenge -- thereby allowing me to keep a French ally who was getting more and more nervous. Then I went to 13 in '04, capturing StP, Mos, War and Ber. I gave Mun to my trusty French ally to put him at six!

Now I'm using the Italian and Frenchman, who quit fighting once R/T killed off Austria, to beat at the Turk. I stayed even in '05 and '06 and am now in Vie and Sev after our last move, the Spring of '07. I hope to go on to the win without stabbing my game-long ally -- France. I could probably get 18 in a romp if I pulled my fleets down on top of Iberia. Somehow I'd rather do it without a stab. After all I'll need these guys to trust me in the next phone game; it starts this week.

((The entry before Porter's dealt with a fake war; Fortor's with a fake alliance! But the winner is from Bob Osuch.))

Throughout my years as a postal Diplomacy player I have always taken a straightforward approach to the game. No fake letters, no unwanted convoys, few unwanted supports, maybe one forged GM adjudication, a few phony wars, a couple of intentionally miswritten orders, nothing earthshattering. I suppose the best thing I ever did postally was to come back from a two-center position to win my first postal game start. No, the greatest bit of deception I ever pulled was in a face-to-face meeting. It might not have had much effect on the outcome of the game, but it sure was a coup!

It was a meeting of a large number of gamers from the Chicago area and nearby communities. I suppose there were close to thirty people there. As was the case with most such gatherings, massive amounts of alcohol were being consumed. The token joint or two was being smoked. Oh, I suppose there was some coke around too. In other words, there wasn't a straight face in the house. I was behaving admirably. Everything in moderation, that's me. Hell, I think I only fell once or twice and it was already 9PM. At any rate, when somebody took a Dip set upstairs petitioning fellow combatants, I was up and ready for action.

When everything was set up, I knew it was going to be a fun game because there were two or three girls involved. I only knew one of the participants well, and he was Turkey. I believe, to my Germany. One of the girls was England, her boyfriend was Russia, and the other two girls were Austria and Italy. I don't remember who France was, I sure didn't know him and his play was very forgettable. I do remember talking with the French man first. He was one of those guys who's embarrassed to open his mouth for fear of saying something stupid. I proposed neutrality and next cornered England. She was all ears. Everything I said sounded good. She was really sweet too, and had a good sense of humor. OK, so she giggled a lot. As we left the room, however, I got to wondering how much she cared for that boyfriend of hers.

Things progressed well on the board. England was toadying for me, Russia was wiping out Austria, and France was crumbling under the G/E assault. Russia's girlfriend kept smiling over the table, and when we got behind closed doors, the body language was unmistakable. She wanted more than an alliance out of me! Either that or she was one well-versed in the art of trickteasing!

Around 1907, the game bogged down. Russia and Turkey were the stronger alliance, but England and Germany had a stalemate set up through Mid-Spa-Mar-Tyo-Bob-Prn-Ital-Swe-Swy. I voted for a draw but it was vetoed by Russia, so I convinced Turkey to stab him and we'd take a three-way. Too bad England stabbed me the same turn. Realizing that we were now in for a long battle, the Turk called for a break. Everyone else quickly left while I sat there, plotting my revenge.

By this time it was after 1 AM and I was more than slightly pissed by the turn of events. I began wondering if the come-on hadn't been a plot by the bitch and her boyfriend from the very beginning. That thought further infuriated me, so when the English player entered the room, I said something like, "What the fuck did you do that for?" I went on to explain how I was going to suicide out against her and mentioned how I hoped she and her boyfriend had a good laugh at my expense. She was very apologetic and seemed genuinely hurt by the things I had said. She suggested that we go somewhere to talk about it. I let her take the lead, and this time she chose the bathroom. As she hastily grabbed my hand, I could actually feel the sudden burst of affection shoot through my body. I can honestly say that I have never seen a person so obviously overcome by emotion as she was then. At least not in a game-related episode.

Once inside the bathroom, she wasted no time in letting me know what she wanted. Rather than go into detail, let's just say that she repaid me for all the damage she had done on the Dip board, with interest. Afterwards, she again apologized and snuck back out into the hallway.

The game ended in a Turkish/English draw. I remember that I survived with most of my units in Russia. I really didn't care any more. I was extremely satisfied with the fact that I had foiled Russia's plans and then some. In fact, he seemed irritated by the shit-eating grin I was wearing as England devoured my home centers. No matter, just more

reason for me to gloat.

The game over, I said my goodbyes and left. Driving down the Stevenson on the way home, I kept recreating the incident in my mind. "God," I thought to myself, "I hope somebody runs a contest some day, because that had to be the greatest diplomatic coup of all time!"

((And thus ends the Great Diplomatic Coup Contest! Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who entered. Sounds to me like the girl in Osuch's entry could have written a real winner...))

Seventeen free issues to Bob, five to Porter, and two apiece to Billy and James.))

~~.....~~

I'm going to reprint a part of a recent discussion that took place in Ron Brown's Murd'ring Ministers, because I think it is relevant to VD and my strict GMing style. One of Ron's players, Tim Haffey, is pissed that his game ended due to a No Vote Received = yes house rule:

"...I pay to play Diplomacy, not to have my games disrupted by silly pointless house rules. Someone, I forget who, said that this rule was necessary to keep games from dragging on forever simply because the players would not vote on the proposals. Whose games are these anyway? The players' or the Gamesmasters? The players should always have the option of voting or not voting without being subjected to penalties imposed by the Gamesmaster to 'move the game along.'...Come on, Ron. Let's have a rule a little bit more realistic than this one."

Ron Brown replies:

"...I can truly sympathize with you about SIAP. It's too bad the game ended in an E/I draw if your Turkey wasn't in agreement. The first question that comes to my mind is, 'Why didn't you veto the draw when it was proposed?' You meant to? But you didn't. You are proposing that I read intent, or rather, try to interpret the unstated intent of your non-vote. I'm sorry. I flatly refuse to do so. Once, early in my gamesmastering 'career', I presumed to do that. I thought I was doing the best thing and following the obvious (it seemed obvious to me at the time) intent, but non-stated, of the orders. After the results were mailed out I got an immediate long-distance phone call from a very experienced player, very angry that I had not followed his orders exactly as they had been stated. When I explained how I had followed what he had certainly 'intended', he coldly replied that he did not know it was the gamesmaster's duty to interpret, but merely to adjudicate the moves he received. I was dead wrong and knew it. I felt like a real scumbag and promised never to do that again. I haven't. Not even in cases like yours where the 'intent is clear'."

And this very eloquently explains my GMing philosophy. I don't feel that the GM should involve himself in interpreting what a player means. He should simply adjudicate what comes in, whether or not he thinks he "knows" the player's intent. That's why A Vie-Tro was ruled ambiguous in this zine, and it's why A Bul R (A Gre S), A Gre R (A Bul S) was ruled as two double-ordered units. In each case, I knew (or was reasonably sure) of what the player wanted to do, but felt I had to adjudicate the orders as they were written and not change them to conform with what I felt was the player's intent. To do otherwise is in my book GM interference. There are other zines for players who want the GM to make these decisions about the meaning of their orders, and these people should not sign up here. To sign up in VD, and then quit in a huff when a strict ruling like the above occurs, is just plain silly as I don't make any secret of my philosophy.

I'll close with the thought that writing orders correctly is a skill just as is negotiating well or using effective tactics. In VD, or any other zine, you are penalized if you don't have this ability. It's all part of the game.

Game Masters and the Telephone

by Jim Meinel

When a game master opens up the telephone as a legitimate way for players to give him orders for a game he allows a potential area of trouble to exist if he is not as careful in handling the phone as he is a letter. Here are six situations which may confront a game master -- how would you act in each one?

1. A player calls you on deadline day with his orders. He has no other orders or file for that season. He recites all the information to you and you read it back to him, however, he has forgotten to vote on a draw and/or concession proposal and his vote is critical to the outcome. Will you prompt him for a vote on the phone (or in some other manner permitted him)?

2. A player calls you with his orders on deadline day at 6:02 by your clock. You have a deadline cutoff of 6:00. Will you accept his orders? What if it was 6:01? 6:00:30? If you answered yes to all three situations how long is your grace period? If you answered no to all three how do you know if his clock is to standard time and yours is off a couple of minutes?

3. It's deadline day again and a person has not sent any orders in. You provide "NMR insurance" for your players and this player is on that list. How many times and how often will you call him if there is no answer? Ask yourself, would you keep calling a "friend" or a "reliable" player over and over while only calling an unfamiliar player or an erratic one, once or twice?

4. A player moves to another location and sends you his new address but does not include a phone number (obviously because it has yet to be installed). He is a player who has requested previously to be on your "NMR insurance" list. Deadline day comes and no orders from him. Will you take the trouble to call directory assistance to determine if he has a number yet? (The call is free.) Will your answer depend on whether the player moved closer to the deadline or three or four weeks before?

5. You have a 6:00 cutoff time and it's deadline day. At about 5:30 or 5:40 a player (and a good friend) calls to give you his orders. The two of you get to bullshitting and by the time you hang up it's 6:04. Another player subsequently calls you with his orders. Will you accept his late orders? Does he have to indicate in some way that the line was busy? Will you prompt him regarding that if he doesn't? How long after 6:00 will you accept orders accompanied by the explanation that "the line was busy"?

6. The zine goes out and a few days later you get a letter (or phone call) from a very embittered player. He NMR'd the previous season and is loudly complaining that you were never at home on deadline day or the day before. You know that he is a player who usually sends his orders in. You are about to point to your house rule about not guaranteeing to be home for phone orders and signing off with "tough luck 'Warble" when you check the last issue of the zine and discover you have a typo in your phone number. What will you do? (What will you do...?)

((And to these questions I would like to add the following...))

7. You are a strict GM and will not accept a written order like "A Box O' Pru-Gill" because you require that the unit being supported be identified. Do you accept such an order over the phone, and correct it? Or do you prompt the player with a question like, "Is that any Prussia to Silesia?" Likewise, if you don't accept "implied orders", and a player orders A Vile O' P And-Fri over the phone, will you in any way prompt him to add "A Acc-771"?

8. A player, in Spring 1901, phones in the order "A Ber-Den". Will you point out to him that this is impossible? Will you ask a player to clarify "Fleet Norwegian to North"? (This assumes that you would consider "North" to be ambiguous in that situation.)

9. A player's wife phones you with his moves, saying that he is out of town and cannot be reached. Will you accept them? Will you accept moves that are given to a member of your family in your absence? If you answered yes to both of these, then will you accept orders given to a member of your family from his wife?

10. Three days before the deadline, you pick up the phone and hear an awful silence. It is four days before Ma Bell sends a guy out to fix it. As a result, several of your players try to call in their orders a day late, explaining that they couldn't call you in the past few days due to the problem with your phone. Do you accept their orders? If so, then what about the guy who NMRs and upon receiving the zine, calls you and explains that he tried to call over and over but gave up after the deadline because he knows you don't accept late orders?

All readers are welcome to respond. If I get enough interesting responses, I'll try to make this into another roundtable discussion as I did with the "Off the Record" article a while back. I have my own answers to all of these, of course, but will save them for the follow-up piece.

Thanks to Jim Meinel for providing me with the first six questions. Three free issues, Jim. You're welcome to send your responses with everyone else...

~~*****~~

Submitted to VB by (who else?) Flumphar T. Quiddipoo, Jr.

The Durable Fig Leaf

By Mark Strage

Studying the habits of a large colony of hamadryas baboons at London's Regent's Park Zoo some years ago, a young South African biologist named Solly Zuckerman noticed certain peculiar but recurring patterns of behavior. When a male baboon felt threatened by a stronger male, he would ward off danger by exposing his hind parts to the superior male. The latter would then cease to harass and would mount the submissive one, imitating the act of mating. Similar behavior has since been observed on the part of other monkeys and apes and of other animal species that live in bands or flocks structured by a fixed hierarchy.

The psychologist A.H. Maslow defines this kind of dominance-subordination behavior as "pseudosex." That it occurs among human beings, he notes, is obvious to any clinician and is illustrated by language itself -- in phrases such as "kiss my ass." Especially in social situations which, by imposing a strict hierarchical order, most nearly resemble baboon life -- the military, for instance, or corporate life -- a subordinate who attempts to appease a superior or curry favor with him is likely to be categorized as a "brown-noser," an "ass-licker," or a "corn-holer."

Another genital mode of demonstrating dominance was described by Drs. Flogg and Maclean after observing a captive colony of monkeys for a year. The surest indicator of rank proved to be the order of precedence in displaying penile erections. Caspar turned out to be the dominant member of the group. He displayed to the other males, but none dared to display to him. The lowest member of the group was Edgar. He displayed to none of the other males, but all displayed to him. Edgar, the authors note, displayed only to the humans.

ipse Facto! ((adds Flumphar)) Scientific confirmation of my long-established conviction that Lockheed management (among others) has much farther to ascend on the ladder of evolution than they would have one believe.

Corporate baboons. Lovely.

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BRUX

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