

Happy Birthday to...

THE VOICE OF DOOM

#95

October 18, 1983

Circulation: 125

by RRUX

A very special issue for all my friends out there in Doomland...

THE GALA FOURTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

The following 67 people have all contributed to making this issue special through their articles, letters, press releases, cartoons, and other contributions. Thank to:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Ed Wrobel | Rick Ragedale | Alex Lord | Joan Exton |
| James Woodson | Flumpho Quiddipoo | Mark Lew | Greg Ellis |
| Bob Witzmond | Jeff Panches | Steve Langley | Richard Edison |
| Judy Winsons | Marc Peters | Steve Knight | Michael Ditz |
| Jim Williams | Mark Paul | John Kelley | Don Del Grande |
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| James Wall | Brian Orloff | John Kador | Pat Conlon |
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| John Thrall | Jennifer Noto | Edmund Jedry | Ronald Brown |
| Pete Tamly | John Michalski | Bob Howerton | Doug Bayerlein |
| Bob Sweeney | Jim Meinal | Nelson Heintzman | Mark Berch |
| Kevin Stone | Mike Masser | Ty Hare | Konrad Baumeister |
| Dan Stafford | Ron Masurkiewicz | Garry Hamlin | Mike Barno |
| Randolph Smyth | Jim Makuc | Jake Halverstadt | Peter Ansoff |
| Rob Schamuk | John MacFarlane | Ruth Glaspey | Steve Angle |
| Glover Rogerson | Mark Luedi | Mark Fruah | Chuff Afflerback |
| Paul Rauterberg | William C.S.A.A. Lowe | Jim Finley | |

I wouldn't trade my Doomes for any other sub list in the world!

The Voice of Doom is a journal of postal Diplomacy published every now and then. Bruce Linzey, 24A Quarry Drive, Albany, NY 12205. Phone (518) 459-9250. Subs are \$5.00. Standbys are wanted. There are no game openings in regular Diplomacy. Diplomacy is a registered trademark for a game invented by Allan B. Calhamer and copyrighted by Avalon Hill.

The deadline for all games contained herein is November 11, 1983. That's a good thing, so get your orders in early!

BHUX Reflects

The Fourth Year

BHUX Reflects is an annual feature which appears in the anniversary issues of VD only. It is devoted to sharing with my readers some (usually disjointed) thoughts about my hobby involvement in the past, with emphasis on the most recent year; and will also discuss where I think VD is going in the foreseeable future.

I feel that my fourth year as a publisher was a very successful one; perhaps not quite on a par with my third year, but very satisfying nonetheless. Mark Berch and Ralph Morton expressed astonishment at my third year statistics of over 400 total pages and 30+ pages per issue. This year, I once again topped the 30-page mark per issue; and with 19 issues out since my third annish, the total page count here was just shy of 600. I remain very pleased with the high quality of material submitted to me for print. Joan Extrom recently told me that she considers the press here among the best in any of the zines she receives. She commented especially on Dave Kleiman's outstanding "Jeopardy" release in the last issue (HINT, HINT, Dave!). Mark Paul continues to send in excellent cartoons, while articles keep coming in from many of the hobby's best writers. The Gossip Column has never been healthier -- and I still find myself incredulous at my great good fortune. VD would shrivel up and die without the generous help of you, it's readers.

My record of never sending out a game report late has now stretched to four years. Although I am very proud of this achievement, credit must be given where it is most due -- to the dedicated, reliable players here who make GMing fun.

Certainly there have been some negatives. Clearly the switch to ditto format as a price-saving measure did not help the zine's readability, and Alex's Column finally wound down after a long and successful run. There was still too much controversy for my taste, some of it due to poor editing on my part. But there were a lot of precious moments as well: the "Off the Record" discussion and Chuff Afflerbach's delightful follow-up "Broken Record", the "Doomie of the Year" issue featuring Alex, the Zoo issue which was so much fun to produce, the second meeting of the Pilgrim and the Dipimaster, Cupcake's article on Origins, etc., etc.

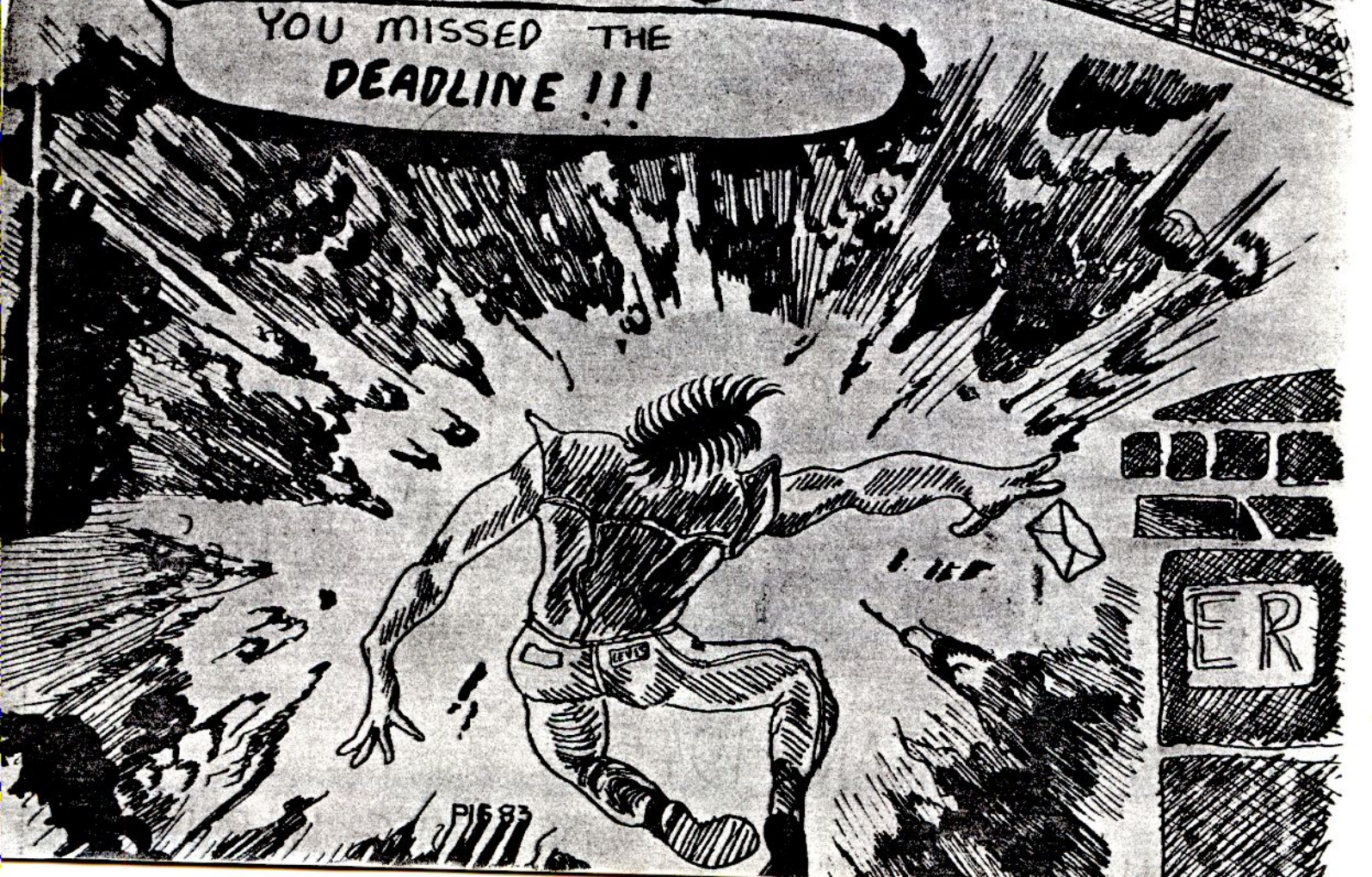
Last annish I listed the names of a bunch of novices and predicted that some of them would still be playing and enjoying postal Diplomacy in five years. Of those named, Wrobel and Halverstadt are now publishers (both with exceptional writing skills), and all but two are still very active in the hobby and VD. This year, we have a brand new influx of promising new blood. I won't name all the names, but you'll find seven of them playing in the RIGEL game. Novices are the lifeblood of the hobby, and I hope to continue doing my part to help them get started in it. Around 450 copies of Supernova have been distributed since it was first published, and it still sells thanks to the many publishers who continue to plug it.

As for my own involvement in the foreseeable future; well, as usual I feel as though I'm just a bit overinvolved in the hobby. I have felt this way ever since I started publishing; maybe it's my destiny or some such. I'm playing now in Jake's Presidential Politics game and don't expect to join any other postal games for over a year. Nor do I expect to open any new games in VD for a long time to come (exceptions: see the semi-humorous discussion of "Diplomacy Cantal" somewhere inside) because I'd like to reduce my gameload as a GM.

So what does the zine have in store for the coming year? I honestly don't know, because so far every new year has brought different and pleasant surprises for the hobby and VD. Let's make VD's fifth year its best ever. Let's go out there and celebrate our wonderful hobby together, you and I, as friends. Let's continue to have fun.



YOU MISSED THE DEADLINE !!!



No wonder this issue is so fat! Here they are in all their delightfully notorious glory, organized as never before thanks to Steve Knight...

THE VOICE OF DOOM HOUSERULES

OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. RULES AND RULE PRECEDENCE
2. GENDER INCLUSIVENESS
3. VD GAMES ARE INHUMAN!
4. ABBREVIATIONS
 - a. PROVINCES
 - b. OTHER ABBREVIATIONS
5. GM ERRORS AND PLAYER PROTESTS
 - a. GM RESPONSE
 - b. CORRECTING ERRORS
6. ARBITRATION
 - a. USE OF ARBITRATION
 - b. OMBUDSMAN SELECTION
7. TRANSFERRING A GAME
8. UNFORSEEN SITUATIONS
9. THE "GREATER GOOD" RULE

II. GAMESTARTS

1. MINIMAL PLAYER OBLIGATIONS
2. ALIASES
3. PLAYER SELECTION
4. PREFERENCE LISTS

III. GAME PROCEDURE

1. SEASONS
2. DEADLINES
3. SEPARATION OF SEASONS
4. DELAY OF GAME
 - a. SPRING 1901
 - b. EXTREME ERRORS
 - c. POSTAL STRIKES
 - d. NO CIVIL DISORDER
5. CHANGE OF PROCEDURE
6. USE AND ABUSE OF THE GM

IV. SUBMITTING ORDERS

- 1. NECESSITY OF ORDERS
- 2. GENERAL COMMUNICATION
- 3. WRITTEN ORDERS
- 4. PHONED ORDERS
- 5. PRECEDENCE OF MULTIPLE ORDERS
 - a. SAME COMMUNICATION METHOD
 - b. DIFFERENT METHODS, SAME DAY
 - c. IDENTICAL OR UNCERTAIN DATING
- 6. UNACCEPTABLE TYPES OF ORDERS
- 7. CONDITIONAL ORDERS
 - a. SCOPE OF CONDITIONALS
 - b. CONFLICTING RETREATS
 - c. CONDITIONS REFER TO LEGAL ATTEMPTS
 - d. CONDITIONALS FOR MISSED ORDERS

V. MISSED DEADLINES AND DROPPING OUT

- 1. MISSING A DEADLINE
- 2. EFFECTS OF MISSED DEADLINES
 - a. MISSED SPRING OR FALL MOVES
 - b. MISSED SUMMER OR AUTUMN RETREATS
 - c. MISSED WINTER BUILDS
 - d. MISSED WINTER REMOVALS
 - e. MISSED SPRING 1901 MOVES
- 3. DROPPING
 - a. INTENT TO CONTINUE
 - b. HOPELESS ORDERS
 - c. DROPPING VIA SUBSCRIPTION LAPSE
- 4. RESIGNING

VI. REPLACEMENT PLAYERS

- 1. STANDBYS
 - a. STANDBY RIGHTS
 - b. STAND BY FOR ONE COUNTRY PER GAME
- 2. SUBSTITUTES
- 3. REPLACEMENT WINS BY RETREAT

VII. INTERPRETATION OF ORDERS

- 1. IMPLIED ORDERS
- 2. COMBINED ORDERS
- 3. PROVINCES WITH TWO COASTS
- 4. UNIT SPECIFICATION
- 5. MUTUAL SUPPORT
- 6. PARENTHESIZED ORDERS
- 7. SPECIFICATION OF NATIONALITY
- 8. LEGALITY ASSUMED
- 9. RETREATS ARE NOT MOVES
- 10. AMBIGUITY AND ILLEGIBILITY

VIII. ADJUDICATIONS

- 1. ADJUDICATION FORMAT
 - a. ADJUDICATED ORDERS
 - b. SUPPLY CENTER CHART
 - c. GAME NOTES
- 2. RESULTS VIA PHONE
- 3. ADJUDICATIONS ARRIVING LATE
- 4. GAME YEAR ON RECORD
- 5. UNUSED ORDERS

IX. PRESS

- 1. SUBMISSION OF PRESS
- 2. PRESS FORMAT
- 3. PUBLICATION OF PRESS
- 4. WINTER 1900 PRESS
- 5. BLACK PRESS
- 6. GM PRESS

X. ENDING THE GAME

- 1. DRAW AND CONCESSION PROPOSALS
- 2. VOTING
- 3. SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF PROPOSALS
 - a. EARLY PROPOSAL
 - b. UNDESERVED WIN
 - c. EXCLUSIVE DRAW
- 4. UNPROPOSED DRAWS
- 5. EXTENSION OF VOTING DEADLINE
- 6. ENFORCED DRAW

XI. RULEBOOK CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS

- 1. UNNECESSARY CONVOYS
- 2. UNADJUDICATABLE SITUATIONS
- 3. SELF-DISLODGE MENT VIA CONVOY
- 4. EXCHANGES BY CONVOY
- 5. NO DECLINING OF SUPPORT OR CONVOYS
- 6. COASTAL CREEP
- 7. NO INLAND FLEETS
- 8. NO FUNNY STUFF IN THE WINTER
- 9. NEGOTIATION TIMES
- 10. IS THIS FOR REAL, BRUX?
- 11. DECLINING BUILDS

XII. AMENDING THE HOUSE RULES

- 1. PROCEDURE
- 2. PROTESTING AMENDMENTS

THE VOICE OF DOOM HOUSERULES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. RULES AND RULE PRECEDENCE. The rules to be used for games in The Voice of Doom, in order of priority, will be:

- 1) the variant rules for a given game;
- 2) these houserules;
- 3) the 1976 Rulebook.

With the exception of the decision of an ombudsman in a Player-GM dispute, the decision of the GM shall be final in all cases. The GM is not responsible for players' failure to read or understand the Rules or houserules. The GM will, however, answer questions concerning the Rules, houserules, and their interpretation, but will restrict himself to those subjects; in particular, the GM will never give advice to a player concerning his game in VD.

Example: The GM will answer a question like, "How do I legally write such-and-such an order?" but will not discuss questions such as, "Where should I move?" or "Should I stab now?"

2. GENDER INCLUSIVENESS. The word "his," or any other word in these houserules which refers to a player or potential player, shall also be construed to include players of the feminine gender, and any player with no gender.

3. VD GAMES ARE INHUMAN!. Players in games in VD need not be human. Dogs, extraterrestrials, and computer programs are all allowed to play, provided they abide by these houserules.

4. ABBREVIATIONS. The following abbreviations will be used throughout these houserules, and generally in The Voice of Doom. Use of the abbreviations listed here is recommended, but not necessary. Other abbreviations are, however, subject to the GM's judgement regarding their ambiguity.

a. PROVINCES. Any province or body of water except those listed below will be abbreviated simply by using the first three letters of its name. The exceptions, with the abbreviations that the GM will use, are:

Bot	Gulf of Bothnia	NAt	North Atlantic Ocean
Lyo	Gulf of Lyon	Nth	North Sea
Hlg	Helgoland Bight	Nwy	Norway
Lvp	Liverpool	Nwg	Norwegian Sea
Lvn	Livonia	Tyo	Tyrolia
NAF	North Africa		

Additionally, note that "Tyr" is still the preferred abbreviation for the Tyr-rhenian Sea, but will be accepted as an abbreviation for Tyrolia. Abbreviations such as "Liv", "Nor", "Nor Sea", and "North" are strongly discouraged but will be accepted if and only if the order is unambiguous.

b. OTHER ABBREVIATIONS. The following abbreviations will be used in adjudications, order descriptions, and for other miscellaneous things:

Voice of Doom Houserules

A	army	imp	impossible
F	fleet	NSU	no such unit
H	holds	NSO	no such order
S	supports	OTM	ordered to move
MS	mutually supports	ec	east coast
C	convoys	nc	north coast
U	unordered	sc	south coast
d	dislodged	NMR	no moves received
r	retreat to	NBR	no builds (or removals) received
OTB	off the board	NRR	no retreats received
ann	annihilated	NVR	no votes received
amb	ambiguous	SASE	self-addressed stamped envelope
GM	gamesmaster	HRs	houserules
CD	civil disorder	VOD,VD	The Voice of Doom
COA	change of address		

5. GM ERRORS AND PLAYER PROTESTS. A player who wishes to protest a GMing decision or bring an adjudication error to the GM's attention has until the next deadline to do so. Protests must be clearly labeled as such, and the player must state his argument at the time the protest is registered. Players are under no obligation to report adjudication errors to the GM.

a. GM RESPONSE. The GM may respond in one of three ways:

1) If the player has clearly made an error and his argument is totally unsupported by the Rulebook or these houserules, the GM will print the player's argument and a rebuttal, and proceed with the game.

2) If the player is clearly correct and the GM has made an error, the GM will inform the players of the error as soon as possible and attempt to correct the error.

3) If the GM feels that he has ruled correctly but finds the player's argument at all debatable, he shall submit the argument, along with his rebuttal, to arbitration. The protest, rebuttal, and ombudsman's comments will all be published in VD.

b. CORRECTING ERRORS. The GM will correct any GMing errors caught by the next deadline by informing the players of the error and of its resolution according to the houserules. Errors which result in an impossible situation (such as two units in the same province) may be corrected after the deadline if the GM decides that it is the best way to resolve the error.

6. ARBITRATION. In the event of a Player-GM dispute in which there is a chance that the player may be right, the GM will solicit an ombudsman's ruling on the matter. The ombudsman's decision will be final and must be adhered to by all parties involved.

a. USE OF ARBITRATION. The decision as to whether or not an ombudsman will be used to arbitrate a dispute shall, in the end, rest with the GM.

b. OMBUDSMAN SELECTION. The GM will choose the ombudsman for a GM-Player dispute, but will restrict himself to well-known and respected hobby members, and may not make the choice dependent upon the decision. The name of the ombudsman will be publicized in VD. The player involved in the dispute

Voice of Doom Houserules

may specify, at the time he registers his protest, any one ombudsman that he does not want used, or may specify that he does not want the case to go to an ombudsman.

7. TRANSFERRING A GAME. A game will be transferred from VD to another zine if and only if all of its players vote in favor of doing so. A proposal for such a transfer must be made by a player, and the GM will call for a vote by the following deadline; NVR will be taken as a "no" vote. If the vote succeeds, the following deadline will not be played in VD. All votes will be made public. The GM will assist in such a transfer, provided he receives payment for all expenses incurred. The players' NMR fees and game fees will be forfeited. In the event, however, of the death, disability, or dismemberment of the GM, players are urged to ask another GM to rehouse their game; the GM will see to it that at least one other person exists who will be able to refund players' fees in such a situation. The GM will do everything in his power to prevent this--thus, if I commit suicide, I am in violation of my houserules.

8. UNFORSEEN SITUATIONS. If a situation arises that is not covered by these houserules, the GM will do his best to render a fair decision. Such a decision may, but is not required to, be used as a precedent for future decisions pertaining to games in VD.

9. THE "GREATER GOOD" RULE. These houserules are intended as a guideline under which the GM will run the games in VD. The GM recognizes that occasions may arise in which the greater good is served by ruling in a manner other than that prescribed by these houserules, and he therefore reserves the power to override them if, in his judgement, the situation warrants such action.

II. GAMESTARTS

1. MINIMAL PLAYER OBLIGATIONS. A player in a game in Voice of Doom must keep up his subscription, pay his game and NMR fees by no later than the fall 1901 deadline, avoid dropping or resigning, and abide by these houserules.

2. ALIASES. No player may play in, or sign up for, a game under an alias, although a player may use a nickname rather than his given name. The GM reserves the right to know and publish the real name of any player using a nickname.

3. PLAYER SELECTION. The GM reserves the right to refuse any potential player a position in a game. The GM will do his best to insure a good geographical spread of players. In general, an attempt will be made to ensure that no player has a significant advantage or disadvantage in negotiating with the other players due to his location. Additionally, any active, potential, or standby player may indicate any other player or players with whom he does not wish to play. Such requests will be held in confidence, and honored within reason.

4. PREFERENCE LISTS. Preference lists of countries, and partial preference lists, will be accepted prior to a gamestart. They will not be published unless publication is requested by any player in the game or in the event that

any player receives his fourth choice or lower; in either case, all preference lists for the game will be published. No preference lists, however, will be published after the spring 1901 season has been published. A potential player is also permitted to sign up for a game conditional upon receiving, or not receiving, a certain country, although this practice may decrease his chances of obtaining a position in the game.

Example: "My first choice is Austria, my second choice is Russia, and my last choice is Turkey!" is an acceptable partial preference list.

Example: "I'll sign up only if I can play Italy," is legal, but players who do this are warned that they run the risk of being turned down altogether.

III. GAME PROCEDURE

1. SEASONS. A Diplomacy game-year will consist of up to five seasons. They are, in order: spring moves, summer retreats, fall moves, autumn retreats, and winter adjustments. Ordinarily, summer and fall will be combined so that orders for both seasons will be due at the same deadline; similarly, autumn, winter, and spring will be combined.

2. DEADLINES. The GM shall determine the intervals between deadlines, which will generally be four weeks, and never less than that. (Exception: when Daylight Savings Time takes effect in the spring, the deadline may be short of four weeks by one hour.) The deadline itself will be 8:00 p.m. by the GM's time on a Friday. The deadline date will be announced on page 1 of every issue of VD containing game reports. The deadline set by the GM is the absolute deadline for orders, press, votes, and anything else pertaining to the season in question with the sole exception of address changes. No other exceptions will be made, even for orders phoned in TWO SECONDS LATE! The GM's clock will be used to determine the exact time of the deadline, and a player who is in the process of giving the GM his orders when the deadline passes will not be permitted to finish.

3. SEPARATION OF SEASONS. Autumn/winter 1901 will always be separate from spring 1902. Additionally, seasons may be separated by player request. Whenever there are three or more retreats or adjustments or both due in conjunction with an upcoming spring or fall turn, one request for separation of seasons shall be sufficient to effect the separation. Two requests shall be required for separation when fewer retreats or adjustments or both are due. (Note: "hopeless retreat" and "hopeless removal" orders as defined by these Houserules do not count in the determination of the number of retreats/adjustments due.) Failure to submit orders will not be interpreted as a separation request. Requests for separation of seasons for a spring season deadline will assume that autumn and winter are still to be combined unless explicitly stated otherwise.

4. DELAY OF GAME. Under certain conditions, play of a season may be delayed one or more deadlines, in which case the GM will set another deadline and inform the players of the change as soon as possible. A player may still be replaced, such as for sub lapse, during a delayed game. Orders which were submitted before the delayed deadline will remain valid unless superceded by later orders. Players should note that, due to the possibility of game delays or separations of seasons, it may be unwise to reveal their actions for a given season until they receive verification from the GM that the season has

Voice of Doom Houserules

in fact been played.

a. **SPRING 1901.** The spring 1901 season will be delayed by one deadline if two players in the game request the delay. An NMR in spring 1901 is not a request to delay the season.

b. **EXTREME ERRORS.** The GM may announce a delay of season in order to correct an extreme error in the game adjudication. Such a decision is a judgement call by the GM.

Example: If the GM were to misreport a player's orders (e.g., list "A Tyo-Vie" when the player actually ordered "A Tyo-Ven"), a fact which is undetectable to the other players, the GM may resort to delaying a season, but will not necessarily do this for all cases.

c. **POSTAL STRIKES.** In the event of an American postal strike, all games will be automatically delayed until further notice by the GM. In the event of a postal strike in any other country containing a player currently playing in a VD game, all games so affected will be so delayed.

Example: If the Laotian postal service goes on strike, all games with players residing in Laos will be delayed until the strike is over.

d. **NO CIVIL DISORDER.** If, on the deadline following an NMR by a player, the GM receives moves from neither the player himself nor the standby for that player's country, the GM will call upon another standby to assume control of the country, and the game will be delayed on a deadline-by-deadline basis until the GM receives orders for the country in question.

5. **CHANGE OF PROCEDURE.** Subject to the approval of the GM, the players in a game may propose and vote on any change of procedure for the play of the game. Such a change in procedure must be unanimously approved by the players of that game, and NVR will be interpreted as "no" for such votes.

Example: Permitting black press in a game which did not previously have it is one such allowable change.

6. **USE AND ABUSE OF THE GM.** A player may not deceive the GM in any manner whatsoever concerning the VD game he is in. "Deception" shall include impersonation of another player, lying to the GM, and any other misrepresentation of facts. Impersonation of the GM is, however, permitted--although the GM himself will not assist in such a ruse. Abusive language directed toward the GM will not be tolerated. Additionally, a player is not permitted to raid the GM's mailbox or files for information pertaining to his VD game. Such actions may result in the player's expulsion from the game.

IV. SUBMITTING ORDERS

The word "orders" in this section of the houserules may be construed by the GM to mean any information pertaining to a player's VD game.

1. **NECESSITY OF ORDERS.** Orders are required from any player who has any units to remove, retreat, build, or move, even if he wishes to decline builds or have all units hold. A player with no orders due at a given deadline need not submit orders. Every player must submit his own orders unless the GM expressly permits a player's orders to be submitted by a substitute.

2. **GENERAL COMMUNICATION.** The GM accepts no responsibility for the media used to convey any information, nor for being accessible by any media. In particular, players should not depend upon reaching the GM by phone, even

(or especially) on the day of a deadline. Players may, however, phone the GM to submit moves or find out results on a 24-hour basis—but may be forced to wait long-distance while the grogginess clears if they wake up the GM. (Abuse of this 24-hour privilege may result in its revocation.)

3. WRITTEN ORDERS. The GM might not accept postage due letters. All other forms of written communication are legal, including special delivery letters, telegrams, hand delivery, and, of course, the Postal (Dis)Service.

Written orders should be on a sheet of paper at least 3" by 5" in size. They should not be on the same sheet as unrelated correspondence, nor with orders for any other games. Written orders should include the following: the player's signature, the date, the game season, the Boardman Number of the game or the name assigned to the game by the GM, and the country. Dates may be abbreviated by using the format month/day, month/day/year, or day/month/year. In the event of an ambiguity involving an abbreviated date with three numbers, the month/day/year format will be assumed. In dating orders, the year may be abbreviated by using the final two digits.

Example: A player playing in four games should submit orders on four separate sheets of paper, one for each game.

Example: 2/19/82 will be taken to mean 2/19/1982.

Example: A game whose last deadline was June 24, 1983 has been delayed and the new deadline is August 19, 1983. If a player has submitted sets of orders dated "8/7/83" and "7/8/83", the former will be assumed to be the later set submitted. Players in the military or in countries which use the day/month/year format are hereby warned!

4. PHONED ORDERS. Phoned orders must be given directly from the player to the GM, and not via a third party. The GM will be writing the orders down as the player is speaking, and will ask the player to repeat what he said, if necessary. The GM will always repeat the orders back to the player who phones them in; the orders will not be considered valid until the GM has repeated them. The player has no proof of what was said on the phone, and absolutely no protests will be accepted that the GM heard the orders incorrectly.

If the GM has not received orders from a player by the deadline day (for any season), the GM may attempt to call the player COLLECT for the orders. Players are not to rely on this; the GM may have time to call only some of the players who have not submitted orders. Such a collect call may be declined and then returned to save the player money. If the call is made mistakenly, the GM will reimburse the player for the cost of the call.

5. PRECEDENCE OF MULTIPLE ORDERS. The following rules will be used whenever the deadline finds the GM with more than one set of orders for a country.

a. SAME COMMUNICATION METHOD. If the GM receives two or more sets of orders for a given country and a given season, the latest-dated set received before the deadline will be used. If two or more sets of phoned orders are received on the same day, the latest such set received will be used. An exception would be if the later orders clearly indicate that they are a revision of the previous set, in which case the unchanged orders from the first set will also be used.

b. DIFFERENT METHODS, SAME DAY. If a set of written and a set of phoned orders are identically dated, the phoned orders will be used.

Voice of Doom Houserules

c. **IDENTICAL OR UNCERTAIN DATING.** If two or more identically dated sets of postal orders are received, or if for any reason the GM is unable to determine which is the latest among two or more sets of orders, then only those orders common to all of the sets of orders in question will be used.

Example: France has A Par, A Mar, F Bre, and sends in two sets of orders: "1/1/83: A Par-Bur, A Mar-Spa, F Bre-Mid;" and "1/1/83: A Par-Bur, A Mar-Pie." A Par-Bur is the only order which succeeds, since neither set indicates it supercedes the other, and A Par-Bur is the only order common to both.

6. **UNACCEPTABLE TYPES OF ORDERS.** The following types of orders are unacceptable: perpetual orders and orders for more than one game year in advance, general orders, and joint orders.

7. **CONDITIONAL ORDERS.** A player may submit a set of orders which are conditional upon the activities of earlier seasons which occur at the same deadline. Players should make it **PAINFULLY OBVIOUS** as to which conditions apply to which orders for which units. If a player's orders do not account for a given situation which actually occurs, the player's units will be considered unordered. Likewise, if a player's orders account for a situation more than once with conflicting orders, all units with conflicting orders will be treated as unordered (i.e., only those orders common to the relevant conditional sets will be used).

Example: A player may make his winter adjustments conditional upon the autumn retreats of another player; also possible is making the spring moves conditional upon the builds of the winter turn due with the spring moves.

a. **SCOPE OF CONDITIONALS.** In addition to submitting orders conditional upon what actually happened during a previous season, players may submit orders that are conditional:

- 1) upon what another player may have tried to do during a previous season;
- 2) upon whether a given player missed a previous season's moves;
- 3) upon whether or not a particular GMing error was made on the previous deadline;
- 4) upon whether or not the seasons for the current deadline are being separated;
- 5) upon who is playing a country for the current season;
- 6) upon a codeword submitted by another player in that game. (A codeword must be clearly labeled as such by the player submitting it, and it may not be part of the press.)
- 7) upon the answer to a question concerning the rules of the game, these houserules, or how the GM would adjudicate a given situation.

Orders may NOT be conditional upon another player's vote on a proposal. Players should take pains to include all possible cases, including retreats off the board. Additionally, a set labeled "all other cases" is encouraged as a wise precaution.

Example: A conditional based on a situation such as "if Russia retreated to Berlin" will not take effect if Russia attempted this retreat unsuccessfully. Players should thus take extreme caution to say precisely what they mean; an order can be made conditional upon the situation "if Russia attempted to retreat to Berlin."

b. **CONFLICTING RETREATS.** If an order is conditional upon the success of a retreat that was unsuccessfully attempted (due to a conflict with the attempted retreat of another unit), then the condition for an OTB retreat will be used, since that is what will have actually taken place.

c. **CONDITIONS REFER TO LEGAL ATTEMPTS.** An order conditional upon what another player attempted to do in a previous season will be followed only if the attempt was made legally.

Example: FRANCE: "If Italy attempts to retreat to Mar, then build A Par." This would be followed if Italy ordered "A Pie r Mar," but would not be followed if Italy ordered "A Rom r Mar."

d. **CONDITIONALS FOR MISSED ORDERS.** Conditional orders for an OTB retreat, removal of a given unit, or a declined build will be used by the GM in the event of an NRR, NBR, and NBR, respectively, provided that there is no condition explicitly covering said NRR or NBR.

Example: FRANCE: "If Germany retreats F Bal OTB, build A Par; in all other cases, build F Bre." If Germany NRR's, resulting in the removal of F Bal, the French A Par will be built.

Example: FRANCE: "If Germany retreats F Bal OTB, build A Par; if Germany NRR's, build A Bre; in all other cases build F Bre." In this case, if Germany NRR's, A Bre will be built, as there is a specific condition covering the NRR.

V. MISSED DEADLINES AND DROPPING OUT

1. **MISSED A DEADLINE.** A player will miss a deadline if no orders are received by the GM from that player for a given deadline when orders are due from that player. A player who submits orders will not miss a deadline, even if none of the orders are legal or valid. During combined seasons, the submission of retreat orders alone does count as a missed deadline, as does the submission of only builds or removals. The exception will be if a player retreats his last unit OTB, in which case no moves need be submitted for the turn following the retreat. In the event of separated seasons, the submission of just retreats or adjustments will, of course, be sufficient to avoid an NMR. A player who has neither builds nor removals need not submit orders for a winter season.

2. **EFFECTS OF MISSED DEADLINES.** In the event of a missed deadline, the GM will choose and call on a standby to submit standby orders for the affected country for the next season. (See the section on standby players.) The immediate effect of a missed deadline on the game will be as follows:

a. **MISSED SPRING OR FALL MOVES.** All units will hold in place, with the exception of missed moves for spring 1901.

b. **MISSED SUMMER OR AUTUMN RETREATS.** The units involved will retreat OTB.

c. **MISSED WINTER BUILDS.** The build is not made and the player in question plays short.

d. **MISSED WINTER REMOVALS.** The removals will be made by the GM, who will remove units from non-supply center territories outside of the players home country first, then units from supply centers not in the home country, and finally units from non-supply center territories within the home country. Within each of these three groups, the GM will remove units in alphabetical order, based on the full name of the spaces affected.

Example: Russia has A Mos, F Fin, A Lvn, A Ukr, F Ber, F Cly, and A Arm. If the Russian player misses his winter removals, the order of precedence for

Voice of Doom Houserules

the removals would be: A Arm, F Cly, F Ber, F Fin, and A Lvn. (Note that A Mos and A Ukr could never come off here; Russia still owns at least two centers, Moscow and Berlin.)

e. MISSED SPRING 1901 MOVES. The following neutral moves will be used:

- AUSTRIA: A Vie H, A Bud-Ser, F Tri-Alb
- ENGLAND: A Lvp-Yor, F Edi-Nwg, F Lon-Nth
- FRANCE: A Par-Pic, A Mar-Spa, F Bre-Mid
- GERMANY: A Ber-Kie, A Mun-Ruh, F Kie-Den
- ITALY: A Rom-Apu, A Ven H, F Nap-Ion
- RUSSIA: A Mos-Ukr, A War H, F Sev-Rum, F StP(sc)-Bot
- TURKEY: A Con-Bul, A Smy H, F Ank-Con

3. DROPPING. If a player misses two deadlines in a row for which he should have submitted orders, or if a player misses three deadlines within five game years or four deadlines at any time during the game, that player has "NMR'ed out," and will be dropped from playing that position and, at the GM's discretion, from the YD sub list, with no refund of his NMR or subscription fee.

a. INTENT TO CONTINUE. If a player misses a deadline and has no orders due at the next deadline, the player is nevertheless required to inform the GM, before the next deadline, of his intent to continue--otherwise, it is counted as a drop.

b. HOPELESS ORDERS. A "hopeless retreat" is defined as an autumn retreat for a player whose supply center count is zero and whose units can neither retreat to a supply center nor conflict with the retreat of another country's unit. A "hopeless removal" is defined as a removal for a player whose supply center count is zero. A player is not required to submit hopeless retreats or hopeless removals in order to avoid dropping his position.

c. DROPPING VIA SUBSCRIPTION LAPSE. If a game report is to be published in an issue which a player should not receive due to a lapse of subscription, the GM will generally send only the page with the adjudication to the player, and will call a standby. Should the player fail to renew his subscription by the following deadline, he will be dropped from the game.

4. RESIGNING. A player may resign from a game by informing the GM, and may nominate his own replacement. The GM may, at his discretion, assign the position to the nominated replacement player. A resigning player is encouraged, but not required, to submit final orders for his country, which will be used if no standby orders are submitted. A player who resigns will receive his NMR fee back, but not his game fee.

VI. REPLACEMENT PLAYERS

1. STANDBYS. The GM will maintain a list of standby players, one of whom he will call on to submit standby orders whenever a player in a game misses a deadline or allows his subscription to lapse. A standby who fails to respond to a standby call may be removed from the standby list.

a. STANDBY RIGHTS. Standbys play for free and may submit votes, vote proposals, separation requests, and press with their standby orders. If the original player drops at the following deadline, the called standby will assume control of the player's country. Whatever a standby submits will be ig-

nored if the original player retains control of the position by submitting orders.

b. **STAND BY FOR ONE COUNTRY PER GAME.** A player who has played or been asked to stand by for one country in a game will never be asked to stand by for a different country in that same game.

2. **SUBSTITUTES.** A player may use a substitute player if the GM specifically gives permission in advance. The substitute may be chosen by the player (provided the GM approves of the choice) or by the GM. A player who has played in the same game or been asked to stand by for a different country in the same game will not be allowed to substitute. A substitute, while playing, has all of the powers of the player for whom he is substituting. There may be no partial delegation of powers (e.g., "Joe will be my substitute, but he may not attack Italy."). The original player may reassume control of the country by giving the GM notice one deadline in advance. The substitute must then yield his position back to the original player. If the original player fails to return, the substitute may retain control of the position indefinitely. For the purposes of game records, all changes between players and substitutes will be treated as resignations.

3. **REPLACEMENT WINS BY RETREAT.** If a player leaves a game in a fall turn, and his replacement retreats a dislodged unit into a winning (18th) center in the autumn, the replacement will receive credit for the win.

VII. INTERPRETATION OF ORDERS

There are four separate and mutually exclusive orders which a unit may receive during a spring or fall season: hold, move, support, or (for fleets only) convoy. Each unit must receive a single separate and legal order; a unit which does not, either because it receives no order, receives conflicting multiple orders, or receives an illegal, illegible, or impossible order, shall be considered unordered. Unordered units will hold in place, and may receive support in holding; additionally, units which are unordered will have the option of retreating if dislodged.

1. **IMPLIED ORDERS.** A support or convoy order will not itself constitute an order for the unit to be supported or convoyed.

Example: A Mun S A Tyo-Boh. As a single order, this does not implicitly state an order of A Tyo-Boh, so the move will fail. A correct way of writing this would be either A Tyo-Boh (A Mun S) or A Tyo-Boh, A Mun S A Tyo-Boh.

2. **COMBINED ORDERS.** Players may specify combined orders, subject to the interpretation of the GM.

Example: "All units hold" will be accepted as a set of hold orders for all of a player's units.

Example: A combined order such as "F Mid and A Gas S A Par-Bre" will be accepted and interpreted as "F Mid S A Par-Bre" and "A Gas S A Par-Bre."

3. **PROVINCES WITH TWO COASTS.** In all cases, incorrectly specifying the coast of a fleet occupying a double-coasted province will invalidate the order in which the incorrect specification occurs. Failure to specify the coast, however, will invalidate the order only if the failure creates an ambiguity; that is, if the unit could move to (or be built at) either coast. This also

Voice of Doom Houserules

holds for retreat orders; if failure to specify a coast creates an ambiguous retreat, the order will be converted to an unordered retreat.

Example: F Mid-Spa; F Aeg S F Con-Bul; Build F StP. All three are unacceptable because either coast is possible in all cases. "F Aeg S F Con-Bul" is ambiguous even in conjunction with the order "F Con-Bul(sc)".

Example: F Spa-Mid; A Smy S F Bul-Con; F Lvn-StP. All are acceptable (but poorly written!) because each refers to a single coast; the first two presumably refer to specific units--at specific coasts--on the board, while StP(sc) is the only legal destination that fits the last order.

Example: F Mid r Spa(nc); F Con r Bul. The former is correct. The latter retreat is unacceptable, and will be treated as an unordered retreat (i.e., retreated off the board), because it failed to specify a coast.

4. UNIT SPECIFICATION. Mislabeling, or failure to label, a unit as an army or a fleet will invalidate the order.

Example: A Eas-Ion; F Mos-Ukr; Alb-Gre; F Bel S A Eng. All orders are unacceptable; the first two mislabel the moving units, the third fails to label the moving unit, and the fourth mislabels the supported unit.

Example: F Hol-Bel, A Rub S Hol-Bel. The support order is unacceptable despite the existence of the movement order itself, as the unit being supported is unlabeled.

Example: F Hlg H, F Den S Hlg. The support order is unacceptable since the unit being supported is unlabeled.

5. MUTUAL SUPPORT. "MS" is an acceptable abbreviation, indicating that two units are supporting each other in place.

Example: "F Rom MS F Nap" is an acceptable abbreviation for the two orders "F Rom S F Nap" and "F Nap S F Rom".

6. PARENTHESES ORDERS. Orders may be written so that supports or convoys may follow the order for the unit to which they apply IN PARENTHESES ONLY. Support and convoy orders so parenthesized will always be assumed to refer to the unit immediately preceding the parentheses. This notation may be used only for fleets being ordered to convoy an army, or for units being ordered to support another unit which is moving or holding. Units which are supporting another unit which is ordered to convoy or support may not be ordered with this notation.

Example: A Wal-Bre (F Iri C, F Mid C, A Gas S). This is a valid set of four orders, equivalent to the four separate orders: A Wal-Bre, F Iri C A Wal-Bre, F Mid C A Wal-Bre, A Gas S A Wal-Bre.

7. SPECIFICATION OF NATIONALITY. Supports or convoys for a foreign unit must correctly state the nationality of the unit supported or convoyed.

Example: ENGLAND: F Wes C FRENCH A Mar-Tun, F Naf S A Mar-Tun. FRANCE: A Mar-Tun, F Lyo C A Mar-Tun. The convoy is acceptable, because the English order for F Wes specified the nationality of the convoyed French unit, but the support by F Naf is not because it failed to indicate the nationality.

8. LEGALITY ASSUMED. In interpreting the orders, the GM will assume that a player does intend to order his units legally, unless a unit is given an order which is clearly illegal. In considering the legality of an attempted move by an army the GM shall base his decision on whether only one legal interpretation exists INCLUDING POSSIBLE CONVOY ROUTES. The meaning of an

Voice of Doom Houserules

orders cannot depend on what other units are ordered to do, but it can depend on where other units are to begin the season.

Example: A Con-Blg. The order is acceptable as a move to Bulgaria, unless a convoy route to Belgium exists, in which case it is ambiguous. This holds true even if the same player orders "F Aeg S A Con-Bul."

Example: F Den-Nor. The move is acceptable as a synonym for F Den-Nth, as the North Sea is the only possible correct interpretation.

Example: A Den-Liv. The move may be interpreted as to either Livonia or Liverpool, provided a convoy route exists to one and only of these spaces.

Example: With F Nth and F Nwg: F Nwg-Nwy, F Nor-Edi. The latter order is unacceptable, even though the former order is acceptable. If the second order had been F Nor-Den, though, the move would be accepted, as this could be a legal move only for F Nth.

Example: F Swe S F Ska-Nwy, F Ska-Nor. The latter order is not acceptable (and therefore causes the former to fail), even though the former makes the intention clear.

9. RETREATS ARE NOT MOVES. Retreats are not considered moves, and they do not occur during winter. A player must somehow indicate that a retreat is a retreat and not a move or removal, either by using the letter "r" instead of a hyphen, or by explicitly labeling the order as an autumn or summer order.

Example: A Hol r Bel. A successful retreat of A Hol to Belgium.

Example: Winter 1906: A Hol-Bel. The intended retreat fails, as it is neither labeled as an autumn order nor specifically indicated by an "r".

10. AMBIGUITY AND ILLEGIBILITY. Illegible orders are unacceptable; orders making use of ambiguous abbreviations may be unacceptable, subject to the rules above. Ambiguity and illegibility are judgement calls, and as such, the GM's judgement in these matters is correct by definition.

VIII. ADJUDICATIONS

1. ADJUDICATION FORMAT. An adjudication report will be in three parts: the adjudicated orders for the season; a supply center chart (following fall moves); and the game notes.

a. ADJUDICATED ORDERS. The orders for a given country will be printed in any sequence the GM sees fit; the GM will normally print "joke" orders and orders for non-existent units, but reserves the right not to do so. Except in the case of a piece that is dislodged, all spring and fall adjudications will show the final location of a unit by capitalizing all the letters in that location's abbreviation. The GM will underline all orders which failed, and any unordered units which were dislodged. The GM will also indicate the spaces to which a dislodged unit may retreat.

Example: A Vie-BUD. Report of a successful move.

Example: A VIE-Bud. Report of an unsuccessful move.

Example: A Vie-Bud. Report of an unsuccessful move in which the piece was dislodged or annihilated. (In an actual report, this would be followed by a "d" indicating dislodgement, followed by a list of spaces to which the unit may retreat, or an "ann" indicating annihilation of the unit.)

b. SUPPLY CENTER CHART. After each fall turn, the GM will print a supply center chart, along with the number of builds or removals for each country. An asterisk (*) in the supply center chart will mean that the supply center count (and subsequent builds or removals) may be affected by a retreat,

Voice of Doom Houserules

and that the Game Notes should be consulted for details. Supply centers which are capitalized indicate centers gained by that country during the current year; supply centers crossed out with slashes indicate centers lost by that country during the current year.

c. GAME NOTES. The GM will print all notes pertaining to the play of the game in the Game Notes section of the adjudication. All players are expected to read the Game Notes each season.

2. RESULTS VIA PHONE. Players may call to find out the moves in their game as soon as the deadline has passed. Thus, the GM will tell a player the moves at 8:01 p.m., but not at 7:59 p.m., on a deadline Friday.

3. ADJUDICATIONS ARRIVING LATE. If the zine is unusually late in arriving, it is up to the player to inform the GM so that he can remail the results.

4. GAME YEAR ON RECORD. Once the supply center count has been determined and cannot change for a given game year, that year is on the record.

Example: If a game ends with an autumn retreat yet to be made, the final game year shall be listed by the GM as on the record if and only if the supply center count can not be affected by the retreat.

5. UNUSED ORDERS. Orders which were not used because they arrived late, were overridden by later orders, or were conditional upon a situation which did not occur will not be included in the adjudication report and will not be revealed to the other players.

IX. PRESS

Press for games in VD is strongly encouraged. The press section will follow the game notes in the game report. Players should remember that remarks made in the press are unofficial and should not be taken seriously regarding official game pronouncements. The GM will not act on any comments made in the press when running the game--that is, proposals or votes made in the press may be printed, but will not indicate an actual proposal or vote.

1. SUBMISSION OF PRESS. Press for a game may be written by any player who is currently, or was at any time, in that game--and only such players. (Press may also be written by the GM; see below.) The submission of press may be conditional upon the activities of any previous or current season.

2. PRESS FORMAT. All press should be datelined from a player's home country, a province under the player's control before the turn for which it is submitted, or any dateline which properly identifies its source. Short press may be submitted by phone, and any press may be cancelled by phone, but lengthy press should be submitted in written form. Submission of written press should contain the same information required of submission of orders (such as signature) if submitted separately from the player's orders.

3. PUBLICATION OF PRESS. Press will generally be printed on the deadline it is received unless specifically requested otherwise. If, however, a separation of seasons occurs due to player request, press will not be printed until the later season unless otherwise requested. Press will be printed in

Voice of Doom Houserules

any order the GM sees fit; however, requests in this regard by a player will be taken into account. The GM reserves the right to clarify the source of any press, and also to censor or edit press for excessive length, lack of quality or lack of taste.

4. WINTER 1900 PRESS. Press is permitted for the winter 1900 season, and may be datelined by the GM as necessary.

5. BLACK PRESS. Black press, wherein almost all restrictions on datelines are off, will be permitted in the April Fool's issue each year, and only in that issue. The April Fool's issue will be the first game issue published in April; and for any given game, such press will be permitted for the first deadline after the beginning of April on which press is generally accepted for that game. (In practice, this may turn out to be different issues for different games.) The GM will more than likely not announce this in advance of that issue's publication.

6. GM PRESS. The GM will write press if he wishes, with a dateline that contains the word BRUX. No player may use any dateline containing the word BRUX at any time (not even in the April Fool's issue), and the GM may not use any other dateline.

X. ENDING THE GAME

1. DRAW AND CONCESSION PROPOSALS. The players in a game may end the game before a player controls 18 supply centers by voting for a draw among any two or more of the surviving players or a concession to any active power. Proposals for such a vote may be made by any active player. Draw proposals need not include all surviving players, and a concession may only be to a single power. A proposal for a "concession" to more than one power will be treated as a proposal for a draw among the powers named. The source of a proposal will remain confidential unless the player who proposed the vote requests that the GM make that fact known. Additionally, a player may request his non-proposal of a given draw or concession vote be made public up until the deadline following the proposal.

2. VOTING. All surviving players at the time a vote is proposed have the right to vote on the proposal. The voting record of each player will remain confidential unless a given player requests that the GM make known that he voted for or against a given proposal. Votes will be due on the deadline following the proposal; the vote itself, however, is considered to take place before the deadline on which it occurs. In particular, if a voted proposal succeeds on the same deadline that a player reaches 18 centers, the voted proposal will take precedence over the board victory. The GM will not carry votes over from one season to the next, and may not veto the result of a vote.

Example: A player may have his last unit annihilated and last center occupied in the spring and still vote on a proposal for the fall deadline, as his is still an active power.

3. SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF PROPOSALS. The GM will report whether or not a voted proposal fails or succeeds. One negative vote is sufficient to kill any proposal, but in the event that a proposal would pass except for the negative vote of a standby, then the proposal will pass if and only if the original

player sends in orders (i.e., the standby's vote is not considered). In general, NVR shall be taken as a "yes" vote unless the GM states otherwise when informing the players of the proposal. NVR will be taken as a "no" vote, however, under any of the following conditions:

- a. **EARLY PROPOSAL.** If a proposal to end the game by either draw or concession is made at or before the winter 1905 deadline.
- b. **UNDESERVED WIN.** If a concession is proposed to a power which is not in sole possession of first place in the game, as determined by a count of supply centers owned, or a concession is proposed to a power which does not own at least 12 supply centers.
- c. **EXCLUSIVE DRAW.** If a draw is proposed which includes a power equal to or smaller than a power which is not included (by supply center count), or which fails to include any power owning 5 or more centers.

Notwithstanding the above, NVR will always be taken to mean "yes" when the player misses the deadline.

4. **UNPROPOSED DRAWS.** If two or more proposals pass at the same deadline, the result will be a draw among all the countries named in any of the proposals which passed. A player may, however, anticipate and veto such an "unproposed draw". In this event, the proposal which contains the largest number of powers will be considered successful; if there is a tie, none of the proposals will pass.

5. **EXTENSION OF VOTING DEADLINE.** In the event that a draw or concession passes, the GM may at his discretion announce this result to the players without declaring the game over, and extend the voting deadline until the next game deadline before declaring the game over.

6. **ENFORCED DRAW.** If the number of supply centers owned by each country remains the same for three consecutive game years, the GM may at his discretion propose a draw among all surviving countries. The draw will then take effect unless the supply center count changes by the winter season following such a proposal.

XI. RULEBOOK CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS

1. **UNNECESSARY CONVOYS.** If an army is ordered to an adjacent province, its move cannot be foiled by the dislodgement of a fleet. If an army is ordered to move to a non-adjacent province, then the move cannot be foiled by the dislodgement(s) of any fleet(s), unless such dislodgement(s) disrupt all useable convoy routes.

Example: FRANCE: A Cly-Edi. ENGLAND: F Nwg C FRENCH A Cly-Edi. RUSSIA: F Bar-Nwg, F Nwy S F Bar-Nwg. The English F Nwg is dislodged. The order A Cly-Edi, however, succeeds because such a move would succeed of its own accord under Rule VII.1.

2. **UNADJUDICATABLE SITUATIONS.** In the event that two or more legal adjudications exist as a result of a group of orders, or that no legal adjudication exists, the units involved will all remain in place.

3. **SELF-DISLODGE MENT VIA CONVOY.** Although Rule IX.3 expressly forbids active self-dislodgement, a fleet may convoy a foreign army to dislodge a unit

of the fleet's nationality.

Example: ENGLAND: A Lon H, F Eng C GERMAN A Bel-Lon. GERMANY: A Bel-Lon, F Nth S A Bel-Lon The convoy succeeds and A Lon is dislodged, despite the fact that the convoy order of English F Eng was, in part, responsible for the dislodgement.

4. EXCHANGES BY CONVOY. Two units may exchange places if one or both is convoyed, even if one of the moves is more strongly supported than the other.

5. NO DECLINING OF SUPPORT OR CONVOYS. A player may not explicitly specify acceptance of, nor refusal of, a foreign unit's support or convoy for one of his units. Such a statement of acceptance or refusal will be ignored.

6. COASTAL CREEP. Rule VIII is interpreted to disallow two fleets to exchange provinces by moving from and to different coasts of one of the provinces.

Example: F Spa(nc)-Por, F Por-Spa(sc). Both moves fail, and the units hold in place.

7. NO INLAND FLEETS. Fleets may not be built in a province which is not a coast for a body of water specifically named on the playing board.

8. NO FUNNY STUFF IN THE WINTER. A player may not build units and remove units during the same winter season.

9. NEGOTIATION TIMES. Negotiations will be permitted at all times among the players, despite Rules XI.1 and XIII.2 preventing diplomacy before retreats and adjustments.

10. IS THIS FOR REAL, BRUX?. The North Atlantic Ocean is not a supply center.

11. DECLINING BUILDS. Despite the first sentence of Rule XIII.2, a player is never obligated to build more units than he desires.

XII. AMENDING THE HOUSERULES

1. PROCEDURE. These houserules may be amended by the GM at any time merely by his publishing the amendment. The amendment will become effective on the deadline after it is published, and will apply to all game.

2. PROTESTING AMENDMENTS. Any current player in a VD game may protest the adoption of any houserule amendment adopted by the GM. Such protest must be received by the GM in writing no later than four weeks following the publication of the amendment. If the protest is in response to an amendment covering a situation not previously covered in these houserules, the protesting player must propose an alternative houserule. The GM will publish the protest, including the player's reasons for it, and a rebuttal. The amendment will then take effect unless a majority of the players in VD advise the GM that they oppose the amendment. Each player in VD receives one vote, regardless of how many VD games he is playing in. The GM will provide a forum for debate of the amendment in VD's Gossip Column.

It's Not Origins... Thank God!

by Don Del Grande

I bet all of you missed me last year when I didn't come up with a report on Pacificon '82 like I did for the one in '80 and Pacific Origins. To make up for it, here's the 1983 version of what happened.

Like it usually does, it starts for me at 6:30 in the morning on Saturday (September 3). Check to see if I have everything...bag packed, car keys, used games, and, of course, MONEY -- all set. Check the gas gauge -- near empty. Quick stop at the gas station to fill it up (unleaded, of course...\$%&* catalytic converters), and then on Highway 101 toward San Francisco. The city welcomes me by starting a strike of tollbooth workers on the Golden Gate Bridge. On top of that, it's \$2 a day. Okay, left on Lombard, right on Van Ness, right on Turk, then back to the freeway for another 20-30 minutes, and there it is, in big red letters... "HAPPY BAR MITZVAH STANLEY". I can see how welcome we are. (The next day, the sign read, "WELCOME PACIFICON" like it's supposed to.)

It's 7:45 now, and the doors should open by 8. I never got a pre-registration form in the mail, but I picked one up in Berkeley and sent it in, so I could get in the pre-registered line. Only 15 minutes to go...7:50...7:55...8:00...8:05...8:10... the next few minutes felt like an hour. No wonder -- it was! The doors finally opened an hour late, and I got in.

It's 10:00, which is when the Fantasy Role-Playing tournament begins. Up to the tournament room, and...who's in charge? Some guy named Grabar? You know, there's a Dip player by that name...it's the same one, of course, with some cowboy hat on. Probably to hide his face. He calls my number, and, noticing that the person with the number next to mine isn't there, asks if we're friends. Anyway, the tournament begins one hour late, to allow for late arrivals, and my team is off to a slow start. Eventually, however, we find our way to the crypt of some powerful sorcerer, so we resurrect him and he lets us out. I ended up with one of his gloves and his sword. Together, they equal a PLUS 15 LONG SWORD. (For you non-FRFers, this means that there's a 95% chance that a "basic character" can hit anything wearing any armor up to chainmail plus a shield, or whatever AC 4 is in D&D.) However, we didn't win.

Over to what John Boardman calls the "huckster's room" (or something to that effect, better known as the dealer's area. Nothing much new, since I've seen the Origins stuff already, but I end up with NATO and Star Fleet Battles (which isn't very new). NATO is a one-map strategic World War III in Europe type of thing -- a small Next War. There were better bargains in the Flea Market and the Auction -- I got Dune for \$1 (you read that right -- ONE DOLLAR, and the only thing missing is one small Harkonnen counter), as well as \$1 for an old Football Strategy, and a few other things.

I'm not the all-nighter kind of person, so I head back to my room. I am surprised at how much Kathy Byrne praised the place where Origins was held in Detroit -- it can't be much better than the Dunfee San Mateo. I'm spending \$45 a night, and getting my money's worth.

For you non-regular VD readers (the last report was over two years ago), I'll describe how the tournament works. It was run by Jim Bumpas and his wife Linda. There are no rounds per se; instead, when you want to play, you sign up, and if seven players are signed up, a game starts. There are a few restrictions: you can't play in two games with the same person, and you can't play someone from your city/twon without permission of the other players. (If you clearly don't know each other, it's all right.) Also, you can't repeat countries. The tournament begins at 9:00 Saturday and ends at 2:00 Monday.

There are two ways to score a game: (a) if someone gets 18 centers; (b) if nobody does. (b) includes concessions as well as draws, which are DIAS (Draws Include All Survivors). In (a), take your average supply center count, including one 0 if you were eliminated, and subtract 0.1 for each of those years; then add 16 for a win, 9 for

second place, then 4, 0, -2, -4, and -6 for seventh (ties divide points equally). In (b), the eliminated players do the same as (a); the survivors each get the sum of the "place points" divided by 3/4 and then multiplied by their final center count, with the result added to their place points. A player's tournament score is the average of his/her game scores, or one-half of the score if he/she has only played one game.

It's not over yet. The seven highest-rated players who are present at 9:00 on Monday play on the top board; this game is not averaged in, but instead half of this game's score is added directly to each player's score at the beginning of the game. At the end of the top board (or at 3:30, which is when the game must end), the winner is determined.

Anyway, Dave Grabar is ranked eleventh or so, but sneaks onto the top board. (He did well in his first game, but only played one before this, so it is halved.) He draws Austria...he and Russia get up to 10 or so each, right before he shoots up while Russia gets multiple stab wounds. By 1908, Dave had 19 supply centers. I'll recap that: Dave Grabar...won on the top board...as Austria. Certain people in Flushing and elsewhere nationwide, can't believe that. He finished fourth overall, behind some local FTWers.

As a special feature, Jim ran a "Libourse" coinciding with the tournament. One game at a time was used for the bourse. This wasn't an ordinary bourse; there were agricultural, military, and other factors not normally seen in a bourse. The Diplomacy game had only two effects: (1) when a country is eliminated, its currency drops to zero, (2) when a game ends, the score = the sum of the products of the number of pieces of each currency used multiplied by the number of centers the associated countries had. Other than that, the game had no effect on the bourse. (Grabar finished second in the bourse...and unlike the other tournaments, Diplomacy pays CASH; however, Pacifican certificates are good at many game stores in the area after the convention ends, so there's none of this "last-second rush" to the booths.)

However, Dave did show his "true colors"...remember when I said that he asked me that question in the FRP tournament? He didn't know it was me...nor did he know that I was even in the tournament...until I told him the next day. (Not only that, but I got the sword!)

After it was over, I ended up with about \$140 (slightly more than what I started with) and a pile of games (I went there with two piles -- now I have closet space). But after the experiences I had, I'm glad that Origins '85 will go to Baltimore to follow next year in Dallas. Dave Grabar is planning to go to Origins next year. I'm working on Marycon, since that's where I heard that most East Coast Dippers would be. One question comes to mind: DipCon 1985 is supposed to go to the western United States, but Origins is in the East -- what now? I guess that can wait until next year, which brings up the question of how I'm supposed to write another article if XBL is going to be where I am...

((Well, I'll just have to stay home then. Thanks, Don, and six free issues.))

~~~~~~~~~

Cyclic Article (from page 119)

said that it has no end."

"But I don't understand..."

He picked up a piece of chalk and quickly drew a circle on the blackboard. "Look at what I've drawn. Does it ever end?"

"No," I replied, suddenly catching on.

"And yet it is finite - it surely doesn't go on forever, either!" he rubbed



MILKY WAY

1982W

Game-end Chart:

|         | 1901 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 |      |
|---------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| AUSTRIA | 4    | 6  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 8  | 6  |      |
| ENGLAND | 4    | 4  | 4  | 6  | 5  | 6  | 9  | draw |
| FRANCE  | 5    | 5  | 4  | 2  | 1  | 0  | -  |      |
| GERMANY | 5    | 5  | 3  | 3  | 4  | 3  | 2  |      |
| ITALY   | 4    | 6  | 10 | 10 | 9  | 11 | 12 | draw |
| RUSSIA  | 5    | 6  | 4  | 3  | 3  | 4  | 3  |      |
| TURKEY  | 4    | 2  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  |      |

Game: 1982W  
 Zine: The Voice of Doom  
 GM: Bruce Liney

Cast of Players:

- AUSTRIA: Steve Arnawoodian
- ENGLAND: Mike Mazzer (drew 1908)
- FRANCE: Paul Rauterberg (out 1906)
- GERMANY: John Kador
- ITALY: Steve Angle (drew 1908)
- RUSSIA: Larry Saleski
- TURKEY: Peter Blitstein (dropped W 07), Rob Wittmond

End Game Statements:

Steve Angle (ITALY): I'd like to thank everyone involved for making my first PFM Dippy game a lot of fun; I think that I was lucky to have some of the hobby's best in my introductory game. I guess that much of my success was due to my being an "unknown"; perhaps being a novice has its advantages!

My first step upon learning the names of those involved in my game was to try to determine who these people were; had they been playing by mail for years, or were they, like me, beginners? My only resource was a few back issues of VD, where I saw the names Kador, Arnawoodian, Rauterberg, and Mazzer mentioned many times. Of Blitstein and Saleski, I saw no mention. Since I was Italy (which I had asked for), an experienced player was Austria, and a novice (as far as I knew) was playing Turkey, my initial plan was to ally with Austria against Turkey. Perhaps this alliance would last the whole game.

To this end, I began writing. One thing that I had learned from the Novice Packet and from BRUX himself was that writing was essential. Thus I wrote. Not on a Bruxian scale, but enough to serve my purposes. I established some DMZs and a friendly rapport with Paul. With Russia, my plan was to cultivate a fear of Woody (after all, he played in so many games...) that could eventually be used to my advantage. Germany and I were friendly, and England seemed far removed from Italy at the time. I thought that I'd made a pretty good start.

The first few turns saw lots of action (as I suppose they often do). England was blitzed, and, though I felt sorry for the poor guy, there was little I could do at the time. Turkey was also in trouble. Blitstein's undoing was his failure to write. His confusion over my move to Tri and his trust in me didn't help either. Even though I had made some hostile moves, he was determined to attack Russia, who had moved to Bla (violating some treaty, I assume). This worked to my advantage.

Sometime in 1903 Woody and I decided it was time to turn our attentions elsewhere. Turkey was in the final stages of collapse, and we needed somewhere to go. Saleski and I made a plan to attack Austria; as such, I knew Larry's exact moves. I relayed them to Woody, and he went on from there.

While Woody was moving north, I had to find something to do. France and Germany were totally involved against England, and had left their southern borders totally undefended. I am not one to stab indiscriminately, but when such an opportunity

((MILKY WAY continues next page))

presents itself, one would be a fool to pass it up.

Things went well for a while. I blew a turn by setting up my board wrong, but it didn't hurt too much. Turkey won, setting off a bit of controversy. For my part, I thought that Bruce handled the concession to a one-center power well; I do not feel that anyone's position was jeopardized or that the game was unduly affected.

Why did I stab Woody? I guess I'm just abnormally suspicious; he was demanding Tri back, and when I refused, he took it anyway. I was worried that he'd go on from there. After the first turn that I "stabbed" him (I actually lost centers while he built), he called me up and laughed at me, offering to continue our alliance. When I continued to attack next turn, I began to get results.

I was happy to see the game end when it did. I don't know if I could have gone on to win or not; if the Mazzer-Woody-Kador alliance had ever come to pass, I doubt that I'd have been able to do it. I was happy with the draw -- I think Mike deserved it after coming back from near death.

This game was an example of Bruce realizing that his house rules were stupid and ignoring them for the players' sakes. I refer, of course, to the concession to Turkey. Everyone wanted the game to continue, in clear violation of BRUX's HRA, and we did. Is it possible that Bruce still has a feel for the play of the game? Perhaps there's hope... it's a shame to see a sign of VD's exceptional quality become more and more mechanized. I believe that it is necessary to have a GM that keeps the players in mind, not merely someone who follows rules no matter what the consequences.

Paul Rauterberg (FRANCE): This was one of those games where just nothing seemed to go right. From the start, I advocated a Franco-German-Russian alliance against England. Not only did Russia refuse to cooperate in such a venture, but he actively attacked my ally, Germany, in an early war in the Baltic. Germany and I were able to make some early gains against England, despite the lack of Russian help. Germany was in the Nth by Fall 1901, and I was in the Channel, Irish Sea, and Wales by Fall 1902.

Ironically, it was a "selfless gesture" on my part which was instrumental in my downfall. Austria and Italy formed a strong alliance, and hit Germany hard in 1902. Since I had the upper hand against England in the north, I gave one of my centers (Belgium) to Germany in Fall 1902, feeling that he needed a build much more desperately than I did. Because I gave away my 1902 build, I left myself wide open in the south. Sure enough, Italy moved to Piedmont in Fall 1902, and I had no units adjacent to Marseilles with which to defend myself! Ah, the costs of being a good ally...

1903 was a very disappointing year. Germany had been given Belgium the year before, on the condition that he would continue to help me against England. Now, having screwed myself blue by not having taken my rightful 1902 build, I was faced with a German who had no more enthusiasm for the English war. Citing the need to "set up stalemate lines," Germany pulled out of the English conflict, leaving me no choice but to move southward, and to sue for peace with Mazzer. This left me "inviting" England to encircle me, in order to keep the Italians out -- a dangerous turn of events at best. In the meantime, A/I gutted an unsuspecting Russia.

At this point, the game was conceded to Turkey. I voted yes, and you all know that touched off the famous BRUX/Woody feud with which we are all so horribly bored by now.

When the game resumed, Russia refused Anglo-German offers of help, choosing to fight them while A/I marched into Moscow unopposed. Italy continued to overrun me in 1904, and Austria joined in the fun via the Munich-Burgundy-Gascony route. My last faint hopes of recovery were dashed in Fall 1904 when Germany failed to coordinate his moves with mine.

Still, I was alive, and was useful to England as a buffer against the still rapidly expanding A/I alliance. I knew that I'd be around as a puppet as long as A/I stuck together. Since that alliance seemed strong and prosperous, my chances for survival looked pretty promising. So what happened next? Italy stabbed Austria, and allied with England -- who stabbed me! This was a logical move on England's part, since Italy offered him my centers on a silver platter. The move was less logical on the part of Italy. In order to buy England's cooperation, he had to pull out of his dominant

position in France.

In view of the two-way draw which was the final result of all this wrangling, I am left with the question: how was a two-way draw with England preferable to a two-way draw with Austria? Was it worth ending a profitable alliance between I/A, just to get a middling alliance with I/E? I am convinced that Italy might have won this game, had he stuck with Austria. He had Russia as a puppet, giving him a slight edge against E/F/G; he should have used it to the fullest.

My congratulations to Mike Mazzer, who came out looking like the best player in this particular game. He held out until he could get back into the offensive mode, and he pried Italy loose from Austria. He deserved a share of the victory.

John Kador (GERMANY): It's possible that in my ten years of playing Diplomacy, I've screwed up more often and completely than I screwed up in MILKY WAY. How did I screw up? Let me count the ways.

Perhaps the first mistake was to take the North Sea in Fall, 1901. This can look impressive, but in actuality it is mostly useless against any kind of intelligence in the English player. Against Mike Mills ((he means Mazzer)), it was a mere distraction and an invitation for the other powers to jump on me.

I also called it wrong in the south. I didn't see the Italian-Austrian alliance until it was too late. By the time France, England, and Germany came to be allies, it was too late.

But the biggest mistake I made was consenting to allow the game to continue after the concession to Turkey. I remember Bruce calling me to explain the situation. I've never heard him sound so embarrassed. I got the impression that he wanted the game to continue. I know that Steve Angle did. But I regret allowing the game to continue. It didn't seem to have much interest for me afterwards, and it wasn't fair to anyone. The game should have been concluded as a testament to Bruce's house rules.

Mike Mazzer (ENGLAND): Ok, ok. Sheesh, what a kvetch (as they say in the Irish), here's my end-of-game statement.

First, my congratulations to Pete Blitstein on his brilliant victory in "MILKY WAY -- Phase I". Of course, his victory was somewhat tainted. Woody was playing Austria. Anytime someone wins a game in which Woody was an opponent, it should be entered into the record book with an asterisk.

As for "MILKY WAY -- Phase II", Italy probably had a good chance for a win. My strategy was to hold on for as long as possible to build up my strength, and stab at the last possible moment before Italy grabbed his 18th. It wasn't a good prospect because I started off behind thanks to a French/German invasion. Nevertheless, I feel lucky that I was able to dance on the grave of Rauterberg and have Kador as a semi-puppet at the end.

Italy took advantage of all his opportunities and played a solid game. My congratulations to Steve for his well-earned finish. Woody played his usual unusual style. As a tactician, he's always good for comic relief.

And thanks again to BRUX for his always exciting GMing.

BRUX Linsey (GM): Well, not a whole lot I can add to the above. Congratulations again to Mike and Steve for sharing the draw. I thought for a long time that Italy was going to win, but I think he would have improved his chances by holding off on stabbing Austria at least until he got some fleets into the Mid. His early stab of France was a thing of beauty, though.

I'm sure Steve will realize that he has utterly ruined my reputation by implying that I actually have some feel for the play of the game and/or compassion for the players. In fact, restarting the game did not directly violate any VD house rule, so there! Make me out to be some kind of human, for chissakes, Steve.

The other players? Russia struck me as gullible, the original Turkey struck me as the world's worst diplomat, France and Germany were good players who just made the wrong choices in this game. And Woody was the most obnoxious player I've ever GMed for.

~~~~~

NEPTUNE

1982X

THE WESTERN ALLIANCE CRUMBLES!

Autumn 1908

FRANCE: F Den r BAL

TURKEY: A Ser r OTB

Winter 1908

ENGLAND: Build F LVP, F EDI

FRANCE: Remove A Tri

ITALY: even

RUSSIA: Build A SEV

TURKEY: even

Spring 1909

ENGLAND (Duarte): F Lvp-IRI, F EDI-Nwg (F NWY S), F Lon-ENG (F NTH S), F POR-Mid,
F DEN-Kie, F SWE-BotFRANCE (Conlon): F BAL-Bot, F NWG H, F MID-Eng, A Gas-SPA, A Bur-GAS,
A BEL S RUSSIAN A Ruh-Hol (NSO)

ITALY (Jedry): F Wes-LYO, F Aeg-ION, A Tyo-PIE, F Adr-VEN

RUSSIA (Kane): F ANK-Con (F BLA S, A BUL S), A Sev-ARM, F STP(nc)-Nwy, A Sll-BOH,
F Kie-HOL (A RUH S), A BER-Kie, A Vie-TYO (A MUN S), A Bud-TRI (A SER S)

TURKEY (Schmunk): F SMY S F Con, F CON S F Smy, A GRE-Bul

Game Notes: The E/I/T draw did not pass. Now proposed are an E/R draw and a concession to Russia. Please vote by next deadline.

Press:

ST. PETERSBURG: The saga continues...

"Status report, Mr. Coughlan?"

"Well, suh, it done look like yore ideah has worked. Bulgaria was blown to smithereens -- Hot diggity!"

"Kindly refrain from extraneous comments, Mr. Coughlan. If you can't to tha... Wait! I feel the presence of another -- whoever it is, he is not unfamiliar with the force, Duarte?"

"Father?!"

"It is my son! Hear me, Mark, feel the power of the..."

"Aww cut the crap dad, can I borrow St. Petes for a while?"

"No, you slime sucking son of a pig, have you no respect for your father?"

"I can't take this shit any more, I'm cutting out, dad -- Shalom."

"And stop saying that! Oh never mind, good riddance. Now, I must report to the Empress..."

Later...

"Yes, my master, what is it you want of me?"

"Are you still playing that silly game?"

"Yes, my master."

"Well gag me with a spoon! Can't you just win it already?"

"Yes, my master, I am trying."

"Well, hurry up! I want you to bring me the corpse of Obi-wan-Conlon within two more quantums." (That's years to us simple-minded humans.)

"As you wish, my master."

And so it goes. The question is, will I be able still to use St. Petes as a dateline next time?

((NEPTUNE continues next page))

(25 FEBRUARY 1983; SMYRNA): Moonlight filtered through dust-laden windows, revealing a large room of leather-bound books. Gold-flecked bindings shot small rays of reflected light around the chamber, rendering visible an occasional author or title: Machiavelli, Clausewitz, the Quran, all volumes of some import.

A large door creaked open and a bulky figure slipped into the library. Occasionally it passed through a patch of moonlight, revealing glimpses of a padded nightrobe patterned with scimitars embroidered in gold on a white background. It was the Sultan.

Slowly he circled the room, peering at every shelf. Occasional words passed his lips as he searched for an elusive text. "It must be here. Why, I remember seeing it just a year ago. Perhaps it's just a few shelves to the left. Over here, maybe."

A soft tapping at the door interrupted the Sultan just as he was bending down to look at a shelf near the floor. As he straightened up, he called out, "Yes?"

A soft voice answered, "My Sultan, may I speak with you?" It was his military aide. The Sultan bade him enter, and the eunuch stepped in, bearing a lamp in his left hand and a sheaf of papers in the right.

"I have more news from Greece, my lord. General Hassan reports that the evacuation of Serbia is complete and all survivors have been integrated into his army."

"Oh, come now," said the Sultan, "this means practically naught. There were hardly any survivors in the first place, and Hassan knows that the odds are great that his force is likely to soon follow. Does he not report anything else?"

The eunuch replied, "He speaks only the usual trivialities of how his men suffer, and inquires if aid from the Italian is possible."

The Sultan exploded in anger. "That pompous ass! He cares not a whit for the common soldier, but only of the luxuries that he and his staff may purloin from any convenient source. I'd relieve that son of a dog of his command, but travel has been cut off to Greece." Furiously he stomped over to a window and peered out. "There is nothing we can do for the army in Greece. If I could withdraw them to safety, I would, and leave Hassan behind to face those rapists in chains."

"Damn, there is nothing that can be done!" he cried out. "Everybody knows it now. What hasn't been lost will soon fall. Oh, Allah, what did we do to deserve such treatment at the hands of unbelievers?"

The aide was reluctant to utter his next words. "Master..."

"What?" the Sultan yelled as he spun around to stare at the discomfited eunuch.

"The, uh, planning staff had, um, much to say in, uh, this report. They just finished it, um, earlier, um, this evening." Shakily, he held the document forward.

The Sultan grabbed it from his quavery hand and immediately turned to the final page. "It is with most profound sorrow that this staff recommends that the Sultan sue the Russian Empire for peace. The situation has become so untenable that our last bastions will soon be overwhelmed and the Turkish people amalgamated into that hegemony unless the war is halted immediately."

"Ah, those fools, it took them until now to realize that. It was obvious when we lost Bulgaria that we only had to count the days until Allah finally turned his back to us," said the Sultan.

"Get out and leave me to think." The eunuch made to obey but was halted. "Stop. Give me that lamp. Now leave." With a kick, the Sultan sent the eunuch from the room and returned to the mission which had originally brought him to the library. He bent down again, and with the aid of the lamp, soon found the object of his quest, a short but thick volume bound in soft leather with delicate writing on the cover: A New Pronouncing Dictionary of the Russian and Arabic Languages.

The Sultan began to leaf through the pages, occasionally stopping when he found a significant word or phrase. He tried speaking the words aloud: "Sdavat...Mir... Miloserdnya...Droog," but halted when a feeling of nausea began to overcome him.

NEPTUNE (continued)

Clutching the volume, he exited the library, knowing that he would not like what was soon to follow, but that it was necessary to preserve what few lives were left.

ITALY: The Italian Monarchy is outraged at the recent blunders of the Paris regime. The French Monarchy's mistakes have resulted in serious problems in the alliance of the four great powers against Russia. Diplomatic resources are being applied fully towards England to reprimand France...

PARIS to LONDON: You have played your last pack of lies, maggot mouth. And obviously, you have not learned a single thing about multi-player negotiations and relations. Now shall you learn.

MOSCOW to WORLD: Who proposed that idiotic draw?

ITALY to RUSSIA: CONGRATULATIONS you scoundrel! Thanks to France, you won the game. Too bad! You are a good player and it has been a pleasure doing battle with you, also. If the government in Paris didn't blunder so badly it would have been an interesting war against you. C'est la vie, C'est l'amour, Le Français mort en cette guerre.

PARIS to ROME: Sorry, Ed, but I cannot tolerate any longer the fool in London. The time of his comeuppance has been long overdue. I wish it didn't have to end like this.

ITALY to FRANCE: Parlez-vous Russe??? Merci beaucoup mon ami. Ever since I took over the Italian position I gave you 100% while the Turks suffered. Your reinforcements were to aid Sultan Schmunk later, and instead of sending my badly-needed fleets to him sooner I wasted them on you. Now, I have the Sultan on his way to Rome to escape Russian war crimes, and I am packing my bags too! At least King Duarte has an Island to hide on...the Sultan and the Pope have already purchased umbrellas to cope with the London fog. Have you got anything to cope with the severe weather conditions at the iceberg prison camps in Siberia?

SEV to ROME AND CON: You guys always seem to be one unit short; better luck next time, suckers.

PARIS to RIGEL PARIS: Can you hear the seals in the bay from where you live?

~~.....~~

O R I O N

1982Y

GUESS WE ALL GOTTA CATCH OUR BREATH AFTER THAT LAST SEASON!

Autumn 1909

GERMANY: A Pru r SIL

Winter 1909

ENGLAND (Ansoff): even

FRANCE (Bennett): even

GERMANY (Wittmond): even

ITALY (Howerton): Remove A Tur:

RUSSIA (Beyerlein): Remove A Fin, F StP(nc)

TURKEY (Leritte): Build A COX, A ANK, F SMY

Game Notes: The seasons were separated in this game by player request. Spring 1910 only will be played at the next deadline. Rob Wittmond has returned to the game (how about sending me your phone number, Rob, in case I need to try calling you again?). Thanks to Dan Gorham for the standby orders which turned out not to be needed.

COA for Brent Bennett, 9912-89 Ave. Apt. A, Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T6E 2S5.

Under Houserule Amendedtends...ahem. Under Houserule Amendment #30, press is normally held over during a player-requested separation. However, for this anniversary issue I am printing press anyway unless I consider it revealing. Hope y'all don't object...

(ORION continues next page)

ORION (continued)

GERMANY: Sorry about the NMR. I was sure I had sent those orders in. Who knows, maybe I did and they got lost in the Twilight Zone or something.
KAISER to PROFESSOR LERITTE: It was a real good thing you did that, Professor, a real good thing. Stalemate can be so boring.

~~.....~~

PEGASUS

1982Z

HEY! C'MON! I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WANTED TO PLAY THIS GAME!

Autumn 1908

FRANCE: F Mid r SPA(sc)

Winter 1908

AUSTRIA (Husk): Remove A Nap

ENGLAND (Halverstadt): Remove A NAF

FRANCE (Chatfield): Build A PAR

GERMANY (MacFarlane): even

RUSSIA (Meisner): Build F SEV, F STP(nc), A WAR

TURKEY (Punches): even

Game Notes: The seasons in this game are separated by player request (yawn). I am making an exception to Houserule Amendment #30, under which press would normally be held over till next season, and printing the non-revealing press now. Spring 1909 only will be played at the next deadline.

Press:

ANKARA: The Sultan, after sunning himself all day, downed a great deal of beer and exuptated loudly, declaring "that gas should asphyxiate those Czarist pigs now residing in Constantinople!"

~~.....~~

QUASAR

1982AE

FRANCE SLEEPS AGAIN WHILE THE QUEEN TRIES TO CUT HER OWN SUPPORT!

Autumn 1907

RUSSIA: F Lvn r OTB

Winter 1907

AUSTRIA: even

ENGLAND: even

FRANCE: NBR! Will play 2 short.

GERMANY: even

ITALY: Build F ROM

RUSSIA: even

TURKEY: Build A ANK

Spring 1908

ARMENIA (Orloff): A Vio-TYO (A TRI S), A DuC-VIE, A Ser-BUD

ENGLAND (Claspey): A Lvn-MOS (A STP S), F BOT S F Bal, F BAL S GERMAN A Ber-Fru, F SEN-Bal, F BAR S A StP, A BRU-Dea (F NTH C), F DWG H

((QUASAR continues next page))

QUASAR (continued)

- FRANCE (Bird?): NMR! F TEN U, F TYR U, F LYO U, A KIE U, A MUN U, A SIL U
- GERMANY (Howerton): A Ber-PRU
- ITALY (Kettman): F Rom-TUS, A VEN H, A NAP H
- RUSSIA (Lansing): A Mos H (ann), A WAR H, A UKR H
- TURKEY (Sweeney): A Ank-GON, F Con-BLA, A Rum-SEV, F GRE S F Bas-Ion (NSO), F EAS U, F Ion-ADR

Game Notes: The English support coming from F Bal is not out as the attack was made by an English unit. The Turkish order for F Gre fails; implied orders of this nature are not acceptable in VD. Each unit must receive a separate order.

Will Pat Pikel, 633 Paden St., Endicott, NY 13760 please stand by for France?

COA for Mike Kettman, effective 10/29, to 445 Elm St. #1, Deerfield, IL 60015.

Press:

CON to WORLD: Does anyone else write press? See RIGEL for the effects of an inhumane press war and the sadistic effects it has on BRUX! (JUPITER!)

CON to BUD: Grave trust is being placed on the Austrians for continued alliance against the F/E threat. With the concentration of Austrian troops on the Turkish provincial borders, the threat of war from yet another enemy materializes (or so we hope not!).

CON to MOS: Write! Write! Write! Or concede your position to a standby who'll at least try to communicate and save his (and yes! mine) ass!

CON to ROM: Go west to MARSEILLES! But touch not my ally's (or so I still hope) head!

LONDON: The Dirty Old Man of the Turks stands accused:

The Sovereign of England in print he's abused.

"Someone will, we hope.

Wash his mouth out with soap."

Victoria remarks, "for we are not amused."

LON to CON: Thanks - I've been waiting since 1901 for a chance to use that line.

~~.....~~

R I G E L

1983K

ADDITIONAL ICY WINTER!

Autumn 1903

ITALY: F Ion r TYR A Rom r TUS

Winter 1903

AUSTRIA (Knight): Build A VIE

ENGLAND (Sweeney): NMR! GM remove, F Mid

FRANCE (Hare): Build F MAR

GERMANY (Heintzman): even

ITALY (Ellis): Remove F AB b

RUSSIA (Kleiman): Build A WAR, A SEP

TURKEY (Reilly): even

Game Notes: The English F Mid was removed in accordance with the VD house rules, as England did not submit a removal order. The seasons in this page were separated by player request, but non-revealing press is still printed for the annish despite BR Amendment #30. Please, don't sue me...

There is a proposal that BRUX never be allowed to mention JUPITER again. Please let me know by next deadline.

((RIGEL continues next page))

Press:

THE POET FROM PARIS:

The Austrian attacks the Russian
Who in turn attacks the Turk;
He has no fears about the Prussian
Who advances, hand on dirk.

The Briton, troubled by the Frog,
Seeks assurance from the Kraut.
But Heintzman knows that he's the cog
Who'll help the Frenchman brain the lout.

The Frenchman used to war and battle
Would sooner kill a Brit than not;
It scarcely has begun to prattle
When he impedes the English tot.

The Kaiser's seething irritation
Stops the consul's sharp rebuke;
Thus begins the conflagration
And the downfall of the 'Duke.

The Italians, desperate in their plight,
Seek allies at whatever cost;
But soon the French will join the fight
And then it's clear that all is lost.

The Russian Czar waits on the pavement
For his enormous limousine,
And ponders Turkish child-enslavement
And other projects still more mean.

The Sultan in his royal palace
With scorn perceives the Russian bear;
He knows the Archduke shares his malice,
Ils se battent dans une quere.

THE BLACK FOREST ((via GERMANY)): Outside the ancient fortress, a chill high wind swept through the palatial forest. Silver flamed clouds careened madly about in the moonlit sky. Standing aloof and alone on a castle balcony, his cloak wrapped tightly about him, the German Kaiser peered impassively into the darkened distance. Somewhat aged in years, yet ageless in appearance, the Kaiser's expression changed as he stared with sharp interest at the figure furtively approaching on the pathways through the royal garden. With satisfaction he recognized the curiously crabbed posture of the mystic dwarf, Rasputmann, and quickly he reentered his inner chambers to await the arrival of the imperial seer...

Within a small alcove the subtle fragrance of unscented candles mingled with the heavy aroma of burning incense. The tiny, misshapen sorcerer crouched low over the chain laid flat upon the floor. The Kaiser squatted awkwardly too, his wan visage turned toward the sorcerer, his expression strained and intent. Rasputmann slowly withdrew from his pocket a miniature pendulum, murmured a few incomprehensible phrases and suddenly pitched the pendulum into the air over the chart. Swirling end over end, the pendulum abruptly righted itself over the chart. Affixed to nothing, the pendulum hung in midair for an instant and then began to rock eerily back and forth, to and fro. The attention of both men became riveted to the tableau before them. Upon the chart was imprinted a map of Europe and hovering above it, the pendulum slowly circled over the nations portrayed thereon...

((RIGEL continues next page))

Hours had passed and the Kaiser had lost track of time. Muscle cramps wracked his body, but he had not dared to stir even once. Dead silence reigned while the dwarf's magical pendulum continued to circle slowly over the board. The Kaiser's thoughts flitted to those nations symbolically represented in this midnight ritual: Italy -- a poor land, as misbegotten politically as was the wizard dwarf physically. The current Premier was Italy's third attempt at stable government. Premier Ellisi was by far the most astute and responsible of all the previous Italian power brokers. Unfortunately, the southern situation was in near chaos and Italian survival was in dire jeopardy in spite of the excellence of its new leadership. The Kaiser watched the pendulum slowly pass over the Turkish positions. The Sultan was an enigma; powerful and strong, rapidly expanding into the Mediterranean, his goals and aims yet remained a mystery. The Kaiser thought of France; stable and responsible leadership had succeeded in welding together the French and Iberian peoples into a united effort which had thwarted the maniacal English planned policy of genocide. Sadly, the Kaiser thought of the Brits. Fanatical Francophobes with a government dominated by technocrats and behavioral scientists, the British had attempted strange and perverse forms of psychopolitical engineering. The madness had backfired and soon the English would taste the bitter fruit of their own harvest.

...A black darkness seemed to pervade the room. The Kaiser's senses registered shadows within shadows and his mind's-eye detected myriad shades of grey. He glanced quickly at Rasputin and the wizard gnome's reptilian gaze stared unblinkingly back. It felt hard to breathe and panic and anxiety began to squirm within the Kaiser's mind. The pendulum had slowed considerably...slowly, slowly...back and forth, to...and...fro, Russia...Austria...Russia...Austria... The Kaiser's thoughts zeroed in: The Tsar -- heavily embattled in the Black Sea area, recipient of German generosity in the North, now a power equal to the Second Reich...but debts ought to be paid. The other Kaiser, the second one, the lover of imported pastries, an excellent ally against the Italian governments; struggling against the Tsar in alliance with the inscrutable Turk. WAIT! WAIT! Is the pendulum slowing even more? Is it coming to a stop? A bone-chilling coldness seems to freeze the very marrow in his bones; a dank, wet, sodden smell of bitter sulfur pierces his nostrils. The mystical pendulum seems to be ceasing movement, his eyesight blurs, clears, blurs again... Softly the wizard dwarf snickers...

DATELINE...TUSCANY! (WOP -- TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS FOR THE ITALIAN HIGH COMMAND); The response from each of the other heads of state was pretty much as had been expected. The Germans and Austrians would continue for at least one more season against us. The Russians were looking for whatever help they could find, and France would be more than happy to help out as soon as England was out of the way. The Turks were the most puzzling. They were willing to help now, and professed no desire to enter the Ionian.

And so, the plan was set: the army in Rome would attack the Austrian position in Apulia with support from the Ionian fleet. Albanian forces would attack Trieste to draw off the Austrian fleet in the Adriatic. At worst the Austrians could be held off, or lose Trieste.

Spirits were high as the offensive started. Italian forces inflicted heavy casualties on the Austrian occupation forces. The German support of the Austrians forced the army to pull back, but the real crushing blow was dealt by the Turks; the Ionian fleet support never arrived to pull off the southern attack. At first we thought it had been the Austrian fleet, but the word from Albania was that they had engaged the fleet in Trieste. The Turks had forced the Ionian, and ~~the~~ Italian fleet was in retreat. The Albania forces, now completely surrounded, were given the only sensible orders: disband, every man for himself.

The army retreated to the Tuscany Valley to regroup, vowing to retake Rome. The fleet sailed into the Tyrrhenian Sea. Envoys were sent out to Venice and Marseilles

RIGEL (continued)

carrying the same message: Can you help us stop the Austro-Turk alliance? The French responded by committing two fleets to the Mediterranean, and the Germans promised to remain neutral.

Perhaps there is hope yet; the war may still be won! Italy will be free again! LIVERPOOL to WORLD: Wales announces its freedom from French scummy dogs. The populace, in a simultaneous riot, threw the French First Fleet from their shores into the Irish Sea. The French Second Fleet (currently victorious in London) is expected to move to Wales to assist. Liverpool regrets its inability to intervene with the English Third Fleet due to ammo shortages.

VIENNA: What is it with this Russian? We gain ground and he still gets to build units! BRUX, are you available to the highest bidder? I won't win any press wars, but maybe I can outspend him...

LIVERPOOL to BRUXUS AGGRAVATUS: You just had to do it, didn't you! Just had to say JUPITER, didn't you! Just had to say JUPITER 9 times! OK, take that! Save or be a halfling!

ITALY to GM: This is really great! Cupcake writes and says, "Gee, Greg, your diplomacy is great, but I think I'll kill you anyway." Then Von Heintzman writes and says, "Well, I would love to help you, as your letters are very good, and your logic is flawless, but I promised to support Austria into Rome, although it is true that he will end up building a unit because of this, and my other potential target, Russia, will end up at plus 2, yet I still must honor my commitments..." Reilly writes to say, "No!!! I won't be moving to Ion this season! I want to ally with you and Russia against Cupcake!" So what do I do? Believe them all! I have the distinct honor now of being the last diplomat in VD who only has two centers. Lovely.

~~VIENNA~~ TUSCANY to ~~LONDON~~ LIVERPOOL: Ah, forget it. Now I forget what I was going to say!

ITALY to AUSTRIA: So, you attacked the last two Italys because they didn't write. So I write. You attacking me on general principles?

ELLIS to KLEIMAN: What the hell am I doing in a Dippy Jeopardy game? I thought this was Wheel of Fortune, and it's turning our more like Joker's Wild! P.S. Don't tell Dave Frick that I stole his WOP acronym. He's mad enough at me because of a local game we're in.

LIVERPOOL to PARIS: Liverpool scientists under pressure from the High Command announced the development of an atomic bomb. The French are ordered to immediately lay down their weapons or meet their maker.

POSTERS WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ((via ITALY)): If you love something, let it go. If it comes back to you, it is yours forever. If it doesn't, BLOW IT AWAY!

Today is the first day of the rest of my life, SO DON'T FUCK IT UP!
I don't care if Ted Kennedy runs, as long as he doesn't drive anywhere.
Diplomacy. Official game of the 1980 Summer Olympics.



Cyclic Article (from page 114)

it? I mean, maybe something about writing styles in general, or..."
"No, Bruce, your readers will be interested, I assure you. You'll be the poet as you describe your own work in verse; you'll be the artist as you create a rendition of one of your paintings."
"But I don't know if I could really do justice to the topic," I protested. "You see, not only haven't I mastered the technique, but I haven't the foggiest notion of what you're talking about when you mention "cyclic writing"."
"Oh, come on, Bruce, surely you can figure that out by yourself. You do know

The Decline and Hiatus of the Atathabasca Watermelon Festival

(blame Plumpner for this!)

All festival grognards doubtless recall with regret the following which appeared in gaming publications a few years ago.

"PUBLIC NOTICE: The 79th annual Atathabasca Watermelon Festival has been cancelled due to a dearth of virgins. Sorry. Send refund requests to AWA (Atathabasca Watermelon Achievement) Committee at (**), Ann Arbor, MI."

However, our hearts churned with joy the following year when, in the same magz "PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT: The Atathabasca Watermelon Festival for 1981 is ON! Last year's problem, the "Dearth of Virgins" has been resolved. We are now accepting girls. And frogs. (No entry fee for frogs, but girls should be prepared for a small sacrifice.) Since the Watermelon Festival Colors are red and green, green-eyed redheads are preferred. (This does NOT apply to frogs with blood-shot eyes.) Please submit all entrants to Mr. Quiddipoo at Black s Beach, Calif., for initial evaluation."

Despite an editorial disclaimer which noted this was a paid advertisement and that and staff in no way supported the so called "Watermelon Festival", the response was truly heartening.

Unfortunately, the Ranidae entrants, without exception, arrived festooned in red and were promptly tossed out by the committee.

Results of further evaluation sessions remain unclear due to a massive sweep by the Sheriff's Dept. and subsequent closing of the beach to naturalists. Chairman Quiddipoo was last spotted some 200 yds. offshore paddling like a Mississippi sidewheeler.

Despite his enthusiastic endorsement of several entrants during the sessions, as attested by onlookers, all have demurely denied qualification for the honor. The redheads most vehemently.

Since this contretremps, all Festival activities have been in abeyance. Recently, however, there have been encouraging signs that the Chairman may be preparing to surface and resume his responsibilities. If this should eventuate it could be a joyous vintage season for all Festivalists.

Donations to defray expenses should be directed to the Quiddipoo Foundation, a non profit, non-accountable fund.

((Two free issues and a redhead for the above submission. Plumpner has one of the weirdest senses of humor it has ever been my pleasure to run across.))

~~*****~~

To please Mack Berch, here's the current WJ standby list. Anyone writing either on or off should let me know. Peter Ansoff, Dan Gotham, George Lorittle, Michael Quirk, Jim Chaffield, Rob Schrank, Randal Husk, Brent Bennett, Ty Hare, Michael Ditz, Eric Kane, Greg Mills, Bob Howerton, Richard Edison, Mark Fzueh, Konrad Baumeister, Mark Lourts, Matt Fleming, John Kador, Dave Gatter, Tim Allen, G E. Blender, Pat Coulon, Ken Deel, Rob Wittmond, Paul Rauterberg, Jerry Lucas, Dou Burd, Cathy Cunnig, Steve Angle, Bob Sweeney, Mike Jones, Kevin Stone, John Davies, Jeff Panches, Doug Beyerlein, "Jane Proskin", Pat Pakel, Larry Lansing, Edmund Jedry, Mark Keller, Brian Orloff, Mark Johnson, Chuck Kaplan, Rick Ragsdale, Bill Placek, Michael Kottman, Steve Knight, Jim Makuc, and Don Williams. Total of 50.

I have kicked God off the standby list as I think he takes the game a little too seriously. You'll understand why if you read this whole issue.

The JUPITER standby list has been nuked.

Ninety-nine zillion loyal, screaming Doomies can't all be wrong! Here is the VD sub list, correct as of October 16, 1983. The number to the right of each listing is the issue with which each person's sub expires. "T" indicates a trade with a British zine. An asterisk (*) after your listing means I want a color photo of you!

- 1. Chuff Afflerbach, 5632 Oakgrove, Oakland, CA 94618 96
- 2. Jeff Albrecht, 2029 Cedar Breaks Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84118 86
- 3. Jerald Allen, 284 Silman, Ferndale, MI 48220 87 *
- 4. Tim Allen, 29 Stockbridge Ave., Lowell, MA 01854 86 *
- 5. Steve Angle, Box 47, Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520 103 *
- 6. Peter Ansoff, 5777-162 Reading Ave., Alexandria, VA 22311 96
- 7. Peter Ashley, 2530 N. Chelton Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80909 96 *
- 8. Dick Astrom, 135 Sprague St., Portsmouth, RI 02871 94 *
- 9. Mike Barno, Box 1187, 25 Andrews Memorial Dr., Rochester, NY 14623 90
- 10. Konrad Baumeister, Box 6039, Henle Village, Georgetown U., Washington, DC 20057 98
- 11. Brent Bennett, 9912-89 Ave. Apt. A, Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T6E 2S5 103 *
- 12. Mark Borch, 492 Naylor Place, Alexandria, VA 22304 107
- 13. Doug Beyerlein, 640 College, Menlo Park, CA 94025 100
- 14. Peter Birks, 39 Handforth Road, London, UNITED KINGDOM SW9 0LL T *
- 15. Kerry Blant, PO Box 8078, Coral Springs, FL 33065 97
- 16. Jeff Dohner, 509 Twist Run Road, Endwell, NY 13760 91
- 17. Ivo Bouwman, van Heutszstraat 11, 2593 PC 's-Gravenhage, THE NETHERLANDS 92 *
- 18. Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Place, Bakersfield, CA 93304 93 *
- 19. Ronald Brown, 1200 Summerville Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1Z 8G4 93
- 20. Don Burd, Ward Star Route, Jamestown, CO 80455 88 *
- 21. Dave Carter, 118 Horsham Ave., Willowdale, Ontario, CANADA M2N 1Z9 107
- 22. Geoff Challenger, 100 High Street, Swanscombe, Kent, UNITED KINGDOM DA10 0AH T *
- 23. Jim Chatfield, 7505 Kenlea Ave., Baltimore, MD 21236 92 *
- 24. Pat Conlon, Box 17014, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70893 119
- 25. Gary Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis, TN 38118 114
- 26. Cathy Cuning, 1603 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105 89
- 27. Phil Dancause, 30D Hidden Lake, Stafford, VA 22554 92
- 28. John Davies, Box 968, Port Hardy, British Columbia, CANADA V0N 2P0 91 *
- 29. Fred Davis, 1427 Clairidge Rd., Baltimore, MD 21207 97
- 30. Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr., Greenbrae, CA 94904 105 *
- 31. Peter DeLuca, 164-56-1421, B. Co. 3d Bn. USAET Bde., Fort Belvoir, VA 22060 87 *
- 32. Don Ditter, 63 South Main St., Florida, NY 10921 86
- 33. Michael Ditz, 5785 Danube Way, Apt. C, Orlando, FL 32837 102 *
- 34. Mark Duarte, 4738 E. McKenzie, Fresno, CA 93702 105 *
- 35. Richard Edison, PO Box 9987, Berkeley, CA 94709 106 *
- 36. Greg Ellis, 9430 Concourse #1612, Houston, TX 77036 91 *
- 37. Joan Extrom and Samantha Corbin, Rt. 1, Box 26W, Philomath, OR 97370 93
- 38. Nick Felella, 17 Brokaw Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001 86 *
- 39. Jim Finley, 1913 West Dr. #5, Vista, CA 92083 89 *
- 40. Matt Fleming, 4290 Chateau de Ville, St. Louis, MO 63129 93 *
- 41. Mark Frueh, 1013 Milton St., Apt. #304, Madison, WI 53715 101
- 42. Ruth Glaspey, 1318 Rennie, Traverse City, MI 49634 88 *
- 43. Dan Gorham, 800 South Euclid St., Fullerton, CA 92634 99 *
- 44. Jake Halverstadt, 1106 Castlerock Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80521 115
- 45. Garry Hamlin, 111 Varner Ct., Midland, MI 48640 103
- 46. Ty Hare, 425 Van Buren St., Monterey, CA 93940 98 *
- 47. Nelson Heintzman, #C-4, 2255 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14216 97
- 48. Roy Henricks, 128 Deerfield Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15235 99
- 49. Bob Howerton, 4510 Treeline Dr., Pensacola, FL 32504 101 *
- 50. Randal Musk, 1411 Scollon Ct., San Jose, CA 95132 98 *
- 51. Steve Hutton, 704 Brant St., London, Ontario, CANADA N5Y 3N1 96
- 52. Edmund Jedry, 3851 N. Whipple, Chicago, IL 60618 104 *

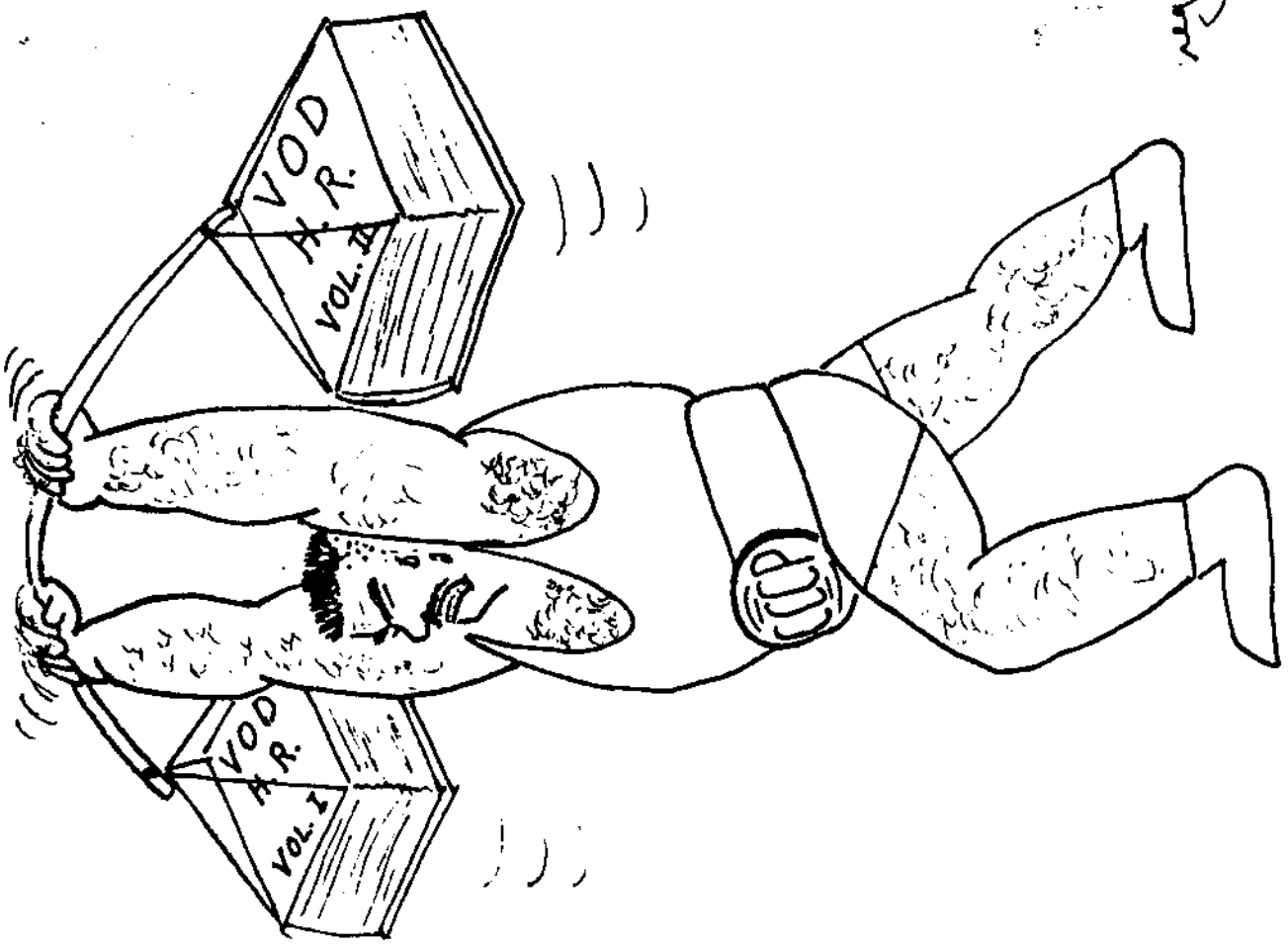
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|------|---|-------|
| 53. | Mark Johnson, 833 Dent St., Garland, TX 75040 | 101 |
| 54. | Pete Johnson, 1632 Campus Dr. #239, Hurst, TX 76053 | 85 * |
| 55. | Mike Jones, 2733 Collie Jillway, Anchorage, AK 99504 | 92 * |
| 56. | Bryan Jurkowski, CBC-703, 7435 Monticello Rd., Columbia, SC 29203 | 92 * |
| 57. | John Kador, 505 Second Ave., Melbourne Beach, FL 32951 | 90 |
| 58. | Eric Kane, 109 Hicks Lane, Great Neck, NY 11024 | 85 |
| 59. | Chuck Kaplan, 742 Grouse Ct., Deerfield, IL 60015 | 98 * |
| 60. | Jim Keeley, 12-3111 Blakiston Dr. NW, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2L 1L7 | 93 * |
| 61. | Mark Keller, 9536 Shumway Dr., Orangevale, CA 95662 | 88 * |
| 62. | John Kelley, 209 McMahon Hall, U. of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195 | 119 * |
| 63. | Mike Kettman, 445 Elm St. 3H, Deerfield, IL 60015 | 86 * |
| 64. | Dudley Kidd, 2421 Redmont Rd., Huntsville, AL 35810 | 86 * |
| 65. | Dave Kleinman, 3530 Hyannis Port Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46224 | 92 |
| 66. | Steve Knight, 11905 Wintertur Lane, Reston, VA 22091 | 109 |
| 67. | Richard Kovalcik, 25 South St., Brighton, MA 02135 | 89 |
| 68. | Steve Langley, 4112 Boone Lane, Sacramento, CA 95821 | 103 * |
| 69. | Larry Lansing, 3700 La Hacienda Dr., San Bernardino, CA 92404 | 91 * |
| 70. | John Leeder, 605 15th St. NW, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2N 2B1 | 88 * |
| 71. | George Leritte, 108 Merchants Blvd. #3, Lafayette, LA 70503 | 92 * |
| 72. | Mark Lew, 3120 W. 79th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502 | 96 * |
| 73. | Andy Lischett, 2402 S. Ridgeland Ave., Berwyn, IL 60402 | 92 * |
| 74. | Brian Lorber, 7 Polo Rd., Great Neck, NY 11023 | 86 |
| 75. | Alex and Debbie Lord, Box 178, Hannacroix, NY 12087 | 101 |
| 76. | Rob Lowes, RR #9, Peterborough, Ontario, CANADA K9J 6Y1 | 91 * |
| 77. | Jerry Lucas, 3902 Lakemead Way, Redwood City, CA 94062 | 96 * |
| 78. | Mark Luedi, PO Box 2424, Bloomington, IN 47402 | 98 |
| 79. | John MacFarlane, 630 Totavi, Los Alamos, NM 87544 | 95 * |
| 80. | Jim Makuc, PO Box 111, Monterey, MA 01245-0111 | 93 * |
| 81. | Mike Mazzer, 1338B Harvard St., Santa Monica, CA 90404 | 94 * |
| 82. | Jim Meinel, 7410 Nancy St. #1, Anchorage, AK 99507 | 84 |
| 83. | Mike Meisner, 5604 York, Metairie, LA 70003 | 93 * |
| 84. | Victor Melucci, 280 Collins Ave., Apt. 2E, Fleetwood, NY 10552 | 86 * |
| 85. | John Michalski, Rt. 10 Box 526Q, Moore, OK 73165 | 102 * |
| 86. | Ralph Morton, RR #2, Greely, Ontario, CANADA KOA 1Z0 | 121 * |
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| 88. | Bob Olsen, 6818 Winterberry Circle, Wichita, KS 67226 | 125 * |
| 89. | Brian Orloff, 110 South 17th St., Manhattan, KS 66502 | 97 * |
| 90. | Bob Osuch, 2247 E. Inverness, Mesa, AZ 85204 | 112 * |
| 91. | Eric Ozog, 1526 N. Lawler Ave., Chicago, IL 60651 | 90 |
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| 97. | Marc Peters, 29 E. Wilson #202, Madison, WI 53703 | 105 |
| 98. | Bill Placek, 2157 Gilbride Rd., Martinsville, NJ 08836 | 88 |
| 99. | Jane Proskin, 199 Pine Grove Dr., Pittsfield, MA 01201 | 126 |
| 100. | Jeff PUNCHES, 4520 La Portalada Dr., Carlsbad, CA 92008 | 101 * |
| 101. | Michael Quirk, 3830 Chester Drive, Glenview, IL 60025 | 93 * |
| 102. | Rick Ragsdale, PO Box 543, Scott AFB, IL 62225 | 92 * |
| 103. | Paul Rauterberg, 4922 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53208 | 107 |
| 104. | Richard Reilly, Upham Hall, Room #308, Moscow, ID 83843 | 92 * |
| 105. | Glover Rogerson, "Mazarbul", 11 Buckingham Place, Clifton, Bristol, U.K BS8 1LJ | T * |
| 106. | Al Ross, 6125 Honeysuckle Lane, Charlotte, NC 28212 | 86 |
| 107. | Ben Schilling, Apt. 315, 24730 Roosevelt Ct., Farmington Hills, MI 48018 | 92 |
| 108. | Rob Schmunk, 826 North Hedges, Bozeman, MT 59715 | 88 * |

- 109. Keith Seeler, PO Box 158, Fraser, MI 48026 100
- 110. Randolph Smyth, 212 Aberdeen St. SE, Medicine Hat, Alberta, CANADA T1A 0R1 102
- 111. Dan Stafford, 1643 Graniteway Lane, Columbus, OH 43229 87
- 112. Kevin Stone, Box 671, Grove City College, Grove City, PA 16127 90
- 113. Bob Sweeney, PO Box 886, Munson Army Hospital, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027 98 *
- 114. Tom Swider, 1183 Robinson Hill Rd., Endwell, NY 13760 101
- 115. Pete Tamlyn, 2 Poplar Rd., The Coppice, Aylesbury, Bucks, UNITED KINGDOM HP22 5BN T
- 116. Gerry Thompson, 13400 Bromwich St., Arleta, CA 91331 94
- 117. Lynn Torkelson, 992 Rosedale Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30306 101 *
- 118. Pierre Touchette, 1, Rue Georges, Masson, Quebec, CANADA J0X 2H0 86 *
- 119. Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024 93
- 120. James Wall, 27 N. Mills #3, Madison, WI 53715 93 *
- 121. Porter Wightman, 57 Rossiter Road, Rochester, NY 14620 95
- 122. Don Williams, 185 New Ludlow Rd. #106, Chicopee, MA 01020 93 *
- 123. Jim Williams, 2500 6th St. SW, Altoona, IA 50009 87
- 124. Rob Wittmond, 2723 Vanderbilt Lane #5, Redondo Beach, CA 90278 87 *
- 125. James Woodson, PO Box 33032, Pensacola, FL 32508 102
- 126. Ed Wrobel, 3932 N. Forestdale Ave., Dale City, VA 22193 104

Jim Meinel is listed even though his sub has expired, because I think he will be renewing. Others receiving this issue because they have contributed to it are:

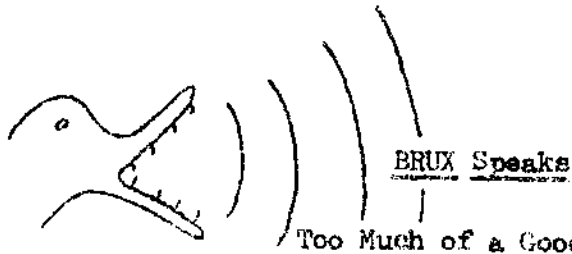
- Jim Burgess, 66 Hall St., Providence, RI 02904
- William C.S.A.A. Lowe, 2206 Daniel St., Trail, British Columbia, CANADA V1R 4G9
- Ron Mazurkiewicz, 2431 N. 41st St., Milwaukee, WI 53210
- John Thrall, 3630 N. 22nd St., Arlington, VA 22207

Thanks to Bob Howerton for letting me reprint the half-page cartoons on my house- rules which have appeared in his zine, Feastings Hof. All are Bob's work except for the one below and the one on page 153, which were done by Ruth Glaspy.



VASIL ALEKSEEV TRIES
 FOR A NEW RECORD...

The ongoing saga of Bruce Linsey's Houserules. He publishes Voice of Doom and his houserules are a legend to the game.

BRUX SpeaksToo Much of a Good Thing

At the risk of sounding like a crotchety old hobby fart, I must explain my reasons for not giving extensive support or publicity to certain hobby projects some other people have been involved with recently. I'll kill two or three birds with one editorial while I'm at it. There is nothing wrong per se with any of the projects I am about to criticize. They're all just overdone to the point of absurdity.

The first target of my discussion is fake zines. Time was that when a good fake hit the mails, it was the talk of the hobby. Whether it was the sort of fake intended to fool people, such as the first fake Volkerwanderung, or just a parody like the Brux Bulletin #69, people would get a thrill out of sending and/or receiving such a high-quality forgery. I still remember how I leapt gleefully into the air in a fit of glorious ecstasy when I first saw the "Mellow Yellow" fake of Voice of Doom.

For the past two or three years, though, fake zines in the hobby have generally been so frequent (and, alas, low in quality) as to barely be worthy of a passing mention, if that, and nobody gets excited any more. Thus, the downplaying of such items in VD. I mention the latest Woodpecker only because of the takeoff on Alex's Column it contained, but probably wouldn't have otherwise. The art of faking has lost much of its charm due to overkill.

On a related note, the same criticism can be made of hobby polls and awards. I remember when the Runestone Poll was THE poll, and everyone eagerly awaited its results. (And awaited, and awaited, and...) Nowadays there are polls for Best This and Most That, and I can't keep up with half of them. The joy of being able to claim the top spot in a poll is greatly reduced when there are three or four polls asking the same question. So, except for the Runestone Poll, that's why you don't hear much about them in VD. Oh sure, I'll give it a passing mention if I win something else somewhere and happen to notice it, such as the "Toady" poll recently, but I won't break my back to cover them all. (For people with more interest in these matters than me, I recommend Europa Express as the best source of in-depth coverage of both fakes and polls.)

As a side note, I might also mention that most of the polls creeping around these days are nothing more than popularity contests. The best example I can think of is a recent "Best Writer" poll conducted by a well-known zine. Now, I know that the quality of someone's writing is a subjective matter, but let's be reasonable. A certain well-known publisher who has not the writing skills of your average 7th-grader (and I assure you I am not exaggerating in the least) placed high up in the standings. To be sure, so did a few of the truly talented writers around, such as Coughlan and Olsen, but not very many of them. To me these polls seem basically just a uniform mushy mass: the same group of people running them, voting in them, and winning them, with an occasional exception or two.

All of which is not to imply that such polls should be abandoned. But I find them next to meaningless, so I've stopped voting and stopped covering them. The Runestone Poll and polls pertaining to matters in VD are the exceptions.

Finally, a quick note about hobby awards -- quick because the exact same criticisms are applicable. We don't need twenty trillion different awards in this hobby, because the effect of each is then reduced to practically zero. I support the Don Miller Award. I do not support and will not publicize the diarrhea of proposed awards I have heard of elsewhere recently, sorry.

OK, I'm grumpy. So sue me. Or take a poll to determine whether I get the award for Hobby Grumpbucket.

Alex's Column

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

One day about two years ago, Bruce was my teacher and asked me if I would like to write an article for his magazine. I never quite understood what his magazine dealt with. I thought it was computer games or something. It was a long time before I knew the nature of the magazines and the hobby. I loved writing articles about funny things to make everyone have a chuckle before they stabbed a player or after they did. I liked doing it and had lots of fun trying to come up with articles that would hold the interest of the hobby players whom I wanted to satisfy. Since I knew that few people knew Bruce or what he was like, I wrote hopefully humorous articles about him and the adventures of his life in Greenville. I certainly had an abundance of ideas and material to write on, since it seemed to me that if I just observed Bruce a quarter of the time I saw him, I'd have enough to write ten articles. He was always getting himself into these hysterical predicaments and I couldn't help being interested in the hobby magazine he published. It was so much fun getting so many letters after I wrote my first article. I enthusiastically wrote back to everyone and eagerly waited by my mailbox for replies. My articles progressed in quality, I thought, and they usually coincided with the seasons and the activities that went along with that time. The environment in which I live has a bucolic setting and had a lot to do with my topics and references. My controversial hunting article was born right here in the Catskills where the interest is high and the deer know it. Right now they're frolicking in the fields but in November they'll be hiding from the red hats. When Bruce, my brother and I, and a couple of friends went to Riverside it was excellent writing material. When I drove into a snowbank and Bruce had to pay the farmer for his fence, it made for a very good article. All these memories bring a smile to my face and if I could repeat them all, I would.

As soon as I met Bill Highfield, Mark Larzelere, Mike Barno, and Eric Kane around New Year's last year, I had a broadened view of some of the hobby players. This enabled me to get to know them better and I have made many good friends in this way. This summer I saw Mike Barno and Bill Highfield at Lake George and they are two good guys, in my opinion. I wish the summer didn't flee so fast because we all had "quite the memorable time" at Lake George in a two-and-a-half room cabin together. I also have many friends that I have never met but feel close to and I trust them whenever I write personally to them.

I now wish Bruce and I could have kept everything fun and simple. But, as hobby players and VD readers got to know me better they got confused with the true story. People started getting wrong impressions with the increasing publicity I got. I don't want this article to sound like a lecture or a depressing obloquy abusing the hobby, but I don't want any more hassles. I know this is VD's anniversary issue and I don't want the cake to collapse or the playboy dancer to fall asleep inside it, but I feel this speech is necessary on my part. Now everyone can go grab a mug of cider (hard cider, preferably) and get ready to get comfortable in a pile of leaves for the rest of this.

One big happy family is what I thought this hobby portrayed. Sure there are disagreements and quarrels but they are quickly resolved. I guess I was wrong. What is this bellicose behavior that is dulling the shine of the hobby and its players? Is it noticeable to all or only to me? Enough questions for now; here is my answer. I have discontinued my heavy involvement with the hobby for many reasons. Although the National Enquirer may have explained it all already or the grapevine may have made a

recording because of the demand, this is the truth. Through the eyes of a fifteen-year-old now sixteen, I have observed many things and they have disappointed and disillusioned me greatly. I wanted to be part of this abstruse hobby and its fun and games. As you have noticed I am now out of it. I am surprised at the immaturity, callousness and approach of some of the players to others. Of course we all fight but there is a word that isn't in use much any more, and it's called forgive. We are all capable of this and its exercise can be helpful. I hope you all understand that I am embarrassed at the behavior of some of the players whom I respected at one time. I'm not being partial to anyone except maybe Bruce and myself. I didn't and don't want to be the gossip part of the hobby. I wrote because I wanted to and VD needed some enlightening material. As my writing progressed towards the last issues, I couldn't think of anything that would enlighten the dark pandemonium ragin through US post offices and into the homes of real, feeling homo sapiens.

It's hard for me, growing up in this era. There are so many problems and dangers that youths have to dodge, it's pitiful. This is not a sob story. I wanted you all to know the truth and not believe in some scandalous rumor you heard from another captious player. All I know is that I would be pretty ashamed if I had a part in growing a black scandalous flower right now. How about it -- a sixteen-year-old schoolgirl commenting on adults that are ruining their once-prestigious names, magazines, and personal friendships over gossip and spite? Boo on you! Let's all lighten up! Who knows, we could all be annihilated without saying we were sorry tomorrow.

Hey, let's all raise our glasses to the anniversary of Voice of Doom! Cheers with beers, or champagne if you'd like!

Hug a hobbler,
Alex

PS. Any comments, write to me and we will figure something out...

((There is nothing I can add to such a powerful article, so I won't try. Thank for telling it like it is, Alex.))

The ongoing saga of Brux' houserules:

Sorry, Comrade, but we still haven't been able to decipher The Voice of Doom Houserules!



Voice of Doom is published by Bruce Linsey, 24A Quarry Dr Albany, NY 12205

BH

JOSHUA

HERSHELL

BERCOH

DATE

August 15, 1983

WEIGHT

6 pounds 15 ounces

LENGTH

19½ inches

VOLUME

62 decibels

DESTINY

???????

((Congratulations, Mark and Mona! Just think, if he'd been born one day later (on my birthday), you would have had to name him BRUX!))

An Old Controversy Revisited

44

by Ronald Brown

When I first entered the hobby, in 1979, I read a few articles on "cross-gaming". In general the article writers condemned it as "unethical, regrettable, but unavoidable." I was impressed by their arguments and agreed whole-heartedly with them, but I have now since revised my opinion.

First, what are we talking about? "Cross-gaming," generally, refers to the practice of using information, relationships, or deals from one game and applying them in another. This can run from "You let me win in 1979XQ and I'll help you win 1975PZ" to basing your decisions on alliances on knowledge of how others have played other games.

The purist position is that each game represents a complete universe in itself and that nothing from any other universe (i.e., game) can intrude. Ideally when one enters a new game he should forget everything he knows about the other players and begin afresh. You should not let the fact that the fellow playing England opened anti-France in one game influence your opening moves or the fact that another guy stabbed you in a meaningless gesture a few months before influence your attempts to set up an alliance with him. That is all well and good if you don't mind repeating past mistakes -- and I doubt, sincerely, that the purists stick to their philosophy 100%. If they did, they'd never win a game.

I think, in retrospect, that the reason I agreed with the purist position when I was first beginning was because I had no experience myself with the other players. It didn't seem fair to me that two players in my game would have a long-standing alliance developed in other games, as I could do little to influence their prior relationship. I recall another instance, a few years later, of a player attacking me senselessly, with no hope of either of us gaining. He answered my pleas to be reasonable with: "This is repayment for what you did to ----- in -----." I was appalled and wrote, "I do not cross-game and am disgusted that you would stoop to such a thing." He was properly chastized and apologized (though he continued his attacks, growing the game to a third party).

As one continues in the hobby, it is inevitable that one will develop friendships and enemies. One gets the starting lineup for a game and scans the list for familiar names. Ah, there's so-and-so who allied with me in 1978QZ, never wavered or lied; there's that bastard who kept attacking in 1980RT and never answered a letter; whatchamacallim playing Turkey just published an article on how Turkey should open anti-Italy and I've seen him do it three times now in other games. Is one supposed to suppress all this knowledge and pretend the past doesn't exist?

Of course, whatchamacallim may decide not to open anti-Italy this time; the bastard may condescend to write a few letters and seek an alliance; so-and-so may decide to wipe you off the map. The possibility is always there and you'd be a fool not to consider it. But, you'd be a bigger fool if you rejected an offer of an alliance from someone with a proven track record of loyalty or didn't protect your country from the anonymous attacker.

What of the position of the novices in the game? Well, they have the same opportunity to learn and develop their own relationships and knowledge as every beginner. The casual player may not be interested; the up-and-comer may be doing all the research he can. It may not be "fair" that some in the game have more experience, but what is the difference between understanding the mechanics of the Key Lepanto and knowing that the fellow playing Germany frequently NMRs in other games? A sales manager in a company does not suppress all he knows about the market because a rival company just hired a new, inexperienced salesman.

Which brings us to cross-game deals. I do and don't do this. To explain: suppose I have an excellent working relationship with a player in one game. We have worked together from the beginning, making suggestions, giving support, and finally, swept

the board for a two-way draw. We enter another game and I will likely propose that we form a two-way working alliance with the aim of sweeping the board for a two-way. I do not mention the other game directly, but he knows, from past experience, precisely what I am thinking of. Is this really a cross-game deal? Or is it a matter of having learned from experience?

I have not, nor likely will, set up the kind of deal where one gives support in one game in exchange for support in another. This is what many Dippies find repugnant, though, to be honest, I don't see why now. There is no limit on negotiations. If I offer a \$50 bribe or threaten to dump rotting fish through a player's bedroom window if he doesn't cooperate, that is my affair. And what, really, is the difference between this and offering Munich in one game in exchange for support in another? One might answer that the rest of the players can't counter with similar offers and so it's unfair to them. Well, maybe they can't match a bribe either, or arrange for a shipload of rotting fish to be delivered. But, they have their own imaginations and resources.

Besides the fact that rules against cross-game deals would be impossible to enforce, the tradition that all is fair in Diplomacy negotiations is a strong one. Players impersonating other players, tying up phone lines so orders can't be phoned in, or even, gasp, lying to each other, have been known to occur with the admiration of the hobby community. And we all have the same protection from such activities: namely, any act of deception of the GM is forbidden; and, it's the player of record who makes the final decision on whether or not he's going to go along with your nasty little schemes.

My decision not to engage in cross-game deals is based on more practical considerations. First off, a cross-game deal is as enforceable, or unenforceable, as any other kind of deal. Secondly, I prefer to think about each game I am in separately. Keeping track of six other players at a time is enough, without having to consider twelve arcs of deception at one sitting. However, if someone made a good offer, why should I not consider it? And who's to tell me otherwise?

I guess cross-gaming is unethical, but no more or less than any other negotiations. Why is it regrettable? It certainly is unavoidable.

((Back in VD #7, I published a BRUX Speaks angrily castigating the practice of cross-gaming. Although I still frown on it, I now know that whenever two people play in more than one game together, it is unavoidable. I don't have this problem at the moment, since I'm not playing in any games, but there's no way around the fact that if somebody's screwed you over in three previous games, you're going to remember it if you meet up with him again. So my views are similar to Ronald's: cross-gaming is regrettable but unavoidable. (However, I would still blast someone who makes an overt attempt at a cross-game threat.)

Ronald, thanx for submitting this article to VD as it's a topic that hasn't seen light here for such a long time. Five free ones.))

~~~~~

**Humor submitted by Greg Ellis:**

Five thousand years ago Moses said, "Pack your camel, pick up your shovel, mount your ass and I shall lead you to the Promised Land."

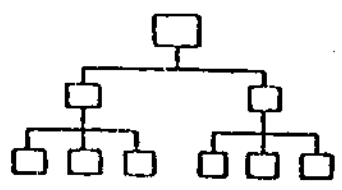
Five thousand years later Franklin Roosevelt said, "Lay down your shovel, sit on your ass, and light up a Camel. This is the Promised Land."

Today, Reagan will tax your shovel, sell your camel, kick your ass and tell you there is no promised land.

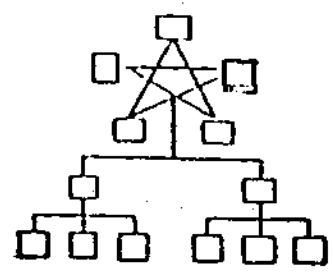
I'm glad I'm an American; I'm glad that I am free;  
But I wish I were a little dog and Reagan was a tree.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

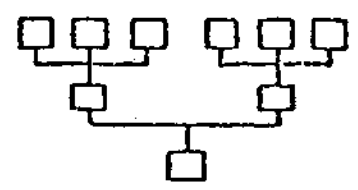
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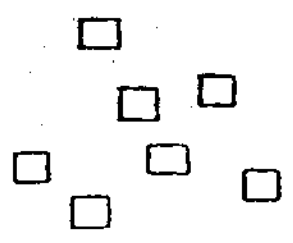
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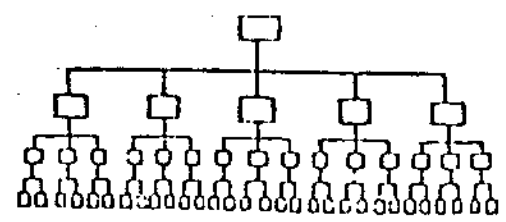
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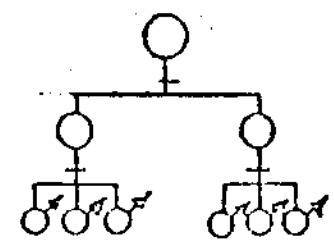
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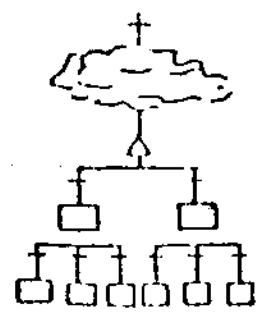
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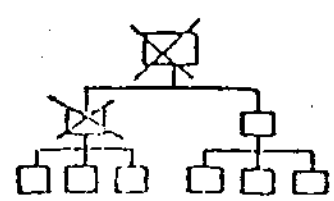
WOMAN'S LIB



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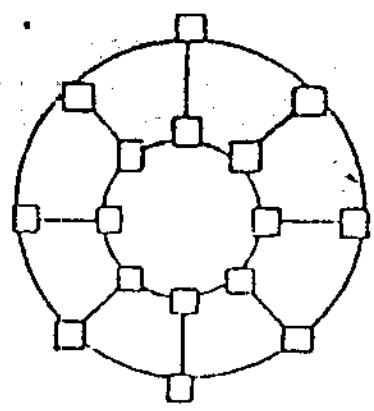
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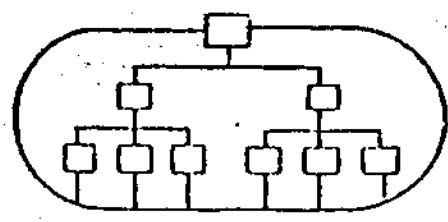
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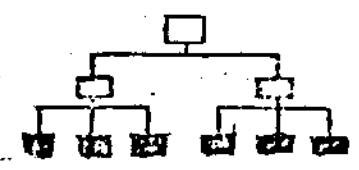
UNITED NATIONS



AMERICAN



RHODESIA



47

The Gossip Column  
Part I

From Mike Barnac (8/6/83 -- 8/27/83):

Brucsphalitis,

Okay, maybe not sleeping sickness, but definitely some kind of sickness. Anyhow, here's a few thoughts on #82 (and 83).

On the telephone-in-GMing discussion: Oh, wow, I agreed with Mark Lew a lot more than with the good GMs. (:-) No, really, I've always tried to give players every possible break, and the telephone ends up being a big part of that. It does, unfortunately, get abused; as a matter of fact, I end up calling in my own moves about half the time, far too much. It does have the advantage that players and GMs talk to each other, instead of just exchanging moves and results. Distant relationships turn into friendships. I like to use the enhanced communications to make sure I get a player's moves correctly; since I use the "badly-written order" rule anyhow, I might as well achieve the best possible understanding on the spot without interfering in the game. As several people observed, it's easy to miss something or have misunderstandings when ordering by phone. ("Balls, Domino's Pizza? I'd like...") As long as I question the player on matters of communication and not of substance, this can only help a game. But it's still the player's responsibility to get his orders to me correctly; anything I do is merely a service. Anyhow, a player can get a similar service by mail in my games; he can either call me after his moves have had time to arrive, or include a return postcard saying something like, "I have received your moves and they (are/are not) complete and legal." I've had players do both.

Really, you can formulate consistent policies (and shame on you, Ronald Brown, a good GM like you not doing so even when seeing and responding to such a question), but the only way to eliminate all the problems is to take no orders by phone. And the price you'll pay in NMRs that way is overwhelming...not all players live up to John Michalek's standards.

You say you listen to Pat; listen to him this time. Many leaders -- including a Soviet supported one every now and then -- have offered their people better futures than some of the madmen we've supported to this day. But Washington thinks that another anti-communist dictator is more in the national interest than a prosperous (and thus stable) Latin America. Yes, we should aid these nations -- with health care, peaceful technology, and agricultural development, not with weaponry. Violence never creates freedom.

I'll tell you, after Somoza, I had real hope for the Sandinistas. But they went the way of most revolutions and betrayed the people. Yet, is it doing Jose Kicaraguan a service for the US to overthrow them?

I fear that there'll be little real progress until Washington and Moscow realize that the world doesn't revolve around them. Like the Europeans, the people of Latin America are unique individuals with their own outlooks and problems. Does it really matter to Luisa whether the foreigners who killed her family and ravaged her home and crops were from Asia or North America?

Jim Finley's letter is a fine counterpoint of all this. For too long, I've been condemned by people for daring to question the faults of our government and society, for realizing that the rest of the world merits an equal place in mankind. Perhaps I should have been equally loud in expressing other views I hold, views that coincide with Jim's. Man is basically free; I believe it is wrong for any government, and church, any army to try to deny man his freedom. Where America wrongs men, whatever nation they belong to, I will argue in hopes of improving what needs improvement. But, all told, I celebrate our abundant nation, for it has the courage to respect man's right to live free. I am glad to be a part of this society. Thank you, Jim, for cutting through our negativism. And please, soldier and hunter, use not your gun. It's the ultimate tool for denying a being his freedom.

Another erudite letter from the Old Fogey. Regardless of what Highchair says (and with his immature rantings, he's one to judge?), I find Rod's comments to be knowledgeable, thoughtful, and even at times interesting. His observation on the function of a dictionary struck a neuron in me... My argument with John Kador a while back was based

on a similar idea, that "rules" should merely be tools to help people know the language and how it is being used, and not dictators to reality or something to force people to conform to. For instance, if the vast majority of our society ends sentences with prepositions, then the "rule" banning it should be modified, and not the people. I'm occasionally disgusted and generally amused by Jack Kilpatrick's syndicated column, in which he whines that nobody's keeping their infinitives unsplit like they used to in the good old days.

"Up Against the Wall M.F. Blues Digest"?? Boy, if I ever need a name for a subline...

"...a male chauvinist pig..."; Oh! Bruce! What a great delivery! Good timing of a superb line! That makes up for a week of "That's SNOT funny."

FudgeCon was great. A number of people didn't show, but I'm glad I made it after missing last year's. Messrs. Olsen, Masner, Michalaki, and Langley have made this hobby enjoyable for me for many years...it was worth crossing half a continent. And, of course, I've had a lot of good times with the others there, all of whom I've met before (if you throw Daf in with the first group). (Oh, and Jim-Bob too. To know Jim Burgess, just think of Lanny Myers, get the idea? Jim's folks live in Schenectady; he's familiar with your area and with Bolton Landing as well. He's camped on the islands out in the lake. You may see him if you hold a December con.) Bob deserves kudos just for tolerating us and the hour-long squirt gun war. Oro-zog, too, gets thank for organizing Northerners (though most cancelled out) right up until the last minute. You'll see reports elsewhere. It had to be a great trip; I got home broke.

Slightly late JUPITER endgame statement: Game? There was a game we were playing? I thought this was the line for the "Let's Make a Deal" studio audience.

Regarding MILKY WAY, or SNICKERS, or whatever: You certainly didn't give Rob Wittmond a shit position, as Masner implies; Turkey has already won the game!

I have a ODA effective Sept. 7: MP Barzo, Box 1187, 25 Andrews Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623. (716) 475-3777.

Selling you the ditto sets me up for an interesting excuse:

"Hey Mike, I've got some heavy news...I saw my doctor today. He says I'm...I'm pregnant."

"Whose is it?"

"Why, yours, I'm sure."

"Can't be."

"Why not??"

"Uh, I never told you this before...A couple of years ago, I started playing around with some different people. I...I picked up VD."

"VD?!"

"Yep...now I can't reproduce like I could before that, due to an exchange between that guy and me."

"--'That...guy'?!"

"Yeah, we've been real 'aids' to each other."

Other stuff...thank suchismo for the pictures. Of course, I'll always remember that weak more indelibly than any photo. They're nice shots, though. ((Lake George.))

#83 got here...more comments, of course. The questionnaire was possibly the best-thought-out I've ever seen. You'll get a lot of meaningful answers, instead of yes/no tossoffs.

OBOL, huh? You'll almost be a real programmer! What kind of hardware are you ~~working~~ working with?

Good to see Konrad helping to keep feuding out of lines. Easygoing guys like him and Dick are such fun.

Here's a point of logic I question: Why add requirements for a player's orders? "Being postal play, they should be able to do it?" In other words, you're adding an extra requirement not because it would improve anything, but merely because it's possible. It's like G.E. saying, "You must back into your parking space on Tuesdays,



and we'll penalize you if you don't." Anyhow, you interfere more with the play of the game by invalidating orders for mislabeled units than by ignoring the error as the Rulebook requires.

To Greg Ellis I offer the opinion: especially not Henry K. Is that the kind of man you care to trust the world's future to? Maybe next time he'll want to bug you, seeing you sign "Love" to a letter to another man...

Calling Samantha, huh? Aren't you letting your youth fetish get the best of you? Talk about an extreme rebound...

Bill's Rochester steaks are called Furterhouse because guess where he eats them...

And the line I get quoted on is "Better check your wallets." Keep this up and Michalski's gonna start liking me.

Loved Steve's Detroit writeup. Indeed, the game is virtually superfluous to my enjoyment of the hobby and of cons in Detroit, Wichita, Kazoo, Chitown, Flushing, Rochester (Rochville?), and most anywhere else I can't afford to go.

I'll close for now. Good luck with the job, and thank again for the photos, for the dedication, and for trusting us with all that you have. I'll see if I can find a weekend that fits our plans and swing over. And...dare to care.

Love, lust, gluttony, and Woody,  
Mike

((Good thing you closed it here; you were beginning to get a little mushy towards the end there.

I like your theory that there is more GM interference involved when I don't change the player's orders than when I do. Maybe some day I'll even understand it.

Actually, I like ODBOL a lot. It's easy to understand and use, as opposed to most lower level computer languages. We're using a Honeywell something-or-other in our department.

Actually, the world does revolve around Moscow and Washington, whether it likes it or not. Oh yeah, sure, there are a few other fairly major forces (Red China, Germany, the Vatican, and the VI Housserules), but Russia and the US are the Big Bosses. I don't like it any more than you do.

Wish I had made PudgeCon. Maybe next year...))

From Rick Ragedale (10/30/83):

BRUX,

Survey enclosed. Please publish the number of charter Doomsies still subscribing when you pub the survey results.

Of interest to you, perhaps, is the fact that the Air Force has "DOOMies", too. My office symbol is: HQ MAC/DOOMT. Civilian translation follows (from back to front or specific to general or lowest rank to highest):

DOOMT = Tactical Airlift Branch

DOOM = Airlift Management Division

DOO = Director of Current Operations

DO = Deputy Chief of Staff / Operations

MAC = Military Airlift Command

HQ = Headquarters

So, I work in the Tactical Airlift Branch, Airlift Management Division, Directorate of Current Operations, for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Headquarters Military Airlift Command. See how much time, ink, and paper we (the military) save the American taxpayer by shortening it all to HQ MAC/DOOMT? And they say the military wastes money.

When will a game open up?

((Not for a long time, sorry. Good to see that the Air Force has Doomsies.

Only 19 of my subbers have been with me since issue #1. Including you, of course.))

From Jim Finley (8/25/83):

Hiya, BRUX!

What's new? Here's VD #83 waiting for me when I get home... and Robyn's even opened it, so if any sand was in there it didn't fall out on me. Life is grand.

Robyn just took off for her Jazzercise class; maybe she'll have something to say when she gets back.

Congratulations on your new job! Though it sounds as if you'll have to put off the infinite improvement of living in New Mexico. (Just think, you wouldn't even have had to change your whole address. You could have kept the "New" part.)

I've got a bunch of people at my work section playing Dip now; when we got ready to start a game today, seventeen people wanted to play. We're playing one turn a day; get orders to the GM by 11:30 so he can adjudicate on his lunch break, then he gets the results out by the end of the workday. We had to make a rule that all negotiations take place outside of working hours because some boss-types were getting irritated.

Anyway, with the seventeen people, we're going to run large games with four people playing in two games at once. I'm going to GM the two I'm not playing in, and another guy who's been playing for a while will run the third game and play in one or both of the ones I'm running. We played one game this way last month and it worked out very well.

Maybe soon I can point out to all these guys that they've been playing postal-type Dip and loving it and they'll all rush home and send you money. (I keep samples of VD and some other zines in my desk for them to take a look at.) Watch for return addresses from Vista, Oceanside, Chatsbad, Fallbrook, Camp Pendleton...

If you start seeing more typos it's because I'm watching both kids and MTV. Jessica is trying to either climb me or pull my running shorts off and Chris is beating a small saucisson against a toy Viking helmet, and Eddie Kenny is acting silly on the tube. Very soothing. This calls for a beer but we're out -- oh, well.

Enclosed are our questionnaires; the views of 1.7% of your readership, for what they're worth. Of course we don't agree on much.

Oh, oh. Chris is sneaking up on me with a nasty game in his eye. Excuse me a moment.

He asked my permission to hit me with his (steel) saucisson. A very polite kid. I'm proud of him.

Well, I think I'll stop here. Robyn says hi (she's home now). So long for now and take care. I bid you two adieus and raise you a sayonara.

((Sounds like you've got a nice little menagerie there! (smile))

Did you tell your friends at work about Supernova? Or show them this issue -- hey, guys, postal Diplomacy is just a letter away! -- write me and get started. (Boy am I an opportunist...)

From John Kelley:

Bruce --

I take exception to some of Mike Haysfield's stronger statements. Too much joking about foreigners is often interpreted as insecurity or racism; it's not a good risk.

It's too bad Bill was held up. And it's whappy, that he simply didn't do what I would have done: keep a .44 in the register at a Michaels. Bad people in Dip are not usually financial terrorists and crooks. I might point out that brutal force was used on you. Still, you seem to have received something worse than that: you a fanatic can't get so angry. I don't think the word force -- or even the word John Exatom -- is enough. I feel that opinions on politics are strongly expressed and are not deserving targets. Save it for war, if that ever comes. I don't think it's fair to call people who are not this reckless talk but not to be used in official and... (unclear) ...

... But the point is to get... (unclear) ...

It's rather a touching belief that everyone except them is a heathen. I don't practice religion with large organized groups, but am a devout Christian in my own mind. Groups, however, strengthen many people's faith greatly; it is one thing to personally practice, and far another to condemn all organized religion as BS. I might have hit the guy too, but don't hold all Christians, Moslems, Jews, and Mormons responsible for his idiocy.

Rod makes a good point. Everyone has biases, true. And you writing is reasonably objective; just wanted to point out that many (now silent) voices would argue with you (Rod) if they were still in Diplomacy.

How've you been, Konrad? And another thing. Can you locate the town of Buer for me? It's in Prussia of 1850; one of my ancestors came from there. Then moved to Hannover, then to Osnabrück. It may be in Niedersachsen, near the EC border. It might, however, be in Poland; no way of knowing. I'd be obliged if you could tell me. And I agree on the NA Zine Poll; if I thought anyone would listen, I'd argue for it's abolishment. I support anarchy in the hobby.

Scattered my sand in a pine forest.

I would put literacy tests in standard English and Braille English. No standard Spanish or Braille Spanish. Our nation benefits greatly, Mark, from having one official tongue. There's no excuse for not learning English in the USA.

((Three cheers for Uncle Sam and the Red, White and Blue!

Maybe Konrad can help you out with your geography problem.

I'm more or less an agnostic myself, with strong atheistic tendencies and a Jewish background that I regard as incidental to my life. I respect all religions to a degree, until someone tries to push it on me (as has happened on two or three occasions), and then I get grumpy.

Highfield is no longer a Doomie, so the discussion about him should end now.))

From Joan Extrom (9/15/83);

Dear BRUX,

Sure was nice talking to you. But you must have an outrageous phone bill.

Remember when I dropped the phone? The dial is now lopsided, but it still works. How did you get the name BRUX, and why the backwards R?

Looking at the NY map -- I found Greenville. Wasn't that a long drive from Albany? Ken's grandmother (Samantha's only great-grandmother) lives on fifth Ave. in Rensselaer, so that's two reasons (you and her) to visit that area. I also see that Schenectady is nearby. We have a friend who named his daughter Schenectady. Poor kid.

That's about it. Told you everything else in the phone conversation. Thanks for calling. It makes my day enjoyable. I like getting calls from men! You and Ralph the Gnome sure help keep my spirits up.

You'll have to staple the article together. Haven't found our stapler since we've moved. Hope you like it.

((The article Joan sent, about computer programmers, appears elsewhere in this issue. I got many laughs out of it.

Sheesh. How could someone stick their kid with a name like Schenectady? It's not even that nice a place to live. As for my name, I got it when I was in the scouts. I started calling my friend Frank DeLalla "FRUX" for no particular reason, and he retaliated by calling me BRUX. And (many older Doomies have heard the tale before), it STUX. (Groan.)

I hope you do come out to visit. How about between Christmas and New Years, when I'll be holding BRUX Con II? You'll get to meet several Doomies, including John Kelley, Mike Barno, Eric Kane and others (anyone else who's interested should let me hear it!). Maybe even Alex! Oh, and BRUX contains a backwards "R" simply because that's the way it happened to be spelled.))

From Rod Walker (8/27/83):

Dear BRUX:

...With respect to the double-order thing: it is not necessary for me to reconcile my comments with VII.1. Why should I? We both acknowledge that the unit's got two orders. That's not really the issue at all, and VII.1 certainly does not specify that if a unit gets 2 orders that any given action must be taken, does it? The significant failure to reconcile is yours and Berch's: neither of you has yet been able to tell me why this "badly-written order, which nevertheless can have only one meaning" is voided out rather than followed, as required by the Rules.

Ed Jedry's article was extremely well done. Good ideas, too. I am glad to see someone else in there telling people that the itchy-bitsy standby slot isn't so bad after all. Good show.

Bill Highfield...sigh... Used to be a liberal, got held up and then all upset by the hostage crisis, and so became a conservative. I must confess I've heard some lame excuses in my time, but these are positively quadraplegic. Getting held up with a knife in your throat is no fun, of course, but that's hardly a reason to go out and vote for Ronnie Reagan. The notion that errant humanity is deterred by "brutal force" has long since been shown largely invalid. In fact, frustration-aggression theory shows clearly that repression actually increases the incidence of malfeasance in many instances. In fact, if the penalty for armed robbery were the same as the penalty for murder, chances are Bill would have had his throat cut so there wouldn't be any witnesses. So he's lucky our society treats thieves rather more lightly than murderers. In any event, I wonder if Bill has considered whether Cuba or Nicaragua or any other country likes having someone's nukes held to their throats. Probably they don't. And if he changed his politics because he objected to a death-threat, then can he blame them if they do the same?

Bill, the only way to beat the fundamentalist freaks is to know more about the Bible than they do. Won't hurt you...the teachings of Jesus are the handbook for the liberal movement. However, if you get bugged by somebody who thinks you ought to go to church, just remind them that Jesus said (I'm paraphrasing here a very famous logion): "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there also." ((Really? I thought that was The Captain and Tenille!))

Konrad is of course right that throwing out a bad government does not guarantee you'll get a better replacement. As the French say, the more things change, the more they remain the same. Certainly the present government in Russia has most of the same faults that the Tsarist regime had...but there is also general agreement among scholars that it represents improvement, however marginal. I don't believe one can really argue that Batista was better than Castro, nor that Somoza was better than the Sandinistas. Certainly there is no indication now that Cuba or Nicaragua are revolutions waiting to happen, as was the case under their previous regimes. And I think that Jimmy Carter's historical image will brighten with time...as an example of what might happen, Harry Truman was not highly regarded when he stepped down, nor for a while after, but now he is ranked with the best...in fact, his historical stock now far outshines that of Woodrow Wilson, whom he so admired.

Konrad is right that my articles reminisce. That's deliberate. There aren't many active in the hobby who remember the pre-1970 period, and I was active for most of it. So I share my memories. It's interesting that Konrad would say I wrote better humor than Konrad; actually, I feel his was better than mine. It was very Pythonesque, even before Python. But there is nothing these days...or very little...to match the sheer quality of what was being written during 1963-1970. Perhaps the best, and the closest to the old school of humor, is Don Del Grande, whose Life of Monty is absolutely the funniest thing around today. His DipWart is hysterical, his Dip Bowl is side-splitting, and it is all very sophisticated and yet with that delicious aura of camp which is very much in the spirit of the 80s. LOH forever!

Beyerlein's article was interesting...talk about reminiscing. I had forgotten the game; 1972 was not exactly a good year for me. Knight's article was also good. All-in-all, #83 was a very nice issue, even if it was purple.

((I enjoy the style of your articles, as they say a lot about the history of the hobby. I regret not being around when people like Conrad von Metzke were active; the next best thing is seeing their stuff reprinted and reading about them.

The badly written order rule has nothing to do with A Gre H (A Bul S), A Bul H (A Gre S). None of those four orders is badly written at all.

So now you admit that the unit's got two orders, but you don't think this needs to be reconciled with the rule that "a unit may be ordered to do only one thing on each move." Oh.

Of course today's Russian government is marginally better than the Tsarist regimes. In fact, it's far better. Shooting 269 people out of the sky is so much more efficient than killing them all one by one with swords and pistols, don't you think?))

From Jim Williams (8/29/83):

Dear BRUX,

Here is my response to your poll, and a letter filled with all kinds of things I've been saving up in my little head. Even though I'm mostly deadwood in Voice of Doom, I do keep up with the latest goings on.

First off, Bill Highfield. After reading his letters in YD for a while, I've come to the conclusion that he's an obnoxious little twerp. For some reason, though, I like him. He overreacts at times to criticism, but he seems to have a devil-say-care attitude that is different, perhaps even refreshing. I like reading your letters, Bill, but lighten up on the personal stuff and you'll have a much better time and make a lot more friends in the hobby.

I can sort of relate to Bill's feelings he had when his life was threatened in a hold-up. It wasn't quite the same thing, but in the summer of '76, I was driving to my girlfriend's house (now my wife...) (for John Kador's benefit the girlfriend is now my wife, not her house) ((I'm glad to hear that your girlfriend did not turn into a house.)). Driving to her house was a five-minute hop over the interstate normally, but on this particularly hot August day it was no routine drive.

As I was passing over the interstate on this day, I noticed a motorcycle speeding up the exit ramp up ahead to my right. I slowed down because, even though I had the green light, I didn't think the cycle would stop. As the bike reached the top of the exit ramp, the rider slammed on the brakes and came to a skidding halt next to an old man in an old car. Before the bike had come to a complete halt, the rider jumped off, letting the cycle fall, and ran toward the car of the old man.

Needless to say, this action caught my eye. As I drove past, I heard the cyclist screaming at the man. The man in the car was in his late 50's or early 60s, while the motorcycle rider was around 30 and big. I'd guess about 6'4", 220 lbs. Well, this old man just turned away from the rantings and ravings of the biker, but just as I was about to leave this excitement behind, the biker gave the old man a shot to the head with his elbow. He followed that up by practically diving into the car, throwing punches all the way.

I couldn't let this old man get beat up by this big young biker, so I pulled over and ran back toward the old man's car. I knew I wasn't going to fight the guy, but I thought maybe I could calm him down. I got to within about 20 feet of the action and saw the helpless guy still struggling with the guy from the cycle. I yelled to the attacker, "Hey! Take it easy on the old guy!" With this, the cyclist backed out of the old man's car and faced me. In his hand was a .45 caliber automatic shootin' iron, and I was looking right down the barrel of it.

The term "spinning on one's heel" could have been coined by someone watching my next

move. Spin I did and I muttered a "never mind" under my breath and walked slowly away, all the while wondering what it felt like to be shot in the back and expecting to find out shortly. A voice behind me called out, "Call the police!" A young voice. I hesitated, turned around (slowly this time), and stuttered "What?" (the "Sir" was apparent, though unspoken.) This time I saw the cyclist speak. "Call the police! This asshole tried to run me off the road back there and then he pulled this gun on me. I had to take it away!"

He had to take it away. The realization hit me that the good guy had the gun and I almost fainted from relief. I ran as fast as my trebling legs would carry me, to a nearby house and I called the police. Just as I returned to the scene, five police cars came to a screeching halt at the ramp. The old man and his car were nowhere to be seen. The young man had the license number, though, and in a few short minutes the crazy old buzzard was clamped in irons.

I learned a few things that day. Things are not always as they seem, for one. I also learned that I'm no hero. I found that out right after I discovered what it felt like to have a gun pointed at my head. The gun was loaded, by the way. Loaded, cocked, and with the safety off. I realize that my incident is not in the same class as Bill's, but for those long 10-15 seconds I was convinced that I was going to be shot at by a deranged biker. Also unlike Bill, this incident did not cause me to change my political leanings. It didn't even change my stance on hunting.

I have to confess to being one of those sadistic brutes who stroll through the wilderness blowing out the brains of God's creatures, for sport. There's nothing like the feeling you get when you're stalking through the underbrush and a ring-necked pheasant, spooked from his hiding place, leaps into the air before you in frantic flight. A little spooked yourself, you bring the shotgun to your shoulder, popping the safety off in the same motion. You line up your fleeing prey in your sights and leading the target a bit, you squeeze the trigger. The pattern from your shell expands as it nears the bird, striking him down with several critical wounds. If you've made a good shot, the bird is dead before landing with a thud in the tall grass. If you've made a bad shot, though, you have to step on the bird's head, with force, until the struggling and wing flapping ceases. Hunting rabbits is pretty much the same thing, and I usually hunt both rabbits and pheasants at the same time. I really enjoy getting back to nature, breathing the fresh air of the wild country, and crushing the heads of a few furry little creatures. You really should try it sometime.

Another topic I've been meaning to address lately, one which gets a lot of print space in VD, is houserules. I personally think that players should be given as much leeway as possible with their orders; however, you feel quite differently. A GM has the right to run his games the way he chooses, so players not wishing strict GMing can play elsewhere, as you say. Most players wouldn't worry about it, though. I know I wouldn't. I might make a note to be extra careful in a VD game. I think Ed Wrobel's only crime was in being too careful. Indirectly, your own strict houserules may have caused a violation of your own strict houserules! Nuff said.

On to other issues, like Presidential Politics. The game hasn't really begun, but I'm already having nothing but fun, fun, fun. If you're running in the GOP primaries, I'll see you in November. I'm a Democrat and proud of it! This may turn out to be the last PEM game I've played in my 5 odd years of postal play. It's a nice diversion from Diplomacy, anyway. Jake Halverstadt seems like a great guy, and I'm looking forward to some of his other games coming up. Football, Stock Market, etc. This PEM hobby of ours needs more zines and pubbers who devote more time to non-Dip activities.

Getting to real life politics, now, Mark Berch's comments last ish regarding literacy tests for voting hit my nail right on the head. ((Youch!)) Most people nowadays, literate or not, get their information on candidates from television. To penalize a group of people who know as much as anyone about the candidates and issues, simply because they cannot read is ridiculous. I'm actually beginning to like ol' Berchie. No, I take that back. I guess I've always liked him.

Last but not least among my topics for today, I'd like to bid a fond farewell to our dear Alex. Her column was always a bright spot amidst the turmoil and controversy that is Voice of Doom. Dip players do need diversions from serious (?) gaming, and Alex's Column gave us one of the best diversions I've ever seen. I'll miss you, Alex, perhaps not as much as BRUX, but I will miss you. Thanks for the time that we did have together, you and I. It was special, with a capital S.

That, Mr. Linsey, wraps up this letter. I was planning on sending an article along soon, but this thing sort of took the wind out of my sails. Perhaps I'll still get one out to you, but probably not in time for the anniversary issue. Meanwhile...

((Thank you for your comments regarding Alex. VD loses a lot without her column. Thank you also for the strongest anti-hunting statement made to date in VD. It was, you know.

Your account of the encounter with the old man and the motorcyclist was great, and surprising. Glad you decided to share it with us.))

From Edmund Jedry:

Dear BRUX,

I am enclosing this letter to supplement the formal evaluation I sent to you earlier. I have been aware of the debate surrounding the hold/support controversy, and I would like to state my opinion about that issue.

Firstly, all active VD gamers are playing under the bylaws that you have established. When a player accepts the privilege of commanding a Great Power in one of your games, he or she must also accept the sole RESPONSIBILITY of following the rules and regulations, including the ones concerning HOLD and SUPPORT. If one does not, one is bound to get Byrned at some point in his game.

Secondly, I think that all VD subscribers who are (were) members of the Armed Forces should answer the following two questions:

- 1) What would you do if you were ordered to support a position?
- 2) What would you do if you were ordered to hold a position?

I have asked those questions to several NCO's that I am acquainted with, and I got basically the following two answers.

I found that when a HOLD order is given, the commander of the hold-ordered unit will try to do the following: 1) set up new perimeter defenses, 2) strengthen existing defenses, 3) wait for new orders. ALL energies of the holding unit are used to "sit tight and stay put".

However, when a SUPPORT order is given, men and support/cover fire are used to aid a friend in an adjacent sector. Existing defenses are still maintained as a supporting unit should also hold its current position. But any remaining available resources of the supporting unit that are not used TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN DEFENSE are applied to aid in his neighbor's attack or defense.

In summary, hold can be defined as self-support. But support means help your neighbor hold.

Another point that I would like to address is that of your rules. They are very extensive, true, but I feel that they have much foresight in mind. By having so many rules to cover a variety of situations spelled out in black and white, you can avoid many sensitive situations where you personally must resolve a problem. All you have to do now is refer the disagreeing parties to a page and cite a rule number to end the argument. This eliminates the possibility of you getting BYRNEED by a sore loser if you had to Judge-it-Yourself. You can live with being called a "Strict Wargamer", but it is much more difficult to live down a falsely stated accusation like showing player favoritism.

Finally, I'd like to talk about the elimination of personal injuries from all Press Releases. Calling the Czar of Russia a dirty-dog is harmless. However, if

John Doe is playing the Russian position and one calls John Doe a dirty-dog, I feel that is injurious.

I would also like to see the use of profanity eliminated from your zine altogether. I am not offended by it in any way, but based on the quality of VD and the intelligence of the subscribers of VD, I feel it is unnecessary. Let's all try to write in a classy manner to reflect the classy people we are.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!!!!!!!!!!!!

((Thank you! I appreciate your support, though I disagree with much of your letter. I like a little bit of profanity sprinkled here and there, so long as it doesn't get out of hand. And I feel that calling anyone a dirty-dog is a compliment, not an insult.

Your arguments regarding hold/support are new ones to me. I have never put much stock, though, in reasoning which attempts to compare the game to real-life situations, as Diplomacy is clearly meant to be very abstract.

Your comments about houserules are 100% right on. I think that most people who disagree simply don't understand the purpose behind them. Who cares if houserule xxx never has to be applied -- nobody loses so long as it's there and ready to be referred to if needed. Until now, people were able to (correctly) criticize my houserules because they are disorganized, but even that problem is solved thanks to Steve Knight. When people criticize them for being too long, however, I can always just reply by asking where I should start trimming them. Aside from a couple of "joke" rules (e.g. The North Atlantic Ocean is not a supply center), nobody ever has a good answer to that, which proves my point.

Gee. Am I getting worked up over this, or what?..))

From Peter Ansoff (8/27/83):

Dear BRUX,

The enclosed photo is a bit fuzzy (the cameraperson was standing on a pitching dock) but it gives a good idea of what the ol' boat looks like. She hasn't been christened yet, but unofficially her name is "Hornblower". The name seemed appropriate for at least 3 reasons: 1) it's English, as is the boat herself, 2) Horatio Hornblower, RN, is a longtime hero of mine, 3) I kind of enjoy all the double-takes and turned heads that she gets when among all the O'Days and Hobie Cats.

I hope that you decide to come to MaryCon next spring; I was very impressed by the facilities and by the high overall quality of the convention. This time, however, I think I'll skip the marathon Rail Baron game!

My completed reader response poll should be enclosed. Just in case I haven't mentioned it recently, VD is by far the best of the Dippy publications that I receive and one of the few that I consistently read from cover to cover.

Good luck in your new job. If nothing else, your new field should provide decent job security. My girlfriend started out as a programmer 10-12 years ago and has had no real problem finding jobs in government or private industry. I like to give her a hard time about working in COBOL -- it takes a half a page of code to execute two or three DO-loops (well, not exactly, but...)

I have some further comments on our A/F discussion, but I'll save them for a later letter.

((DO-loops? In COBOL??

Enjoyed the picture of Hornblower; she has the same name as one of the math prof's at Albany State up here.

MaryCon looks very probable for me next year; along with KaneKon it will probably be about the only convention I'll be going to. I heard nothing but compliments about the way Ed Wrobel handled it last year. See you there!))



Krazy Envelopes and Nifty Birth Announcements (thank to the Berkeley Kids and FRUX and Melinda DeLalla):

57

HUGH G. RECTOR  
MISS  
425 VAN BUREN ST.  
MONTEREY, CA.  
93940



MISS JANE PROSKIN ; LOVER  
24A QUARRY DRIVE  
ALBANY, N.Y.



RIGEL, A REAL

12205



Pissed Off Box 9987  
Berkeley, Mass  
94709



The Center To Abolish Illiterate Martians  
From The Diplomacy Hierarchy  
c/o Bursitis Lundermann  
24A Quarry Driveway  
Albania, N.Y! (Next Year)

12205

System Developers Frank and Melinda DeLalla are pleased to announce the successful implementation of a new operating system named

KRISTIN NICOLE

The real-time system went live at 1811 on 18 July 1983. At installation time the mini-mainframe had a fixed record length of 20.5 inches and occupied 8 lbs., 0 oz. of mass storage. Peripheral sensors include blue optical scanners. Dark brown hair covers the central processing unit and main memory.

The system interfaces well with the parent systems, who are monitoring tasks and providing routine maintenance. The system is apparently bug-free, although interrupts are anticipated due to occasional dumps and overflows.

58

The Toady of the Year Controversy

The Toady of the Year Poll is one of many that would not have received a mention in VD, except for the fact that I scored a surprised upset victory and won. (Wellll, actually it was a tie with Bob Olsen, but everyone knows he doesn't count.) Also, I might add that Alex finished second behind Kathy Byrne in the Toad of the Year Poll, which was run concurrently with the other. I'm sure Alex will croak when she finds out!

Anyhow, to make a long story short, Bob Olsen, in his infinitely irritable geniality, is trying to deny me this tiny crumb of hobby fame by claiming that his vote wasn't counted, and since he voted for Jim Burgess, Jim is the rightful winner. And naturally, I and all the other loyal screaming Doomsies who know what's good for them are ready to go to war over this.

First up is Bob's letter of protest to Mark "Dead Skunk" Luedi, who ran the poll.

Dear Mark,

Just a short note to tell you that you made a mistake in the Toady Poll. It seems that you forgot to count my vote, possibly in a letter or something; I know because I sent it in the day the poll was announced. Since my vote was for the only qualified candidate, Jim-Boob Burgess, as first choice, and since I voted neither for myself nor BRUX, this gives Jim-Boob enough points to lift him to the top spot. So I would like to request that you check your files, count my vote, and put that toady sucker on top where he belongs.

I don't want to have to appear to be threatening but just in case you refuse I am calling for an ombudsman in this matter. My selected ombudsperson is someone we all know, love and toady to regularly. Since ombudding is a transcendently toad-like activity, you will in no way be surprised to learn that I am asking Kathy Byrne to investigate this case.

Sincerely yours,  
Bob Olsen

This led to the following comments by Jim Burgess:

It has come to my attention that a protest has been lodged regarding the conduct of the Toady of the Year election by Mark Luedi. If you had to take a wild guess, which vile, disgusting, sycophantic alubberdegullion would you choose as the sludge behind this dastardly deed? There are billy-uns and billy-uns of possibilities in this contentious hobby but the smart money would be on last year's whiner and all-round poor loser...Robert Olsen! In this case, the smart money has it right.

The Boob (I mean the only one involved in this controversy...that's right, Jabba the Olsen) claims that a "mistake" has been made in the Toady Poll. The only mistake is that poor Bob didn't win it outright, as he deserved. Last year Bob threw a temper tantrum because he didn't win, so now this year he's bitching because he did (tied for first, anyway, Bob's never won anything all by himself). And guess who the target of Jabba's vicious invective is? Right again! Me!!

Naturally, Olsen has another of his lame excuses for why I should win instead of him. Poor Bob complains that his vote wasn't counted and furthermore that he had me as his top choice for toady and didn't vote for Highfield, BRUX, or himself. A likely story, but let us examine this situation in a more global light before we accept Bob's version. Mark has hinted to me that Bob's vote has been "found", presumably in one of Bob's letters, probably in small print or on the back of game orders. Yet the deadline is passed, the results have been published, and Bob's vote has only been discovered after the fact. On whom should the blame for this unfortunate circumstance rest? I claim, naturally enough, that it rests on the head of the one and only, original BOOB, Bob Olsen!

Let's go to the evidence. My first contention is that Robert Olsen does indeed

know how to read. I know that's hard to believe for some of you but I believe I can present sufficient evidence to that effect. Bob has been known to write (frequently profuse) letters and articles all over this hobby. Many of these writings even make some sense. I have never heard of a case of someone writing before they learned how to read, it seems impossible. Indeed, Bob seems to have been able to read the Toady of the Year election results to a sufficient extent that he was able to determine that his vote didn't get counted.

Now that everyone grants that Bob knows how to read, I direct you to Thirty Miles of Bad Road #12 (the so-called generic zine, since no numbering appears on the issue, but it comes between issues 11 and 13 so I presume we may call it issue 12) on page nine hundred eighty-seven (I'll only call into evidence the abridged version of the zine that excludes pgs. 6-975, inclusive). There, under the heading/ ---MARK LUEDI SEZ--- comes the following quote; "Even if you've already dropped a ballot (referring to the Toady Poll, naturally) in the mail, do it again, as I think a couple have been misplaced." Did Bob do this (i.e. drop another ballot in the mail)? The answer seems to be no. Did anyone read this statement and follow its instructions? The answer seems to be yes. I cite Bill Becker. In a letter responding to my pleas to leave my name off the ballot Bill told me that he had mailed in a second ballot since Mark told him that his was one of the misplaced ballots. So we have precedent and neglect. I assert that it was Bob's fault for not making sure that Mark had his vote. Otherwise, who knows how many other lost ballots are sitting around in Mark's files that could be dragged out 50 or 100 years down the road. Mark's statement in issue #12 should clearly be taken as a repudiation of any lost ballots. It may not be fair...but hey, life's tough, Bob. Take it like a man instead of the crybaby wimp that you are. That's all I have to say at this time. I accept the choice of Kathy Byrne as an ombudsperson, but only if that's agreeable to Mr. Luedi. My feeling is that it should go before the official Hobby Pollster, but luckily we don't have one (right Mr. Tallperson?).

Sincerely,  
Jim-Bob  
(ex-Toady of the Year)

((I had been hoping to steer clear of controversy in this anniversary issue, but this matter is of far too much consequence to ignore. How dare Bob Olsen attempt to strip me of what is rightfully mine -- a share in the title of Toady of the Year! If this keeps up I'm going to call my lawyer Mark Berch to defend me and then Bob will be in so much trouble that he'll have to make still another pilgrimage up the mountain (HINT! HINT!) to get himself out of it.

Folks, the true evidence regarding the outcome of the Poll is right there for all to read -- in the new, unabridged, comprehensive version of the VD house rules. And let's not have any quibbling about whether the House rules apply in this case -- the VD house rules apply to everything that happens, within the hobby and outside of it.

The rule in question in this particular circumstance, of course, is the one I have entitled the "Greater Good" rule. Stated briefly (quite an effort with any of my house rules), it says that the GM may toss out the rules of the game and CHEAT if he thinks that the game will benefit from it. There can be no question that this rule was written with situations like this election prominently in mind.

It is, I contend, absolutely and undeniably in the interest of the hobby's Greater Good that Bob Olsen's vote in the Toady of the Year Poll not be counted. We have labored far too long under the delusion that what Bob Olsen says should be given the same weight as the utterances of any normal person. Who among us has not read an Olsen letter at one time or another, doubled over in a fit of uncontrollable mirth, and then, upon recovering, totally forgotten what the letter said to begin with?! The evidence is unmistakable. Bob Olsen uses his boyish insouciance (description his) as a shield to hide the fact that he never actually says anything! Therefore, all words uttered by Bob, including his Toady Poll vote, must be ignored for the Greater Good of the hobby. And therefore. Bob and I must remain the rightful co-winners.))

Winning Against a Stop-the-Leader Alliance

It's been a successful game for you so far. You wheeled and dealt in the early going, and the alliance formations generally turned out favorably for you. One or two of the weaker players were wiped out, and you were able to take advantage of wars among the other powers to build up a strong position; in fact, you have become the dominant power in the game. As the clear leader, you are a threat to win. The problem is, all of the other players seem to have realized it all of a sudden. The petty wars they were fighting have miraculously stopped and the whole rest of the board is united with the goal of keeping you from winning. Under these suddenly unfavorable circumstances, what resources do you have that will work in your favor?

You must write. Only under very unusual circumstances can you afford to take on the whole lot of them in a head-to-head conflict. If you are a great tactician with at least 15 centers, and the opposition includes poor players, or unreliable ones, then your better play may tip the balance in your favor, enough to win a straight up fight. But you cannot count on this. The attempt will be doomed to failure if the other players are at all awake. No, you will have to negotiate your way out of this one.

One factor is on your side: time. As the game years slip by, time will inexorably take its toll on the alliance; they may screw up a move here and there due to lack of communication, disagreements may arise as to who should get which centers, old arguments may flare, boredom may set in. Your job is to accelerate this process of deterioration within the alliance. All multi-player alliances are doomed to eventual failure (although sometimes the game ends first). You must hasten the day of this failure so that when it finally occurs, you are still able to strike quickly and effectively for the win.

Which brings me to the meat of this article: how do you unhinge a stop-the-leader alliance which has formed against you? You must first locate, and then exploit, the weak links in the opposition. There are several things you can look for.

One weak link may be a player who will consider taking second place to your win. If the guy is reasonably large and getting bored with the game, he's a candidate. Work on him gradually. Be patient; the whole situation requires much patience on your part anyway. After every (yawn) season, drop him a note to the effect that any time he wants to team up with you and end this farce, you're game. (A variation on this would be to promise him a two-way draw, let him stab his allies, and then stab him for the win. If you can make this promise with a reasonable amount of credibility, this may work with a guy who isn't so hot on taking second to your win.)

Another guy you should be picking on is the sheltered power -- the player who is sitting back at the opposite end of the board doing nothing because he has no common frontier with you. (If there isn't such a country left in the game, too bad. Sometimes careful advance planning will help to ensure that at least one power remains sheltered from you.) Christ, man, that fellow has to be impatient for some action! Irrillate his fancy, for crying out loud. Write often and well -- he is your best ally at this point, after all -- spouting grandiose plans for a great stab into the backs of the other members of the coalition -- an enterprise to which you will gladly lend all possible assistance. Try to inject a "you and me against the world" tone into your negotiating; after all, he isn't fighting anyone now, so why treat him as hostile? Just don't arrange things so that he becomes unsheltered from you -- this fatal error will allow him to play an active rather than passive role in your demise. (Doomies who have read Randolph Smyth's excellent article on the Sheltered Power will note that I am here describing the same situation from the opposite point of view.)

Other potential weak spots in the alliance would include players who for whatever reason bear grudges against other members of the alliance. You should not ignore such sore points; you must be actively fostering their festering. In an offhand manner, remind the guy who used to own Belgium that it is rightfully his. Instill fear. "What is France going to do with all those fleets after you guys take a hand?"

play with himself? E"mon... " Play on their sense of fairness: "Man, Germany's the one who stabbed you; why take me down instead of him?"

Now bear in mind that if they're all competent and reliable players, there is perhaps nothing you can say that will keep you from getting knocked down to size before the alliance breaks up. But you must keep plugging away. Because the alliance will dissolve sooner or later, and you've got to find the chinks in their armor, insert your chisel, and pry it apart sooner instead of later.

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Real Publishers Don't ... But I Do

by Mr. Y

We've all heard about "real" people. Real men don't eat quiche. Real extra-terrestrials don't phone home. Real Russians don't apologize for shooting down anything.

But we've got that in the hobby, too. The following is designed to be all in good fun, in the spirit of satire and kidding around. It's not designed to hurt or embarrass anyone, or spill any secrets. Of course, some of you aren't going to take it that way, are you? Thus, I'm going to have to keep my identity quiet for the time being until the coast is clear.

- John Michalski: Real diplomats don't need season separations.
- John Leader: Real Miller Number Custodians don't need to give out Miller Numbers.
- John Boardman: Real hobby-founders don't need the rest of the hobby.
- Ed Wrobel: Real publishers don't need sub rates.
- Doug Beyerlein: Real GMs don't start Diplomacy games.
- John Caruso: Real ByzneCons don't need to be bugged.
- Roy Henricks: Real GMs are unconcerned with turnaround.
- Mark Berch: Real publishers don't fool with games.
- Randolph Smyth: Real publishers don't need to publish.
- Steve Hutton: Real Canadians don't need a place to call home.
- Herb Barents: Real zines don't need to be legible.
- Larry Peery: Real editorialists don't get to the point.
- Don Dittier: Real BNCs don't need to publish Everything.

Then there are some others which I didn't hear, but maybe these guys could use some advice, or maybe they ought to be saying...

- Bruce Linsey: Real GMs don't care how many times a piece is ordered.
- Jack Fleming: Real travelers don't come back.
- Robert Sacks: Real bigwigs don't need titles or sub-sub-sub-subcommittees.
- Ronald (Canada) Brown: Real daddies don't need baby pics to remind themselves of what their kids look like.
- Woody: Real zines don't need subzines.
- Eric Kane: Real publishers don't care about their grades.

((Or how about this one, from Mr. Y: Real article writers don't care about getting the free issues!))

We're asking you

by Kathleen Wachowicz

"What was the most important event in your life?"



"I guess, meeting my husband, because of all the things that happened together after that — living together, going to school together, traveling together and having our son Isaac."

Margaret Mace-Tessler
Troy resident



"Getting married, because I've been happier since then."

Tom Heiple
Colonie resident



"The birth of my child, because of the love and joy they bring."

Janet Zelanko
Loudonville resident



"Being born, because without that you'd have no other events."

Steve Barrie
Niskayuna resident



"The most important event in my life is this interview, because, as an ex-teacher, it feels good to have somebody finally listen to me."

Bruce Linsey
Colonie resident



"Spiritually, finding God; physically, having a child."

Jody Barnett
Colonie resident

62

THAT'S RIGHT, DOONES! Your humble editor got his picture in the local newspaper a few weeks ago and his fame soared to new heights! Note how he took great advantage of this golden opportunity to issue forth a press release worthy of the RICE! game while all the other people in the article gave dumb answers! Note the nice first! Note the glittering numberness of his statement! Heh, heh.

Thanks to Joan Extrom for this submission...

63

Real Programmers Don't Use PASCAL

by Ed Post

Back in the good old days -- the "Golden Era" of computers, it was easy to separate the men from the boys (sometimes called "Real Men" and "Quiche Eaters" in the literature). During this period, the Real Men were the ones that understood computer programming, and the Quiche Eaters were the ones that didn't. A real computer programmer said things like "DO 10 I=1,10" and "ABEND" (they actually talked in capital letters, you understand), and the rest of the world said things like "computers are too complicated for me" and "I can't relate to computers -- they're so impersonal". (A previous work points out that Real Men don't relate to anything, and aren't afraid of being impersonal.)

But, as usual, times change. We are faced today with a world in which little old ladies can get computers in their microwave ovens, 12-year-old kids can blow Real Men out of the water playing Asteroids and Pac-Man, and anyone can buy and even understand their very own Personal Computer. The Real Programmer is in danger of becoming extinct, of being replaced by high-school students with TRASH-80s.

There is a clear need to point out the differences between the typical high-school junior Pac-Man player and a Real Programmer. If this difference is made clear, it will give these kids something to aspire to -- a role model, a Father Figure. It will also help explain to the employers of Real Programmers why it would be a mistake to replace the Real Programmers on their staff with 12-year-old Pac-Man players (at a considerable salary savings).

LANGUAGES

The easiest way to tell a Real Programmer from the crowd is by the programming language he (or she) uses. Real Programmers use FORTRAN. Quiche Eaters use PASCAL. Nicklaus Wirth, the designer of PASCAL, gave a talk once at which he was asked, "How do you pronounce your name?" He replied, "You can either call me by my name, pronouncing it 'Veert', or call me by my value, 'Worth'." One can tell immediately from this comment that Nicklaus Wirth is a Quiche Eater. The only parameter passing mechanism endorsed by Real Programmers is call-by-value-return, as implemented in the IBM/370 FORTRAN G and H compilers. Real Programmers don't need all these abstract concepts to get their jobs done -- they are perfectly happy with a keypunch, a FORTRAN IV compiler, and a beer.

Real Programmers do List Processing in FORTRAN.

Real Programmers do String Manipulation in FORTRAN.

Real Programmers do Accounting (if they do it at all) in FORTRAN.

Real Programmers do Artificial Intelligence programs in FORTRAN.

If you can't do it in FORTRAN, do it in assembly language. If you can't do it in assembly language, it isn't worth doing.

STRUCTURED PROGRAMMING

The academics in computer science have gotten into the "structured programming" rut over the past several years. They claim that programs are more easily understood if the programmer uses some special language constructs and techniques. They don't all agree on exactly which constructs, of course, and the examples they use to show their particular point of view invariably fit on a single page of some obscure journal or another -- clearly not enough of an example to convince anyone. When I got out of school, I thought I was the best programmer in the world. I could write an unbeatable tic-tac-toe program, use five different computer languages, and create 1000-line programs that WORKED. (Really!) Then I got out into the Real World. My first task in the Real World was to read and understand a 200,000-line FORTRAN program, then speed

it up by a factor of two. Any Real Programmer will tell you that all the Structured Coding in the world won't help you solve a problem like that -- it takes actual talent. Some quick observations on Real Programmers and Structured Programming:

Real Programmers aren't afraid to use GOTOs.

Real Programmers can write five-page long DO loops without getting confused.

Real Programmers like Arithmetic IF statements -- they make the code more interesting.

Real Programmers write self-modifying code, especially if they can save 20 nanoseconds in the middle of a tight loop.

Real Programmers don't need comments -- the code is obvious.

Since FORTRAN doesn't have a structured IF, REPEAT ... UNTIL, or CASE statement, Real Programmers don't have to worry about not using them. Besides, they can be simulated when necessary using assigned GOTOs.

Data structures have also gotten a lot of press lately. Abstract Data Types, Structures, Pointers, Lists, and Strings have become popular in certain circles. Wirth (the above-mentioned Quiche Eater) actually wrote an entire book contending that you could write a program based on data structures, rather than the other way around. As all Real Programmers know, the only useful data structure is the Array. Strings, Lists, Structures, Sets -- these are all special cases of arrays and can be treated that way just as easily without messing up your programming language with all sorts of complications. The worst thing about fancy data types is that you have to declare them, and Real Programming Languages, as we all know, have implicit typing based on the first letter of the (six character) variable name.

OPERATING SYSTEMS

What kind of operating system is used by a Real Programmer? CP/M? God forbid -- CP/M, after all, is basically a toy operating system. Even little old ladies and grade school students can understand and use CP/M.

Unix is a lot more complicated of course -- the typical Unix hacker never can remember what the PRINT command is called this week -- but when it gets right down to it, Unix is a glorified video game. People don't do Serious Work on Unix systems; they send jokes around the world on UUCP-net and write adventure games and research papers.

No, your Real Programmer uses OS/370. A good programmer can find and understand the description of the LJK305I error he just got in his JCL manual. A great programmer can write JCL without referring to the manual at all. A truly outstanding programmer can find bugs buried in a 5 megabyte core dump without using a hex calculator. (I have actually seen this done.)

OS is a truly remarkable operating system. It's possible to destroy days of work with a single misplaced space, so alertness in the programming staff is encouraged. The best way to approach the system is through a keypunch. Some people claim there is a Time Sharing system that runs on OS/370, but after careful study I have come to the conclusion that they were mistaken.

PROGRAMMING TOOLS

What kind of tools does a Real Programmer use? In theory, a Real Programmer could run his programs by keying them into the front panel of the computer. Back in the days when computers had front panels, this was actually done occasionally. Your typical Real Programmer knew the entire bootstrap loader by memory in hex, and toggled it in whenever it got destroyed by his program. (Back then, memory was memory -- it didn't go away when the power went off. Today, memory either forgets things when you don't want it to, or remembers things long after they're better forgotten.) Legend has it that Seymour Gray, inventor of the Gray I supercomputer and most of Control Data's computers, actually toggled the first operating system for the CDC7600 in on the front panel from memory when it was first powered on. Seymour, needless to say, is a Real Programmer.

One of my favorite Real Programmers was a systems programmer for Texas Instruments. One day, he got a long distance call from a user whose system had crashed in the middle of saving some important work. Jim was able to repair the damage over the phone, getting the user to toggle in disk I/O instructions at the front panel, repairing system tables in hex, reading register contents back over the phone. The moral of this story: while a Real Programmer usually includes a keypunch and lineprinter in his toolkit, he can get along with just a front panel and a telephone in emergencies.

In some companies, text editing no longer consists of ten engineers standing in line to use an 029 keypunch. The Real Programmer in this situation has to do his work with a "text editor" program. Most systems supply several text editors to select from, and the Real Programmer must be careful to pick one that reflects his personal style. Many people believe that the best text editors in the world were written at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center for use on their Alto and Dorado computers. Unfortunately, no Real Programmer would ever use a computer whose operating system is called SmallTalk, and would certainly not talk to the computer with a mouse.

Some of the concepts in these Xerox editors have been incorporated into editors running on more reasonably named operating systems -- EMACS and VI being just two. The problem with these editors is that Real Programmers consider "what you see is what you get" to be just as bad a concept in Text Editors as it is in Women. No, the Real Programmer wants a "you asked for it, you got it" text editor -- complicated, cryptic, powerful, unforgiving, dangerous. TECO, to be precise.

It has been observed that a TECO command sequence more closely resembles transmission line noise than readable text. One of the more entertaining games to play with TECO is to type in your name as a command line and try to guess what it does. Just about any possible typing error while talking with TECO will probably destroy your program, or even worse -- introduce subtle and mysterious bugs in a once working subroutine.

For this reason, Real Programmers are reluctant to actually edit a program that is close to working. They find it much easier to just patch the binary object code directly, using a wonderful program called SUPERZAP (or its equivalent on non-IBM machines). This works so well that many working programs on IBM systems bear no relation to the original FORTRAN code. In many cases, the original source code is no longer available. When it comes time to fix a program like this, no manager would even think of sending anything less than a Real Programmer to do the job -- no Quiche Eating structured programmer would even know where to start. This is called "job security".

Some programming tools NOT used by Real Programmers:

FORTRAN preprocessors like MORTRAN and RATFOR. The Cuisinarts of programming -- great for making Quiche. See comments above on structured programming.

Source language debuggers. Real Programmers can read core dumps.

Compilers with array bounds checking. They stifle creativity, destroy most of the interesting uses for EQUIVALENCE, and make it impossible to modify the operating system code with negative subscripts. Worst of all, bounds checking is inefficient.

Source code maintenance systems. A Real Programmer keeps his code locked up in a card file, because it implies that its owner cannot leave his important programs unguarded.

THE REAL PROGRAMMER AT WORK

Where does the typical Real Programmer work? What kind of programs are worthy of the efforts of so talented an individual? You can be sure that no Real Programmer would be caught dead writing accounts-receivable programs in COBOL, or sorting sailing lists for People magazine. A Real Programmer wants tasks of earth-shaking importance (literally!).

Real Programmers work for Los Alamos National Laboratory, writing atomic bomb simulations to run on Cray I supercomputers.

Real Programmers work for the National Security Agency, decoding Russian transmissions.

It was largely due to the efforts of thousands of Real Programmers working for NASA that our boys got to the moon and back before the Ruskies.

The computers in the Space Shuttle were programmed by Real Programmers.

Real Programmers are at work for Boeing designing the operating systems for cruise missiles.

Some of the most awesome Real Programmers of all work at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. Many of them know the entire operating system of the Pioneer and Voyager spacecraft by heart. With a combination of large ground-based FORTRAN programs and small spacecraft-based assembly language programs, they are able to do incredible feats of navigation and improvisation -- hitting ten-kilometer wide windows at Saturn after six years in space, repairing or bypassing damaged sensor platforms, radios, and batteries. Allegedly, one Real Programmer managed to tuck a pattern-matching program into a few hundred bytes of unused memory in a Voyager spacecraft that searched for, located, and photographed a new moon of Jupiter.

The current plan for the Galileo spacecraft is to use a gravity assist trajectory past Mars on the way to Jupiter. This trajectory passes within 80 +/- 3 kilometers of the surface of Mars. Nobody is going to trust a PASCAL program (or PASCAL programmer) for navigation to these tolerances.

As you can tell, many of the world's Real Programmers work for the U.S. Government -- mainly the Defense Department. This is as it should be. Recently, however, a black cloud has formed on the Real Programmer horizon. It seems that some highly placed Quiche Eaters at the Defense Department decided that all Defense programs should be written in some grand unified language called "ADA" ((r), DoD). For a while, it seemed that ADA was destined to become a language that went against all the precepts of Real Programming -- a language with structure, a language with data types, strong typing, and semicolons. In short, a language designed to cripple the creativity of the typical Real Programmer. Fortunately, the language adopted by DoD has enough interesting features to make it approachable -- it's incredibly complex, includes methods for messing with the operating system and rearranging memory, and Edgar Dijkstra doesn't like it. (Dijkstra, as I'm sure you know, was the author of "GoTos Considered Harmful" -- a landmark work in programming methodology, applauded by Pascal Programmers and Quiche Eaters alike.) Besides, the determined Real Programmer can write FORTRAN programs in any language.

The Real Programmer might compromise his principles and work on something slightly more trivial than the destruction of life as we know it, providing there's enough money in it. There are several Real Programmers building video games at Atari, for example. (But not playing them -- a Real Programmer knows how to beat the machine every time; no challenge in that.) Everyone working at Lucas Film is a Real Programmer. (It would be crazy to turn down the money of fifty million Star Trek fans.) The proportion of Real Programmers in Computer Graphics is somewhat lower than the norm, mostly because nobody has found a use for Computer Graphics yet. On the other hand, all Computer Graphics is done in FORTRAN, so there are a fair number of people doing Graphics in order to avoid having to write COBOL programs.

THE REAL PROGRAMMER AT PLAY

Generally, the Real Programmer plays the same way he works -- with computers. He is constantly amazed that his employer actually pays him to do what he would be doing for an anyway (although he is careful not to express this opinion out loud). Occasionally, the Real Programmer does step out of the office for a breath of fresh air and a beer or two. Some tips on recognizing Real Programmers away from the computer room:

At a party, the Real Programmers are the ones in the corner talking about operating system security and how to get around it.

At a football game, the Real Programmer is the one comparing the plays against his simulations printed on 11 by 14 fanfold paper.

At the beach, the Real Programmer is the one drawing flowcharts in the sand.

A Real Programmer goes to discos to watch the light shows.

At a funeral, the Real Programmer is the one saying, "Poor George. And he almost had the sort routine working before the coronary."

In a grocery store, the Real Programmer is the one who insists on running the cans past the laser checkout scanner himself, because he could never trust keypunch operators to get it right the first time.

THE REAL PROGRAMMER'S NATURAL HABITAT

What sort of environment does the Real Programmer function best in? This is an important question for the managers of Real Programmers. Considering the amount of money it costs to keep one on the staff, it's best to put him (or her) in an environment where he can get his work done.

The typical Real Programmer lives in front of a computer terminal. Surrounding this terminal are:

Listings of all programs the Real Programmer has ever worked on, piled in roughly chronological order on every flat surface in the office.

Some half-dozen or so partly filled cups of cold coffee. Occasionally, there will be cigarette butts floating in the coffee. In some cases, the cups will contain Orange Crush.

Unless he is very good, there will be copies of the OS JCL manual and the Principles of Operation open to some particularly interesting pages.

Taped to the wall is a line-printer Snoopy calendar for the year 1969.

Scattered about the floor are several wrappers for peanut butter filled cheese bars -- the type that are made pre-stale at the bakery so they can't get any worse while waiting in the vending machine.

Hiding in the top left-hand drawer of the desk is a stash of double-stuff Oreos for special occasions.

Underneath the Oreos is a flow-charting template, left there by the previous occupant of the office. (Real Programmers write programs, not documentation. Leave that to the maintenance people.)

The Real Programmer is capable of working 30, 40, even 50 hours at a stretch, under intense pressure. In fact, he prefers it that way. Bad response time doesn't bother the Real Programmer -- it gives him a chance to catch a little sleep between compiles. If there is not enough schedule pressure on the Real Programmer, he tends to make things more challenging by working on some small but interesting part of the problem for the first nine weeks, then finishing the rest in the last week, in two or three 50-hour marathons. This not only impresses the hell out of his manager, who was despairing of ever getting the project done on time, but creates a convenient excuse for not doing the documentation. In general:

No Real Programmer works 9 to 5. (Unless it's the ones at night.)

Real Programmers don't wear neckties.

Real Programmers don't wear high heeled shoes.

Real Programmers arrive at work in time for lunch.

A Real Programmer might or might not know his wife's name. He does, however, know the entire ASCII (or EBCDIC) code table.

Real Programmers don't know how to cook. Grocery stores aren't open at three in the morning. Real Programmers survive on Twinkies and coffee.

THE FUTURE

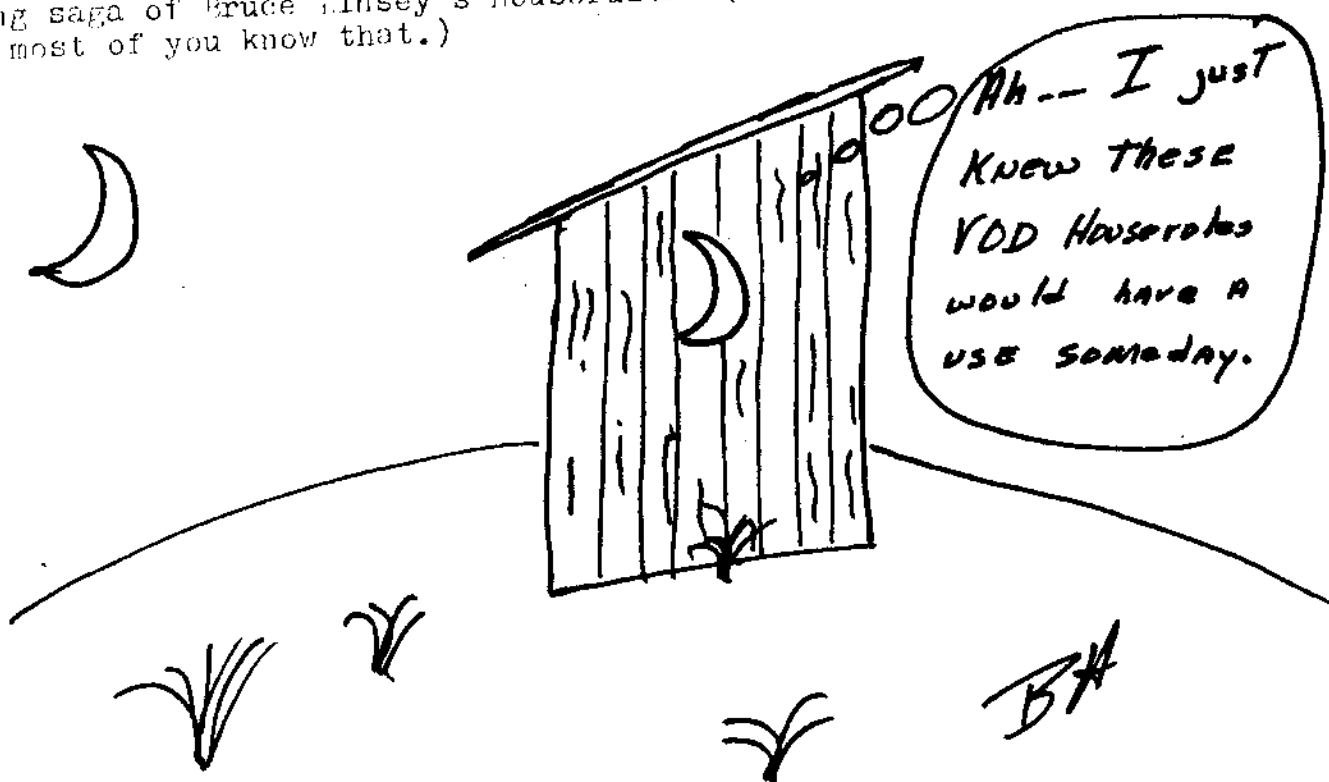
What of the future? It is a matter of some concern to Real Programmers that the latest generation of computer programmers are not being brought up with the same outlook on life as their elders. Many of them have never seen a computer with a front panel. Hardly anyone graduating from school these days can do hex arithmetic without a calculator. College graduates these days are soft -- protected from the realities of programming by source level debuggers, text editors that count parentheses, and "user friendly" operating systems. Worst of all, some of these alleged "computer scientists" manage to get degrees without ever learning FORTRAN! Are we destined to become an industry of Unix hackers and PASCAL programmers?

From my experience, I can only report that the future is bright for Real Programmers everywhere. Neither OS/370 nor FORTRAN show any signs of dying out, despite all the efforts of PASCAL programmers the world over. Even more subtle tricks, like adding structured coding constructs to FORTRAN have failed. Oh sure, some computer vendors have come out with FORTRAN 77 compilers, but every one of them has a way of converting itself back into a FORTRAN 66 compiler at the drop of an option card -- to compile DO loops like God meant them to be.

Even Unix might not be as bad on Real Programmers as it once was. The latest release of Unix has the potential of an operating system worthy of any Real Programmer -- two different and subtly incompatible user interfaces, an arcane and complicated teletype driver, virtual memory. If you ignore the fact that it's "structured", even 'C' programming can be appreciated by the Real Programmer; after all, there's no type checking, variable names are seven (ten? eight?) characters long, and the added bonus of the Pointer data type is thrown in -- like having the best parts of FORTRAN and assembly language in one place. (Not to mention some of the more creative uses for #define).

No, the future isn't all that bad. Why, in the past few years, the popular press has even commented on the bright new crop of computer nerds and hackers leaving places like Stanford and M.I.T. for the Real World. From all evidence, the spirit of Real Programming lives on in these young men and women. As long as there are ill-defined goals, bizarre bugs, and unrealistic schedules, there will be Real Programmers willing to jump in and Solve The Problem, saving documentation for later. Long live FORTRAN!

The ongoing saga of Bruce Linsey's Houserules (Bruce publishes The Voice of Doom, but most of you know that.)



Truth is Beauty

69

by Ed Wrobel

Were life only so simple as to present the truth as that which is most pleasing to the eye! If we need only set our eyes upon the facts, and feel pleasure or displeasure, and then know surely in our hearts that we have the real from the feigned. Then would our tasks be so easily accomplished and our burden so light that we would soar like the very birds of the air!

Alas, such can never be, for no sooner does one say, "There's a pretty picture, eh?" than the next says, "I should say not, for the shadows are ill-set to the light!" and a third says, "No, that's not the case -- the colors are crude and garish." What are we to make of this? Each, in his own judgement, has the truth, not so? Yet they share nothing. Is truth, like beauty, to reach only so deeply as the outer skin? To be found in the beholder's eye and no place else? To be so infinitely malleable as to herd one into despair???

Fear not, friend, for despite our varying judgements as to the quality of a thing, always will we agree as to its nature. A painting remains a painting, regardless of diverse likings and dislikings. In a similar vein, a man's actions are an indisputable fact, independent of the various meanings assigned to said actions.

For example, it is an indisputable fact that a player of NEPTUNE submitted orders of A Bul H (A Gre S) and A Gre H (A Bul S). This player resigned subsequent to a referee's interpretation of these orders. Much discussion has been had over the meaning of the actions of the player and the referee, with no resolution satisfactory to the various parties to the dispute. May we suggest an entirely new, albeit improbable, interpretation of the facts? We would be hard-pressed to gather proof of this interpretation as it is based solely on idle speculation.

Let us assume, arguendo, that said player submitted the instant orders with full prior knowledge of the referee's adverse action. Absurd? Perhaps. Why intentionally discharge a firearm in the direction of one's lower extremity? To attain some end greater than the preservation of the extremity, of course. What could such an end be? To avoid military service, to qualify for handicapped auto plates...any number of goals. One might even have wished to encourage criticism of the referee, especially if the referee has borne similar criticism in the past. In fact, the player himself may have been acting only as a clone in the hands of some greater power, perhaps a loosely-knit organization of supernatural beings residing near the Atlantic Ocean. Then again -- could not the referee himself, bearing some antipathy for persons certain to join in the criticism, have inspired the player-pawn's action, in hopes of later presenting himself as a martyr to the cause of fairness and objectivity? Can we be certain that the clone-pawn actually exists and is not a fabrication of the referee and his "enemies", whose common goal is propagation of the most complete deceptions?

Alternatively, perhaps the pawn exists, placed the orders in good faith, expressed his indignation and then was prodded to tro by the referee; thus he could have had both feet shot by the impartial umpire. Fantastic!

But no, it appears that nothing can be said with certainty, except A Bul H (A Gre S), A Gre H (A Bul S). And the meaning of those cryptic symbols is shrouded in quasi-legalistic obfuscation. We have only the fact that they were written. All else is mystery.

((Would that I could write in the glorious style of Ed Wrobel! He's a masterful maker of the meaningless metaphor and a powerful propagator of the polysyllable. (Why, pray tell, dare I even try?)

The readers may themselves evaluate the meaning of the above. All that is known is that Ed gets three free issues, two double orders, and a partidge in a pear tree.))

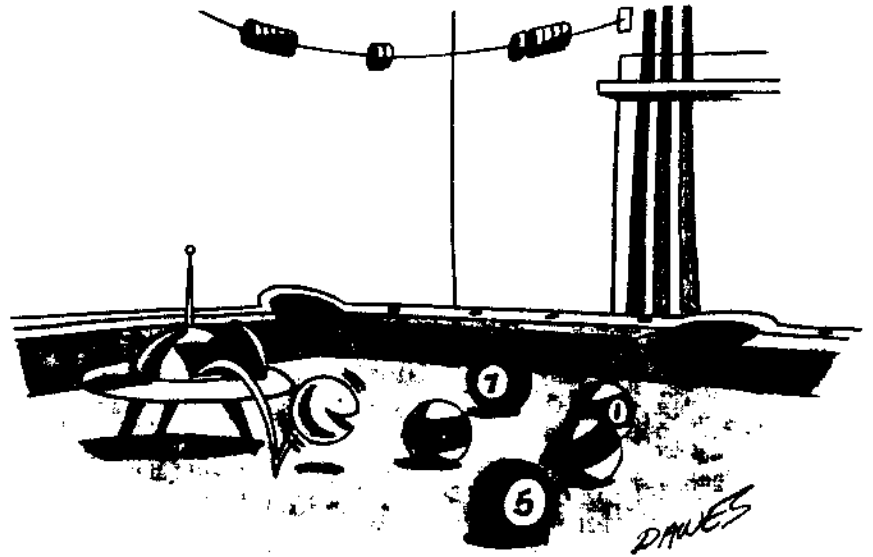
DETERIORATA

GO PLACIDLY AMID THE NOISE & WASTE, & REMEMBER WHAT COMFORT THERE MAY BE IN OWNING A

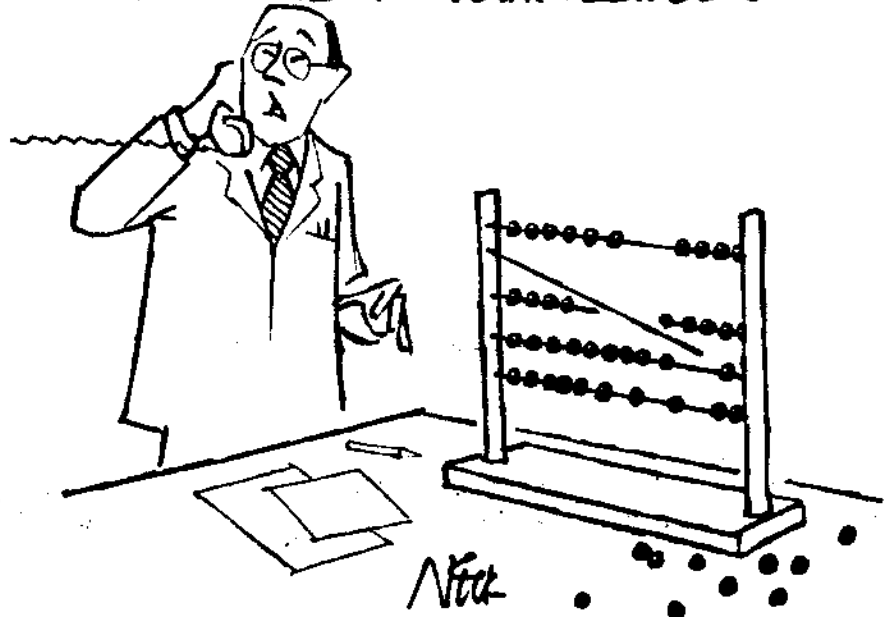
piece thereof. Avoid quiet & passive persons unless you are in need of sleep. Rotate your tires. Speak glowingly of those greater than yourself and heed all their advice even though they be turkeys: know what to kiss and when. Consider that two wrongs never make a right but that three do. Wherever possible, put people on hold. Be comforted that in the face of all aridity & disillusionment and despite the changing fortunes of time, there is always a big fortune in computer maintenance. Remember the Pueblo. Strive at all times to bend, fold, spindle & mutilate. Know your self: if you need help, call the FBI. Exercise caution in your daily affairs, especially with those persons closest to you. That lemon on your left, for instance. Be assured that a walk through the ocean of most souls would scarcely get your feet wet. Fall not in love therefore: it will stick to your face. Gracefully surrender the things of youth, birds, clean air, tuna, Taiwan: and let not the sands of time get in your lunch. Hire people with hooks. For a good time, call 606-4311; ask for Ken. Take heart amid the deepening gloom that your dog is finally getting enough cheese: and reflect that whatever misfortune may be your lot, it could only be worse in Milwaukee. You are a fluke of the universe: you have no right to be here, and whether you can hear it or not, the universe is laughing behind your back. Therefore make peace with your God whatever you conceive Him to be: Harry Thunderer or Cosmic Muffin. With all its hopes, dreams, promises, & urban renewal, the world continues to deteriorate. Give up.

BY TONY HENDRIX

FOUND IN AN OLD NATIONAL LAMPOON - DATED 1972



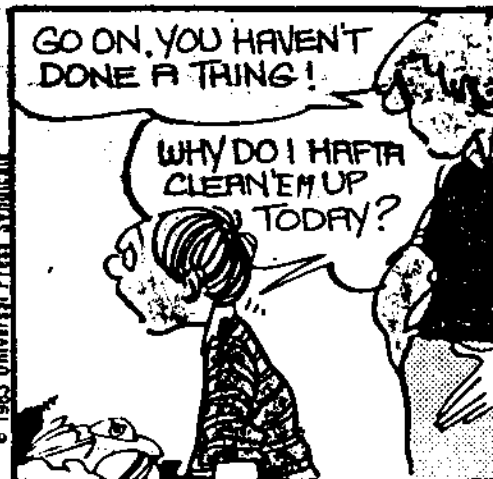
TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER!



"Maintenance? We've had a computer malfunction."

For Better or For Worse

by Lynn Johnston



From Konrad Baumeister (9/26/83):

Dear Bruce,

Received your latest issue a few days back. Commentary seems like the obvious reason for writing you.

...Mexicans "speak the same language"? Not as the Americans, except for certain southern areas of the United States. As the Central and South Americans? Perhaps so (Brazil speaks Portuguese, though, and in many parts of these areas it is impossible to get by with simple Spanish; to this day, you have to know the various Indian tongues if you wish to converse with the natives), but then the same reasoning would apply to blindly following the ideas of Grenada, which I rather doubt we'll do.

Endorsing scholarships based on a person's race or sex or brand of underarm deodorant is racism, pure and simple. If Gary is really in favor of a nation of equals (which can never really be the case, but it's a nice goal to shoot for) then he will support scholarships on the basis of ability. His rationale -- they were discriminated against then, so now let's discriminate against whites instead -- is common, but totally indefensible on its face.

Much more fun than to simply contrast one form of racism with another is to see how much individuals are willing to give up for these goals they speak so highly of. For example, the Kennedy family epitomizes dishonesty, haughty egotism, a fabulous lifestyle made possible by the ill-gotten (illegally-gotten, partially) gains of an old bootlegger, usurer, and capitalist -- and, extremely liberal political opinions. I wonder just how long these opinions would last if the United States nationalized their Hyannisport estate and tossed them out, replacing them with ten black families who have lived on welfare up until that time. I doubt that they would take this sort of "justice", which presumably Mr. Coughlan would espouse, at all lightly.

There are lots of these types -- Jane Fonda is one infamous example -- of people who have made their fortunes in capitalist America, and now that they are as wealthy as they can become, are all in favor of a socialist America, where the other wealthy and powerful families are pushed down.

Would Mr. Coughlan volunteer his job and his house-trailer and his xerox machine to an underprivileged black family? Why not? It is possible that he will insist that this is his life's work; he has earned them. No arguing with that. Let others earn their share. That's a fair shake of what America is all about.

Well, that should do it. Now see, was I nasty to Gary at all? I was just arguing against the sort of reverse discrimination that he happens to be so hot for, that's all. I would argue the same were he George McGovern. Nothing personal at all.

((No, you weren't nasty. Debates like this are welcome here any time (even if my letter column is disgustingly politics-heavy). I think Gary has clarified his position well in this issue. I am against the things I thought he was advocating, but I cannot argue, say, with a scholarship given to blacks by blacks (and anyone else who chooses to support it).

Jane Fonda is a dirty word around here. Thank for writing.))

From Mark Berch (9/29/83):

Dear Bruce,

Some of your younger readers have put forth the notion that racially linked scholarships are a new concept, and only work to the benefit of minorities. Taint so. When I was an undergraduate, I looked into the possibility of financial aid, learning what I already suspected, viz, that family income was too high. But the people at the office urged me to check out the "restricted" file. These were scholarships which had no requirement of need but had some other restrictions. There were quite a few of these. Except for the first one listed below, I don't remember the specifics, but this recreation should give you an idea of how they worked.

1. Parent or grandparent was born in one of three specific counties in Ireland.
 2. Be a music major and have attended a certain high school in Orange County, California.
 3. Been on the golf team at school for at least three years.
- You get the picture. There were several that required the recipient to be Jewish. These are not strictly speaking racial, but, at that time especially, black kids just didn't play golf, for example.

This is just one aspect of a wider problem. Most kids get, in effect, scholarships from their parents. If you look at the age group who put their kids into college (basically, males in their 40s and 50s), the income for whites of that age is MUCH higher than that of blacks of that age. (And why is that? That's where your "grandfather" comes in, Bruce. These effects can go way back.) Since their income is much higher, they are in a much better position to provide scholarships for their kids. There are other factors as well. I really don't want to get into a long discussion of this, so I'll just say that by and large I agree with Coughlan, and for many of his same reasons. If part way thru a race, you discover that one of the horses was wrongfully carrying too much weight, and slipped behind as a result, you can't just say, "Two wrongs don't make a right" and only equalize his weight. If you do that, he still suffers from being behind, from having carried too much weight earlier in the race. You have to go further than that.

((But do you go so far as to penalize the offspring of the other horses in subsequent races? Ed Wrobel gave a similar example, so I'll reply in more detail following his letter.))

From Eric Kane (9/12/83):

Dear Bruce,

I just wanted to drop you a note about the last issue ((#83)). Especially re Highfield's latest letter. As you well know, Billy and I have been "feuding" of late in both our respective zines, as well as in VD. The latter, though, has been pretty much one-sided in that Bill writes to you and expresses anger towards me. You may also know that this all started out in fun, but Bill actually seems to be mad at me and I'm starting to get tired of not responding to him. Still, I won't stoop to mudslinging as he has done. It is hard for me to know how to deal with Bill; I don't know if it is better to strike back in a mean and vicious manner, ignore him totally, or try and make a joke out of whatever he says. I suppose that if Bill continues to make comments about me and about others that I consider friends, I will have to make a decision of some sort.

By the way, Bill, one doesn't have to live in England to like the English (much as I'd love to live there) and I doubt I'm the one who has any growing up to do. But I'll let my words speak for me and I expect the same is true for you. If this is the case then let's just let the readers of our verses decide for themselves.

Enough negative stuff. As usual, I found VD very entertaining and am continually awed by the vast volumes of material you produce each month. Keep 'em coming.

((Well, since Bill's not a subber here any more, we don't have to worry about his abrasive comments in the future. I'm sure it's obvious to everyone by now that Bill has a lot of maturing to do. My advice is to ignore his rantings till he grows up. I think your non-response to his repeated barbs says a lot about you.

England? I'd like to visit, but you'd never get me to live there, and the reason is the horrible climate. (Then again, who I am to speak, living in the Northeast as I do, right?) I like the English culture and people, but the rain and general dampness would do me in.

Vast volumes of material? Who, me?))

From Jim Meinel (excerpts):

73

Dear Bruce,

I've been getting VD for a while now and if you want to know what my impression of it is, okay.

I've never played in a game but from what I gather the games are just as good as anyone else's if not better. The so-called "strictness" or absolute adherence to house rules is not to my liking and would probably (though not absolutely) keep me from playing there. But aside from that I've never seen any reason to think the games were not well-run.

I'm glad you went to ditto. When you said one time that you sometimes spent 1/3 of your salary on it -- yow! I gag on \$40. To each his own, but still I welcomed the switch to ditto.

...I really used to chafe at what I saw to be the editor's large ego, but as of late with all the shit flying around in the hobby I see that a big ego is not a big problem compared to other things. But your constant ravings about biggest sample mailing or most letters or most pages or 2nd most read in North America etc. etc. just turn me off. Maybe I'm just more sensitive to that sort of thing. Anyway, that really bugged me till just a bit ago. Now, it's just a personality quirk, rather harmless.

You devote a lot of energy and time to the zine and like anything else one gets one what they put into it. If you hit 100 and beyond I'm sure you'll become unsurpassed in sheer output over a long period of time. As much as some people may dislike VD, it is the closest thing to the center of the hobby ((illegible)) (DW notwithstanding and since BB folded).

I will be able to visit some hobby biggies this December. I am flying to San Diego on business Dec. 5-9 and I'm planning on stopping over the weekend after to visit Rod Walker, Larry Feery and whoever else shows up (Sherwood?). They may try to have some sort of con going -- I'd settle just to see the zoo.

((I've been there myself, spent a full day in fact. It's a terrific experience which you won't forget. The zoo, that is.

I appreciate your comment about the "center of the hobby" (even though I couldn't read all of it), but in fairness, that honor belongs to Europa Express with his high-quality product, almost universal admiration, and high degree of European contacts.

And by the way, with this letter I am proud to announce that I have set a NEW ALL-TIME RECORD FOR THE HOBBY! I have now turned off 48 people with my constant boasting, a mark which may never be reached by anyone else. Thanks, Jim, for your help in attaining this monumental goal.))

From William Christopher Seth Affleck Asch Lowa (9/29/ 83):

Greetings, BRUX;

Thanks for the sample of The Voice of Doom. Well, I'm a bit short on money, but if you want to trade for my "C.F. Machiavelli", then fine...

Maybe we should shoot to kill anyone who goes faster than 55 m.p.h.? Recently, a double-tank truck wiped out my CO's jeep while we were in a military convoy and he signaled (hand) a turn at a "no passing" zone. The trucker passed anyway, going about 80-90 m.p.h., and the CO and his driver almost were killed (luckily pulled through). Americans have little respect for speed limits; we should have used our weapons on the fucker.

Incidentally, don't pass military convoys, it's illegal... (Note: I'm a corporal in 44th Field Engineer Squadron, a militia unit in Trail, British Columbia.)

((Sorry you can't sub now; you get this issue for writing in. William Christopher Seth Affleck Asch also asked me to plug his "C.F. Machiavelli" and "Old Gueat Convention". Write him at 2206 Daniel St., Trail, B.C., CANADA V1R 4G7.))

From Kevin Stone(d) (9/14/83):

Dear Mr. Candidate,

How the hell are you? I'm sorry I didn't get into the Presidential race, but I am ready to become the next Al Davis. Are you entering a team in the GFL ((Genzo Football League, run by Jake Halverstadt. No, I'm not.))

Why didn't I get any credit for the Jones Beach sand? After all, it was my idea. How about a little compensation? Since you've got so many Thirty Miles Brownie Points, how about giving me one?

How is the job going? Any regrets as the school year started? Life here as a senior is great! My classes this semester aren't easy, but they are all interesting. Next semester I'll need 16 credits and then it's out into the real world.

On to #83:

Bill Highfive: is he more than half English or less than half English? He said almost half in VD and over half in Anduin. As for the mandatory driving tests, the cure is worse than the disease. After all, if every (emphasis Bill's not mine) citizen has to take a driving test every five years, you'll have blind people, 5-year-olds and Karne Quindan behind the wheel. Seriously, it does scare me to see all the idiots who drive around now, but think about your own driving test -- how tough is it, and how many jokers would it weed out? Also, it would add tremendously to the cost of a license. A better solution is to force everyone to take a driver education course before they get a license. I know I'm a good driver and one of the reasons is that I went through the toughest and best driver ed classes in New York State. Why is Bill so soft on DWIs? He wants to lower the first DWI conviction from 6 months lost license to two months. Also, what's the matter with the second DWI conviction being a felony? I think a year in Attica is worse than losing your license for two years. As for the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit, why is it too slow? Because it saves energy and lives?

Mark Berch: Right on about the literacy test!

VD Houserules: I've been looking through your houserules trying to figure out which one you are philosophically opposed to. I need those Brownie Points! I've narrowed it down to three:

III.I You are philosophically opposed to Eastern Standard Time and wish we had Daylight Savings Time year round.

OR

VI.A. You are philosophically opposed to changing anything a player sends in, including the spelling of his press. After all, it could be construed as GM interference.

OR

VII.I You've always wanted to build an Inland Fleet, but never got the chance and now want to see that nobody gets to do it.

Well, do I win? Huh? Please, please, pretty please? With a cherry on top? Please!

Anybody out there want to comment on life in the Southwest or Pacific Northwest? I'm getting a real job in June and those are the two areas of the country I'm looking at. Anything, pro or con, would be welcome. Well, it's time to hit the Calculus book. Take care, BRUX, and I hope I get a chance to beat your brains out in football.

((Nah, I stayed out because I didn't want to embarrass you. Just draft all the Cowboys and you'll win, though.

You've not guessed the other VD houserule to which I am philosophically opposed. It's the one which permits press to be made conditional upon orders of the same season. Mark Berch persuaded me to put it in back when I started GMing, and it's stayed there even since, a bothersome food particle stuck amidst the teeth of my houserules, but not enough of a nuisance to extract. I've even had two or three players take advantage of the rule over the past four years.

I think we should have tough driver ed courses, tough driving tests, and stiff penalties for DWIs. All that sounds harsh, right now -- until someone you know gets killed by a drunk or incompetent driver.))

From James Wall (9/20/83):

75

BRUX,

First off realize that this is written in response to the issue #83 letter column which means that there may be info from later issues that I'm not aware of.

The letter by Rod Walker was interesting if a bit unrealistic in content. Specifically in reference to his view of the United States' attitude toward communism. I'll take the case of Nicaragua first. Realize that this is not just another in a series of Marxist nations that the U.S. is driving into Russia's hands. That in and of itself is a misguided fallacy. They have in their national anthem a line that specifically calls for the downfall of the United States. When you combine this with the documented aid that the Sandinistas are providing for the guerilla terrorists in El Salvador and the fact that the moderates among the original Sandinistas were driven out of the government, one can only conclude that they are opponents of the U.S. Now what should be done about them short of sending in the Marines? You fight fire with fire, in this case aiding the Contras and the other guerilla movement (whose name slips me at the moment). This keeps them unstable and less able to stir up trouble for us. This may stray a little from that letter, but Rod should be aware that NO nation that has slipped behind the Iron Curtain has emerged since the Russian Revolution when Lenin swept into power. Now, except for Birchers, everyone realizes that communism is not monolithic; but I ask, does that make it less dangerous? I argue the opposite, in fact; that it is more to be feared as a result. Remember, oftentimes words, not bullets and swords, will win a war and the fact that Marxists are split keeps the ideology from becoming old hat. The U.S. has been, and still is, too complacent in its view of communism. The newspapers regularly ignore gross violations of human rights if the Russians perform them (witness the chemical warfare in Afghanistan and in Cambodia), yet relentlessly attack the Reagan administration for producing nerve gas. Like it or not we either stand up to international bullies or we will get bloodied and beaten by them.

Being a Political Science major the next area of comment is a little easier to speak about — the Electoral College. There are very good reasons for seeing to it that this American institution is maintained (even if the votes go automatically instead of wasting money to have actual electors). The Electoral College in fact protects America's voters. The interests of the minority can in fact be enhanced by it and here's how. Take farmers first. They are not statistically a large sector of the voting population and certainly cannot match the urban vote, yet their interests are important because every state has electoral votes. North Dakota farmers are a lot more important electorally when electoral votes back up their votes. Without said votes why bother? All that needs doing is to flood the big cities and large media markets with visits and money to carry the election (assuming the candidates are both competent). The North Dakota farmer becomes statistically and strategically worthless. Further, minorities can impact more on candidates when they have a state's electoral votes behind them. Who can afford to ignore 40% of New York? No one. Lastly for now, the Electoral College protects the public from voter fraud. It is generally agreed now that the Chicago cemeteries won Illinois for JFK and were likely the difference in nationwide vote totals. With the Electoral College Kennedy won Illinois, but without the College, it would have won him the election. What would that have said about the American electoral system? Those corpses in all likelihood gave JFK more total votes. Do you really want to risk that in the future? Besides, why change something that worked for 200 years with only a slight mechanical change? Rod is perfectly correct about the Hayes/Wilden election. The states, not the College, failed. Finally, and scariest to me, would be the increase of single issue voting in the United States. Candidates would have even more incentive to curry their favor due to the numbers they carry. Do you really want to see Jerry Falwell, Jesse Jackson, and Judy Goldsmith increase in importance because they represent millions? I don't.

This got a little long but the issues were important enough to point out.

((As my readers know by now, I share your concern for the spread of communism. On the Electoral College, I disagree with you. It is true that the system has (for the most part) worked for two hundred years. And it is true that certain tiny but important minorities -- like the farmers in North Dakota -- are given more power than they would have in a direct popular vote. But I am philosophically opposed to a system that weights someone's vote more heavily simply because he happens to live in Alaska rather than California.

Unfair things can happen with the electoral system we have now, too. It is easy to show how a candidate could win over 70% of the votes in the country, and still lose the election because the votes were distributed wrong. Not likely, but possible. As for the Electoral College protecting the voters from fraud, what about the occasional elector who decides to vote his own way rather than the way his state voted? This has happened before, and I cringe to think what would happen if it occurred in a year where one candidate won by one electoral vote! (Actually, I don't cringe; I'd love to see it as people would finally realize how foolish the whole system really is.) Anyway, welcome to the zine! Happy Doomying.))

From John Kadon

Dear BRUX:

My wife and I just got back from three weeks in Peru and I thought you might like my impressions. Peru is a desperately poor country. That all-pervading fact makes life difficult in many ways for American tourists. On first impression, it seemed that I was always being ripped off. Vendors would shortchange me. Taxi drivers would overcharge. Beggars and shoeshine boys were always around me. Shoeshine boys were a constant nuisance. And I always wore Nike running shoes!

I suppose it comes from the fact that most Americans who make it to Peru are inconceivably wealthy, by Peruvian standards. In comparison to the United States, prices are stunningly lower and, because of the inflation, getting lower. The Peruvian monetary unit, the Sol, went for about 1700 Sols per dollar when we arrived. Three weeks later, the exchange rate was 2,000 Sols per dollar. A good dinner cost about 4,000 Sols with wine, maybe 7,000. That's less than \$4. And it was very easy to get a decent chicken dinner for 1500 Sol. A newspaper cost 250 Sol; a movie, 900 Sol; a good pair of shoes 25,000 Sol. Many working people made less than 10,000 Sol per week. When I exchanged money, the bank gave me a lot of 10,000 Sol notes. I had a hard time getting people to accept it. They couldn't make change.

Being considered a representative of the United States isn't always a very comfortable feeling in Latin America these days. I felt uncomfortable. The truth is that President Reagan's policy toward Latin America in general and Peru in particular encourages, rather than diminishes, the poverty.

One of the most unpleasant aspects of being seen as "a rich gringo," is that most people tend to treat you as a stereotype. One result: everyone tells you what they think it is you want to hear. Once I asked a tour guide if a train would get in before 5:00 PM. "Oh sure," he said, although he knew full well it wouldn't get in before 7:00. And, to be fair, he probably would get upset if I accused him of lying. He was, by his lights, just trying to be accomodating. But it really got to be tiresome to persuade people that I really wanted to know the truth, the facts. I didn't need to be pampered.

Traveling in third world countries is difficult. We took busses, trains, and planes. The trains were fun in a sterile sort of way. The trains meander up and down the Andes. At one point, the train was 16,000 feet above sea level. At that altitude, many people get a little faint from the lack of oxygen. Stewards are trained to recognize the symptoms and they have little bottles of oxygen that they administer. The altitude sickness is called "soroche." My wife really suffered from it. I didn't have a problem unless I tried to be active.

Traveling by plane is a zoo. It's very polittive. From check in to baggage check.

They are still not computerized, so tickets are written by hand. Flights are closed two hours before flight time. On the other hand, they don't feel the need to screen people or luggage. No hijackings yet on AeroPeru. Baggage claim is like a cattle call. The passengers surround a pit filled with the luggage and about ten porters. Everyone yells and points, trying to get the porters to find their baggage and bring it around. It's a system to maximize tips for the porters. It's a real joke, with dozens of people yelling, pointing, and gesturing wildly.

Lima is a big, sprawling, ugly city. It is a dusty city and very noisy. Millions of cars zip around, all with busted mufflers. There's absolutely no regard for pedestrians. Outside of the capital, Peru is quite lovely. The snow-capped Andes preside over green countryside and a brilliant blue sky. At the high altitudes of such places as Arequipa (10,500 feet) and Cuzco (12,000 feet), the sunlight is much stronger. It's very easy to get sunburned. When it's summer in the U.S., it's winter in Peru. It was quite refreshing to get away from the heat for a while.

Of course, the big attraction of Peru is the Incan ruins and archeological treasures. I got a new appreciation for the Incan culture. It was a very sophisticated culture, capable of astonishing feats of engineering. Some of the Incan mountain trails are still being used. These trails have carefully carved steps and ladders, stonework so carefully fitted together that no mortar was necessary. You've heard of Machu Picchu, of course. It's a recently discovered (1910) Incan city of some unknown purpose. It's an incredible fortress built on a sloping mountain. First they terraced it, then built acres of connected structures: residences, temples, kitchens, even jails and torture chambers. No one knows the purpose of the fortress. The only human remains found at the site were the skeletons of about two dozen young women and girls. No men at all.

I had a chance to explore the countryside and see how some people's lives haven't changed for centuries. There are still farmers without electricity or even glass in the windows, using oxen to pull plows.

It's getting late so I'll end this. Besides, I want to go out to the beach and watch the first night launch of the Space Shuttle. As you know, we moved to Melbourne a few days ago. Melbourne is about 25 miles south of Cape Canaveral. We bought a house about four blocks from the beach. So far it's been great.

((Good luck in your new home. One of my long-time ambitions is to travel abroad, but I've never made it out of the US or Canada, other than some brief excursions into Mexican border towns.

If I were to visit a country such as Peru, I'd like to avoid the large cities as much as possible and visit the countryside. It sounds to me as if that was the best part of your trip. The Andes and Incan ruins would be high on my list of priorities (sigh). So would restaurants, outside the major tourist areas.

Thanks very much for sharing your experiences with me and my readers. Your letter was different, and very enjoyable.))

From Judy Winsome (8/29/83):

Dear Bruce,

Enclosed is your reader response poll. I dreamt of Alex Lord last night. In my dream her bangs came down past her nose. I don't know what weird Freudian significance that has. Your readers can have fun with that. In my dream I helped Alex's mother select an antique Scandinavian dresser... This hobby may be getting too much if I'm starting to dream about it. I think the prospect of YD without Alex was powerful enough to bring about the dream.

Peery thinks I'm not Jerry Lucas. He says I was at Masuondocor L.

((Fancy that. I think that Alex would look awfully strange with bangs! But how did you know that her mother is an antique buff?))

From Peter Ansoff (9/13/83):

78

Dear BRUX,

Once more into the breach, on the subject of un- or mislabeled unit-types.

To recap, the issue is whether or not an order to "A Mar" or just "Mar" is a legal order to a Fleet in Mar. The Rules clearly indicate that the unit designation is not required: your houserules specify that it is. My original question (VD #81) was: "...Why...do you feel it necessary to impose an arbitrary rule on your players, even though it isn't in the rules and serves no other useful function?"

Your initial response was that having the units labeled made it possible for you to type the adjudications without referring to the last season's adjudications. I pointed out (VD #82 and 83) that this made no sense because you had to refer to the previous season's adjudications anyway to determine which units were mislabeled. You thereupon conceded this point and raised three others, namely:

1. "But if I were to insert an "A" or "F", I would then be changing what the player wrote down. I view that as GM interference."
2. "This is far from being the only point on which Allan Calhmer and I disagree; look at the ban on negotiations before retreat and adjustments, eg..."
3. "I still see no reason why...a player cannot take the time to get his orders right...Personal preference and all that..."

(Quotes from VD #83, page 27)

You can't be serious about the first reason. The Spring 1909 orders that I submitted for ONION were: F Ska-Nwy, F Nwg S F Ska-Nwy, A Swe S F Ska-Nwy. What appeared in VD #83 was: F Ska-NWY (F Nwg S, A Swe S). That was a lot more "interference" than simply adding an "A" or "F"!!

Regarding your second reason, I absolutely agree that there is nothing wrong with changing the rules if it results in a better, more interesting game without giving any player an unfair advantage or disadvantage. I agree also that allowing negotiations before retreats and adjustments does make for a better game. Now then: how does changing the rules' requirements for labeling units create a better game? The primary effect of this change is to cause more unordered units and more rules disputes -- do you regard these as desirable changes? Referring back to my original question, what "useful function" does this change serve?

Your third reason is the most interesting. When you speak of a player getting his orders "right", I presume that you intend "right" to mean "in accordance with the VD houserules", since an order to an unlabeled or mislabeled unit is "right" according to the Rules of Diplomacy. In any event, you seem to be saying that your "personal preference" is to hold players to a higher standard than is required by the Rules. OK -- but to what end? To quote Rod Walker (VD #83, page 14): "...are we, as GMs, running a game or are we running a reformatory for bad kids who can't write their orders correctly? Are we really in the business of punishing those who can't turn in perfect orders time after time?" As far as I can see, Bruce, you are in this business -- you make arbitrary rules and then penalize people for not following them.

To summarize: it appears to me that you have, via your houserules, changed the Rules in a way that does not improve (and actually degrades) the play of the game. You have offered no reason for doing this, either, other than that it is your "personal preference." (No valid reason, that is.) In other words, you did it simply because you like to make rules.

Comments?

((Me? Like to make rules? How dare you...))

I'm dead serious about my first reason. I will not change what a player wrote down. Oh sure, I'll abbreviate his orders to conform to my method of typing up game reports, but I won't change the order itself.

The second and third reasons are more or less tied together. I think that the identity of the unit is a necessary part of an order. I know, I know. The Rules

say otherwise. But to my way of thinking, it's the unit that's receiving the order, not the space it occupies, and to me it improves the game to require this information correctly written.

(Sigh) I concede that you have outmaneuvered me logically on points 2 and 3 (but not on 1); however, I still retain my own views as to what makes a "better game". You may be able to defuse my logic on this matter, but to make me change on this matter you'd also have to dig deep down into the very core of my psyche and manipulate my emotional complexion and alter very own unique personal style.

Uh, yeah, dammit. I like to make rules.))

From Steve Langley (9/9/83):

Dear Bruce,

Welcome to the wonderful world of data processing. If I may be so bold as to offer unsolicited advice, read the COBOL manual and the COBOL Programmer's Guide and the Job Control Manual from cover to cover. Don't worry about comprehension. Once you've been working for a while, reread all three. With your bent toward precision you will likely be a good programmer.

It has been my experience that the good programmers have only one common quality. They all tend toward a "literalness of mind". Lucky you.

Hate to say it, but without the backstabbing, namecalling feuding of several issues back, I don't find as much interest in the Gossip Column. The only decent spot was Konrad, and he's still beating a dead horse.

I agree with your assessment that GMAW should have scored higher in the Runestone Poll. I think Konrad's far past publishing problems hurt him. Back when he was searching for a means of repro, the zine was often late, poorly reproed (upside-down and mixed pages, etc.) and that turned a lot of people off. Konrad was also evincing the "philosophy" that he was pubbing for himself and a small circle of friends. That also turned a few people off. Now, GMAW is dittoed, and well presented, with some of the more unusual writing in dipdom. If he keeps it up, he'll rank higher next year.

It will be interesting to see if his attitude toward the Poll changes.

Oh, congratulations on your own showing in the Poll. Considering the field of really fine zines this year, anyone who made the top ten has something to feel proud about.

((Absolutely. You are right to point out that GMAW has shown a definite improvement in recent issues. I think it will rise significantly in the Poll if Konrad keeps it up. He is a very capable publisher and it shows.

Your advice is sound for any new programmer. the first time through the manuals, my comprehension was next to zero, but it has increased with experience and now I find them a very useful reference in my work. Thanks for writing.))

From Ed Wrobel (9/4/83):

My Dear Linsey,

It is with great interest that I read, somewhat belatedly (these southern climes do relax one), VD's debate over the disenfranchisement of uninformed voters through application of illiteracy tests at the polls. I find myself in agreement with many of the arguments set forth by the affirmatives and, yet, it is obvious to me, and, I would think, yet more obvious to such fine minds as your own and John MacFarlane's, that a literacy test is, alone, insufficient to ensure that the ignorant do not influence the governing of the United States of America.

Consider, for example, my own mother. Now, I do not wish to speak ill of my own flesh and blood but I would be less than frank if I did not admit that my own beloved mother is utterly incapable of grasping the subtleties of Mr. Reagan's economic program. She is, and has been for many years, a humble, but honest, factory worker and obstinately

holds that the president's plan is wrong-headed simply because a mere 1 out of 10 Americans is unemployed. Granted, the percentages are much, much higher among tradespeople, factory workers, adolescents, blacks, hispanics and females, and much, much lower among white male Republican corporate executives, but hey, these guys have higher living expenses. How else could the system function so smoothly? My mother, simple woman that she is, is indeed literate and under your proposal, would be permitted to vote against the president, under the mistaken notion that he is not pursuing her interests and the interests of her class. Yet, if she only possessed the extensive knowledge of economics and the keen insight of a Stockman or a Laiffler! Then she would understand the necessity of sacrifice on the part of the working class (just temporarily while the benefits trickle down from the corporate executives supra) to atone for years of self-indulgent, budget-busting spending on the part of Tip O'Neill and his ilk. Simultaneously, she would surely realize that it is imperative to pursue our defense build-up at all costs, to maintain access to international markets and to save the good people of El Salvador from gun-toting Russo-Cuban bullies. But such is not to be.

How, then, to keep her from voting? May I suggest that we return to a very old-fashioned idea -- an idea that the ancient Greeks, the founders of democracy, held dear? Government, after all, is not a right, but a privilege, to be exercised by responsible citizens, not just by anyone with crazy ideas about nuclear freezes. In my experience, the most responsible of citizens are white, male property-owners over the age of 40. These individuals are generally prosperous and settled in life, carry no axes to grind, and are not deceived by passing political fads such as the "Women's Movement." To restrict the franchise to this select group may seem like a reactionary step, particularly to those hysterical individuals who may be under 40, or non-white, or female or poor, in this age of free-for-all, give-away, classless-society utopianism. But the wisdom of such a proposal is clear to those who are able to weigh the matter objectively. It was sufficient for the ancient Greeks; it should be sufficient for a nation fighting for its very liberty against Sandinistas and Kadafi's. Restrict voting to the wisest in society and the result will be the wisest government: a simple proposition with a simple result!

((Damn! I wish I had been able to come up with such a logical argument in favor of preserving our democracy by disenfranchizing those who would, through their votes, weaken it. You have made your points very persuasively. The liberty of the individual can only be safely preserved if it is entrusted to the right people. Well done, Ed.))

From Mark Frueh (8/31/83):

Dear BRUX,

Thanks for the sand. It made me feel closer to New York. God help me if I must be closer to that Thomas Swi(n)d(1)er!

I enjoyed the last issue. How come Steve Knight writes to you? I haven't heard from him in a month and a half. We of the Madison Mob love to laugh at cupcakes!

Congratulations on your new job. I hope you like working there. Best of luck.

I'm starting to look for a job for next year in the St. Louis area. Know anyone who needs a civil engineer with a strong background in hydrology and coastal engineering? Better yet, know any Dip players?

((Check out my address list this issue, especially Matt Fleming and Rick Ragsdale. As for your question on civil engineering, have you tried the Federal Government? You may also want to write to Doug Bayerlein; I don't know if he can be of any help, but his field is very similar to yours.

Cupcake and I are a natural pair; he writes to me because nowhere else can he get the natural high of editing such extensive house rules. I made him write the Origins article by threatening never to send him any more rules.

Glad you're an engineer. Gladder still that you're civil!!!

Here's what got us all started over 20 years ago...

GRAUSTARK

81

#1

Box 22, New York 33, N. Y.

May 1963

POSTAL DIPLOMACY

In Knowable #3 a proposal was made to begin playing by mail the board game Diplomacy. The response to this proposal has led to the inauguration of GRAUSTARK, a magazine of postal Diplomacy.

The most enthusiastic response came from the East Paterson Diplomacy Club which, according to Allan Calhammer, inventor of the game, is the first formally organized Diplomacy club. Others interested in trying a few games of Diplomacy by mail include Derek Nelson and Dave McDaniel. Addresses of all respondents are listed on page 2.

I have tentatively undertaken to provide a set of rules for the play of postal Diplomacy, and to serve as Umpire for the first game. I will also supply rule books and maps at cost. It is recommended that anyone undertaking postal Diplomacy should get the game board and pieces, which are \$7.50 from any large department store or from Cornwall Corp., 48 Wareham Street, Boston 18, Mass. However, if this is financially impossible, I can provide rule books at \$1 each and maps at 4¢ each.

Postal Diplomacy will be played under the following rules:

1) The rules of across-the-board Diplomacy will be followed as far as is practicable.

2) The entry fee for a game will be \$1, payable to the Umpire. The Umpire is obligated to report to the players after every move on the outcome of that move.

3) All correspondence relating to the game, among players or between players and the Umpire, shall be by first-class mail.

4) The Umpire shall announce a deadline date for entries. Upon this date, or upon such earlier date as he receives seven entries for the game, he shall assign by lot one country to each player. He shall then inform the players which country each of them will play, and give the name, address, and country of each of the other players.

5) Three weeks will be allotted to the players for their first move, and two weeks for each subsequent move. All players must send their moves to the Umpire by these deadlines. For example, suppose that the Umpire sends out the playing assignments on January 1. The first moves of each player must reach him by first-class mail no later than January 22. The Umpire will then compare the moves, determine which are possible, and report the orders and troop movements to the players. The players' next moves must be sent to the Umpire no later than February 5.

6) Players may make alliances among themselves by private correspondence or other forms of contact.

7) The Umpire's report to the players shall include an account of all orders and the movements which he judges to be consonant with those orders according to the rules of the game.

8) If a player does not make a move during the required period, civil government will be assumed to have collapsed in his country for that move, as described on p. 6 of the rules. This does not affect his right to take part in subsequent moves.

...moves will be tried out in a game for which this issue of Graustark #1 is an invitation. Anyone who wishes to take part in this game should send his entry fee so that it arrives by May 25, 1963. If seven entries are received before that time, the game will be begun when the seventh arrives.

The following persons have expressed an interest in postal diplomacy. Unless another address is given, the player lives in East Paterson, New Jersey, and is a member of the East Paterson Diplomacy Club.

John Beardman, Box 22, New York 33, N. Y.
 Tom Bulmer, 138 Lincoln Ave.
 Ray Eggermont, 113 Mill Street
 Richard Frobose, 153A Boulevard
 James Goldman, 45 Hamilton Ave.
 Stuart Keshner, 102A Elmwood Terr.
 Fred Lerner, 152-B Donor Ave.
 Keith Marchese, 10 East Washington Ave.
 Dave McDaniel, 6225 Longa Drive, San Diego 15, Calif.
 Derek Nelson, 18 Granard Blvd., Scarborough, Ontario, Canada
 Edward Rocklin, 166A Donor Ave.
 Dan Vandermast, 104 Lee Street

FRED LERNER: "It might be interesting to publish a "newspaper" which would contain players' propaganda, and serve as a vehicle for negotiation, intimidation, ultimatums, etc. This could be a job of the umpire, one of the players, or a neutral party."

DAVE McDANIEL: "I'm sure I could get a couple of the L. A. fans into it...Suggest you start as Umpire, then the winner of each game serve as Umpire for the next game or pass the duty on to another willing player...Count me in."

GRAUSTARK #1
 John Beardman
 Box 22, New York 33, N. Y.

PRINTED MATTER ONLY
 RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED



Derek Nelson
 18 Granard Blvd.
 Scarborough, Ontario
 Canada

The Poll Results!

83

The results from the Reader Response Poll I sent out two issues ago are in. As of October 10, 1983, I had received back 69 ballots. Thanks to all those who took the time to respond. The results follow, together with some of your comments and a few of my own.

1. Please rate the reading material in VD by placing one check in each row.

| | Enjoy very much | Enjoy somewhat | Neutral | Dislike |
|--|-----------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| a. Games and press | 29½ | 22 | 14½ | 2 |
| b. Articles generally | 41 | 23 | 4 | 0 |
| c. Gossip Column (letters) | 49½ | 14½ | 1½ | 2½ |
| d. Alex's Column | 13 | 28 | 22 | 5 |
| e. Cartoons | 33½ | 22½ | 11 | 1 |
| f. Round-table discussions
(e.g. the telephone article) | 38 | 22 | 6 | 1 |
| g. Contests | 17 | 27 | 20 | 1 |
| j. <u>VD</u> on the whole | 54½ | 14½ | 0 | 0 |

Additionally, there were spaces labeled "you name it". The other items people listed under "enjoy very much" or "enjoy somewhat" were as follows: humor, hobby news, envelopes, bulk, sand, VD people, staples, Cynthia, Sherry, editorials, announcements, reliability, crazy envelopes, front page stuff, unpredictability, controversy, con reviews, Lake George report, the latest "Bruce news", BRUX Speaks, BRUX's humor, front page ramblings, Jane Proskin address stickers, humor articles, puzzles, advice (such as Edmund Jedry's article on the successful standby), the front page, other people's games, reliability and promptness, cost, BRUX's comments, "my name in print" ((sorry, Chuff, I'm not gonna print your name!)), BRUX Speaks (sometimes), "your jobs", and articles on cons.

The other items that people listed as "neutral" or "dislike" were: BRUX Speaks (usually), the front page, no table of contents, BRUX Travels ((that's BRUX Goes Wandering, an old feature which has been discontinued)), Bruce Linsey, anybody that looks like Bruce Linsey, sand in envelope, reprinting standby list, feuds/personality-related crap, hobby history from the '60s (yawn) and polls, feuds, house rules, special "humor" issues, political discussions, Rod Walker's theology, standby lists, sand, availability of games, stamps (need more variety), bad gossip, special zines without games/press.

Some of the other comments submitted in response to this question:

Joan Extrom on contests: Haven't seen any yet.

Jim Finley on round-table discussions: Neutral because I don't even read them.

Tim Allen: What cartoons?

Jeff Panches on contests: We need more.

Rich Reilly on contests: I haven't participated in any contests, but I enjoyed reading the Great Diplomatic Coups.

Ronald Brown on contests: Wish I had time to do them.

Bob Sweeney on Alex's Column: Try to change her mind about quitting!

Keith Sealer on round-table discussions: Best part.

Dave Kleiman on cartoons: Haven't seen many.

Hobyn Finley: What contests?

Judy Winsome on Alex's Column: I'll miss her.

Nelson Heintzman on cartoons: (Enjoy very much) Particularly Mark Paul's spoofs on games.

Ty Hare on contests: More!

Steve Angle: I find I don't follow other games too much. Perhaps now that mine's over that'll change.

Jeff Panches: I'm generally high on VD; therefore the high marks. You do a good job!

BRUX's comments: No major surprises here. I was very pleased with the marks for the Gossip Column and VD as a whole. There haven't been very many cartoons or contests lately, as evidenced by some of the comments. Alex's Column suffered for a couple of reasons: It doesn't deal with Diplomacy, so some of the hard-core gamers don't care for it, and many of her better columns were before quite a few of the recent subbers came on board. Still, a substantial majority of readers enjoy it either very much or somewhat. And every single respondent enjoys VD on the whole!

2. How do you feel about VD going ditto?

10 I like the ditto format and am glad BRUX switched to it.

28 I don't have a strong preference one way or the other regarding ditto.

26½ I don't care for ditto, but since it saves BRUX megabucks, it's OK by me.

3½ I dislike ditto and wish that BRUX would switch back to offset, even if it means an increase in price.

Comments were as follows (numbers in parentheses indicate the choice number that the person chose):

Don Dal Grande (3): Ditto is occasionally too hard to read.

Peter Ansoff (3): Anything is better than reduced print.

Mike Barco (2): With it's financial effects, I'm glad you switched.

Michael Ditz (3 & 4): I prefer the old method and would pay more but if you save megabucks then that's OK too.

Rich Reilly (2): If ditto saves you money, then I say great! But I liked the old look better.

Edmund Jedry (none): I only saw ditto, no opinion.

Mark Johnson (1): When readable. Doing better.

Rob Schmunk (2): Considering postage on the last VD was 61¢ ((71¢, actually)), you gotta save somewhere.

Keith Sessler (2): It's very readable. That's the important thing.

Ty Hare (2): Looks good, so it's okay.

Jeff Panches (2): If it saves you money, it's okay.

John Kelley (1): Offset hurts my eyes sometimes.

BRUX's comments: A majority of you either like the ditto, or don't care one way or the other. Most of those who don't like it still say it's okay as a money-saving measure. I personally side with those who picked choice 3, as I'm not crazy about ditto myself. But offset costs way too much for me to use on a regular basis, though I used it for parts of this issue, so the ditto format is here to stay.

3. Regarding the editorial on controversy in VD #74.

30½ BRUX has made an honest and successful attempt to keep the nasty stuff out of VD.

22½ BRUX is trying, but needs to try harder. There is still too much nastiness in VD.

2 BRUX hasn't changed VD at all. It is still the same forum for mad-slinging that it always has been.

- Comments follow, again indicating the person's choice in parentheses:
- John MacFarlane (2): See #83, p. 24. (That was Konrad's letter.)
- Roddy Finley (none): People have a right to voice their opinions, whatever they may be.
- Chuck Kaplan (1): Who cares?
- Eric Ozog (3): The zine is controversial but I don't regard controversy as necessarily a bad thing -- but there are limits.
- Richard Edison (1): A little is OK by me.
- Greg Mills (2): I see Billy's personal attacks whether in fun or not. He should argue, not insult.
- Tim Allen (none): BRUX has not been nasty enough.
- Mark Lew (none): BRUX is trying but doesn't understand the problem and would be hesitant if he did.
- Chuff Afflerbach (2): Seems they just won't let you change, BRUX!
- Daf Langley (2): Witness Baumelster's letter.
- Bob Deuch (none): None of the above. I feel warranted "nastiness" has its place in VD, whereas fabricated nastiness is bullshit.
- Mark Struch (none): Neutral. I feel you're okay. I wouldn't sob if I felt you didn't treat people fairly.
- Jim Williams (1): However, controversy and VD are inseparable.
- Mark Berch (1): Bill Highfield's comments about Joan should have been removed.
- Don Del Grande (1): However, nobody keeps all the nasty stuff out of anything (possible exceptions: Envoy and maybe The Dogs of War). There are a bunch of zines I don't read.
- Peter Ansoff (none): Brian back the mudslinging -- everybody loves a good feud!
- Heison Heintzman (2): To wit: your front page on Byrne, but most especially, Baumelster's letter on Coughlan, etc! I could have done without reading that. REAL EASY!
- Mike Barro (2): I really don't see what's left as your fault. Others throw stuff in, and you occasionally feel an obligation to make comments that others don't take well. Keep up the effort.
- Ty Gare (none): Whatever you feel comfortable with. Feuding is kind of silly, don't you think?
- Jeff Sanchez (2): This is a hard question -- sometimes the mud-slinging is fun stuff and good for the zine, but at other times it gets too personal.
- John Kelley (1): I think it's a silly idea, though sooner or later you'll fly off the handle, which I would prefer.
- Don Walker (2): You're letting some cattiness and personal nastiness creep back into the lettercol. I'm not able to come up with a specific example right at the moment, but it seems to be there in my memory anyway. Allowing Coughlan and Baumelster to debate whether the former is a party is a good example of what to avoid, though.

BRUX's comments: I appreciate the majority who said that I have been successful, but to my hostile opinion they are wrong. I haven't been as controversy-free as I would like (though this issue is!). Highfield's and Baumelster's letters drew the most comments, as you can see.

I do not and will not apologize for telling my readers about other publishers who run their games poorly, or print confidential letters, or whatever. I regard comments of this nature as a hobby service, not pointless controversy, and I will continue to run them in/when applicable.

I might also point out that it is not an easy decision at all sometimes as to when to draw the line; I certainly don't want people to think that they can't hit back at all their friends have any more. The identity of the target does play a role in my editing: some people, like Mark Struch, Joan Barrow and Don Walker's are hard to offend and say anything, while others might be more sensitive.

Comments from other people would be appreciated.

- 4. In his dealings with other hobby members,
- 30 BRUX tries hard to be fair to people, and generally succeeds.
- 26 BRUX tries to be fair, but sometimes does not succeed.
- 1 BRUX is often deliberately unfair to others.

Comments as follows:

- Keith Sesler (1): As far as I know.
- Michael Ditz (1): I am not really qualified to say anything here.
- Rick Ragsdale (none): Who cares?
- Jim Meinel (none): How would I know? All a reader could give is his impression. (My impression is that you are trying.)
- Steve Langley (none): Insufficient information -- BRUX has always dealt fairly with me.
- Randolph Smyth (2): But this depends on your definition of "fair": you treat everyone the same, but sometimes I wonder if this only means that everyone has an equal chance of being shafted!
- Robyn Finley (none): BRUX is only human.
- Eric Ozog (none): Hard to say. I think you like to be unfair for fun sometimes, but it backfires. What a pain in the ass you are, BRUX.
- Mark Frueh (2): Can't make everyone happy.
- Daf Langley (2): He's human. ((Where do some of you get that impression?))
- Richard Edison (none): It's hard to tell, since I generally only hear BRUX's side. You're fair with me, BRUXie.
- Tim Allen (none): BRUX has no conception of fairness.
- Chuff Afflerbach (3): You are the Ann Landers of the hobby. Your readers want you to take a stand, and tell off the fatheads who are out of line. And when you're out of line, you hear about it, too!
- Don Del Grande (2): It's hard for BRUX to be fair unless the other hobby members are just as fair.
- Peter Ansoff (2): Would be (#1) except for strange GMing practices.
- Mike Barno (1): It's just that different people have different perceptions of "fairness" in certain situations.
- Ty Hare (none): Be a hard-ass in your games, but sometimes you come off as such apart from your GMing. It's not really necessary.
- John Kelley (1): At least to decent people. But the victims are only assholes who I would not be fair to.

BRUX's comments: I vote for #1, but then again we all think we're fair, don't we? I'm disappointed that the majority was as slim as it was, though I think that some of the #2's came about as a result of strict GMing (see next question). Hell, I even think I'm scrupulously fair to the people I'm feuding with! (~~So let's take this as settled~~)

Oops: that "see next question" above refers to question #6.

- 5. Compare your philosophy about house rules with BRUX's.
- 21 I appreciate VD's comprehensive house rules and prefer them that way.
- 33 I think house rules should cover most common situations, but VD's are too detailed.
- 8 I feel that house rules are mostly unnecessary, and VD's are ridiculously long.

Comments:

- Rod Walker (none): I've not yet seen your HRs. My impression is that they may be a little too comprehensive. One can go too far in anticipating the improbable.
- Judy Winsome (none): I feel that a GM's houserules should feel comfortable to the GM.
- John MacFarlane (1): Though I admit, Berch's and Walker's letters are swaying me towards the other side of the fence!
- Greg Ellis (2): As a gamesmaster or referee some judgement calls have to be made.
- Mark Lew (3): But they don't hurt anything.
- Jeff Funches (1): I feel it's the GM's prerogative to run the games as he wishes. If someone doesn't like the rules then he can move to another zine.
- John Kelley (1): But discussing them is futile and boring. When people agree to them, they should expect them to be followed.
- Mike Barno (2): Actually, if you're going to GM like you do, it might be best to have a very detailed (but well-organized) set of HRs. Go with what you think best for reflecting/explaining your GMing.
- Peter Ansoff (2): Houserules cannot substitute for GM common sense, and it's silly to try to force them to do so.
- Don Del Grande (1): If something comes up not in the HRs, at least one player will blame the GM regardless of the result.
- Tim Allen (none): The hobby should adopt a "standard" set, and a GM should limit his own peculiarities to three or four modifications so players can remember them easily.
- Robyn Finley (none): Since BRUX is running the show, he can do whatever agrees with him. If the players don't like it, they don't have to be in the game.
- Jim Meinel (2): But I recognize that this area is your "draw".
- Rich Reilly (1): I prefer comprehensive houserules. Problem is, I can never hope to remember all the VD rules. Hopefully Steve Knight's revisions will help.
- Ronald Brown (2): Only hearsay.

BRUX's comments: I expected to "lose" this question, since my houserules are the most comprehensive to be found anywhere. But nobody, anywhere, any time, has ever put forth a valid reason why a well-organized, comprehensive set of houserules should not be used. Or if so, it has escaped my attention.

Regarding the comment by Peter Ansoff that houserules cannot be a substitute for good common sense, I entirely agree. But Peter and many others still do not understand my philosophy. Houserules are simply a reflection (or a statement) of the way a GM will rule -- and that "way" has (hopefully) been decided using "good common sense". Tim Allen's comment I've heard before, and I think it's a dreadful idea. "Three or four modifications" for variety won't give much variety at all -- I can think of dozen of different variations that arise due to differing sets of houserules and GM procedures, and this variation is good because players have all kinds of tastes.

6. How do you feel about BRUX's ultra-strict GMing?

22 I think that very strict GMing is the best way to go.

30 1/2 I think that a GM should be reasonably strict, but BRUX is sometimes too picky.

10 1/2 I think that the GM should try his hardest to give the players a break, and that BRUX is far too strict.

Comments:

- Bob Sweeney (2): Example: F Mid, in reading my writing, was interpreted as F Min (NGC). Luckily it didn't affect the game, so no big deal! ((No, you wrote "F Min." Bob.))
- Dave Carter (3): But at least players are aware of it.
- Kevin Stone (none): The most important thing is to be consistent and treat everyone the same.

- Mark Frueh (2): I feel that once you lay the ground in print you're covered.
- Cliff Afflerbach (1): Rules are made not to be broken!
- John Kelley (1): It is not ultra-strict. It is conducted by rules which are occasionally bent. How can anything be strict when people know the rules? People will fry you on this one. ((So? I wanted their true opinions or I wouldn't have asked.))
- Mike Barne (3): But it provides a good place for many players who prefer strict GMing.
- Peter Ansoff (none): Can't really answer this one -- I'm not sure that I understand your definition of "strict".
- Don Del Grande (2): "F Min-Spa(sc)" looks obvious to me -- it's obviously not "Mar" or "Lyo" or "Wes" or "Gas" or "Por", is it? (re: RIGEL, Spring 1903, England.)
- Tim Allen (2): The houserule requiring "A" Par in lieu of Par is not literally part of the rules, but within the scope of GM options.
- Robyn Finley (none): Since I'm not in a VD game this does not concern me. ((I made a mistake here, folks. This comment was submitted by Robyn in response to question #5, and the comment I gave for her in that question belongs here. Sorry!))
- Rich Reilly (2): See comments for question #7. Did you make it clear in your houserules or elsewhere that an order to "hold" and "support" is a double order, and unacceptable? (I've now checked: yes, you did, but then, who can remember all your houserules?)

BRUX's comments: Unlike the question on comprehensive houserules, I regard this as strictly a matter of taste. I knew beforehand that a majority would say I am too strict. No problem. As I said in a recent letter to Anduin, a minority of players prefer GMing as strict as mine, but it's a healthy minority and VD's games cater to them. I wonder if Eric Fane will be surprised to learn that over one player out of three prefers that the GM be as strict as I am. I was surprised!

- 7. (On the "double orders" situation...) How would you rule?
 - 25. A unit which is ordered both to "hold" and "support" should be ruled double-ordered.
 - 26. A "support" order should be ruled valid even if the unit is also ordered to "hold".

Comments:

- Richard Edison (none): Haven't decided yet. I'm wishy-washy about this sort of thing.
- Eric Ozog (1): How could you! Strict GM or no! ((And he crossed out the other choice.))
- Jim Finley (2): With a word to the player about format.
- Kevin Stone (1): As your houserules were at the time. I wouldn't allow the use of orders in parentheses.
- Cliff Afflerbach (none): This is the equivalent of Fandin's Paradox and requires a special houserule to cover the situation.
- John Kelley (1): Order Berch and Walker to hold their tongues and support each other. A Ber HT, A Ber S A Wal, A Wal HT, A Wal S A Ber.
- Mike Barne(2): I feel that both "support" and "convoy" imply holding (and can of course be supported in holding).
- Peter Ansoff (2): This situation is covered by the last sentence of Rule VII.4. It's a judgement call to some extent, but such a double order can reasonably be interpreted as having a legal meaning.
- Don Del Grande (1): The hold order isn't badly written, so the unit is ordered to do two things, violating VII.1 (unless, of course, my houserules allowed it, which they don't).
- Tim Allen (2): But only the first time. A note of explanation with a threat to count it double-ordered should suffice. No mercy on second time.
- Jeff Duches (1): Again this is up to the GM -- but I support precise orders and I attempt to do that when I play.
- Mark Bar (none): I'd rule this way, but it'd be incongruous by normal PRUNIAN standards.

Rich Reilly (1): However, as many might disagree, the GM should make such a ruling clear in his houserules, or in the letter sent out starting the game.

Judy Winsome (none): Same ((as #5)). I would allow it. A player who intentionally miswrites his orders should tell the GM.

Ty Hare (1): Aren't "hold" and "support" two different orders?

BRUX's comments: Only if you've read Rule VII.1, Ty. I view this as an upset victory, since I had figured that a majority would vote against me. More people are familiar with the Rulebook than I had guessed. And this has nothing to do with the badly-written order rule. Peter; we're talking about a set of four (in the NEPTUNE situation) orders which were written entirely correctly.

So a majority would rule the way I did. I wonder what Ed Wrobel, Eric Kane, and Rod Walker will say to that!

8. Assume for the purposes of this question that you are looking for a game and that VD has openings (which it doesn't). Would you sign up?

38 I would sign up instantly! VD is a great zine to play in.

20 I'd consider signing up, though I wouldn't necessarily make it a priority. VD is all right to play in.

3 I would not sign up for a game in VD. I disagree with too many of BRUX's GMing philosophies.

1 I would not sign up for a VD game. It's a lousy zine to play in.

Comments:

Rich Reilly (1): I think VD is a great zine to play in, but would hesitate to sign up at this time because I'm already playing in too many PBM games.

Robyn Finley (none): I'd read the houserules first, then decide.

Jim Williams (2): It would depend on my gameload, more than anything. Despite the HRS VD would be fun to play in because of Doodles! They're FUN!!

Steve Angle (1): !!

Pat Conlon (1): Anyone with a sub paid thru #119 would be crazy not to.

Doug Beyerlein (none): I would not sign up for a VD game because I never sign up for new games.

Joan Extrom (2): Hard to judge since I've never played. Would hesitate because of all the talk about strict GMing.

Konrad Baumeister (1): Alas, I am not really looking for openings.

Keith Sealer (none): Not with the HRS you use.

Michael Ditz (none): Would not sign up for a new game (nothing against you). Too many other obligations, but enjoy playing standby position (not the same pressure).

Randolph Smyth (none): I would not sign up because of likely mail problems, but would otherwise. ((He lives in Alberta, and mail between me and him just takes too long.))

Greg Ellis (1): Unfortunately I am already in too many games, but I will enjoy playing in VD (REGEL) and would probably welcome another VD game.

Ronald Brown (2): Depends on other games I'm in.

Eric Ozog (2): I'd like to try other zines and GMs.

Chuff Afflerbach (2): Up until 2 months ago, my answer was #4. But the superb press release by Mr. Reilly in REGEL changed my opinion.

John Kelley (2): I don't like the press.

Mike Baruo (2): I'd sign up if you opened another "silly" game, but for regular Dip, there are other zines with GMing more my style. I don't want to play all over.

Peter Ansoff (1): Despite irritating GMing practices.

Don Del Grande (2): I don't start Dip games any more (and I rarely stand by) -- even VD's houserules aren't enough.

The Alias (none): I signed up for Pink Dragon -- I'll sign up for anything.

Jeff Pancher (1): Great people sub to VD and I enjoy the people in the games as much as the game itself.

Mark Lew (4): There are zeens I'd prefer to play in.

Ty Hare (2): Better than all right. However, I'd want to try other GMB and zines.

BRUX's comments: Well, then, I'm very pleased with the response to this one: a huge majority think it's a great zine to play in, and only four dislike the GMing enough to stay out. Thank!

9. Do you enjoy postal Dip, and how has VD contributed to your enjoyment (or lack thereof)?

65 I enjoy postal Diplomacy, and VD has added to that enjoyment.

1 I enjoy postal Diplomacy, but VD has not added to my enjoyment.

1 I don't really enjoy postal Diplomacy, but VD has not been a negative factor.

0 I don't really enjoy postal Diplomacy, and VD is part of the reason I don't enjoy it.

Comments:

Mark Berch (1): Greatly.

Rich Keilly (1): My first game was (is) in VD. Thanks again, BRUX!

Robyn Finley (1): ☺

Pat Conlon (1): VD was my start!

Eric Ozog (3): In general, other than a couple games I play in, postal Dip has been a yawner to me lately. Maybe I'll recover again. I love face-to-face; that is my territory.

Mike Barno (1): !!!

Don Del Grande (1): To me, PBM Dip rates right up there with PBM everything else.

Jeff Puches (1): Since VD was the first zine I subscribed to this answer is a given.

BRUX's comments: How sweet it is to feel loved!

10. a. What do you like most about VD?

Jeff Puches: The games are well GMed and the presentation is easy to follow for all. I like the shorter deadlines and the dependability better than any other zine I sub to.

Don Del Grande: The price and the size.

Mike Barno: The continual involvement of so many readers, providing exchanges of all kinds of views on all kinds of subjects, keeping the creative load off of you.

Eric Ozog: The sand in the envelopes.

Pat Conlon: Portions of the lettercol; humorous articles.

Robyn Finley: The letter column; humorous articles unrelated to Diplomacy.

Rich Keilly: The games and press.

Mark Berch: Letter column.

Judy Winsome: Letters; Bruce's writing.

Kevin Stone: Letters.

Jim Finley: Most of the letters/something for everyone.

Jim Meinel: Letters.

John MacFarlane: The spirited controversies.

Bob Walker: Lettercol.

Daf Langley: The humor and talent of the article writers. I've read some of the best articles in the pages of VD.

Steve Langley: Humor articles and Gossip Column.

Rick Ragsdale: The free exchange of ideas/viewpoints without the pubber getting upset/involved in the exchanges.

Rob Nehmunk: The Gossip Column.

Mark Johnson: Letters and press. Hard to make a choice between the two.

Kenneth Jedry: The pleasure involved in getting it.

Jean Woodson: Letters; Dip-related articles.

Jake Halverstadt: Playing in PEGASUS, the good writing.
 John Kador: Regular, humanistic, letters, style.
 Eric Kane: Highfield's ravings!
 Bryan Jurkowski: BRUX's faithfulness concerning it.
 Pat Pakel: Alex's Column -- before it folded, and, of course, the games.
 John Davies: The articles about Diplomacy and letters.
 George Leritte: Letter column.
 Paul Ruaterberg: Discussion of important issues by major hobby personalities.
 Mike Jones: Everything.
 Mark Duarte: The way you click your teeth at the dinner table.
 Matthew Fleming: Its length, respectability, and regularity.
 Dan Stafford: Mudslinging.
 Gary Coughlan: The letter column.
 Bob Olsen: Articles (humorous, especially).
 Ron Brown: Its massive size!
 Ruth Glaspey: Philosophical discussions which arise in the articles and letters.
 Don Burd: The games and the GMing.
 Linda Wightman: The letters.
 Porter Wightman: The great letter column and the generally high quality of submitted articles.
 Jeff Noto: Games; articles.
 Dave Kleiman: The people who are involved with it. BRUX is great, so are the fellow players.
 Chuck Kaplan: Letters from many sources.
 Bob Osuch: Letter column.
 Nelson Heintzman: I particularly appreciate the fact that VD brings into focus for its readership a sense of the totality of the hobby itself. One really receives an excellent survey of the broad spectrum of people, issues, activities, attitudes and opinions, and forms of involvement which make up this FEM subculture.
 Bob Sweeney: Games and press.
 Dave Carter: Reliability, promptness, cost, cross-letter debates.
 Mark Frueh: Letter column; games.
 Jim Williams: Letter column; lively discussions and debates.
 Steve Angle: Games, but I'll keep my sub after mine's over due to the articles/letters.
 Doug Beyerlein: Letters to the editor.
 Joan Extrom: Seems to have more variety in types of letters than most other zines. Also your grammar and spelling are excellent, compared to most other zines I've seen. That puts you in a category with Graustark and counts for a lot in my book.
 Konrad Baumeister: Consistent quality.
 Keith Sessler: Round-table discussions.
 Michael Ditz: Humor; spelling corrected for free.
 Randolph Smyth: Best discussions of relevant issues in the hobby.
 Greg Ellis: BRUX's dedication to timeliness and preciseness.
 Ronald Brown: Letters.
 Chuff Afflerbach: All the personalities involved!
 John Kelley: The letter column. Polls. Personal stuff the way Michalski likes it.
 Peter Ansoff: Promptness, accuracy, and editorial quality.
 Tim Allen: Diversity; wide scope.
 Mark Lew: Gossip Column.
 Ty Hare: When it arrives in my mailbox.
 BRUX: Looks like the letter column wins hands down. I like all the people involved in it. But that question was guaranteed to yield flattery. Wait till the next one...

10. b. What do you like least about VD?

John MacFarlane: ~~The editor~~. (Sorry, but I don't like anything least.)

Jim Meinel: The editorial content.

Jim Finley: Letters/articles about feuds and other boring topics.

Kevin Stone: No table of contents and the fact that there is no more Alex's Column.

Judy Winsome: Regurgitation of old feuds. Still, it's interesting. Least is a relative term.

Mark Berch: Too much space wasted on games.

Richard Reilly: The end.

Robyn Finley: The rubbish spouted by an uncouth, bigoted juvenile in the letter column; overkill on feud subjects and Dip rules.

Pat Conlon: Proxy Plomacy.

Eric Ozog: The high sub rates (hyork, hyork).

Mike Barno: As soon as it comes in the mail, I just have to sit down and do nothing else until I've read every word in the issue at least once. ((I hope you ate a big meal before this arrived today, then!))

Don Del Grands: The ditto repro (but I like the size/price more than I dislike the repro).

Jeff Panches: Sometimes the gossip gets a bit long -- but since I usually read it, it can't be that bad, huh?

Ty Hare: When I'm through reading it.

Mark Lew: Alex's Column.

Tim Allen: Sheer volume (there's a tradeoff).

Peter Ansoff: Need you ask?

John Kelley: The fact that everyone ignores me now; rules debates.

Chuff Afflerbach: Ditto.

Ronald Brown: Feuds -- now gone for good, I hope!

Greg Ellis: Cut out personal insults from letters.

Randolph Smyth: The space devoted to a lot of things that I consider irrelevant -- e.g. I must admit that the details of your social life and activities of your personal friends rate no more than a skim -- but the zine has enough material that I can pick out what I like.

Michael Ditz: Waiting for it; sometimes hard to read; don't understand a lot of previous things that have happened.

Keith Sesler: Nothing.

Konrad Baumeister: Some discussions go on too long and get boring, like this "A Ser S A Gre" stuff.

Doug Beyerlein: Press.

Steve Angle: I gotta say it: your house rules. I think that you make the game too serious; after all, it's only a game (to coin a phrase).

Jim Williams: The open sores on my penis and the burning sensation when I urinate.

Mark Frueh: Boring letters concerning double-ordered units -- to me it's obvious. But that's my opinion. I like your zine.

Dave Carter: No game openings.

Bob Sweeney: Bickering displayed in press of this and other zines. I recognize that a conflict is present in the hobby, but is it valid to use zines to present arguments which should be presented in private?

Nelson Heintzman: The personal attacks which appear in the letter column. Baumeister's letter was unpleasant to read, overall. An unnecessary unpleasantness, I might add. I really don't think the newer players and the common players really give two shits about all this feuding and backbiting going on among the hobby's tiny elite coterie of pubbers.

Bob Osuch: Games.

Dave Kleiman: Letter column.

Jeff Noto: Unnecessary controversy. Keep trying.

- Porter Wightman: The long discussions about what that the newspaper's interpretation of BRUX's housewives often result in
- Don Burd: The "soap-opera" letters (the cars she hates what?)
- Ruth Glaspey: The occasional gratuitous vulgarity, which I can't help thinking is an indication of immaturity...on the part of the author, that is. I think that the QUASAR press has been remarkably free of this, though it has been somewhat sparse and not terribly imaginative sometimes.
- Ron Brown: Rules discussions/debates.
- Bob Olsen: Letters like Gary's last time or Howard's this time. ((not and w))
- Gary Coughlan: You pat yourself on the back too much. You, in other words, beat your own horn very often. This turns a lot of people off.
- Dan Stafford: BRUX's constant patronizing of some hobby members.
- Matthew Fleming: Round-table discussions with other MS. This sort of thing leading to the non-publishing of QMing-players.
- Mark Duarte: The festering sores.
- Paul Hauterberg: Too much housewife-related bitching.
- John Davies: Ditto.
- Pat Pakel: The Gossip Column is interesting, but tends to get rather repetitive and boring (too long).
- Red Schmunk: Good question. Hard to pick something out.
- Bryan Jurkowski: The mud.
- Eric Kane: Highfield's ravings!
- John Kadory: BRUX's tendency to take himself too seriously.
- Jake Halverstadt: Wading through crap to find the good stuff in the gossip column. Feuding about stuff I don't care about.
- James Woodson: Sand.
- Edmund Jedry: Penicillin shots.
- Mark Johnson: Biz pages. It's gotten better.
- Kick Ragsdale: The switch to ditto.
- Steve Langley: Some of the gossip.
- Daf Langley: Strategy articles, but that is strictly a personal opinion.
- BRUX: I like the amount of politics here least of all. I also want to reduce the controversy still more from it's level of the past couple issues.
- Other comments?
- Jake Halverstadt: Pittsfield, Mass.?
- Rob Schmunk: On housewives. I generally tend to ignore them and try to make sure my orders are clear. If I get screwed it's my own fault for not paying attention.
- Steve Langley: I think you do a fantastic job -- VJ is right about at the top of my favorite sine list (along with E. and Rags) -- the fact that our more different QMing philosophies doesn't detract from my enjoyment in the least.
- Daf Langley: I think for sheer commitment to quality and quantity of information VJ is the best zine around. I enjoy it.
- Pat Pakel: Cut down a little on the gossip, and get less mud? (Why do you think I took out a sub -- I'm gonna sue!)
- George Leritte: I'm glad that you changed to ditto so that you don't overexpose yourself. The ditto is high-quality.
- Mark Duarte: Keep coming.
- Fred Davis: VJ is just too big. Don't have time to read it in one session. (I'll be better since, but none compares when cost is included. VJ's cost is \$1.00, while E. is only ten cents more per issue, so I'll still be better off, and I'm sure is free to players and students, making it the very best investment of \$1.00.)
- Red Schmunk: Read some guns and smaller zines.
- Steve Langley: Despite that (the housewife) I still enjoy it. I'll be better off if you follow. (I'll be the first to follow.)

- Doug Beyerlein: Your sub rates are too low.
- Joan Extrom: Samantha says she liked your phone call and she's sorry you're 27 years older than she is.
- Keith Sealer: I think you should raise the price of VD a bit (5-10¢) to help cover costs a bit more.
- Greg Ellis: Excellent zine. I hope your dedication lasts longer than my interest. Keep up the good work.
- Ronald Brown: Keep up the good work. The hobby needs you. ((The feeling is mutual!))
- Chuff Afflerbach: Read VD long enough and someone will say something you disagree with. Keep reading, and someone will refute it for you.
- John Kelley: I really don't care what Walker and Berch think about double orders. But VD is thick enough that I can't complain; who can bitch about regular 30-40 pagers?
- Mark Lew: I love reader surveys.
- Ty Hare: Killing in the wild is good, but killing in captivity is OK? I don't buy it. Both are neither. They just are. You're doing a very fine job. I look forward to receiving VD from you.
- Jeff Panches: You really should probably charge more for your zins -- I don't think you should lose too much money!!
- Don Del Grande: Want to avoid another TRO or MIN? Have the players draw their moves on maps. (Actually, it works better in FTP.) ((So who wants to avoid...))
- Mike Barne: Keep your attention on avoiding public fighting, and keep on having fun with VD. It's a fascinating and enjoyable phenomenon. Also, this is an excellent questionnaire.
- Eric Ozog: You're a hell of a guy, BRUX.
- Robyn Finley: I will miss the "woman's touch" that Alex's Column brought to VD. Enjoyed the various photos. Have you thought of running your Dip photo album in VD? Maybe a page or two at a time? Enjoy the letter column -- once in a while I'll learn something I didn't know before. ((Sorry, but I won't be running the photo album here. Photos cost me \$10 a page to run, unless I just xerox them, in which case the quality is poor. Meet me at a con someday and you'll see the pix.))
- Judy Winsome: Yeah! I like you, Bruce -- hope to meet you someday. Good luck with the programming. Try your hand at what Alex did -- you can do it.
- John MacFarlane: #83 was definitely one of your very best. Two things, though. I miss: Mark Paul's cartoons and Chuff Afflerbach's articles. In general, you need more articles, even if at the expense of letters.
- BRUX: I prefer articles to letters too, but I'll take what comes in if it's good enough. This issue, there's plenty of both! As for Chuff, I think we're all always eager to read what he writes!

Names of those who responded and haven't been mentioned by name anywhere above, in case anyone wants to figure out the complete list: Michael Kettman, Jim Chatfield, and Ben Schilling.

My thanks to all 69 of you for your cooperation. Your comments made for interesting reading, as well as letting me know how you all feel about various aspects of the zine. Maybe I'll do another of these someday. Live in thirty years...

A bit of magic by mail....

See the little birdie in the box?



(go to page 99)

"You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villany"

95



#46, Oct 1983

MOS EISLEY is a roving subzine of assorted bull foisted upon you by John Michalski who solicits your reactions (to use as filler in future MES's) at Rt 10 Box 526-Q, Moore, OK 73165.

The Mark Berch Dept.: Ah, winter is finally in the air, what with these chilly 68 degree nights. Ol Fluff hardly needs to run his air conditioner at all now, which is really something even if only true at night. Hell, if you were as huge as he is, you'd want it cold too. Our Sears riding mower sits out in the yard with a lot of grass growing under it, thanks to Sears maintenance, which screwed up the undercarriage so bad that it only ran in one position, and now even that's gone. I guess I'll just have to futz with it and see if I can at least get it to roll into a corner for winter to get it out of sight. Can't do it as it sits, cuz the blade part digs into the dirt--nothing ot hold it up. You'd think Caruso had fixed it or something.

HOBBY NEWS Well, the big news is that VD has yet another anniversary which, kind of like the USSR's annual Bolshevik celebrations at the same time of year, make people pause and contemplate: not so much at another successful year, but that the whole system is still going at all. I still recall VD's raucous first year, with all those predictions of early burnout. No doubt when the final VD #466 comes out, the same folks will say, "Aha, I told you he couldn't keep it up!" Oh, well.

Another milestone was Frauke Petersen Hansen having marriage open her eyes to a whole new world, as evidenced in KINDER/KIRCHE/KUCHEN #2 just out in WHITESTONIA. If this spreads, we may see Judy Winsome become a nun too, or Woody turn hetero. Keep 'em coming, Frauke.

As many of you know, Larry Peery has instituted a special John Michalski Piss-Poor Award of a silver chamber pot to be awarded to various irritating Straights who annoy him by pointing out his foolishness or ridicule his various money-raising schemes. As first recipient, I look forward to receiving my pot. If it really is silver, it will be the first worthwhile thing he's put out that I've seen. I suspect that it is designed to embarrass the recipients though, kind of like his "pink triangle" mailing. I'm not holding my breath for the pot though. After all, when's the last time any of his schemes or polls produced anything tangible at all? But, you never can tell. I'll let you know. (Late note: just received a new Poll from him where he asks you to chart your hobby hours by use on his forms and mail them to him. Just what you always needed, right?)

The Fluff Shaffer Dept.: Did you hear about the Aggie lesbian? She likes men.

Way back when, I lent/sent out my copy of the old IDA Publisher's Handbook to somebody, but never got it back. If YOU happen to find it, do send it in. No bitching-- anyone can mislay and forget--but they ARE rare, and would like it back from wherever, no questions asked.

Oh, somebody sent me a note asking if I was the John Michalski who wrote a Midway article in The General 3-3. Yes. But, I sent the answer to Don Del Grande, and now I find that he is NOT the person who asked. Pardon my organizational talents, but, uh, who ARE you?

Fall 83 DW just out, a big one. I won't criticize it because I was mentioned (an honor) TWICE in the Diplomacy Chronology; thanks (Fred Davis & Walker). Check out Berch's humor item on p. 21-2, cute.

Letters

Ron Mazurkiewicz

Glad to hear you finally got a job. Did you notice how your friends fell away when you were unemployed? Now it's safe again to write you a letter. Apparently I have weathered the storm for the next two years at least. They got rid of everyone with less seniority than me last month. If one social worker out there hadn't retired, that would have been it for me too. But was I worried? No! It seems that I am such a hard worker that management was going to offer me a supervisor's job if I lost my professional slot. Seems they had an opening, at less pay than I am making now, of course, in a unit that is having a little trouble. Like they found one of the patients who had been missing for three days in a janitor's closet, beat up. They needed someone to go in with a new team and clean up the hoodlums that have been abusing the patients. Oh, boy. Wouldn't that have been a plum of a position. Sort of like being the successor to Rudolf Hoess. Thank God I was able to let that cup pass.

On the wargame front I am working again on the Ardennes game. I can't remember if I ever sent you any materials or description of that game. Do you have facilities to project slides? I could take some photos of the gameboard. I have just finished with the rules and might be interested in your opinion. Let me know if you would be interested and have the time to read fifty pages of typed double spaced rules. I am working on an improved map and hope to be ready for a game in early September.

For that other perennial subject of fascination, the Holocaust, I have found some very interesting information. I mentioned the subject to a woman at work who said her father was interested in history and would like to read The Hoax of the 20th Century. After I gave her the book she revealed that her family was Orthodox Jews and her father had been a Norwegian Jew who tried to get out of Norway in 1940 and ended up spending the war fighting with the Resistance in Southern France. At that point I was going, "Oh boy, here it comes." She said her father was very upset and carried on about Nazi trash and such but started reading the book. She said pretty soon he was making notes and after finishing the book told her he felt it was 85% correct. After that she told me that as a matter of fact her father was sort of a "radical" on the subject of Jews. He thinks they have more or less asked for what they got throughout history as a result of their exclusiveness, etc. I was, of course, thinking at this point, "Wow, what is this guy, a Jewish Nazi?" Her father is a business man and says he knows many Jewish businessmen who will not even deal with Gentiles at all, always charge them higher prices, etc. Back to the Holocaust subject, he has done some research himself and carried on a correspondence with Simon Wiesenthal. Also there are supposed to be secret Synagogal archives which are never opened to Gentiles, and only picked Jews, containing records on this subject. I must admit after all this I wonder if this is all a setup, and this guy and his daughter are just baiting me!

At any rate, The Hoax of the 20th Century is now being passed about among Jewish businessmen in Racine. The woman's father's partner was at Buchenwald and he is now reading the book. I asked her if a meeting could be arranged to discuss the subject some time, and she said she would ask. Oh boy, oh boy.

((Well, if I don't hear from you again, I'll know you became a footnote in some secret synagogal archive!

(As background to the readership, Hoax is one of the "revisionist" histories that attempts to prove that the "holocaust" story is greatly exaggerated. The conclusion

I got from it was that while the concentration camps existed, and were not funhouses, the full-steam-slaughterhouse-idea could only have been true of Auschwitz, not the little camps, and the total Jewish casualties were more like 1-1½ million than the "6 million" or more usually mentioned.)

On Bulge, no, I really don't have time to do the USAFR correspondence reading I should be doing, let alone rules review or gaming, and will start being out of town later this month. Have you seen the joke AH produced with their "revised" Bulge? The board is saturated with roads, the Germans can romp as they please even leaving all SS units in the box, and of course it costs a lot more. The old version required you know the game in order to win as the German; the new version only requires you know what a zone of control is, to have the Germans seize the board in pretty short order. The Germans have so many units that they win using Russian -- even Chinese! -- tactics. Ah, that feel of Wehrmacht realism from Avalon Hill...))

J.M.

MP Barno

PudgeCon II was something, wasn't it? Sure, it had its slow times and imperfections -- but I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I enjoyed meeting you. Keep it up, as the director told the porn starlet.

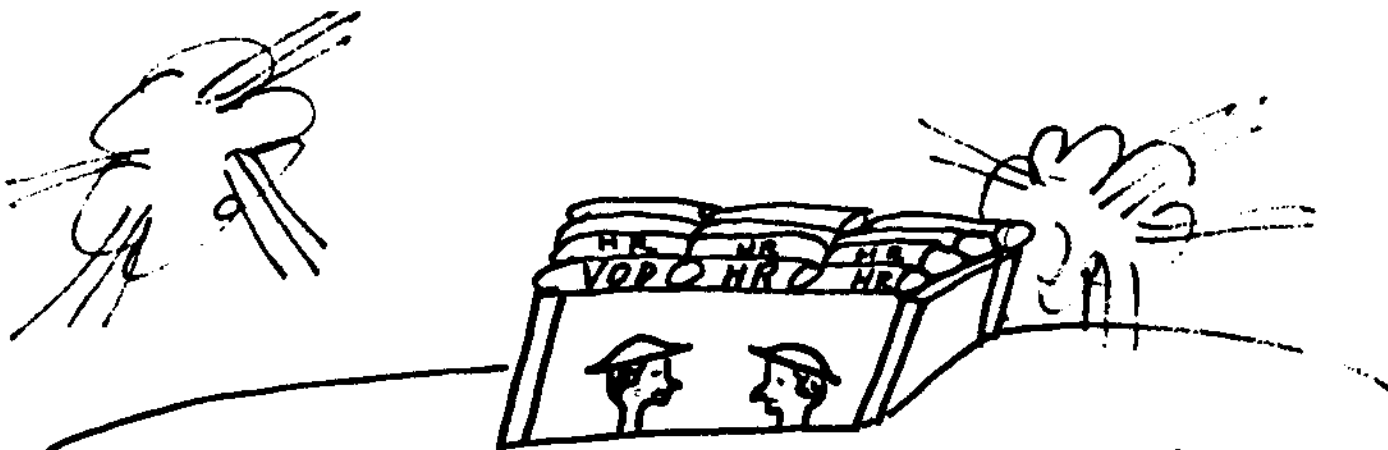
((Uh, yeah, right. It does have a good atmosphere and such, but, it was better last year with a hobby star or two there aside from myself. Next year we need Linsey or Kathy, or how about being able to jeer Berch in the flesh? Or Highfield maybe? Right. See you at P'Con III))

J.M.

Me here again -- BRUX, that is -- slapping on my usual linear separator so you'll know where Mos Eisley ends and sanity begins. For the uninitiated, Mos Eisley Spaceport is John Michalski's roving subzine, making its first ever appearance in VD.

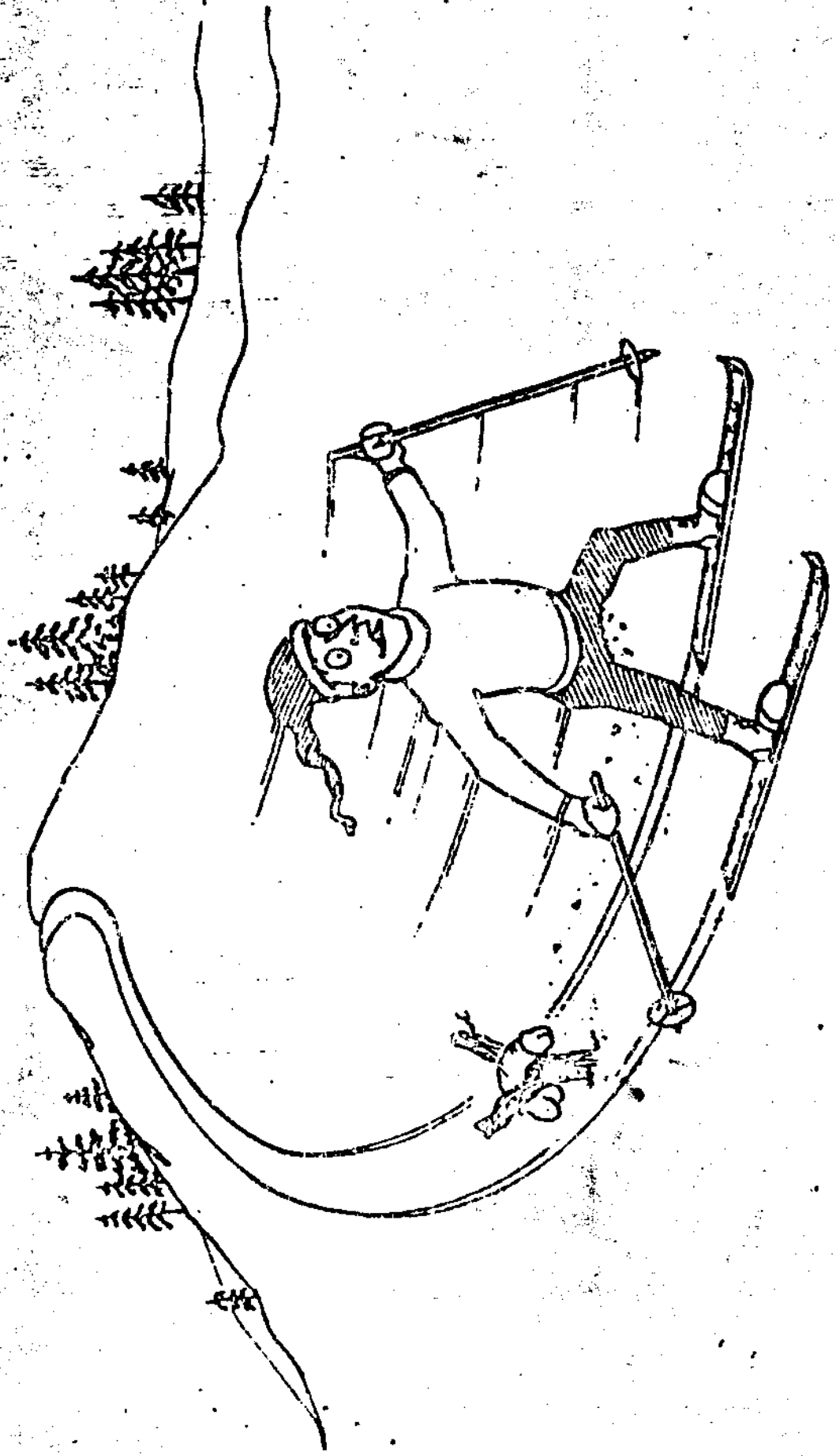
I suppose that, being the host publisher, I get to comment on the above? Not a lot...I always enjoy hearing people say that the Holocaust never was, or wasn't as bad as advertised. Kind of like the folks who think that the only thing Nixon did wrong was to get caught. Oh, well...

Re page 1: VD'll fold when its time is up, but ME burn out? HAHAHAAAA!



STOP WORRYING! I Tell you
THOSE THINGS ARE IMPENETRABLE!!

BH



"WOW! THAT WAS CLOSE!"

The Stab-Stab: Milk It for All It's Worth, Baby!

So you've just stabbed your neighbor; or, as you might prefer to say, violated an agreement you had regarding your common frontier. What do you do next, in terms of negotiating with your victim?

Some players don't write at all, reasoning that since the trust has been broken there is no point to further communication. If your time or energy for writing letters is limited, then fine; it is true that there are other players more important to you at this point than your victim, so writing to him now gets low priority. But if possible you should make the attempt.

Other players write a letter apologizing for the stab, and/or giving their reasons for it. This is always a courtesy and it can even have a practical value in that it may make the victim a bit more receptive to future overtures from you, should they become necessary.

But often the best thing to do is to try and milk it for all it's worth. That is, put on your smoothest tone, apologize for not trusting him and promise to the stars above that you will back off since you (obviously) made a mistake, discuss the tactical details of how you can disengage with a minimum of risk to either party, and then (if you haven't by now talked yourself into a change of plans), stab for his guts the next turn! It's surprising how often a resourceful diplomat can get away with this (perhaps because such changes of heart are far from unheard of). A skilled, experienced player will probably defend himself regardless of what you say, but players with somewhat less experience may be more gullible. Aside from the satisfaction of suckering someone twice in a row, your position can be strengthened further by the second stab if the guy truly believes you are going to withdraw. And even if you fail, what have you got to lose (aside from a little more credibility)? Diplomacy is a game of inches; play it that way and grab for all you can by whatever means you can!

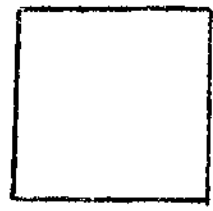
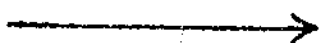
A simple example will suffice. You, as Russia, have just opened to Galicia in violation of an agreement with Austria. If you think he's at all the gullible type, and you want to try for one of his two reachable home centers, don't write a simple "sorry-I-stabbed-you-and-good-luck" sort of letter. He can easily keep you out of both Budapest and Vienna if he knows you're going to keep coming. Instead, write a letter like this: "I'm really sorry that I didn't trust you to keep our agreement concerning Galicia. I suppose we should have arranged to bounce there. Anyway, I know you have every right to be suspicious of me -- I brought this on myself through my own unfounded fears -- and I won't object should you choose to protect yourself from me this turn. But since you were sincere, I will use Army Galicia to support myself to Rumania, and then I will move it to Silesia next spring...". You get the idea. If Austria doesn't bite, you're no worse off than you would have been, except you will have that much more difficulty getting him to believe any of your future statements. And if he does fall for it, then you have at least given yourself a 50-50 shot at taking one of his home centers, where you might easily have had no chance.

The stab-stab is just one of many negotiational techniques you will acquire (and learn to recognize in your opponents) as your gaming experience increases.

Next month: the stab-stab-stab (useful only against Bob Olsen).



PRESTO! He's gone!



The Gossip Column
Part III

100

From Joan Extrom (8/30/83):

Dear BRUX,

I'm too wired to sleep -- must have been the chocolate cake for dessert. What better way to ~~pass~~ pass the time than by writing you a letter?

I didn't notice any sand in the envelope. Will you send more?

Speaking of the envelope, it was great. In fact, Samantha's still playing with it.

Sorry to hear Alex is giving up her column. I'm sure everyone will miss it. Any chance on reprinting "The Best of Alex"? As a new subber, I'd be interested to read some of her earlier columns, especially the classics.

Thumbing thru the last issue, I suddenly realize I haven't finished reading it all. I did read most of it, holding VD in one hand and fixing dinner with the other.

Thanks for defending me against Highfield. I'm planning to write him a long letter and settle our differences. However -- wonder of wonders -- I found something we agree on! The mandatory driving test every 5 years and especially the strict penalties for DWI. I'd suggest being even stricter if anyone is injured or killed by a drunk driver.

Hope you enjoy your new job. Did you know Ken is a programmer? Strictly FORTRAN. He works for a small company in Corvallis that provides software packages to credit unions all over the country. He even spent his Army stint programming at White Sands (beat getting shot at in Viet Nam). And, in the true programmer style, he'll never forgive Samantha for arriving without a user manual.

Q: How many computer programmers does it take to change a light bulb?

A: None -- that's a hardware problem.

And, if that's not bad enough:

A squaw slept on a deer hide and had a son. A second squaw slept on another hide and she also had a son. A third squaw slept on a hippopotamus hide, and she had two sons, which just goes to show that the sons of the squaw on the hippopotamus are equal to the sons of the squaws on the other two hides.

Uh...maybe it's time to go to bed.

3:38 am and ~~logging~~ logging off
Love,

Joan and Samantha

((Your humor is the Pyth's. I don't normally reprint material from old VD's here, but I did send you a bunch of Alex's old columns. Glad you enjoyed them.

I'll be sure to pick up some sand for you next time I go to Jones Beach. Hope you can wait that long. If not, any Doonies who saved their sand and have now decided they don't want it are welcome to forward it to you.))

From Jim Finley (9/3/83):

BRUX,

Found this sitting on the table unmailed. Silly me. Here it is anyway.

Things have been happening since I last wrote; one change is that I'm being allowed to apply for the commissioning program after all -- so I'm still in the Corps for as long as necessary to process my application, and for a long time to come (say 20 or 30 years) if they take me. My goal, if commissioned, is to return to ground combat arms -- infantry by first choice. In light of current events, this is the wrong time to turn my back. My attitude toward war is a curious mix of horror, curiosity, personal fear, anticipation, dread of the consequences to my family, and fascination with the challenge. To boil it down, I don't want to die or be maimed, but I would be ashamed and disappointed to let my friends go without me. My stepfather was in the Navy in World War II; all my mom's three kids are or were in the Marine Corps, and three of my four best friends from high school are in the Navy or the Marine Corps; having been in myself from the age of seventeen, it's gotten into my blood now more than I realized.

The prospect of getting out was getting very depressing.

I still have a very low opinion of the chickenshit trend we're seeing lately, and no doubt will hang heads over it; but I don't care whether I ever make high rank. I can do a lot of good as a junior officer.

Anyway, I should have my application in a month, and an answer a few months later; if it's a yes I'll be coming east to Quantico, VA, for OCS. We shall see.

Well, the kids want breakfast, so I'd better shut up and scramble some eggs. Later days -- so long for now.

((Glad to hear that things may work out for you in the Marine Corps. Keep us posted. And tell your kids to stop interrupting your letters to me!))

From Mark Paul:

BRUX,

Good luck in your computer job. I have had a recent change in career myself, which explains my lack of cartoons in recent months, but they should be coming regularly now. A friend of mine works as a distributor for a chain of New England hobby shops and has given me the list of games ordered by them for the month of June. I thought some of the Doomies might be interested in what has been selling lately. Notice that the Titan fad has yet to die down. With the next issue of The General dedicated to it it may be some time before it does. As I have said before the game is good, but I can't believe the attention it's getting. If any Doomies are looking for a new game try the Avalon Hill remake of the SPI Conquistador. A family game that's pretty good is Prospecting. I just got my copy of Up Front by Avalon Hill. \$25.00 for a card game, it better be good or I'll organize a protest march to Baltimore. If anyone's in a bookstore be sure to pick up the September issue of Games. The game of Star is included in the issue and I feel it is the best abstract game of the century.

| <u>TITLE</u> | <u># ORDERED</u> | <u>TITLE</u> | <u># ORDERED</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Titan | 56 | Civilization | 4 |
| Runequest | 12 | Aquire | 4 |
| Freedom in the Galaxy | 10 | Baker Street | 3 |
| Kennington | 23 | Marakesh | 8 |
| Rail Baron | 7 | Samuri | 1 |
| Star Fleet Battles | 21 | Squad Leader | 2 |
| Car Wars | 17 | D&D (basic) | 12 |
| Car War Supplements | 18 | D&D (expert) | 12 |
| Marakesh | 6 | The Brotherhood | 10 |
| G.I. Anvil of Victory | 34 | Dawn Patrol | 10 |
| Conquistador | 10 | Gamma World | 10 |
| Midway | 3 | Legend of Robin Hood | 4 |
| Traveler | 21 | Cosmic Encounters | 8(expansion sets) |
| Dune | 1 | Frederick the Great | 4 |
| Cosmic Encounters | 10 | Junta | 1 |
| Borderlands | 4 | Statis-Pro Football | 12 |
| Wizards | 3 | Statis-Pro Baseball | 5 |

((Thanks much for sending in the above info, but you have Marakesh listed twice! Actually, it sounds as if the gamers in New England have radically different tastes in games than I do.

Your cartoons are a high point of this zine, and they have been for over a year. It's great to hear that more will be forthcoming -- many of my readers have commented on how much they enjoy them.

Good luck in your new career!))

From John Kelley:

Bruce--

I refuse even to discuss politics with liberal pacifists. Their view is distorted to permit the possibility of absurdities like "world peace" and "enough food for everyone". Only a gnarled perspective can admit such lunacies to the realm of potential events. You worked with computers, Bruce. To produce false results, you need a faulty computation process. This analogy explains much of the liberal and pacifistic thought as it exists today...

I wasn't around for most of the attacks on Gary Coughlan; what were they all about? Can anyone fill me in? I can't imagine the Gary I knew deserving to be attacked in 6 zines.

Rod is right about the general ignorance of many wargamers. However, I feel that this is concentrated heavily in D&D. Many of those (not all, by any means; I play with a small campaign at the WW and people like me well enough) are the social rejects. Either they have bad acne, or are obese, or are simply weird, possibly all of the above and more. They gather together to feel comfortable in the presence of those like themselves.

I don't care for dog racing either. Or TV. Or movies. I'd rather read and play wargames.

I'd hate to see Haig in any important post. He's not a team player; he's just jerking himself off. Most general officers, though, are very well-read, practical people who I'd put in charge without any hesitation.

It's always interesting to hear Rick Ragsdale talk. I wonder if he's got a degree in English; he's very convincing. So is Walker, though. Can't decide on the 1984 data issue.

Let's dump the NA Zine Poll. Not boycott it, just abandon it. Along with rating systems. They simply give rise to petty complaints and serve no valuable function except novice information, which serves you, Bruce, amply provide with Supernova.

Where does Terry Tallman hail from? Sealth was the name of a great Indian chief near Seattle (who also was one).

I've always liked Denver's old style (a la Calypso and Country Boy).

Paul Rueterberg and I will always consider each other politically ignorant, but I like the guy already, without ever having met him.

((Yep, Paul's one of the more likable chaps I've met too, even though his politics are screwy. Terry Tallman lives in Seattle. I've never gotten to know him well.

I agree with you on rating systems, but not the Zine Poll. Sure, it's got its faults, but I don't see it as having no useful function.

The Gary Coughlan I know doesn't deserve to be attacked in any zines'))

From Porter Wightman (9/20/83):

Dear BRUX,

Please find my \$5.00 enclosed to bring me through issue 95. You know, you're not really doing the hobby a service by going broke. You may lose lots of money on VD but all us subbers pay \$5.00 semi-annually to speed you on the path to destruction. We're all going broke! Who's getting our money?

Broke in Rochester

PS. Even if it was \$5.00 a month I'd need my fix.

((But nobody has ever had more fun than I am in the process of going bankrupt! Seriously, VD doesn't cost all that much any more now that I've gone ditto. I maybe lose \$25 or \$30 on a normal issue; not much more. Thanks for renewing.))

From Mark Berch (9/14/83):

Dear Bruce,

Michalski's diatribe against season-separation-on-request was based entirely on the notion that such requests are generated by players too lazy to work out the conditionals. I had given a counterexample, a simple hypothetical where there was only a single build, but the player needed to know what that build was in order to determine what diplomacy to use. John ignored that, as he generally does with arguments he can't refute (of course, I've been known to resort to that sort of trick myself...). I'll give another example, this time from a real game, the last DW Demo game, 1980AY. In W '12, France had to remove one of his three units. If he removed F Adr, as I very much wanted him to do, I could then stab Turkey in S '13. If he didn't remove it, I couldn't stab Turkey (because I anticipated that in F '13, F Adr would be used to prop up Turkey, and would provide the balance of power in the evenly-divided Balkans). Now, obviously I am capable of writing contingencies both ways (my personal record is 7 sets of contingent orders covering 18 different permutations). The problem was my diplomacy in the pre-S '13 period. If I know I'm stabbing, I'll promise Turkey anything even half-way reasonable -- I don't want to put him on his guard, and would be willing to promise to halt my northern campaign. On the other hand, if I'm not stabbing in S '13, I want to leave a good chance to stab him later, and I want to bargain for myself as forward a position as Turkey would permit. So I cannot know what diplomatic approach to take until I see the French removal.

One writer suggested that there is always one's ally to also make the request. But one does not always have allies, and allies cannot be depended on.

As for VD's policy, while I understand your desire to compromise, by making the touchstone the number of adjustments, you've still got your eye on the wrong factor. As I've indicated, a single build or removal can be the factor, and I do not think that the diplomat's interest should be compromised. Why not leave it to the players? Honor all season separation requests. However, state that if the situation falls below some minimum level of complexity (which you can define any way you like), a player requesting a separation should (but is not obliged to) give you his reasons. If his reasons seem good to you, then separate the season -- DON'T COMPROMISE HIS DIPLOMATIC RIGHTS. If the reasons don't seem good to you, then don't be so intrusive as to combine the seasons. Separate them anyhow, but print the name of the requestor. If the players are annoyed at him, they have their ways of extracting revenge. This should also dissuade some players from frivolous requests. While this is still GM intrusion into the game, it's much less so than affecting the actual play of the seasons, which could deprive a player of his diplomatic options or even NMR him.

((The decision's already been made, and I stand behind it. Understand that I am with you 100% from a philosophical standpoint. You are right. There are rare occasions -- very rare, under my houserules -- where a player might be denied the option of separation when he really needs it.

But, like Michalski, you are ignoring the other side of the coin. I can tell you this flat out: there are players in VD who make knee-jerk separation requests. I am unwilling to let them slow the game down every season just out of habit. Nor am I willing to interfere, even to the extent of printing the name of the offender if I don't like his reasons. That's equivalent to me saying to the other players, "Hey, guys, I don't like this player's reasons for requesting a separation, and if you are irritated by it too, attack for me!" I might consider automatically publicizing the name of a requestor, but I will not insert my judgement into the game as both you and Michalski have recommended.))

From James Woodson (9/3/83):

104

Dear Bruce,

First of all, to all the Doomies who have never been to a DipCon, Steve Knight is 100% correct. My time at DipCon was also a great time not because of the tournament, but rather because of the people I met. I urge everyone to attend one someday.

Speaking of cons, let all of your southern subbers (and anyone else interested) know that DixieCon will be held this winter, possibly here in Pensacola, but perhaps some other southern site. If you are interested let me or Bob Howerton know.

Congratulations on finding a new job. I hope you enjoy it as much as you expect. Funny thing, if I were not in the Navy, I'd probably return to school, earn my teaching certificate, and teach high school math/science (my degree in history notwithstanding).

I'm thrilled to see the advent of the RIGEL press war. I'm playing in a game in Lrksome that I entered as a standby. The game itself has been quite boring, but I've been involved in a press war with a player in another game, that has made it one of the more enjoyable games I've played in. This just goes to show that standby positions can be fun if you make them that way.

With regard to Cheesecake's policy on season delay/separations, I see no problem. Cheesecake was the first zine I played in and Andy has GMed perfectly. In fact, he's my choice as the best GM I've played under. I'd recommend Cheesecake to anyone wanting a new game (although Andy has no openings).

I'd like to know what your reaction is to the cartoons in Festungs Hof. I've enjoyed them a lot. Perhaps the Doomies would like to see them too. Have you considered reprinting some of the best ones in VD?

Well, I finally started flight school this week, and as a result, I'm studying to do Aerodynamics, Engineering, Navigation! Here goes!

PS. I hope you enjoy this Pensacola sand. I opened my last VD in my car. I'm still trying to get it clean!

((Heh, heh. The sand did its job, then!

Great minds must think alike -- I had already decided to run the cartoons from Festungs Hof in this annish. Bob Howerton and Ruth Glaspey have very, um, mischievous senses of humor. I'll get 'em both back someday, though!

I hope the RIGEL players keep it up, too. Since they're all new to the hobby (relatively), it's good to see so much enthusiasm among my players. Hell, I wish the players in the other games here would write press like theirs! Kleiman's "Jeopardy" press release in VD #84 brought in several compliments alone.

Have fun at DixieCon, and any readers interested in going should get in touch with Bob or James.))

From Marc Peters (9/18/83):

Dear BRUX,

Thanks for the sample. I'd read Cupcake's piece before, but it was good to see it again.

Why on earth are you so eager to talk me into a sub? (Pant, pant.) The sample you sent cost more in postage than your sub fee! You must be nuts or something! Well, my momma told me never to give a sucker a break, so included is a check -- \$10 for sub fees, and the odd dollar for a copy of your house rules. Don't worry, I don't want them for ridicule, nor to drop on my neighbor's dog, whose head nevertheless deserves crushing in just such a manner. Noisy critter! No, I just want to peruse through them sometime when I have an extra hour or two with nothing else to do.

I've heard lots of good things about VD and the several I've seen have looked awfully good. I'm looking forward to being a subber. I'd volunteer to stand by, but you need those like ~~that~~ a hole in the head. Good luck with your new job. Now you can afford to put out a 250-page VD!!!

((Don't tempt me -- you never know what I, in my infinite weirdness, might attempt for an encore!

I'm sure Bob Howerton can make your comments about my houserules into a very good cartoon for Festungs Hof. Personally, I think they're better used as insulation...

Anyway, since the HRS are included in this issue, I've added the extra back to your sub. Hope you enjoy your stay in the Land of Doomledom!))

From Michael Ditz:

Bruce,

I don't feel like sleeping so I am writing. Like your idea of having a poll about VD but I prefer to have a wider choice in responses. In particular, question #1 should be rated from 0 to 10.

With regard to delaying a season, I feel that two people should need to request it. But for splitting a season one person should be enough if a fair number of retreats and/or builds happen.

Wish you the best of luck with your new job at GE and even more luck using COBOL. My own prejudices (not really pre-judging because I have used it) keep me from saying anything nice about that @#(*% language. But then again judging from the length of your houserules you and COBOL should get along fine.

On the subject of support vs. holding what would you do if a person orders this?

A Ber-Mun

A Ber-Mun

If you consider this a double order then by the same token the support + hold would be a double order. However, if not, then it would seem the other should not be either.

Loved the envelope and sand.

((The order A Ber-Mun would be allowed here in the example you raise, since it is the only order submitted for the unit, even though it was submitted twice. That's a totally different situation than giving a unit two different orders.

I don't have a provision in my houserules for delaying a season entirely by player request, except for S '01.

Yeah, I get along well with COBOL and always have. Okay, so it takes a lot of coding to accomplish anything. But it is a readable (even to novice programmers) language, and I think it's easier to use than any other. But then again, maybe that's just my affinity for verbosity playing tricks on my mind again!))

From Ig Lew (8/23/83):

Dear BRUX,

I would phone a player who forgets to vote in written orders also. In fact, I have done it; I think it was Olsen but I'm not sure.

If I were to be picky about time, I'd have an interesting problem in that I habitually keep my clock running 10 to 30 minutes fast.

What if your deadline is 12:05 a.m. Sunday and you go by "my clock is always right"? First thing Sunday morning Joe Player calls up but your clock is 10 minutes slow and says 11:52. Are Joe's orders on time or is he more than 11 hours late because your clock says it's 11:52 Sunday morning?

I can't see why you all get so excited about typing your own phone number wrong. An NMR is an NMR; the game won't be helped by worrying about whose fault it is. Another thing is when you worry about players getting equal treatment. If you just give your best anti-NMR treatment to everyone, who will complain? No one can ask for better treatment and only a prick would demand worse treatment for the others. Back to the phone # typo, when the guy didn't get any orders in, you'd know something is amiss and be able to act on it.

Here's one to make you cringe: it was long ago so I don't remember the details, but something like: "A Kie-Hol, A Ruh S A Kie-Hol, and A Mun...hm...What should I do with A Mun?" (I always talk to myself when I'm on the phone.) "Well, you could go to Tyo, or..." "Yeah, I'll go to Tyo." This really happened. Don't bother to ask for names, I can't remember. (☺)

Isn't "dominatix" a feminine form? Looks like it, like "aviatrix" and "executrix", etc., none of which one sees any more.

It occurs to me that eating one's huntee serves only to (maybe) save a cow in the produce department. A deer is just as dead -- eaten or not.

Freedom is mostly bunk.

I take that back -- for those without benefit of cow, I suppose it does matter if the huntee is et.

Nixon did want to resign, I might point out.

I won't pretend USSR is nicer than USA. USA is easily defendable politically; I think the main problems with the government are reflected psychologically. But I don't want to talk about it -- ask somebody else.

If you weren't so tight-ass (Thesis Douglas, who is mildly anti-rag, would say "Tight ass? Damn straight!"), you could say, "Seasons will be separated for a good reason."

Stop me if I've told you -- I recall a season in which there were a bunch of retreats and builds, so I explained on paper why each was relevant to my orders, multiplied out the possible combinations and gave a minute to write orders for each condition. Turned out to be a few days so I sent the pages to the GM figuring I'd at least have a good sob story if they weren't separated. Turned out 4 out of 5 requested separation anyway.

Discussing merits, or lack thereof, of Spanish culture.

Sister: What good is Spain, anyway?

Me: Well, if it weren't for Spain, France would be on the corner and it would look funny.

Brother: ...and Portugal would be an island!

(I suppose you think that's worth printing.)

It was in Cheesecakes that I read the suggestion that separation requestors ought to choose the summer/winter results they think most likely and write a set of orders conditional thereon and request separation conditional on any other results.

Or you could have a shorter deadline for a winter season, so as to not slow down the game. Would be a nuisance to GMs with many games, I suppose.

There are people up here who want to kick Alaska out of the union too. They claim Alaska is being "used" -- that you folks get more out of us than we get out of you, which I believe. Detractors say if we left Papa US the commies would attack immediately, which is bullshit. All the same I'd just as soon stay part of the USA.

I live here as a result of inertia. When I was 4 years old I was carted up here by my mother from my birthplace of L.A. (of which I have no memories). Now I stick around because I've grown used to it and have friends here, and because it costs money to move. If it weren't for that, I'd probably be in Australia.

Mm, I suppose you want an endgame statement from me too. Okay. As I recall, when I came in ((to JUPIER)) I was being cut up by Olsen. Austria and Germany were dying too, so I wrote to them saying we should make a sort of Dreikaiserbund and order nicely for each other at least long enough to get us out of shit creek. This was done.

I kept on writing to Hauterberg, and one of us pointed out that because of proxy, a win would be impossible because if/when it got down to two they'd keep ordering each other away, so the logical goal was a two-way draw. Then my great mathematical mind discovered that if a country is eliminated, any two countries equidistant around from the eliminatee get to order each other twice as often. So Paul and I went about eliminating Italy. We finally succeeded but it didn't help much because I started not

writing and botching orders. So Paul started allying with Dave and I resigned.

LUNA ended too, huh? This one started with a phone call from BRUX. Apparently he was one short of a multiple of 7 to start a new batch of games. I had expressed interest but sent no box. BRUX offered me a free game. I said okay -- this was my first mistake.

A few days later this guy calls me up and says this is ditz I want Norway. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about because I didn't get VD yet. So he explains "You're England and I'm Russia. Anyway I just wanted to let you know I want Norway." I was thinking, "Right, asshole, and I want Moscow" but I said something like slow down, buddy, wait till I get the game start. I got VD a few days later and saw Osuch was France. I tried to be fair and wrote to him and Germany both, but I ended up allying with Osuch anyway and, after a few turns, gave up on feeling guilty about it. Also in spring '01 I intended to write to Austria and Turkey to say Ditz is a jerk so attack him, but I never mailed them. No fear, they attacked him anyway. Things were fine until Turkey stabbed Austria and Ditz started getting big again, then it was me and Osuch against Russia and Turkey with them others squashed in between. Ditz wrote a letter saying he was forced to ally with Turkey because me and Osuch were "so damn buddy buddy". This was true so I figured I'd be nice and make the first move. A few weeks later I got around to setting up the board. Wondering if I should phone or write Ditz, I looked up the deadline in VD cops it's missed so I NMR. Then I figure enough of this shit and I resign.

I figured no sense in even sending final orders, because there was already a standby called to do it. But he NMRed and I was blamed.

((You were? It would have been nice of you to send in final orders, but I don't recall anyone blaming you. Your analyses of JUPITER and LUNA, although sent late and printed very late, are interesting to read. I like your description of the phone call from Ditz.

The example you refer to regarding your Army Munich is a clear case of GM interference. I don't know if you told me before about the incident with all the conditional orders (it sounds familiar), but you seem to miss the point that negotiations can be affected by non-moving seasons as well as spring or fall orders.

Thanks for writing. Your style is, uh, unique and I wouldn't want your letters to stop arriving for the world!))

From Bob Olsen (9/21/83):

Dear BRUX,

Gee, it's taken an unconscionably long time for me to get to this, hasn't it? All I can say in my defense is...well, you haven't sent me anything to activate a letter, now have you? Actually I had been half-expecting a new VD any day. Guess there's no mid-monthly this time, too bad, one does become spoiled...

I've seen that you're just sweeping from victory to victory lately. First of all congratulations on your three-way draw for Most Obnoxious Hobby Member; couldn't have happened to a more obnoxious guy...apparently. Anyway this is an award you've been working toward for a long time and I'm so glad you've finally achieved it.

As for the Toady Poll, please see the enclosed. There was a slight error; my vote was not counted for some reason, and since I voted for Jim-Boob, that gives him the necessary points for a solo win, just like last year. I'm sure you will not be sorry to see this since I personally never considered you a toady...for one thing, toadies are never obnoxious.

Pudgecon went over well, or so it seemed; it seemed more like a continuation after a brief break, than a separate event. One bit of controversy for you is that the old computer got quite a workout this year, and there's some debate over whether this was a good idea or not. About half say it ruined the purity of bodily essence of Diplomacy

fetishism, and the other half seem to have enjoyed it. Personally I'd rather watch somebody else play computer games -- or watch somebody else count out-of-state license plates -- than provide cannon fodder for the likes of Ozog and Mazzer in Dip games, but then I never claimed to like FTF Dip anyway. I have enough embarrassment in postal play without looking for trouble...

The ol' computer is back in operation after having its printer die for a couple of months. Computer maintenance -- that's the racket to get into. The Atari Service Centers here in town consist of one car-stereo store, and one furniture store. The car-stereo guy, at least, is a total incompetent; after he "fixed" the thing for six weeks I got it back and it didn't work so I sent it to New York and got it repaired in three days. Langley and I both crashed at about the same time, I guess, so I had some idea of what he was going through.

Woody's going to let me GM one of his games while he's in Europe. My first taste of power! Of course I am shifting the game to YOUR house rules for that one season -- these are (ooh I loved it when Rod said it) bad kids who don't write their orders right. Heh heh. As you may have heard I made good use of your house rules at Pudgecon (and not for heating either). Actually had Kathy made the trip out, I was going to have them framed and hung on the wall when she got here, but had to think of another plan. But never fear, I did find out they were good for something. Unfortunately, we discovered that Gary is too cheap to pay 71 cents for them -- on the other hand, this was the original version without the amendments...

((Selling defective merchandise, eh? Yes, I heard the story (I think it was printed in Magus about how you went down to the airport with a copy of my house rules and tried to lure people off the streets and into Pudgecon. Did I get that right?

I was very pleased and honored to tie for the Most Obnoxious Hobby Member award. After all these years, it's nice to feel appreciated! As for Roody of the Year, well, let's see how "Dead Skunk" Luedi rules on that one before I make my acceptance speech.

Sorry for the lack of personal correspondence lately; this month's been just a bit busy but I've managed to get a few letters out so I'll get one to you sometime in the next year. Or sooner. Now that you're not useful to me in Swedish...aw, never mind.

Glad to hear that Pudgecon was a success again. Damned if I didn't want to go. Some year...))

From Ronald Brown (9/4/83):

Dear Bruce,

Delighted to hear you found a job, though I'm jealous. I love COBOL. It has just the kind of organization and structure that so many languages lack. So how come nobody will even consider hiring me to write programs for them? I went to the university for seven years and worked in a profession for the past eight in order to qualify to clean printers and mount tapes! I am making less than half of what I was as a teacher.

Oh well, they keep telling me it's a stepping stone. That's hard to believe at three in the morning when I'm wrapping listings to be sent out in the morning delivery.

Hopefully, all this will change before too long. At least a zillion people have told me that they started out the same way. (So, when did you serve your apprenticeship?)

Don't envy your commuting, though. At least I can be at work in ten minutes. I had quite enough of long-distance driving my last year in Maniwaki. The car falling apart under you is just a symptom of what's happening to you...

Glad to see VD doing so well. I've always enjoyed it and appreciated the work you put into Supernova. Your promptness in dealing with requests helps keep beginners in the hobby, I'm sure.

Guess you got a picture of yourstruly at Origins '82, so you don't need another to clutter your desk. Does this mean you're coming out with a very special issue

before too long?

In response to Mark Berch on miswritten orders, I think this "controversy" has about run its course.

Anyhow, to clarify on what is required in an order, it does not state in the Rulebook that unit designations must be given, as Mark points out. Nor do I mention this in my houserules. Does this encourage players not to label their units when submitting their orders as Mark claims? Well, I've GMed 14 games over three years and only once had orders submitted without unit designations.

I think the argument focuses on a player's responsibilities -- at least, that's where I'd like to keep it. If a player writes "A Bre-Par" when the unit is a fleet, the order is clearly illegal. If he writes "A Bre-Pic" when he has a fleet in Brest, Mark would "correct" the player and I would not. He would make the correction because he feels that the unit information is not required and is therefore trivial. I do not because it is ambiguous and I am loath to make any decisions involving player intentions. I avoid that by accepting the player's written order, as is. I don't see how an assumption that a written order is an error in need of correction by the GM is fair to anyone. If that's how Mark runs his games, so be it, but I think, in all fairness, I would want to know what else he will "correct" for me if I were to play under him. As a player I want my GM to follow my orders as I wrote them, not as he thinks I should have written them. I hold that the player, not the GM, is responsible for his own orders.

((And of course I'm with you all the way. Mark doesn't run any games, by the way; he just sits around and acts like a GM. I think you would be wise to mention in your houserules that you do require the correct unit designation, since the Rulebook doesn't say it.

Yep, I've got your picture, and a bunch of others from Canada thanks to Dave Carter who sent them on. Even got one of Randolph in there.

Hey, I hope your job situation improves. I guess I'm one of the lucky ones -- I started out as a programmer right out of college, though I later went back and into various and sundry other professions. Keep plugging, anyway; you've certainly got the drive and the smarts.

As for the commuting, I've gotten into a carpool so that money, at least, isn't a major factor any more. But two hours a day on the road adds up to a lot of lost time over the course of a year or two, so I'll probably still be moving sometime in the near future.

If you mean to ask whether I'll be putting out an issue with all those photos I have; sorry, but no. The price of printing pictures is too prohibitive. But I will have a very nice photo album to show off at cons from now on.))

From Gary Coughlan (9/27/83):

Dear BRUX,

I just wanted to make sure you know that I am not in favor of things like the Bakke decision. I do think that the most qualified should get the positions regardless of race. Bakke should have been in the school. I don't believe in quotas.

However I don't think that scholarships fall into this category and that is what my comments were upon. Every ethnic group that I know of has scholarships tailored for their people, like B'nai B'rith, clubs in high schools, and state colleges. I don't see how the existence of any of these discriminates against you. You doubtless had access to scholarships that I did not (like New York State scholarships -- I doubt you would have been eligible for a Memphis State University scholarship). Well guess that's it. Tll later...

((Looks as though I somehow misinterpreted your last letter. I am not opposed to the type of scholarships you describe. I thought you were backing quotas and other forms of reverse discrimination.))

Variations

by Randolph Smyth

Most of you know that I've never been a big fan of variants, for the same reasons that I use when I'm urged to get into the wargaming scene. There are just too many different games knocking around, and none that I know of with a basis in "true" Diplomacy offer significant advantages over the original. So far, the same old board and rules provide me with great enjoyment, with no need of the "variety" ascribed to changes in either. Now that I'm into Diplomacy, I find it more satisfying to hone my skills (what skills -- yeh) here than to jump feet first into half-a-dozen alternatives. Why, then, an article entitled as this one?

Foiled ya! I won't be discussing variants, but variations. The latter beasts arise whenever a player gets into more than one zine, and thus plays under more than one set of houserules. The wrinkles that arise may explain why I remain so fascinated by the standard game. A question, please: would you play an identical position, against identical opponents, differently under different GMs? (On a practical level, is your view of a game altered if the game is orphaned and picked up immediately by a GM using different procedures?) I submit that all changes, including these "extra-game" ones, must be considered in order to squeeze the maximum out of each position. True, the standardized format of most competent GMs will keep such alterations to a minimum, but they should not go unnoticed.

Extremely unusual houserules and/or downright incompetence must be dealt with on an individual basis and are unsuitable as examples. However, take a common discrepancy -- publishing schedules. There you are, with 7 centers, in the middle of a terrific battle, with the option of finishing a "strong second" behind a 14-center candidate for the win, or joining an opposing alliance involving close tactical cooperation with 3-4 other powers. Some would unhesitatingly opt for one course or the other depending on their personal philosophy, their knowledge of the other players, etc. But suppose things are not so clear-cut; if there is flexibility to make a true "decision" as opposed to a "reflex", factors which are not part of the game per se can and should be taken into account.

If one of the small nations is commanded by someone from California, another by a Texan, and the Ontario gazette runs on three-week deadlines, think carefully before going the "cooperation" route, unless you are Mr. Megabucks and enjoy long-distance calls. If everyone lives within 500 miles of each other (note that in any but the small-circulation zines, the geographic distribution of the players is a GM option as certainly as the deadlines are), and the deadlines are a leisurely four weeks, then the big power has probably made a mistake in committing himself to the win in the face of potentially united opposition. On the other hand, if the deadlines are even longer, or the zine appears irregularly, boredom becomes a major consideration, and is particularly likely to strike down one of the small powers at a critical moment. Remember that a smaller but opportunistic power is more likely to stab for second in this case as well, unless the entire alliance expressly forbids it! To ignore such parameters is to invite disaster.

The basic character of the game can thus be determined by the GM, as much as or more than by the players themselves. I don't have facts to back this up (do I ever?), so perhaps I'm about to "suck wind". But I'll lay a moderate bet that games run on four-week deadlines also last the longest in terms of game years. Except in special circumstances, I suggest that the effective "victory criterion" is only 13-15 units with shorter or longer deadlines, since a power reaching this level can steamroller an opposition where even the slightest confusion exists. With coordinated defense, normally possible on four-week deadlines only, even 16-17 centers should require a critical fight and a bit of luck to win (always assuming the commitment of the smaller powers to the defense).

A short note on chronic GM errors: I think my own play becomes increasingly less conservative with every GMing oddity. The "slow but sure" option is not at all "sure" if the adjudications are unreliable, and general confusion is best exploited by aggression and surprise. The thought that, win or lose, one's connection with the game will be terminated sooner with a "fast" strategy is also in plain sight in such situations.

Variations and the Great Powers

|||

If you're a good little Doonie, you've already read Randolph Smyth's excellent article about variations. The article was reprinted here to serve as a springboard for what follows. This business of variations which arise due to differing sets of house-rules has intrigued me ever since I initially read the article several years ago. But Randolph's article pertained to how players might behave once the game is underway, given the varying playing environments found under different GMs. I now wish to shift the discussion to focus on the effects of such variations as they relate to the seven Great Powers in the game. A question, to be brought up again later in the article: Would you base your country preference list on a zine's houserules?

It may be of some value to give a practical example at this point, to illustrate what I'm driving at. Consider the fact that in Graustark, the country of Italy has done extremely well over the years. What possible explanations are there for this (seemingly) anomalous success? Some answers:

1. Even in a zine as old as Graustark (20 years), the number of games played to date is far from enough to establish any trends with a meaningful degree of statistical significance. In other words, the high incidence of Italian victories is merely a fluke; an aberration whose effects would be greatly reduced or destroyed entirely if thousands of games were to be played in Graustark.

2. It just happens to be the case that a fairly high number of Graustark's better players prefer Italy, and place it high on their preference lists -- thus eventually producing a high success rate for that country.

3. Graustark is right and the rest of the hobby is wrong -- ~~the rest of the hobby~~ Italy really is the most powerful country and the sum total of the results produced by the rest of the hobby over the years is anomalous; not the Graustark results.

4. The style of play in Graustark differs significantly from that found in other zines. Perhaps its players are more favorable to the Italy/Austria alliance (for instance) than are players elsewhere.

5. There are some houserules in Graustark that very subtly tip the balance of power more in favor of Italy than the houserules of most other zines.

Let's briefly explore each of these possibilities. #3 is the easiest to discuss, as it can be instantly discarded. The number of games played elsewhere in the hobby to date is statistically significant, and it would be preposterous to assume that these are anomalous and that Graustark's are a true reflection of Italian strength. We may dispose of that possibility, to start with.

Possibilities #2 and 4 are, on the other hand, not so easy to discount. It is indeed conceivable that the best players in Graustark prefer Italy; likewise it is not impossible (nor even unlikely) that players there employ a different style than others in the hobby (e.g. that they place higher priorities on the formation of alliances favorable to Italy). To answer these questions, it would be necessary to interview the players, or study their games, or both. If I must speculate from relative ignorance (yeah, BRUX, you must...), I would guess that even if these two situations do exist in Graustark, they are probably fairly unimportant factors. But without a detailed study of the players and the games there, such speculation is of course very risky.

Possibility #1, I believe, must be considered to be easily the biggest factor in Italy's success rate in Graustark. That is, out of several dozen games completed, and perhaps 25 to 30 wins (I'm not at all sure of the exact numbers), it is very reasonable that Italy, the weakest power of all, might win six or seven times. Clearly one would not expect this pattern to continue indefinitely; if Italy were to win 60 or 70 games out of 250 or 300 wins, then this explanation could no longer be considered a reasonable one. But six or seven wins in the history of Graustark can very easily be viewed as a rather minor ripple in the normal pool of long-range probabilities.

And that, in an extremely roundabout way, brings me to possibility #5: that there are some Graustark houserules that very subtly bias the game in favor of Italy. Do I think this is the case? I don't know. I have simply presented the situation in Graustark as an example; a jumping-off point for the concept I wish to present here: that the houserules of certain zines may (and in fact, must) favor some countries more than those of other zines. I shall delve into this momentarily with some specifics, but first there are some peripheral points that I wish to make.

First, the above discussion in no way is intended to convey a value judgment regarding Graustark. I simply chose that example because I happen to have heard about Italy's unusual performance record there.

Secondly, the word "houserules" in the context of this article means something slightly different than its normal definition. I am, for the purposes of this discussion, referring to a "houserule" as the way in which a given GM will rule in a given situation, whether or not he formally spells this out in advance. This is in slight contrast to the usual definition of the term, which refers to a written decision of a ruling, distributed to players before it is applicable. The perceptive reader may note with amusement that GMs such as Steve Arnawoodian or John Caruso, who profess to despise the little beasties, in fact have as many "houserules" as do I, since the set of potential circumstances in their games is for all practical purposes identical to those in mine.

Third, I do not intend to imply that any significant advantage (or disadvantage) might accrue to certain countries by virtue of a zine's houserules. To the contrary, I view the effects I am about to describe as negligible. That is, I don't feel that these effects would make themselves apparent unless hundreds of thousands of games were played in each of several different zines, and then the statistics closely analyzed. So, those of you who have read up to this point in the hope of obtaining some practical advice may just as well abort now (sorry!), but those interested in the theoretical side of the matter will want to read on.

...Which brings me, at last, to the central issue of the article. Let's look at some examples of variations and how they might affect (usually very slightly) the fortunes of particular countries.

1. "In this zine, the abbreviation "Nor" is always considered ambiguous." I have seen this houserule before. Who might this affect negatively? Why, what country moves the most in the "Nor" spaces, and is therefore most likely to run afoul of this houserule? England, of course! This houserule, then, could be reasonably viewed as unfavorable to England, as in the long run players of that country will probably be hurt by it more than will others. On the other hand, I would think that this rule might ever so slightly favor Russia, who is England's frequent enemy in Scandinavia. The houserule is pro-Russia; anti-England.

2. "The neutral orders to be used in the event of a Spring 1901 NMR in this zine are...". VD is one of many zines that employ neutral orders in Spring '01. Who benefits most from this? To some extent, the answer to that question depends on what the neutral orders are, but most zines that use them use fairly standard moves; e.g. (for England) F Edi-Nwg and F Lon-Nth. Consider England's situation, again. If NMR in Spring '01 meant that all units hold, then an NMRing England would lose practically all hope of a build without this houserule. The same is certainly not true of a similarly unfortunate Germany, which still has a decent shot at Denmark or Holland. So England benefits more than most countries when neutral orders are used; Germany less than some others. The houserule is pro-England; anti-Germany.

3. "Draws include all survivors." Surely everyone has heard of this houserule; it has generated no small degree of controversy in at least one recent instance. But who does it favor? Question: who survives most of the time? France, for one. France is among the leaders in games survived without participating in the draw. Who dies easily? Austria, most of all. There is, however, a mitigating circumstance in this example: in some cases DIAS games go on longer than usual as the dominant powers destroy

the lesser ones to shorten the draw. But, frequently too, DIAS games end in 1908 or '09, with a couple of tiny powers sharing in a draw from which, without this houserule, they would have been excluded. That tiny surviving power is much more likely to be France than Austria. The houserule is pro-France; anti-Austria.

4. "Seasons will be separated at the request of one player." Whew! We are now entering shaky territory indeed as we go to houserules whose effects in terms of the countries are very difficult to determine. But here's how I'd call this one: since this houserule makes it easy to separate seasons, we should assume that there will be a higher incidence of winters played separately. So who is helped, or hurt, the most when winters are played separately? There are some countries whose builds are often very revealing, and others who are better able to disguise the purpose behind their new units. England, I think, falls into the first category; the build of an army anywhere will often alert Germany to possibly unfriendly British intentions and F Lon or F Lvp will invariably unnerve the Frenchman. Austria, on the other hand, does not have this problem to the same extent that England does; even a Russian ally might be able to stomach a build of A Vis or A Bud under many circumstances. And although it is true that even during combined seasons, the players can "see" each others' builds via the mechanism of conditional orders, many players don't. The houserule, then, is in my opinion pro-Austria; anti-England. (Ever so slightly...)

5. "Impersonation of the GM is permitted in this zine." Impersonation of the GM often involves the mailing of a phony readjudication. To whom do you send such a notorious document? To a neighboring country being played by a chowderhead, of course! (Any player above the intelligence level of a chowderhead is likely to see right through the scam; and the chowderhead targeted to receive the forged adjudication is usually a neighbor of the sender, who himself is eager to take immediate advantage of the resulting misordered units next season.) Which countries are most likely to have chowderheaded neighbors? Well, which countries have the most neighbors? Russia, for one. She starts the game with four neighbors to Turkey's two, and is likely to maintain such a lead throughout the course of the game. The houserule, then, is pro-Russia; anti-Turkey. (It is also anti-chowderhead.)

6. "Players may build inland fleets." Don't laugh -- Fol Si Fie used to have this houserule, and the Rulebook doesn't directly prohibit the tactic. For some reason, though, most Italian (and English, and Turkish) players in that zine never showed much interest in taking advantage of the rule; while an astute Germany could. (Readers who want to see an excellent tactical article which involves the build of a fleet in Munich are referred to George Leritte's article in Diplomacy World #32.) The houserule is pro-Germany; anti-Italy.

7. "Unordered units which are dislodged will automatically be disbanded." -- about this one, who knows?! This favors, perhaps, whichever country is least likely to have a stationary unit in a position to be dislodged. Certainly dislodgements occur with greater frequency in some spaces (such as Belgium) than others (like Armenia). It would take a computer to even begin to figure out which countries might be favored by this rule. But Granstark, I notice, has this houserule. Pure speculation: could the configuration of the board be such that, in the long run, units in or near Italy are somewhat less subject to supported attacks than those elsewhere on the board? Perhaps it is so; perhaps not. This is all food for very highly intense theoretical thought only. The houserule is pro-?????; anti-?????. (But it does favor someone -- it must, due to the asymmetry of Calhauer's Europe.)

8. "Houserule amendments can be made only with the approval of a majority of the players." (The normal procedure is much simpler: the GM simply announces the amendment. Taken in isolation, this rule seems absolutely incapable of helping or hindering any of the seven countries. Ahhh, but this could be viewed as a second-order variation. Assume for a moment that the other houserules make the zine, say, slightly pro-Austria

and anti-France (meaning, of course, that the sum total of the zine's houserules, integrated together and weighted in proportion to their relative country-affecting abilities, favor Austria and work against France). This houserule, which makes it difficult to change other houserules, effectively amplifies the biases already present. In other words, in the context of this zine's other houserules, this rule is pro-Austria; anti-France. (The rich get richer, and...) And the reverse would hold true as well; if the houserules are easily amended, then the pro-Austria/anti-France bias in the zine is slightly weakened. Or, in this hypothetical zine we are considering, the houserule would then become pro-France; anti-Austria. (Second-order houserule variations with this effect may justly be thought of as "Robin Hood" rules.)

All of the above is not meant to imply that a player should base his country preference lists on a zine's houserules. If, on the average, Russia wins 19 per cent of all won games and Germany 17 per cent; then even in the most strongly pro-Germany, anti-Russia zine, we might expect the percentages to swing to, say, 18.99% for Russia and 17.01% for Germany. So if you prefer a given country, you should not alter your preference list to accommodate the houserules you will be playing under (to answer the question posed at the beginning of the article). Nor should your choice of a zine be based on your country preference. The advantages thus gained are far too miniscule to make this a practical consideration. (In addition to which we can safely assume that no player has either the resources or the ability to determine which zines favor which countries overall.)

The whole concept leads to some more entertaining food for thought, though, which I've already digested but will be delighted to regurgitate for you: could it be that a GM, in devising his houserules, subconsciously favors his favorite country? Conversely, is Bill Highfield unwittingly GMing pro-Russia games in The Modern Patriot? — what a beautiful irony! (Better Czech those houserules, Bill.)

Does Kathy Byrne subconsciously choose pro-Italy zines to play in, thus undermining her conscious attempts to avoid all facets of houserule-awareness? Do "strict" GMs run, perhaps, pro-Turkey zines; simply because most of the "strict" houserules just happen by sheer chance to favor Turkey? The possibilities are countless...

But the thinkers out there in the Diplomacy world will surely acknowledge the existence of these variations due to different sets of houserules, and the fact that such variations can and do affect the chances of the seven countries in different ways from zine to zine.

Next month: the effects of acid rain on Austria's decision to open to Galicia...



Cyclic Article (from page 165)

article then -- I mean everyone will just begin at the top of the page anyway."

I looked at him quizzically. "So how should I handle it?"

"Look, Bruce, you're about to put out an anniversary issue, right? Use your imagination. What's always a problem for you when you put together a big issue?"

"Well, there's a lot of typing and..."

"No, I mean what part of the issue do you always have the hardest time filling?"

"Well, certainly not the letter column. Nor the press sections, especially RIGEL. I afraid I just don't see what you're getting at here."

He looked irritated. "Look, Bruce, when you put out a big issue, don't you always seem to have a number of pages with empty space at the bottom? A few lines; even a quarter of a page?"

A great light dawned, and then I knew what he meant. But what would be a suitable topic for such an article," I queried.

"Why don't you write about cyclic writing?" he suggested.

"Geez, I dunno — it sounds like rather a drab topic just to write about, doesn't

By Edmund Jedry

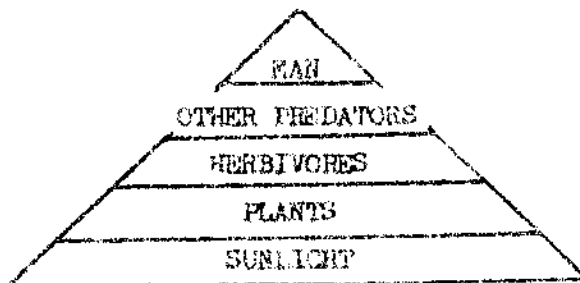
I hope that VD's subscribers will let me take a few minutes of their time to state some facts about a sport that has been the focus of several recent letters in the Gossip Column -- hunting. Before I begin, however, I would like to say that I will discuss this issue from a scientific point of view. I am a biologist whose studies have focused on evolution and ecology throughout my undergraduate and graduate school education.

The first term and basic law of nature that I would like to introduce to all Doomies, and ask them to keep in mind while reading this article, is "Balance-of-Numbers." Because of its importance to the food-web, "Balance-of-Numbers" is always considered when discussing ALL predator/prey relationships; e.g. deer (prey) v. forest vegetation (predator), mountain lions and/or wolf packs (predators) v. deer (prey), man (predator) v. all other organisms in our biosphere (prey).

For eons in the past, Mother Nature has ingeniously and lovingly enforced this law of "Balance-of-Numbers" because there is only a limited amount of energy that is available to support life on this planet. This amount is ultimately determined by the sun. But recently this balance of numbers has been upset.

This upset of nature's most basic and important law has been caused by a mammal who is, and always will be, in a second-place position behind the insects in ruling the planet earth -- MAN. His maintenance of this second-place ranking is due mainly to his Functional-Opposable Thumb and not his intelligence (or lack thereof) as many believe.

At some time, I am sure that all of you have seen the followed (oversimplified) Food (web) Chain diagram:



This graph depicts the proportion of each type of organism that our biosphere can support based on food/energy availability relationships. Note well that all energy to support life ultimately comes from the sun. The reason why the diagram is triangular rather than rectangular, for example, is due to energy expended during normal everyday activities. As one progresses up the food chain, energy is lost at each step due to entropy, metabolism, digestion, reproduction, etc. Therefore, only a smaller proportionate population can be supported as compared to the step below it.

In all species, more organisms are born than the environment can possibly support. Natural selection takes place here allowing the fittest to survive. Thus, the strongest (most adapted, not muscle-bound) have their reproductive information available for the next generation.

There are only two ways that natural selection eliminates excess numbers: starvation or predation. (Disease is a form of predation.) For organisms that are ranked lower on the food chain pyramid, it is most likely that the excess numbers will be eliminated through predation. However, for the predators which occupy the highest positions, starvation is their most likely end.

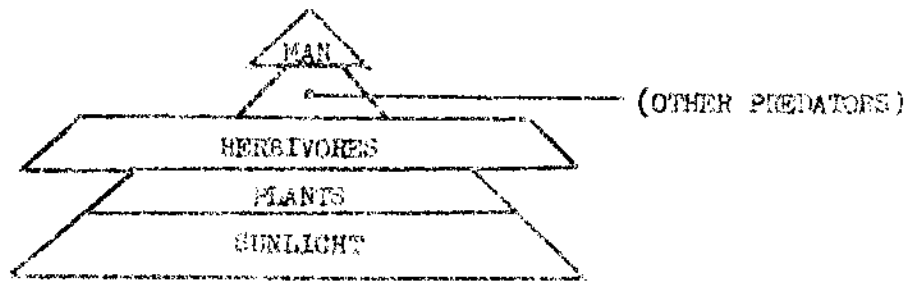
As an aside, I recall a story about a race between two steamboats down the Mississippi River. Both crews were determined to win. When the coal runs out, the crew on the losing boat had to use their axes to keep the engines running.

The first items to be burned are the non-essentials like furniture and lifeboats. After these have been used, the crew proceed to tear down the wood that forms the structure of the steamboats. By the time these boats cross the finish line, the only things that are left are the hull and the steam engines.

This is basically how an animal starves to death. First carbohydrate stores are depleted. Second to go is fat, except for the protective fat around the heart and kidneys and the lubricating fat around the eyes. Structural proteins, like muscle, are then degraded down to their carbohydrate precursors and ammonia. Finally, the fat around the heart, kidneys and eyes is broken down. But that is of no concern to the animal because the myelin around the axons of nerves is also being used for fuel. Death is just around the corner.

Starvation is obviously a slow and painful process. When an animal has starved to death it has basically digested itself.

Now that man has almost eliminated all predators -- with the current exception of himself -- from the food chain, the food web pyramid is distorted unnaturally like this:



Since there are no longer any large scale "natural predator populations" to balance the excess numbers of herbivores, they face a greater probability of starvation -- which is exactly what they do. I recall that several years ago a conservative estimate in a midwestern area that 75,000 deer starved to death, in just one state!

Apparently, the most humane solution to the above problem is to somehow restock our environment with natural predators. This, however, cannot be done. Man can, and does, live in harmony with herbivores both wild and domestic. Unfortunately, it is impossible to harmonize well with wild bears, lions, wolves, and other majestic predators.

The best mankind can do is to preserve what is left of the natural habitats for all creatures, and to carefully monitor and balance the excesses in numbers of game that live outside these areas. HUNTING.

The Friends of Animals, the Fund for Animals and National Humane Society, and some Bonnies oppose hunting. Some of their arguments are justified, but others are the result of their very good intentions prejudicing their judgements.

Populations of all species of animals are carefully monitored by game warden and outside environmental groups. Hunting licenses are basically issued in the following way:

- State A can naturally support100,000 of game X.
- State A has an estimated.....300,000 of game X.
- State A has an excess of.....200,000 of game X.
- State A will harvest.....100,000 of game X.

If state and/or federal agencies determine that a maximum of two game can be harvested per license, then 50,000 licenses will be issued in the above example.

I should add that the revenue generated from hunting and/or fishing licenses are used by government game officials for law enforcement and research projects to ensure the continued health and growth of our wildlife. Hunting does not spoil our environment, poaching does.

In conclusion, I stand in favor of hunting and against it. I do not favor the

abolition of hunting even though it does kill animals which are no threat to man. Yet I do not favor hunting because is it "macho", or because it is fun.

As with all things in life, the solution of an issue lies somewhere between the extremes. Hunting is no exception. Why don't all of us -- hunters and anti-hunters -- combine our resources to preserve what little remains of our natural habitats, develop more wildlife research projects, and declare an open season on those ~~poachers~~ poachers?

((Seven free issues to Edmund for an insightful look at hunting from a biological and ecological standpoint. Will this topic ever die down in VD? Maybe we could starve it to death? Seriously, thanks very much, Edmund.

~~~~~

And now for all you Austrians you want to hunt Italians...

### The Ionian Intrusion

The Austrian attack on Italy in 1901 is a rare event indeed. The moves involved (F Tri-Adr, A Bud-Tri, A Vie-Tyo) sacrifice Greece and probably Serbia while leaving the eastern borders undefended, all for the sake of snatching up Venice. If you really dislike Italy and you don't care what happens to yourself and you can determine that Italy will not foil the whole plan by opening either to Trieste or Tyrolia; then fine, do this. But the Austrian player who finds himself in the right diplomatic situation can in fact do much better. There is no need to sacrifice either Serbia or Greece, and the crucial Ionian Sea can be yours as well!

The diplomatic climate must be as follows. Russia and Turkey are preoccupied with each other, so that Russia does not open to Galicia and Turkey will not interfere with your designs on Serbia and Greece. Italy can be (but does not have to be) unfriendly and may in fact be attacking you. Germany is friendly and is willing and able to spare his Army Munich to help you in Spring '01.

The Austrian moves are fairly standard: F Tri-Alb, A Bud-Ser, A Vie-Tri. Russia has stayed out of Galicia. Turkey has opened to Armenia and at least one of them has opened to the Black Sea, indicating a war which, you hope, will last for a good while. Italy, having been duly warned that any attempt to move into Trieste will be stood off, has opened with A Ven-Tyo, A Rom-Ven, F Nap-Ion. Germany, cooperating nicely, has provided the only real surprise by standing off Italy with A Mun-Tyo.

Diplomacy for the Fall season is simple. Turkey is busy with Russia and, from his standpoint, seems to have little chance of keeping you from getting both Greece and Serbia via the usual supported move to Greece. Italy was told, truthfully, that he would be stood out of Trieste in the Spring; he is now told that he cannot hope to make it there in the Fall, either, as the Austrian army will remain there. Then with the Fall moves, you drop the bombshell: A Ser-Gre, A Tri-Ser, F Alb-Ion! The Italian fleet was occupied with picking up Tunis, since he had no army in a position to be convoyed, and the Ionian Sea falls right away to Austria. Trieste is vacant for the build of a fleet, Italy having been tricked into staying out, while the other build will be Army Vienna. Your Fleet Ionian will cause all kinds of headaches for the Italian even if his one build is Fleet Naples; he can dislodge you, but the Tyrrhenian is then open for a retreat. In the meantime, if he built in Naples, A Vie-Tyo (with German support?), F Tri-Adr, A Ser-Tri looks awfully nice for Spring '02!

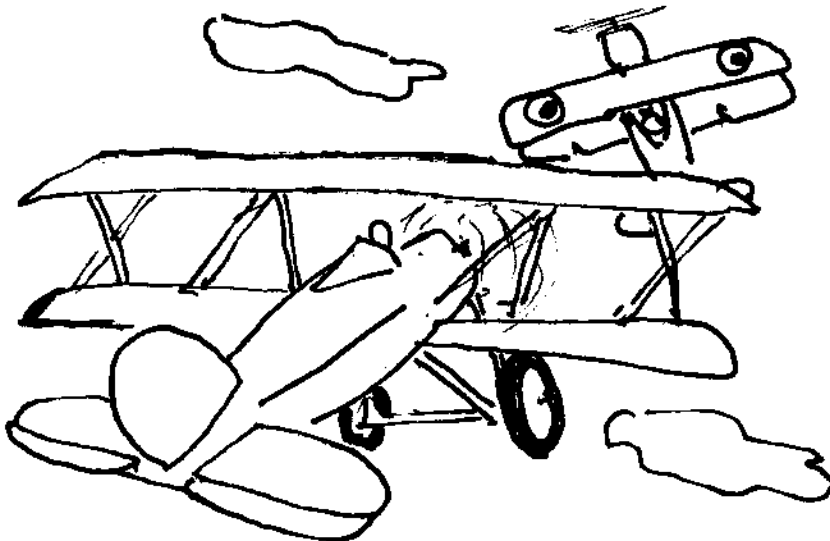
Just be sure that, through design or good fortune, the diplomatic situation is favorable before you attempt the Ionian Intrusion. If Russia or Turkey start eyeing you too soon, or if Italy cannot be tricked into making the right moves, then it's all for naught. But if you do pull it off, you have the definite upper hand against the Italian.

NAVAL WAR

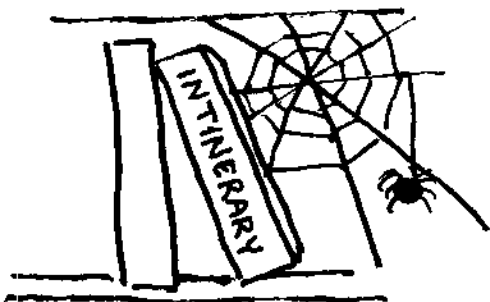


This game is sure to replace Valium as America's best form of sedation. Canasta players may find it amusing, but there is little scope for skill and it's about as realistic as a six-dollar bill.

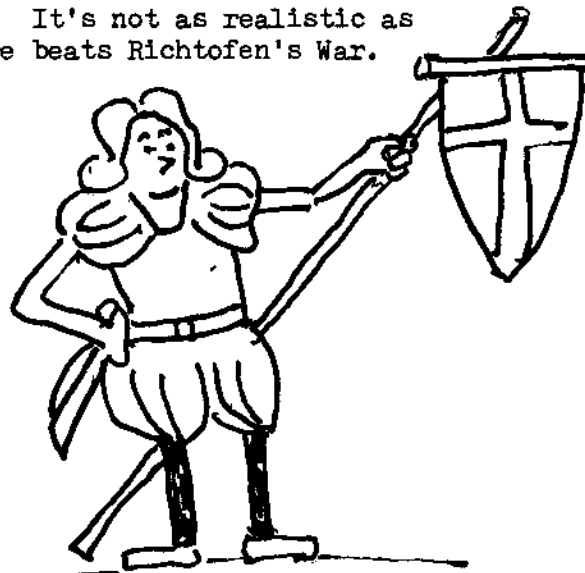
THE BLUE MAX



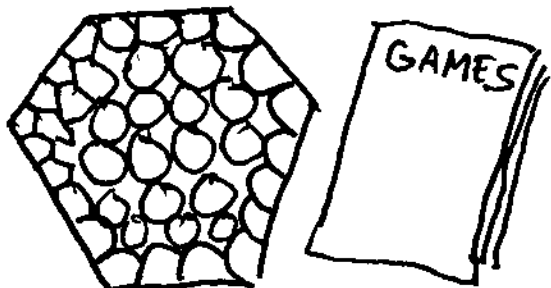
In the Blue Max GDW has perhaps the most playable game of World War I ariel combat on the market. It's not as realistic as Wings, but it sure beats Richtofen's War.



After two excellent releases in Marakesh and Bridgette, Xanadu's Itinerary falls short of the mark. After a few plays you are sure to place this on the bookshelf next to Richard Nixon's memoirs where it is sure to stay for a long time. The money is better spent on a few extra copies of Bridgette (best two-handed card game on the market).



Other than Diplomacy, I consider Conquistador the best game on the market. With room for strategy, skill, and diplomacy, it is a great deal of fun.



In the September issue of Games magazine the game of Star is given complete with its history, a copy of the instructions, and the playing board. For simply the cost of the magazine you get perhaps the best abstract game in years. (This is the only abstract game that has held my interest for that long. It is not only fun, but rivals chess and Go in room for skill.)



How To Reject an Article Without Starting a Feud With the Poor Sap

by Mark L. Berch

Bruce casually mentioned recently that he had rejected an article written by Rod Walker. He thereby revealed what is not really a secret, but more like a little-known fact: pubbers do reject articles. It's quite possible that the entire incident was made up, a bit of hobby theater if you will, just to get this point across.

Pubbers in those circumstances do have some need for a way to break this gently. Here are two suggested letters:

Dear Reginald,

Your article on the French opening was far and away the best article on openings that I have ever seen. If I were to publish it, I'm certain it would revolutionize the way France is played. Although, as you point out, the opening has occasionally been used, the arguments that you marshal for it are so powerful that I'm sure at least 2/3 of the French players will want to use it. This will cause the play of France, and thus the entire game, to become very stereotyped. It will also cause great problems for GMs who rely on country preference lists, since France will suddenly be in great demand, and England, Germany, and Italy will plunge to the bottom of the list. Unscrupulous GMs may resort to asking a higher game fee for those playing France. I'm sure you can easily imagine other problems which may arise. As much as I'd like to run your article, I cannot take the substantial risk of destroying the game and thus the entire hobby by printing it. I hope you'll understand.

Prudently yours,

PS Please sign me up for France in your next game opening.

Obviously, that PS is an optional feature. The next form letter would be of a more general nature; you could use it for any type of article.

Dear Chastity-Diligence,

I was enthralled with your recent article. It is by far the best article I've ever seen, inside or outside the hobby. I would be delighted and honored to publish it. However, if I were to do so, it would be quite impossible for me to ever publish another article of inferior quality. Alas, articles of this stature appear only once every ten years at best. Through no fault of your own, however, it is not possible to publish a dipzine with a publication schedule of once every ten years. It just cannot be done. Thus, were I to run your article, I'd be forced to shut down the zine right away. I'm sure you do not want this to happen. I hope you'll understand.

Unsuicidally yours,

I'm sure that you can come up with variations on this theme. The main principle, however, is that the article is much too good to be published.

((Heh, heh. You get a trio of freebees out of that, Mark!))

~~.....~~

Cyclic Article (from page 123)

other, alternating on a monthly basis. But what does that have to do with this?"  
"Well, maybe it's not such a great analogy. But I'm talking about an article that never ends."  
"Oh, you mean one of Larry Peery's editorials."  
"No, Bruce," he explained patiently, "I didn't say it goes on forever. I just  
(go to page 24)

How To Accept an Article Without Having This Go to the Writer's Head

by Mark L. Berch

Writers in this hobby have such enormous egos (Bob Olsen is an exception, but that's understandable, given...). If you accept one of their articles, it's just going to make matters worse. Some way must be found to deflate their ego at the same time. Here's one suggestion:

Dear Archibald,

I have received your article with some sort of routing slip. Apparently, when you first submitted the article, you included a note, asking the pubber to pass it along to another pubber if he did not want to print it. The pubber didn't, so he crossed his name off, and added the name of another pubber, and then sent it on its way. It's impossible for me to tell how long this has been going on. The first dozen or so names are so old that the ink has faded and their names are completely illegible. The next 38 names, each neatly crossed out, are pubbers no longer in the hobby, many of them for so long that I don't even recognize their names. Then there are about 4 dozen present pubbers who have also refused it, which was at first (i.e. before I had read the article) surprising, since several of them I know are extremely hard up for reading material. It's finally gotten to me.

I would not dream of publishing this piece of trash, but over the years it has accumulated a variety of humorous comments made in the margins and on the backs of the various pages by the various editors. Many of them I'll admit are on the wicked side, and I'll have to tell you that some of them are just downright nasty. I was originally planning to publish just the comments, but to get the full flavor of what they refer to, the reader does have to see the original, I'm afraid.

If you are planning to write another one, could you join some other hobby first, and send it to them?

Cheerfully yours,

This can be varied in several ways. The reason might be to save future editors the torment of reading it, or that it is so aged the pages are crumbling and can no longer be passed on, that you photocopied the pages by accident, so they were already printed. If the article takes up x% of the issue, you might add that readers will be given a sub credit of x% of the per issue price. ("I can't in all honesty charge people for the opportunity of reading this.") Surely you can come up with a few additional reasons yourself.

((I think Mark's ideas for deflating a writer's ego are very clever, but in VD I prefer not to do that. I would rather tell the writer how great his article is, even when it's really just a worthless piece of crap like the above. Thank, Mark, and three more free issues.))

Are wooden Diplomacy pieces back, or aren't they? I don't know. Two issues ago, I mentioned that I had heard news to this effect from someone at KaneKon (I think it was Ed Wrobel). But nobody seems to know anything about it. I hope that Avalon Hill has made this change; else I'll have to keep buying my Diplomacy sets in Canada.

The stapler used to put this issue together is called a foot stapler and I am told it can go through 100 thicknesses of paper. Let's hope it works!

The Voice of Doom wishes you all a Merry Halloween!



The Judy Winsome Story

by Doug Beyerlein (copyright 1983)

In August '83 I met with Judy Winsome, publisher of the postal Diplomacy zine Winsome Losesome, for an interview. Prior to this interview with Judy I did some undercover work to discover Judy's true identity. Last October Brenton Ver Floeg, my wife Marie, and I made a surprise visit to Judy's mail drop address in Mountain View, California. Based on information gained in talking with Judy's co-worker Leslie, the occupant of the address, we discovered Judy's true identity. We kept this information secret until this summer when Judy Winsome, postal Diplomacy's mystery woman for almost two years, revealed herself to be Jerry Lucas of Redwood City, California. This is her/his story.

DB: When Judy first appeared on the postal Diplomacy scene there was some speculation that Judy was in fact a pseudonym for a well-known player or publisher from the past. Various guesses included Edd Birsan, Jerry Jones, and Margaret Gemignani.

JL: I saw the name Edd Birsan mentioned quite a bit. Jack Masters was also mentioned. He had dropped out of the hobby just about the time Judy started.

DB: How did you come up with the idea for Judy Winsome?

JL: A friend introduced me to postal Diplomacy and I started subscribing to Murdering Ministers, Ron Brown's zine. Then I got Don Del Grande's zine and got interested in seeing other zines. So we decided to publish ourselves and trade. But who was going to trade for just another zine? so we decided to come up with a pseudonym and then my partner took off really quickly after we got started.

DB: Who was that?

JL: Tim Winger. It was Tim's idea at first and then I came up with the name. He would write up a few articles and I would put it all together. Fortunately it wasn't a big loss to the zine when he left. He lives in Denver now.

After Tim left the idea took off on its own. People started asking who is Judy Winsome? Although at the time we didn't think that Judy would be that big of a draw. But it became fun to be a mysterious woman. I think that the one who was shocked the most was Ron Brown. He had no idea. I had been writing to him and Judy had been writing him separate letters and he would write back. He probably feels that he should have known.

DB: You had problems with your mail drop in Mountain View, but up to that point did anyone know who Judy was?

JL: Except for Tim, no. Leslie was our mail drop in San Francisco and she would just bring the mail into work. Then when she moved to Mountain View we had a little bit of a problem with mail being forwarded. The mailman down there didn't recognize Judy's name and we had some mail delayed. That was when I decided that maybe Judy should die or something had better happen because it was unfair to some players I had to delay one game for late orders sent to the old address and that were not forwarded. But otherwise we really had no problems.

DB: Did anyone try to visit Judy in person?

JL: Before Brenton, no. There were threats. A number said that they were going to look up the address. But Judy would always say that she was so busy and her roommate works nights and sleeps through the day and please don't disturb her. So no one tried before Brenton showed up. That really shocked Leslie.

10. Yes. I remember the surprised look on her face as she was amazed that anyone would just come by and knock on her door. We weren't able to call her because there wasn't any phone number published in Winsome Losesome.

11. I published a phone number in one issue. It was a number in New York City where a recording of a woman would answer and read an obscene message. I saw that Bruce Lindsey mentioned in his zine that he called up the number. He was recommending that other people do the same.

But I don't particularly want to get phone calls. I lead an active life outside of Diplomacy and don't want to be bothered with calls. This doesn't seem to cause problems. The players know that if they don't get their orders in in time that is their problem.

12. Back in October ('82) Brenton came by sort of out of the blue. I got a phone call one evening from him. He said that he was in town to interview some people in San Francisco for his Miami law firm. He came over for dinner and was curious about Judy Winsome so we looked up on a map where Judy lived and decided to stop by and knock on the door. Brenton is a very smooth talker, but at first I wasn't sure that we would even get in the door.

13. Yes. Leslie was very suspicious.

14. Once we got in the door Brenton started talking and she and her two friends that were there became more friendly or at least less suspicious. And as time wore on he got them to call you.

15. Yes. I had my wife, Barbara, talk to him. And Brenton said, "You are giving me more chit than these young women here." Barbara cracked up about that. I am just sorry that I didn't talk to him. The next day at work Leslie said that he was really something.

16. I first knew Brenton back in the early '70s when he lived in San Francisco and was publishing Platypus Pie. He was also a very good player and we were playing in the second Diplomacy World demonstration game together. I lived in Seattle at that time. The game, 1972GR, was actually played in Walt Berkman's zine, Hoosier Archiving, the forerunner to Diplomacy World. Brenton was playing Russia and I was Italy. We were sweeping the board for a long time and had just about eliminated all real opposition when he stabbed me for the win. Brenton conducted almost all of his diplomacy by phone during the game. He has always been a smooth talker. He moved to Miami in 1979, just a couple of months before I moved down to the San Francisco area.

17. It is a bit curious since how Bruce Lindsey found out about Judy's true identity. He published that about a year or so after I had moved and he knew by giving a real good guess. I don't think that he found out from the phone call because I got the feeling that after the phone call and a subsequent letter, Brenton had satisfied his curiosity and wasn't interested in revealing it any further.

18. I think that you are right.

19. I decided shortly after that to publish my true address. I didn't want to involve Leslie too much and there was that little problem with mail not getting delivered. But I decided to keep the Judy Winsome quest for the zine. I think that it is fun for new players to believe that they are hitting it a one-up by a woman and then maybe only later find out the truth.

20. Have you been to any Diplomacy tournaments?

21. I have never played in any formal Diplomacy games other than a once-a-day tournament at work. I went to the World's Diplomacy tournament when it was held in San Francisco and San Diego. But I only had a couple of hours to play. I had a couple of friends to play with. I had a couple of friends to play with. I had a couple of friends to play with. I had a couple of friends to play with.

But I also decided at the tournament that I had better not be too obvious. Afterwards Judy wrote Ron Brown a letter and called him my cuddly bear or some such term of endearment. I don't know if I got him in trouble or not! But then I knocked it off. I decided Judy didn't tease.

DB: What did you do with all of those checks made out to Judy Winsome?

JL: I just opened up a joint account with Judy Winsome. I went to the bank across the street from where I work and told them that I wanted to open a joint account with a pseudonym and there was no problem. I endorse the checks as Judy Winsome. A lot of people used that as a fact that Judy was for real. In fact Kathy Byrne sent a check and I cashed it and I guess that was good enough for her. She wrote, "Well you cashed my check; I guess that you are real."

DB: After it came out who you were I got this letter from Kathy asking, "Who is Jerry Lucas? This guy did a great hoax, but who is he?" Good question. What do you do for a living?

JL: I am a financial manager for the Postal Service. I went to Berkeley originally as an electrical engineer. After graduating I went in the Navy and then came out and went to work for General Electric designing the placement of nuclear instrumentation. I didn't enjoy the work so I went to Santa Clara and got my MBA and then got a job with the Postal Service first as a computer systems analyst and then moved into accounting. What I am doing now isn't really accounting, it is accounting methods. We have to make sure that each of the 4000 post offices in the region use the same bookkeeping methods. Also I monitor the methods used in estimating revenue from bulk mailings.

DB: What does your wife think of your publishing a zine?

JL: I have minimized the impact on her as much as possible. Judy publishes about once every five weeks now. What I do is put the game material into folders as soon as it is received. The deadlines are on Thursdays and I adjudicate the games over the weekend. Then the actual writing is done Monday night after work. I sit down at the word processor at work and type it all out. You will notice that Judy is not putting out as much as usual. I have been working in San Francisco since April on a temporary assignment and so I can't put as much in as Judy used to write. I have been adding games so the number of pages has stayed the same, but the amount of Judy's writing has gone down. That will change once I get back to my regular office in San Bruno. I am going to finish these games and then wind things down. Right now that is my intention unless the disruption becomes too great. But at the present that is not the problem. It hasn't been too bad. But I can look to the future and see one day my wife is going to resent the fact that one Monday out of five I am gone to midnight or so. I like the hobby, though, but it is just too easy to get overinvolved in it.

(Thank to Doug for his permission to reprint this interview for VD's readers.)

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Cyclic Article (from page 35)

the meaning of the word "cyclic", don't you?"  
"Of course I do. It's something that repeats itself over and over again."  
"You've got it! And that's exactly the sort of article I have in mind."  
I eyed him suspiciously. "You mean you want me to run one of Red Walker's articles?"  
"No," he replied, "I don't mean repetitive in that way."  
"So just what do you mean?"  
"I'm talking about something that's never been done in the history of postal filiposty before! Surely you've heard of "cyclic" subzines, right?"  
"Yes," I responded, "that's where two zines take turns being subzines to each other."  
(go to page 11)

From Ed Krubel:

Bruce,

Your reply to Coupllan on preferential treatment for minorities is naive. The effects of centuries of enslavement and racism cannot be erased by a simple, "Gee, we're sorry; we won't do it any more; let's start all over equal now." There are millions of people alive today who have been disadvantaged and who continue to suffer because of the lack of past educational and employment opportunities. And there are many more in the still-quite-dominant race who harbor racist attitudes. You begrudge a few scholarships!

Growing up in a white, middle-class family with parents who had opportunities is a greater advantage than getting a break on a scholarship.

Konrad's comments about paying 12K for Georgetown because of an accident of birth strikes me as a princess-and-the-pea attitude. How much of that 12K does he earn working part-time? Did he go to a well-funded high school, have plenty of books around the house when he was a kid, have parents who were well-educated? Are these advantages "unfair"?

The existence of a black middle class does not mean that racism is all gone. For example, there are plenty of neighborhoods in my hometown of Baltimore where a black (or a Jew, for that matter) cannot buy a house. And I suspect that the same is true in many cities.

How about a metaphor? A relay race. It starts off with the first black runner in chains. The second has one leg. The third has two legs but halfway around the track a group of white-sheeted hoodlums break both of them. Now the racing commission wants to give the fourth one a free pair of running shoes and you and Konrad are saying "racism". What a sense of history you have.

((I enjoyed your analogy of the "human race", but I don't agree with your reasoning. Yes, the minority groups in this country never had an equal chance at education and employment. Yes, I deplore that situation. No, I have no objection to that last runner getting his new pair of shoes.

But not if in so doing, you are going to strip the fourth white runner (or anyone else) of his pair. There is a big difference in my book between being fair, and inflicting injustices on people who have (in many cases involuntarily) been favored in the past. Life is more complicated than a relay race. If my daddy comes over and beats up your daddy, is it then "fair" for you to come over to my house and beat me up? hm. Something tells me that example wasn't the best one to use, but...))

From Richard Edison (8/26/83):

Dear Rabbi Lindsey,

I am so, so tired of reading letters where people state their opinions as though they were facts. Re: Rod Walker's letter of 7/28, I agree with Rod -- "terminating a life is never 'fun'." For me, for me, dagnabbit, I refuse to say what may be "fun" for someone else. Yes, they may be "sickies", but once again (and as even Rod admits) it's only his (and my) opinion. (He admits that what's right and wrong is in the deep psycho belt of hairsplitting.)

Well, the AIDS problem is beginning to be passé news here in Frisco (Hah! I love using that forbidden nickname). There are loads of gay/AIDS jokes circulating which are too nasty for print, or any other form of conversation. I'm not really pro-gay, but I am pretty anti-minority slander. Still, I wonder if the gays are a minority in SF any more.

Aaah! Excuse me, but my favorite rock station, KROQ, which plays the best music (they still play rock songs from the previous three decades) in this burg, just by the audacity to play a Wings tune. (Riddle: What's a dog with wings? Linda de la Roca learned a lesson reaching for the volume before they got to the next song. I'd had

this is unusual (i.e. jamming a finger). Having played keeper on soccer teams for 10 years, I've jammed all my fingers a few dozen times each. So, it's something I can live with. (Stop digressing! ...What? Come on, don't play dumb, you've run out of things to say, and you want to read more stuff you've written in VD, as though this were the be-all and end-all of PEM Diplomacy. ...But, I thought it was... (scrambled eggs for breakfast).....)

Oh, by the way, Bruce, I'm sorry that NVR = yes for the LUNA game. I really wanted to continue playing, and just plain forgot about the proposals. I'm also aware that a) I got lucky in reaching you at all by phone to call in my moves, that b) you've never said (to my dim recollection) that you will prompt a vote over the phone, and that c) I caught you at a bad time. ((??)) Still, I've finally made up my mind about NVR. If it were up to me, NVR = no, unless a player also NMRs. I'm not sure if this is how your new rule is stated, but it's a consideration. Anyway, happy hunting, goodnight!

Yours, forever and a day,  
Richard Edison  
Reality Policeman  
(cop to you, sonny boy)

RS. Life's a bitch. Then you die.

FPS. "Love hurts. Love smarts. Love stinks like farts."  
--Laurens T. Hare, hallucination

((You West Coast hippies are really freaky, you know? You and Ty, that is. You are absolutely right. People who state their opinions as though they are facts ought to be shot. There is no room in our society for such inflexibility.))

From Ig Lew:

Bruce Dear,

Your response to Gary concerning racism, etc., annoyed me. Gary, like me, favors scholarships &c favorable to blacks &c. Your reply was that you don't amend a wrong with another (equal and opposite?) wrong. I agree with your response, but I think it is both inapplicable in this case and inconsistent with other views of yours.

In this case I think you're naive in saying that we are discriminating against whites now. Racial discrimination has come down a long ways in the last few decades, but it's not completely dead. Face the facts, Bruce, it's still a lot easier being white in this country. I explained that better in the other letter I think.

Onward -- I think that it's bad to hate people and to want to kill them. It is commonly assumed that the commies want to kill us. But the most common reaction is to want to kill them back. Why? What happened to your "two wrongs don't make a right" policy now? But this is different, they're commies. Right?

((Different letter...)) Wooden blocks are back, eh? Now I'll have to go and get some stars and anchors for my collection.

Did I NMR out of JUPITER? ((No.)) Ha. I didn't think so. Proxy Ploamy is unplayable. "The English Island" is unnecessarily awkward. "Britain" refers to the large island.

I'm glad you appreciated "When I'm Sixty-four"; I had forgotten about it. Now I remember I had toyed with the idea of doing a Ticket to Ride one as well, but I never got to it because it required a dismal position, which I never had. Sandtray likes:

I think I'm gonna be killed  
I think it's today, yeh.  
The dot I need for a build  
Was taken away, yeh.

Seems to me "massive" should only describe things which can have mass - something to watch.

Here in Ad Driving Area is 16. Nav has too. Should be 18 at least.

Don't vote better all the time.

...to see the illegitimacy of bridge vote ... If, for instance, you ...

offend Joe Schmo in such a way as to incur his wrath, and he gets angry at the thought of The Voice of Doom: I'd say he's being dishonest if he doesn't vote 0 a zero. If rating a zero zero because you hate it is bad, why should you ever rate a zero zero? Perhaps we should change the poll -- "rate all zeros on a scale of two to ten."

Let me tell you BRUX, I'm really worried about the shocking number of mild-appreciation-votes. I saw some of the votes and there really are people who rate zeros a six.

Sino-Japanese alliance is an intriguing idea; I'm surprised I hadn't heard the idea before. I wouldn't consider it a danger -- the alliance seems to me to be a good one economically, and only incidentally militarily. If you need reasons why it'd be good, how about for starters:

- 1) They're both strong nations with good potential.
- 2) They're near each other.
- 3) One has resources; one has technology.

Unless the writer wishes he were black, these discrimination-against-white arguments leave me unconvinced. I've only known one white who expressed a desire to be black, and I have doubts about her state of mind.

(For other reasons.)

On the subject of "cloaked errors", pretend someone in the hobby is a real asshole. He says things that are wrong -- frustratingly so. But no one else in the hobby seems to notice. Should you: a) expose the error, with logic and fair analysis? b) let it go? Just a thought.

Boardman's writing always enthralis me. So does G. Gordon Liddy's. You guys will all laugh at that comparison. Go on; I don't care.

Well well you guys all seem pretty smug and sure that the electoral system is a problem. You all maintain it's unfair because you can conceivably get a result which isn't the choice of most people. But let's have one big popular vote -- now we can get a result that isn't approved by most of the states. Let's not fool ourselves, we are a nation of states. "United States", get it? (And as long as you're introducing a popular vote, why not one for the U.N. too?)

Jimmy Carter is considered a worst president? Really? Why?

Perhaps we don't have any place to go, but no need to bother to "ignore space" for the SF fans. F in SF means fiction. The fans who think we'll go to other planets and colonize are full of shit. They get happy about Einstein when they can write about time travel and curved space and hyperwarps and throw up some lazily half-assed explanation. But listen, he says you can't go faster than light.

Did you hear something just now?

"Hours and hours of highway driving to get anywhere out of state?" My heart bleeds for you.

Can't imagine why you didn't send me an Alex card. I'd think you'd want one from Alaska, and I didn't see Meinel's name on the list. Come now, you don't think I'd have been so crass as to not cooperate, do you?

Everyone seems to comment on Alex's good cooking. Just like a good woman ought to be, hey? (☺)

Well, I suppose your Doomsies will emulate the politicians regarding the jet shot down near Sakhalin and add their personal denunciation to the growing heap. I won't say whether I think the order came straight from Moscow or not, but I think it's safe to say we aren't (weren't, by the time you get this) sure. Now then, it seems the U.S.A. "demanded an explanation" and USSR said essentially, "We don't know, we're looking into it." Our response was that that was inadequate. Now I wonder, if we don't intend to accept their answer, why did we ask? It seems clear to me that the only answer which would be adequate would be for ((illegible, sorry)) to claim the blame. So what if they do?

(Slipping over your political views, most of which have already made prominent appearances (the topics involved, not your views), I think that you are full of shit in

claiming that we will never colonize the planets.

Yep. Alex is an excellent cook. We got an Alaska card from Mike Jones. At the time you were busy NMRing in games and such, so I figured you might not be a safe bet. No offense, of course...

Boardman's writing never fails to entertain me, which is why I still sub to Graustark. He's quite a guy!

Yeah, two wrongs don't make a right, but killing in self-defense is not a wrong.

I wish you had finished your "Ticket to Ride" piece; the beginning was excellent. And yes, your "When I'm Sixty-Four" spoof is one of the best things I ever printed. (I still occasionally catch myself singing it from time to time.)

From Ed Wrobel (9/30/83):

Bruce--

Just read your job interview. I really got a chuckle out of it. Now that you're working for a company that's capable of supporting and remaining in place, I suppose you'll readjudicate NEPTUNE?

P.S. Oh, and please -- no "Wargames" with those Tridents, okay?

((Well, my main use for them is depicted on page 3 of this issue. But I suppose I could apply that philosophy to people who double-order their units as well!))

Maybe I'll readjudicate NEPTUNE after it ends, just for laughs, and see what the outcome would have been. Who knows, maybe I'll discover that you would have won after all?))

From Flumphier T. Quiddipoo, Jr.:

Bruce;

Perhaps fortunately, my wackery tends to cycle, and I am not presently on the manic curve... Some of this junk I have probably sent you in past but what are round files for?

It's too long a tale to tell, but since Mom's death two months ago I have been continually involved with lawyers and courts concerning conservatorship and probate. It's unbelievable. Legality has an extremely high negative correlation with rationality, realism, or logic. My children now have standing instructions that if I ever again approach within sensor distance of a court, they are to lace me up, suspend me from the ceiling, and pad the walls.

Hail the Immortal Bard. "The first thing we do, we kill all the lawyers."

Trivia classic. Any of you youngsters remember that comic hero, WONTON WALKER? So what was the name of his alter-ego? (No, not Lerek Bourdshy.) First correct answer wins a free, all-expense-paid trip to the Bananas.

Bob Hope jokes: Man puts loaded gun to head, wife snickers. "Don't laugh, lady, you're next!" OR -- Optometrist to Oriental patient -- "You have a cataract!" "Ah no, I have Rincon Continental!" OR -- My uncle used to like to make love to the rhythm of church bells. Had a heart attack when some fire engines went by.

I must be tired. Check ya later.

((Rincon Continental, eh? It's been a long time since you've written in to me up till now, and I really missed getting all your garbage.

awfully sorry to hear about your mom. Sorry too to hear about the subsequent legal hassles, and I hope everything works out for you.

Some of the junk you sent appears elsewhere in the deep dark bowels of this issue.))

From John Macfarlane (8/22/83):

Dear Bruce,

I want to thank you for looking my houserules over and commenting on them - your comments have helped clarify some of my own views on houserules and GMing in general. After thinking things over, I've come to a decision that may shock you a bit. I am going to try getting by with no extensive HRs, merely a few paragraphs explaining matters of policy such as draws and NMRs. I have tried to outline my exact reasons for this, and find that they (the reasons) are somewhat nebulous -- a gut feeling. I just feel that having minimum houserules will work best within my own group, which, I hope you realize, is quite different than the national hobby.

I am prepared for any problems which may come up -- and I don't anticipate many. Quite a few zines have worked well without houserules (I had no complaints about my AG game, and Mark has no HRs, and I remember that Ticket to Ride, Sherwood's zine at LA, had no houserules either and did just fine).

The problem is, as a player, I prefer a GM such as you with detailed HRs to one such as Larvelere. Thus there is some contradiction. If I were starting up a national zine, I would probably have a detailed set of HRs. I just have a gut feeling that minimal HRs will work better in Joe Adams.

I am trying to decide exactly what policies I shall follow. I'm currently swaying towards DIAS, as that is the policy indicated in the rules. What are the main objections to it -- merely that it drags on a game? That might not apply so much with the shorter deadlines of local games. NVRno I still favor. Again, dragging on a game shouldn't be quite as much a problem, and in a local situation it's easier to remind your fellow players to vote for or against such and such a proposal. I'm looking forward to seeing your arguments against that. Deadlines: I can a) have a strict cutoff, such as 5PM, and not accept anything after that time, or b) have a standard cutoff, such as 5 PM, up to which orders will always be accepted, then add the condition that if the game has not yet been adjudicated, orders will be accepted.

I currently lean, surprisingly, towards the latter. This is surprising because I said just the opposite to Heiner's phone (GMing forum). The main reason for this is, uh, er, what. I guess it's just another gut feeling, and I still hold that if I were GMing nationally, I'd be very strict. This contradiction I don't understand.

Anyway, thanks again for the comments. We'll see how this works, okay? If I do find the time to publish a local zine, I'll send you a copy.

((You seem to be trying to justify your decisions to me, fearful that I'm about to wreak wrathful vengeance upon you for violating the Faith. Relax. GM your games like you want. You can't go wrong by having a well-thought-out set of houserules, but many zines have flourished well without them.

Sounds to me as though your "gut feeling" is due to the fact that you know already how your local group operates, and vice versa.

It's always happy to comment on other people's houserules, and I think by now I've done it for at least a dozen new GMs. I also like it when people borrow some of mine. Tom Kelley says that when he resumes publishing (an event I eagerly look forward to), he will use my houserules entirely, just going through them and changing the points he doesn't agree with. Using 'em as a "template", in other words.

You realize, though, that you're having your cake and eating it too. As a GM, you are more powerful without long houserules, since you then are free to make decisions as you go. But as a player, the long houserules you prefer also give you more power -- you can refer to them and know how your GM is going to rule, and use that knowledge to your own advantage.

Anyway, good luck. I'll look forward to seeing your zine if you start it up (or would it be a continuation of Negotiated?).



From Greg Ellis (9/1/83).

128

Dear BRUX,

First I must clear up an obvious deficit in your education. There has in fact been one nation that has voluntarily given up its sovereignty for statehood: Texas. Yes, boys and girls and Doonies, part of the reason that Texas is called the Lone Star State, and that there is such a thing as Six Flags Over Texas, is because we were a country for a while. Not long, mind you, but long enough. So there, BRUX, it has happened. I would have to agree that it will be a while before it happens again. Did you also know that any time the Texas Legislature wants we can divide into 5 separate states, and therefore get 8 more senators? Yup! We used to think that we could also secede but a bunch of Yankees came down and convinced us that we were wrong.

Your veep? I won't say that I won't consider it, but I can think of several more attractive alternatives at this point in time. Besides, are you sure you want me? I see the V.P. office in such the same light as Teddy R. and Lyndon J. Speaking of Lyndon I heard a good story about him the other day, and now I am going to inflict you with it. It takes place in '59 back at the Democratic National Convention in L.A. He had just run a hard fought campaign against John Kennedy, and needless to say, lost. Of course he had his family with him when he accepted the position as JFK's running mate. Well, little Lydia Byrd asked her daddy if he would take her to Disneyland, and Daddy replied, "We didn't come here to go to Disneyland!" To which she replied, "We didn't come here to run for Vice-President, either." Little lady had guts.

What kind of articles are you looking for for the 4th anniversary? Dip garbage, Holy garbage, Read garbage, or will any old garbage do? When is the deadline? I am asking because I only have five classes with three of them requiring research papers. So I should have plenty of time to play.

As long as you are answering questions, which of the three standbys aren't real? (You better think real hard about your answer)

I sympathize with Billy and his ordeal with the hold up man, but if that's what it takes to get liberals to become conservatives, I can't say I'm sorry it happened. I can't say that it changed my life, but I had a very similar experience when I worked at McDonald's. Just as I was leaving with my crew at three in the morning on a Saturday, a lone gunman ran up to us from the back of the building. He instructed us to lie face down in the parking lot. He then put the muzzle of his handgun behind my ear and told me that if I didn't tell everyone to do as he said that I would have my brains blown out. He then marched us back into the store, where I opened the safe and gave him everything we had. Strangely enough, I don't have nightmares about the fact that I could easily have died that night, but I do often think about the chances I missed, or could have taken to try to stop him. I get angry with myself that some punk kid could push me around like that. People have asked me why I don't advocate gun control now; I guess they think that would have stopped him. Usually I answer with another MOB story that happened to a friend of mine. It appears the gunman in this case was out for the kicks rather than the money, so he grabbed one of the female employees and took her to the crew area to rape her. Fortunately the girl was no dummy, and got permission from the "robber" to go to her purse for something. The something was a .45 automatic, with which she literally blew his head off. If she hadn't had her gun, she might even be dead now for all we know. People who advocate gun control mistake our society for a civilization.

What should be our goal in this country? Conflicts? Honesty? Giving lives? How many lives is it worth to make cars cheaper? We all know that we are willing to sacrifice a few people for the comfort and convenience of a car, because we could lose thousands of lives every year by banning cars altogether. What's the point, then, death rate? How many deaths in a year would be worth it? Is it worth it to have a gun, or can that get 2 miles to the left of the road? (I'm not a gun control advocate.)

electd officials make these trade-offs every day.

On to brighter things. So now come nobody is going to the Texas BioCon? I'll have you know that Dallas is a pretty fine city, although not as nice as Houston. They're pretty hospitable up there, too. You'll come on down? The last one was in Detroit, right? Well hell, half of Detroit lives in Texas now!

I heard a joke similar to Jeff P's, so I will close with that.

Some guy was in the very same Brain Transplant Service Center in Texas as the other lady, only he was looking for a bigger buy. He wanted to buy his brains by the pound, so the salesman was giving him the prices accordingly. The first brain the salesman showed him cost \$25,000.00 per pound, and the man explained, it was priced that high only because it was the choicest of attorney's brains. The next was the doctor's brains, at a cost of \$90,000.00 per pound. Finally he took him to the special security section, past the armed guards and Dobermans, to a four foot thick vault in the basement. "These brains," he explained, "cost \$1 million per ounce!" "Why so much?" the customer asked. "Well," replied the salesman, "these are Doonle brains, and do you know how many Doonles it takes to get an ounce of brain?"

Love,  
Greg

Re: Brian Orloff told me that when Pat Coolon moved back to Louisiana from Kansas that he raised the average IQ of both states. (Always blame insulting jokes on other people.)

((Yak, yak. That was about as funny as Mark Borch trying to comb his hair. Diplo in Dallas won't be overly popular with the postal crowd because it's too far from most of us. I'd like to go, btw..

I was aware that Texas was once independent. I meant that no country now would go along with such a plan.

Your stories about the McDonald's girl and little Lydia were top-notch!!!

From Jim Burgess (9/9/83)

Dear BRUX

I just got your free sample of VD today and I wanted to dash off a quick reply before it slips my mind. Yes, indeed, I grew up right next door in Niskayuna. I moved away when I went to college but my parents still live there so I do get back to the Capital District once in a while. I read that you will likely soon be off the Pittsfield, moving closer to my present residence in RI. I hope everything works out well for you.

As for seeing my name all over the place, I thank you for noticing. I like to be involved in every zine I get. In fact, I try to write to every zine after every issue. I used to be faithful and complete about that, but lately I've been a little slack. Therefore, I had pretty much decided not to add any more zines right now.

I saw my first copy of VD at Eric Ozog's house on my way to FudgeCon...quite a trip. Of course I knew you were "out there" anyway, but I had never seen the zine before. If I wanted I would want to contribute, and that doesn't seem possible right now. I am already committed to adding ZIS as it goes over to Cathy Gurning and I am a little overloaded. I guess I'm flattered that so many people send me unsolicited samples. I like to think that's because I have a reputation for active involvement with every zine I get. I know all my publishers are happy (more or less) and I want to guard against burnout. In case you haven't figured it out, that's part of what generates my reputation as a toady. I hope you didn't vote for me in the poll but I'm afraid I might win again...on wheels.

Thanks again for the sample. It is greatly appreciated. The timing is off but

I'll keep you in mind if I do look to add more zines. Obviously it would have helped if you had had a game opening. I've been in the mood to add games lately, but I completely understand why you want to limit the number of games. To be honest with you I don't understand how you guys with huge circulations manage it. Oh well. I've got a letter to write to Kathy Byrne, an article for the next Xenogogic and game correspondence galore (e.g. Bob Olsen, Keith Sherwood, etc.) to get to tonight. Keep in touch.

((Thanks for such a nice letter; you get this one free too! I can certainly sympathize with your desire not to increase your involvement -- I know the feeling! Hey, since you have family nearby, you oughta come to my con this winter between the holidays.

By the way, I don't expect all of my subbers to answer every issue. (Egads! Talk about BIG! I even have a few holes of silence out there in the audience; they are as welcome as anyone else (though not necessarily as appreciated).

OK, I'll let you get back to your toadying. How 'bout another letter from a non-Doomie?..))

From John Thrall:

Dear BRUX,

I'm sorry I haven't written sooner. As of this time, I can't afford to spend the time or money to get involved in Voice of Doom but maybe soon. I enjoyed meeting you and other postal Diplomacy players ((at KaneKon)). I appreciated the sample copy of the zine you sent me. I especially liked "The Italian Who Went to Detroit". The Coast Guard O.C.S. thing seems to have fizzled, so I'm out of work and searching. I guess I'll try the Navy next (my old service during Vietnam); maybe they'll want a motivated college grad. If not that there's always the shipyards of Charleston. Right after I left Kanecon I went to Charleston, S.C. to visit my sisters. My brother-in-law offered me a job working in my old field, nuclear submarines. I might take him up on it. At least it's a job, not like sitting around in quiet desperation staring at four peeling walls waiting for a nebulous dream that always seems to elude me no matter what I do. Take care of yourself.

((Sorry you can't sub now; maybe someday. In the meantime, have another issue. Believe me, I know how it feels to be out of work and I sympathize. Hope you get a job with the Navy as they're our boss where I work, too -- we have a contract with them. Well, I hope you get any job that you like.

KaneKon sure was great, eh? You didn't get any of it, but I really did send out that cupful of sand to my readers in the next issue. I'll never forget you guys burying me in the sand, and trying to play Family Business on the beach with a bloody nose. Hope to see you there next year!))

From Bob Osuch (excerpt):

Bruce,

...Someone wrote that they thought my coup article might have been sexist. Bet she's just jealous 'cause she's never been laid.

My only comment on the Lischett/separation of seasons issue is that the situation Michalski feared in the Cheesecake game actually became a reality. I'm in the game too, and yes (yawn), another separation has been granted. What a stirring game.

((Well, pleasant dreams! and I too when I mentioned your letter to her, said to say that she replies, "NO NO NO!" "Why not, John? It ain't Christmas yet!")

From Jim Makuc (9/10/83):

132

BRUX,

Received VD the other day. I figured an envelope that size had to be either a real nasty letter, or else a bomb. I knew I wasn't in any games with you, so it had to be a bomb, either sent by Rusneck or Mazzer, through you. Well, I wasn't to be fooled, so I had my sister open it. Alas, I was pleasantly disappointed. This has been quite a week, first I get a copy of Whitestonia/MK, and now VD. Without so much as asking for samples. I think I'm going to have to hire an agent. What did I do to deserve all this?

So you got a job in Pittsfield. That's only half an hour from Monterey. Now I've figured it out! You want to stay with me until you get settled in. I knew there was a catch to this sample! Well no dice. I've got six brothers and sisters and no room for anybody else. Unless you want to sleep in the barn with Marcie (our cow) or Victoria (our pig), but maybe you're more Max's type (our bull calf). Personally I'd stick to commuting.

Berkshire County must be one of the most beautiful places in the US, or so our summer residents tell us. You sure got lucky getting a job around here. Did you work for GE in Albany? My uncle worked there and just retired two months ago.

Now that you are a New Englander maybe Caruso won't pick on me so much. NE's finest (that's me) and Caruso are having a feud in Raging Main (OK, Woodson, you got your plug...what, be more subtle?...Dip players don't understand subtlety, you got to pound it into those Bozos!) You can be NE's craziest. Caruso, I hope you're reading this, hopefully it will teach you to think twice about tangling with New Englanders!

There are a few wargamers at this end of the state, and fewer Dip players, but we're looking forward to meeting you as soon as you're settled in. Which reminds me why don't you attend MassCon at UMass in Amherst on the 24th and 25th of this month. They have a Dip tournament, as well as minatures, Ace of Aces, and MAD tournaments.

I see you have finally admitted to being part of the Thirty Miles of Juicy Gossip issue. I'll have you know I'm suing Luedi for the comment about me. You can expect a letter from my lawyer within the week, giving you the date of the trial and the amount of the suit. I hope this won't interfere with any further transactions we may have in the future.

Here is some \$\$\$ for a sub. I hope you give out free issues for stuff, because I can't afford all this stuff. I want to be in your next game start. Throw me on your starby list (Jesus, not that hard!).

If you help in anything at all ((need help?)) in this area (Berkshire County), do not hesitate to call. Someone will be able to give you a hand or two if you need it. Hope to hear from you when you're ready to move, and when you get settled in. My phone number is 413-528-0290, it can be found on many girls rooms' walls throughout the county if you lose it.

Best,  
Jim Makuc  
Grouch Industries

((Hey! A Doobie right near my new home! How handy!  
Jim and I met for lunch last week, and let me tell you I now know why his phone number is all over the girls rooms' walls in the area. The messages all go like this: "For a laugh, call...")

Anyway, it was pleasant to meet yet another Doobie and indoctrinate him into the mysterious society that is Doomedon.

Sure, I'll be glad to stay in your barn. I've always been an animal lover, so no problem. I'll also look forward to gaming with your group now and then. Welcome aboard!))

From Steve Angle (9/12/83):

133

HRUX:

Allow me, if you will, to throw in my two cents regarding the separation issue. One of the reasons for accepting only one request as enough to require a separation is that there are cases when it is a "diplomatic necessity" -- one's diplomacy will be affected in a major way by a removal, retreat, or whatever; and thus one would like to know what that action is before writing. It is impossible, as has been stated again and again, to conduct conditional diplomacy.

This is certainly true, and if we desire PBM Diplomacy to resemble FIF as closely as possible, then one request must be all that is necessary -- indeed, every season should be separated. This is not, however, our intent. PBM Diplomacy is closely akin to, and obviously derived from, FIF Diplomacy, but it has become a separate entity. There are no set standards for this game -- the specific rules vary from GM to GM, as determined by voluminous HRs or the GM's whim -- but there are many standard conventions. NWRs, NVWRs, press, in addition to combined seasons, are all examples of things unique to PBM Diplomacy that can, and often do, affect the game dramatically.

If we accept that PBM and FIF are not one and the same, then the question of separating seasons becomes merely a matter of the GM's preference. The "diplomatic necessity" argument becomes moot, for one could just as easily claim that it was essential for seasons not to be separated. A separation might reveal the outcome of a crucial retreat or build that one would like to keep secret; if it became common knowledge, then one's enemies' diplomacy could be altered to deal with the new situation. Without the separation, they may not deal adequately with the possibility since they cannot conduct conditional diplomacy.

As an example, let us consider a game in which France and England have been allied since the beginning of the game. They have taken Germany, and are beginning to move against Italy and Russia, respectively. France, suffering a temporary setback in central Europe, is forced to retreat one or perhaps two armies after a Fall turn. He has two options: he can fall back to his own centers in Germany, or he can retreat into one or more English centers. If he chooses the latter option, England will have no battles and -- all her fleets being committed against the Czar up north -- will be open to the French stab. Obviously, in a situation such as this, the French player would benefit greatly from no separation. Though the English player could make his orders conditional on the retreat, it is unlikely that he will be able to arrange a counterattack in conjunction with another power conditional on the French retreat. France will, in effect, gain a free turn before a concerted attack could be launched.

Should a request for no separation be honored? Why are we biased toward allowing the game down? Let's face it: PBM is not FIF; we can do whatever we want.

((Thanks for a thought-provoking letter. This is the first time I've seen this viewpoint expressed; that separations might be undesirable not because they allow the game down, but rather because they might cause a country to lose the element of surprise in an attack.

What you say is correct, but I cannot agree with you. The design of the game is such that seasons are supposed to be played sequentially. This is such a basic and fundamental concept that I think it must also apply to postal play, as well as face-to-face. Indeed, combined seasons were not invented as a reflection of the idea that this element of surprise is desirable, but merely to speed up the game. That they introduce the surprise factor is in my opinion an unfortunate side effect; and indeed, it's the reason for this whole debate!

Hey, did I ever tell you good luck at Yale??)

From Mark Johnson (9/7/83):

Dear Bruce,

How the hell are ya? It's been a while since I dropped you a line. Not that I have a great deal to say, but since I've cut my workweek down to 50 hours, took a week off (first in over a year), and bought myself a home computer, I thought I would pound the old keyboard for a while.

First a few words about VD. Great job. Alex will be missed but I hope she can find the time to write a page or two every now and then. Good articles; great letters. (Response Poll enclosed.)

Now to the important stuff. You mentioned that the BIG D is going to be held in BIG D next year. I knew that there was some reason I was saving my vacation time. When? Where? Are you planning to attend? With all your new-found wealth, you should be able to afford it. I'll even put you up (put up with you?) when you get here. Lots of food and brew. I may even be able to loan you some wheels if you can drive a stick. I don't own an automatic.

Am I off your blacklist yet? I ask because I am thinking of becoming active in the hobby again after my COA. Since my boss allowed me to go out and hire some wannabodies to take care of the day-to-day bringing-up, configuration, and trouble-shooting on the computers we use, I've got more free time. So, if you're a mind to, you can put me back on your standby list. I'll see about signing up for a game come the first of the year.

Snaf of this. I've got to go look at some new and bigger houses closer to where I work. I'm getting tired of these \$80 gas bills that keep showing up each month.

This sentence is here to annoy Andy.

((But I'll bet nobody else can say why! (Except maybe Andy himself.)

OK, you're off the blacklist for writing back in. You're also back on my standby list. As for Origins, I doubt very much that I'll make it, but it will be good to see you again if I do. I think it's the weekend following the fourth of July. Not hold off on making plans till I'm sure I've got my info right.))

From Jake Halverstadt (9/21/83):

Dear Mr. President:

Come to think of it, if the president can't run the election, how can he run the stock market? (Altho the real one is doing just what RR would order...)

VD is due tomorrow, and a little Democratic bias tells me you have nice things to say about the Gonzo. Thanks in advance -- I am trying to make it unique, interesting, and fairly educational. There's plenty of room for improvement, but I suppose VD issue #2 was a bit rough.

Ray -- wanna take another shot at a World Series let? My fin says any AL team will take the Dodgers, especially if it's Baltimore. You lay out the groundrules, I'll put up the fever...

Frankly, Diplomacy is getting to bore me, when compared to Presidential Politics or even the Gonzo Football League. My second Dip game by mail -- Malakina in Pesajungs Hof -- is a real dog. Nobody seems to write anybody, from what I hear. This is where I should be strong, but I can't seem to get psyched to put in the effort. Time seems better spent when I work on HPC. A promising Dip career down the crapper? The still talk...

You heard it here first -- I'm gonna win Stocks and Bonds. And, wish I could play IP.

((Monday you shall. Hope your Dip enthusiasm makes a comeback, and the Dodgers are going to win the World Series (you're on if they make it in).))

From Bob Sweeney (9/14/83):

135

Dear BRUX,

I usually enjoy the contents of VD and during a recent jaunt through the letter column I noticed an old friend: the NVR issue. Due to the fact that soon you'll be putting out VD house rules MK 101.937, I felt that I should put forth my oar into the troubled waters (and hope I don't get pulled in).

I understand (I hope) the reasons why you created this monster, and feel that all you created was Excedrin Headache #64. A simpler solution (in my opinion) is to count three types of votes: yes, no, and neutral. In other words, an NVR = no vote and is not counted either for or against. If the individual didn't care to vote, then the results should be equally unimportant to him/her.

You could, just as easily, make NVR = no before 1905 (or 1904 or 1906 or...) to ensure a minimum, adequate game length and thereafter NVR = no vote/neutral. I feel that this is an excellent idea and would, in the future, save on aspirin.

(I'd also like to add that this idea is not mine -- I merely applaud and agree most heartedly with David Kleiman of The Diplomat, who has incorporated this idea into his house rules. A good idea is worth adapting!)

Please find enclosed a small sample of dung from my last visit to the stables. I just wanted you to share in my vacation and...

((How generous of you. I'll think of you every time I smell...never mind.

I'm not sure I totally understand your proposal, since letting NVR = no vote is equivalent to NVR = yes. That is, unless someone vetos the proposal, it passes either your way or mine. Can you elaborate, please?))

From Judy Winsome (8/24/83):

Dear BRUX,

Thanks for thinking Winsome-Losesome should have made the top 30. I take some pride in tying for 11th as a GM in spite of my postal problems with changing address three times. Things should be better now.

Regarding the recent discussions on NFQ letters, it is my policy to clearly indicate those parts of letters that I quote that are not for publication. You will notice that I rarely print letters, but instead print answers that explain what the question was. The only letters I quote are obviously for print, such as those from my transvestite friend CiCi. Maybe that's why I'm 34th?

I met Doug Beyerlein last night. He was interviewing me for an article for ENGLIART and DW or DD. I'm glad I had the chance to meet him and look forward to meeting others in the hobby. Being the mysterious woman was a fun but lonely experience. I'll be curious to read about me.

Love,

Judy

((Well, I don't care what gender you are -- I love ya anyway! I think that the Judy Winsome hoax was about the greatest I've ever witnessed. The article you refer to is reprinted elsewhere in this issue, with Doug's permission.

Your letter-printing policy in W-L is certainly different.

I noticed that during your interview with Doug, you expressed curiosity about how I figured out who you really were before the truth became public. Well, I can tell you that Brenton Ver Floeg had nothing to do with it. But now maybe it's my turn to be mysterious. Let's just say that I have enough spies in high places, who provided me with all the necessary information to deduce your true identity, OK? And (I really thought Leslie was your daughter!))

From Ty Hare (excerpt):

Dear BRUX,

...Having read through the HRS, I noticed that there was no explicit point about not using the Diplomacy Rulebook rule governing poorly-written orders: the one about "If poorly written but the intent is clear..." (I can't find my Rulebook right now, so I can't give you the rule number, but I think you know the one I mean.) I know you state a couple of times, very clearly, that you will not read intent into a player's orders, but will interpret them exactly as written. Perhaps, though, you might state that Rule # whatever-it-is is officially suspended in your next houserules release. Otherwise, there appears to be (or so it seems to me) conflicting rules. Or maybe you've done this already? Just thought I'd check (come on, Knight, can't you type any faster?). Let me try this on you, then: if that rule has not been officially banished from your HRS, could a player invoke it? Such as, on the bottom of his/her orders, write something like, "I have not intended nor attempted to miswrite, nor illegally nor incorrectly write my orders. If there are any orders so written, I wish that you interpret them, under Dip rule what's-it's-face, to the best of your BRUXly ability." What do you think? If it's interesting/relevant/unprecedented, go ahead and publish this. If it's irrelevant (because of my basic assumption), already been discussed, or stupid, I'd prefer you not print it so as to save my face. (What?)

Second question: If I send in a set of orders, undated, how can I ever submit a valid set of orders for the rest of that season? There's always that one set of undated orders. (Actually, I think I have an answer, but I wanna see yours first...)

(On your first question, my houserules are very explicit on what I require for orders, and it is also stated that the houserules have higher precedence than the Rulebook. So the rule you refer to (called the "badly written order" rule, though it doesn't say anything about player intent) is mostly not in effect here. A request such as you describe would be ignored. And I printed your letter because I don't think there's anything I or anyone else can do to save your face.

On the other matter, dated orders do not automatically supercede undated ones. But if I am certain which of an ambiguous pair was received latest, I will use it. You could call to be sure, or you could write "These orders supercede the undated orders which read as follows..." (I assume all you players keep copies of your orders, of course...)

From Jennifer Noto:

10 5 24

Dear BRUX,  
 Thanks for all the nice things you've said about me. I wanted to write sooner, but this is the first chance I got. Mommy's asleep & Daddy's at work at the hoopstqh. Thanks again.  
 Love  
 Jennifer



From Chuff Afflerbach (10/6/85):

137

Dear Bruce,

Well, it was a noble attempt. Figured I'd save you time and trouble, and maybe even meet the deadline for the Big Ish. Alas, it was not to be. My wife went on strike.

What I mean is that the Oakland teachers went on strike, and she was leading the pack. So that meant she no longer has access to the ditto mastering machine. She told me of a marvelous invention which can take an ordinary page and turn it into a ditto master. Wouldn't you have been surprised to receive my article ready to print? Still, I didn't give up easily. Carolina was sure to have some old masters lying around the house, so I dug these out and went to work.

When I was done, she broke the news to me as kindly as she could. The typing was just not hard enough to make a good impression on the page. (Me not make a good impression? Bah!)

So, Bruce, here they are, and it's the thought that counts. Do with them as you must. But if you like the idea of already-done stencils, say so. Do they travel okay in the mail?

Because I'm sure this strike can't go on forever. Can it? I mean, all those parents must be getting tired of having their little darlings home all day.

Well, good luck with the anniversary issue. I'll be looking forward to it!

PS. Here's a news bulletin: for the third time in 3 weeks, a certain mail train in England has been robbed while en route. The train carried no money, and only mail was taken by the bandits. Do I detect the fine hand of Diplomacy at work? Just what is going on in the British hobby that we don't know about?

((Must be Pete Tamlyn trying to find an original way of winning Finchley Central with finesse.

I'd just as soon type up stuff myself, but thanks for the thought. Curiously, both you and Steve Knight sent stuff in on too-faded ditto masters this time; in his case it was the house rules and I paid to have them offset; your article I just retyped. The machine you're thinking of is a Thermofax, and I've never seen one produce a good ditto master. Hell, though, the way you write I wouldn't care if it got here by smoke signals!)

From Jake Halverstadt (10/8/85):

Dear Mr. President,

Well, I guess I didn't come through with anything for your anniversary issue. Sorry! I racked my brain and just couldn't get enthused about any of the topics I considered.

Got your postcard yesterday, and after watching the Dodgers-Phillies game, I think once again that I won't get your \$5. The Dodgers aren't going anywhere but back to L.A. for a long winter. Good riddance! It's the Birds over the Phils in the Series.

You said you were going to print my letter about being bored with Diplomacy. God knows I am. So do the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus. To me, the game's a has-been, and I've only been in the postal end of it for, what, 18 months?

Why am I tired of it? Good question, Jake. I guess I don't like the schizoid nature of the alliances, the severe tactical limitations of the thing, and the disappointment of finding that you just can't communicate with some people. The historical perspective's all wrong, too. Europe drifted into World War I; the game forces an explosion of action, which encourages the schizophrenia to which I object.

But, don't get me wrong -- it's a neat game, but there's got to be a variant somewhere that would make basic Dip look like -- God forbid -- Risk.

The working on such a variant. I have no illusions of grandeur. I haven't parted

the Red Sea lately. But I think I can make a better game. Maybe you'll see it offered in HPG some day.

And I debt my cheque to Mr. Callahan. He's invented a neat game. He just didn't go far enough.

Why didn't you incorporate Stocks and Bonds into VI? Seems like it would help fill some space, and give your subbers something else to look at. Do you really want to make VI solely a Diplomacy zine? Or did you just never think of running other games? Doesn't it get boring when you adjudicate half a dozen Dip games, and kick back with a little Stocks and Bonds? Man, we've got Diplomacy out the hunkhole - I wish you'd think about diversifying a bit more.

There's something I'm trying to say, I guess, and I don't want to throw it at you in such a manner as to imply that I'm better than you. I don't believe that, and I can say that because I know me better than you do. Let's put it this way -- If you're willing and able to serve 120 or so subbers, and have perhaps only a third or one-half that number playing Dip and the rest reading about it, why can't you turn the thing around?

If I could plant one idea in your mind, it would be this. Shitcan about the thickness of the letters you print, and use the space to initiate some different games. The time you blow copying the work of some of these people could be better spent breaking some new ground.

I'm convinced that the PBM hobby is ready for some new alternatives. This is probably a weak analogy, but I'd like to see somebody come out with a zine that was like cable TV, offering a number of choices aimed at special-interest groups. It seems to me that the sum of the parts might be greater than the whole.

I'd like to see an ambitious person -- such as yourself -- come up with a multiple purpose zine that could involve a great number of people in different pursuits. I'm doing it in a limited fashion with HPG, but I haven't the inclination or funds to hit it in the way VI goes at Diplomacy.

But think of what a PBM clearinghouse could accomplish! Imagine a zine that had people playing Diplomacy, as well as things like Stocks and Bonds, Rail Baron, Parliament, United and such. Throw in some other games already in existence, let some other folks initiate new games, and you could easily have a hundred subbers enthusiastically taking part in a fantastic assortment of alternate reality! You'd have a pool of several dozen writers that could offer some tight writing. Instead of having to copy the drack that seems to roll unchecked into the headquarters of the zines that I happen to see.

Think it's time to see a merger of a couple or three of the zines that dominate the PBM field, and hope that these combined forces put out a publication that shows what we hobbyists are capable of.

Wish you got your envelopes and stamps and send for a sample of Spivey and Quest as published by Roy Henricks, whose address appears in the address list on the inside. It's just about the zine you describe.

I've got to understand that tastes vary as widely as the different personalities that make up the play-by-mail hobby. I have never brought other games into VI, nor dropped letters or articles in favor of more games, simply because I don't want to. If I were running two dozen games and printing less reading material, I'd have a set of subbers largely different from those I have now, and alone could be too enough to fill a die of boxes because that's not the size I want to run.

I don't seem to sound overly negative -- there are zines that offer a huge variety of games and edit such more stringently than do I, but they aren't my style. Check out some of the niches in the hobby, and you'll find just about anything (and by the way, if I were to axe the drack, my writing would probably be about the first to go).

I'm truly sorry that Diplomacy bored you. I love the game for its tactical and strategic and tactical aspects of complexity. There are variants for all tastes. I can give you a good one if you like. I'll give you a good one if you like. I'll give you a good one if you like. I'll give you a good one if you like.

From Bob Sweeney (10/8/83):

134

BRUX.

To err is human...but not in VD. Normally, I take GM decisions (adverse or not) with little more than a moan but I feel I must speak up now. When you err, you send out corrections or place the corrections in a later portion of the issue (ex: QUASAR's Turkey for 2-3 seasons). The players assume that you will err occasionally and accept that because you are human.

Recently in two games (QUASAR and RIGEL), my orders were not played as I wrote them because of dated and undated sets of orders. Only orders in common with both were used. I would not (and hope my fellow gamers would not) consider it GM interference if a GM were to use a POSTMARK for a date. I feel this is reasonable because:

- 1) By the house rules, GM deception is not allowed.
- 2) Players and GMs are human, errors will occur, some MINOR allowances could be made (such as dates of orders from postmarks, decisions on whether orders are legal/illegal when players ask, separation of seasons on one player's request due to extraordinary events, corrected spelling in press, etc.).
- 3) That errors written in orders should not and will not be corrected by the GM and players should not expect it.
- 4) That orders may be written and sent in a hurry due to time constraints (such as 2 COAs and living out of a duffel bag in Kansas till my H&G arrives).

Actually, #4 can be filled in with different reasons by different people.

I also realize that VD and Bruce Linsey have a "reputation of r exactness" but perhaps VD also has room for discretion.

((Thanks for writing. I've made my position regarding the use of postmarks for a date public at least twice before, but that was long before you subbed. Basically, it is this: I won't use the postmark because a) it is often illegible, and b) I don't normally save the envelopes moves are sent in. Moreover, I don't even read a player's orders carefully until I adjudicate the game, so I'd either have to start doing this or saving all the envelopes. No, it's the player's responsibility to get all the info right, and I don't propose to take on that task myself.

If it's any help, though, there are GMs out there (like about all of them!) who are more lenient than I am in this regard, and will either save and use the postmarks or allow dated orders to supercede undated ones. I just prefer not to do this.))

From Dan Stafford:

BRUX.

Congratulations on your new job/career opportunity! From high school math teacher to private sector computer programmer -- I'm curious -- what is/are your degrees in? I, too, am studying to be a COBOL programmer.

((I have a B.A. in math and an M.A. in math education. Good luck!))

From Mark Luedt:

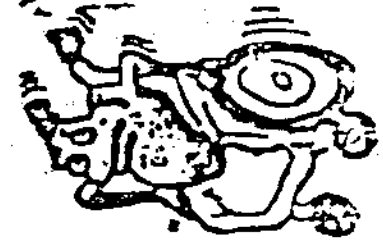
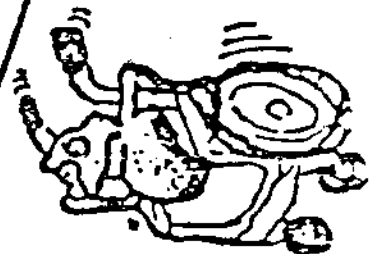
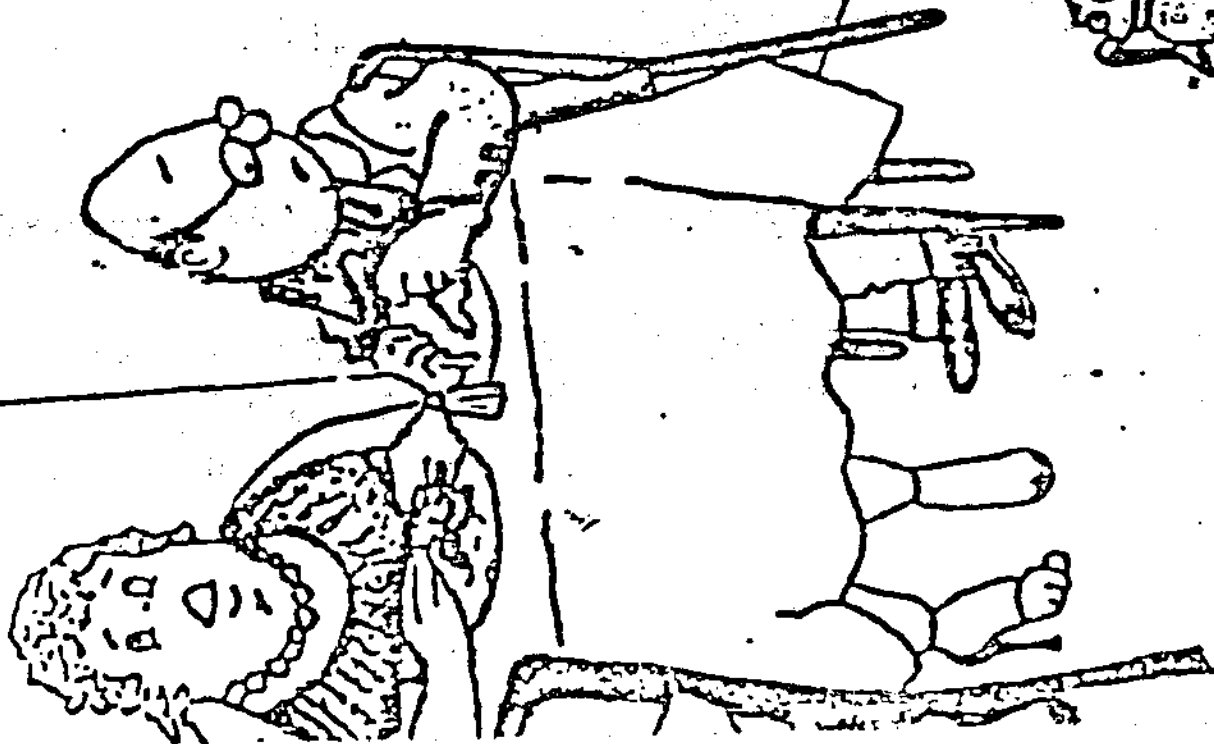
BRUX.

Great issue of VD!! I haven't read it yet, though.

((You know you're a success when your subbers can tell it was a great issue by osmosis!))

Ain't that just peachy? A 46-page letter column with letters from 47 different people!

Today's  
Special  
**FROG  
LEGS**



You guys didn't think I'd let this issue fly without a page just for miscellaneous chitchat, did you? Nahh...

Despite my editorial of some hundred or so pages ago, I must mention the fake Woopecker sent out recently by Bob Osuch, a copy of which was sent to me by Gary Coughlan. High point of the issue was a parody of Alex's Column (which was labeled "Alec's Column"). Of course, it wasn't nearly as good as the real thing...

Also of relevance here is my tie for first in the Toady Poll (a result which Bob Olsen, my co-winner, is disputing) and Alex's second place in the Hobby Toad poll. And, I finished in a three-way tie for Most Obnoxious Hobby Member in some poll somewhere. Isn't that exciting?

OK, on to more substantial announcements. The house rules published in this issue will take effect as of the next game deadline. Some of you may have noticed the "Greater Good" rule, which I inserted so that I never have to break my house rules again due to unforeseen circumstances. Obviously, such a rule would make it legal for me to do anything I want as a GM, which could be a source of deep anxiety for some people. But of course I'll use my judgement in applying it. Players who don't trust my judgement should not be playing here, right?

And thanks to Steve Knight for his superb work in editing and organizing the house rules, and to Mark Berch for his many helpful suggestions.

This issue will be going by third class mail, which will save me over a hundred dollars in postage, so don't panic if it hasn't gotten there by the time you read this. Players are getting their results by first class mail, of course.

I was recently thumbing through some old issues of VD (numbered in the teens and twenties), and was appalled at what an arrogant snob I was back then.

Some people have asked me whether I would mind if they were to reprint material from VD. Absolutely not. I encourage you to do so if you want. Just be sure to give credit to the author, and to state which issue you are reprinting from.

Well, circulation is approaching an all-time high here, and I would have tied the mark but for a new policy I have. There are a very few people in this hobby with whom I do not and cannot get along. Most of them weren't subbers anyway, but two of them were. I have decided that I don't wish to deal with these people any longer, even to the extent of subbing to their zines or sending them mine. I realize fully that this philosophy is in direct opposition to the Berchian Theory of Universal Subscription Permissiveness; so be it. The two people in question received sub refunds from me. I see no reason to lose money for people I don't get along with. So there.

There ought to be a few copies of this issue left over, so I'll sell them off for two bucks apiece to non-subbers (other publishers are welcome to publish this). Or they're available for 50¢ to anyone who sends me \$5 for a sub. These offers are good only while supplies last.

My football expertise apparently outshines my baseball knowledge. I've won our office football pool two weeks out of five now, and they're threatening to kick me out. (There are around thirty people entering each week.) One of the weeks I didn't win was when some guy picked thirteen games out of thirteen against the spread. Whew!

Does anyone have any old "Tom Corbett, Space Cadet" books that they are willing to sell? I am looking for numbers 4, 7, and 8 in the series. The publisher sent me back a form letter in response to an inquiry, to tell me that they are out of print.

A slight change here in article payment rates, starting now. My normal rate of payment is 3 free issues for each printed page. This still holds, but from now on the minimum payment for articles used will be three issues. This applies to original material submitted exclusively to VD; other stuff is also subject to some payment, but usually not as much.

Who else wants to come to BRUXCon the few days before New Year's Eve this year? I know of four or five definite maybes so far. C'mon, you'll have a ball!

Donkey Racing in Texas

blame Greg Ellis!

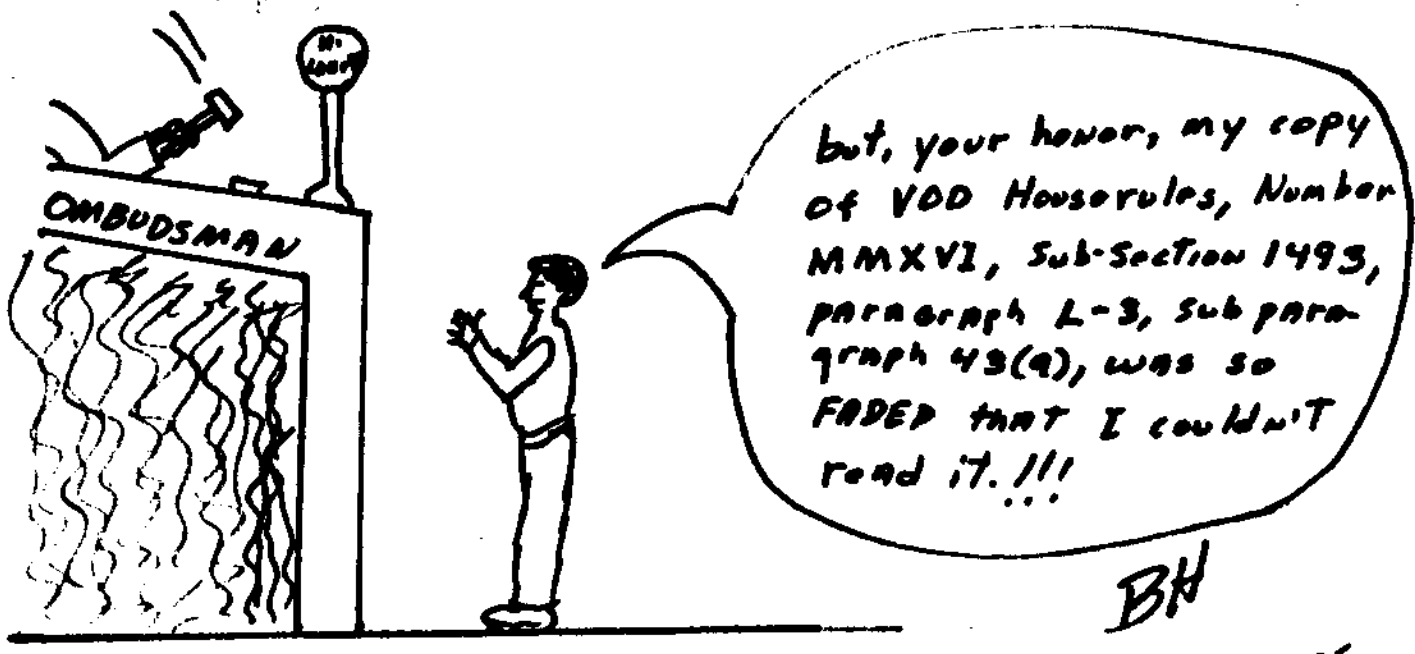
A Preacher wanted to raise money for his church and being told that there was a fortune in horse racing decided to purchase one and enter it in the races.

However, at the local auction, the going price for horses was so steep, the Preacher ended up buying a donkey instead. He figured that since he had it, he might as well go ahead and enter it in the races, and to his surprise, the donkey came in third. The form read, "Preacher's Ass Shows"! The Preacher was so pleased with the donkey that he entered it again. This time he won. The form read: "Preacher's Ass Out Front"! The Bishop was so upset with this kind of publicity, he ordered the Preacher not to enter the donkey in another race. The headline that day was, "Bishop Scratches Preacher's Ass"! This was too much for the Bishop and he ordered the Preacher to get rid of the animal. The Preacher decided to give the donkey to a Nun in a nearby convent. The headline that day read, "Nun Has Best Ass In Town"! The Bishop fainted. He informed the Nun that she would have to dispose of the donkey. She finally found a farmer to buy the donkey for \$10.00. Next day the paper read, "Nun Peddles Ass For Ten Bucks"!

They buried the Bishop the next day.



THE ONGOING SAGA OF BRUCE LINSEY'S HOUSERULES



Optimal Negotiational Effectiveness as an Inverse Function of Gameload

OR

Mathematically Speaking, We Really Ought to Stop Playing Diplomacy

Back in the good old days, when I was a hobby novice, I signed up right away for two games, then entered John Michalski's Blind Madman variant, and more or less accidentally picked up a standby spot, all in the course of two or three months. So my gameload was, for a while, four games.

Now back then this was fine as I was enjoying myself darcimonoriously, and VD was merely an unborn idea wallowing within the womb of my mind (another bit of ammo for the pro-abortionists!). Gradually, though, I came to realize that I wasn't deriving as much enjoyment as possible out of each game I was in. In other words, though my level of correspondence was considerably above the average of my opponents, it fell far short of being optimal in any given game. If I wrote, say, 60 letters per month, then that was only 15 per season in each game. Less, actually, as the Blind game was on two-week deadlines. I figured, why not play in fewer games, so as to maximize my negotiational effectiveness in each? (It is postulated here that more letters = more effective negotiations. This has been borne out beyond any reasonable doubt over the course of the hobby's 20-year history.) Thus, if I could write x letters per month, then the monthly rate of letters per game is clearly an inverse function of n (x/n), where n is the number of games I play in. From this logic, it became apparent that the most desirable gameload was one game, and I immediately endeavored to work myself down to that level. It took a while, but when my last game began to show signs of becoming terminally stalemated, I signed up for my Lone Game. This was Swedish Roundabout in Europa Express, and I decided that regardless of how well I fared or how long it lasted, I would not sign up for another game while it was in progress. Instead, I would direct all of my energy for negotiating into this one game, thereby maximizing my effectiveness and thus my enjoyment.

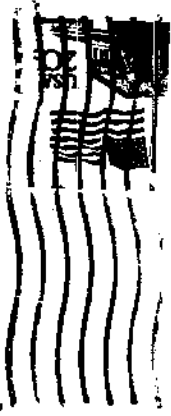
This, it turned out, was a sound policy. As it happened, I burned out sometime around Spring 1902; but no matter, all the decisions of any consequence had long since been made and carried out in that game, as Bob Olsen has already so cheerfully pointed out in these pages.

For a couple of years, then, I twittered along happy as a canary, until one day it dawned on me that my calculations were in error: to maximize the function x/n, n must approach zero. In other words, playing in one game was fine, but if I were to play in only half a game or a quarter of a game, my diplomatic effectiveness quotient would be correspondingly higher. But since it is impossible to play in a fractional number of games, I would carry this argument to its logical limit and play in zero games -- and be infinitely effective in all of them! And, indeed, my record is quite untarnished since the end of Swedish Roundabout. I play in no games, getting hyperecstatic enjoyment out of each, while winning them all. The Ultimate Diplimaster.

If we are all to maximize our enjoyment per game, then, we must all stop playing Diplomacy at once. As demonstrated by the reasoning above, this argument is airtight and irrefutable.

I am not advocating that we shut down the hobby -- not by any means. But, in the diplomatic utopia I envisage, we could scrap the games only, keeping all the sines alive with arguments about rating systems, discussions of double-ordered units, feuds, tactics articles, houserule debates, and so on. The hobby of Diplomacy is by now well enough established that it could flourish without the game of Diplomacy. Think of it -- a hobby full of publishers like Mark Berch who run no games, and players like BRUX Liney who don't play in any, all of them deriving the greatest possible enjoyment out of every single one of their zero games.

I could go on, but I'm sure you're all convinced anyway. Mathematically speaking, we really ought to stop playing Diplomacy. I am hereby requesting that all publishers cancel all of their games forthwith and open no more. It's in the best interest of the enjoyment of the people of the hobby.



V. D. LINSEY  
24A QUARRY DR  
ALBANY N.Y. 12205

# PARKING VIOLATION

PROVINCE OR STATE

AUTOMOBILE LICENSE NUMBER

TIME  
A.M.  
P.M.

MAKE OF AUTOMOBILE

This is not a ticket, but if it were within my power, you would receive two. Because of your bull-headed, inconsiderate, feeble attempt at parking, you have taken enough room for a 20-mule team, two elephants, one goat, and a safari of pygmies from the African interior. The reason for giving you this, is so that in the future you may think of someone else, other than yourself. Besides I don't like domineering, egotistical or simple-minded drivers and you probably fit into one of these categories.

I sign off wishing you an early transmission failure (on the expressway at about 4:30 p.m.). Also may the fleas of a thousand camels infest your armpits.

*With My Compliments*

Every now and then one of my readers (Ed Wrobel this time) just has to remind me what a certain word means...

- bruxism** (bruk'sizm) [Gr. *brychein* to gnash the teeth] rhythmic or spasmodic grinding of the teeth in other than chewing movements of the mandible, especially such movements performed during sleep. Dental malocclusion and tension-release factors are the usual inciting causes. Cf. *bruxomania* and *clenching*.
- bruxomania** (bruk'eo-me'ne-ah) grinding of the teeth occurring as a tension-release habit in the waking state; called also *brychomania*. Cf. *bruxism*.

FOR A GOOD TIME  
CALL BRUCIE -  
459-9250





a short story by ERUX Linsey

Dr. Stephen Isaacson did not hear of the Great Disappearance until several hours after the rest of the scientific community had been alerted. This was ironic because his delay in finding out about the unprecedented event was due to his preoccupation with the very invention that would eventually provide him, alone among all the world's scientists, with the true explanation. It was James Long, his young lab assistant, who finally found Dr. Isaacson in his secluded laboratory and broke the news.

"Dr. Isaacson!" exclaimed James, bursting into the lab without so much as his usual tap on the door. "Have you heard what happened?" When the physicist expressed ignorance regarding the cause of James' excited query, the latter literally grabbed his arm and started to pull him out the door and into the crisp autumn night.

"Hell, James, all right already! I can walk outside by myself," the scientist grumbled irritably. "This better be good. I'm very busy with my cosmic translator now, you know."

They walked out into the night. The moon wasn't up yet and the sky was crystal clear. "Look, sir," James began eagerly, "Right below the Square of Pegasus. Do you notice anything?"

Dr. Isaacson fixed his eyes on the four stars indicated, then lowered his gaze to the faint group of stars that formed the head of Pisces the Fish. He half expected to see a "new star" -- a nova, which is simply a sun that has flared up to many times its normal luminosity. Such phenomena were quite common, although they of course didn't generally attain naked-eye visibility. But in this case, he saw nothing that didn't fit. "No," he replied at last, "What are you getting at, James?"

"Right in Pisces there, sir. What isn't there that is supposed to be?" prompted the lab worker.

Ah, something was missing, then. No, all the stars were there. The scientist was well enough acquainted with the constellations to be sure of that. And then it struck him. "Sweet saccharin!" he cursed under his breath. "Where did it go, James? It was there last night when I looked. James, WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE PLANET MARS?" Instinctively he ran his eyes back and forth along the zodiac, that imaginary arc along which all the planets travel. Jupiter was where it belonged, in Aquarius. There were no other planets visible. Mars, which was supposed to be in Pisces, had utterly vanished.

"It's been gone for over eight hours, sir. It disappeared at quarter till two this afternoon, our time, so nobody over here noticed right away. But a lot of people in Europe and Asia saw it just blink right out. The whole world is in a frenzy, wondering what has happened. The Russians have issued a statement that if the United States is up to any funny business, there will be hell to pay. Our President just spoke on TV two hours ago, and said just about the same thing to Russia. But nobody has any reasonable ideas about how it happened." The younger man paused, out of breath.

The physicist mused, "Blinked right out, did it? Something must be passing in front of it. Maybe a stray asteroid, close enough to Earth to block out the whole..."

"No, sir," James interrupted quickly. "If there were an asteroid blocking it for eight hours, we'd know it. They've already dismissed that possibility. It would have had to be a huge piece of rock, big enough to see and cause a measureable gravitational pull on the Earth. But that's not the case -- in fact, we can normally measure the gravitational field of Mars, and even that isn't there any more. The damn thing is really gone!"

Dr. Isaacson shook his head slowly in astonishment. What had apparently occurred just wasn't possible. He broke his reverie abruptly after a few seconds. "James, I don't know. Planets don't just vanish into space. I'm going back to work now, because I've been having some success with my cosmic translator. Give me a call in the morning if you hear anything, will you?"

"Will do," muttered the lab assistant. He turned to leave, surprised and vaguely annoyed that the scientist did not seem to regard the events of the day as important enough to merit a break in his experiments. The old guy must really be on to something, he thought. On an impulse he turned back and asked, "Dr. Isaacson, may I come in and maybe give you a hand now?" The scientist consented, and together they walked back into the laboratory.

"Sir, you've been working on this device for almost a year now, and you haven't really explained it to me yet. I know that you consider this project top secret, but can't you just give me some idea as to what this is about?" He gestured toward a large rectangular wooden frame on the scientist's lab table, which housed a cluttered array of wires, electrodes, and other assorted metal parts; all connected to a megaphone-like device which hung off an end of the table.

"Sit down, James, and I'll tell you. I've never been more excited about anything I've ever worked on in my life. I've kept it quiet up till now because I'd be considered a crackpot if the world ever found out what I'm doing.

"As you know, there are many different types of electromagnetic radiation. There is visible light; there are ultraviolet rays; there are gamma rays. In almost all cases, we can match radiation with a particular source. Most of our visible light, for instance, comes from the sun or artificial sources we have created, such as incandescent light bulbs. Certain celestial bodies give off different forms of electromagnetic energy. You've heard of quasars, I presume. They are thought to be the strongest sources of radio waves in the universe, though they are all so far away as to be virtually undetectable to our finest instruments.

"But there is one form of radiation whose source has never been pinpointed. That is the 'cosmic background noise,' as astronomers call it. It used to be thought that since all stars emit cosmic radiation, the unaccounted-for residual amount must simply be the sum total of all the stars in the universe whose output we cannot measure individually. Within the expanding universe, there should be a finite and predictable level of cosmic background noise. But, even factoring out what there should be, there is some unexplained extraneous radiation. My translator is connected to a large receiver on the roof of this laboratory. The device is set up to record only the extra background noise, after subtracting out what ought to be present, and to convert it to sound through this speaker."

The old man paused at a questioning glance from the lab assistant. "So what does it sound like? And what have you found out?"

"Well," the physicist replied, "I can make it sound any way I want, since I'm merely artificially converting the radiation from one energy form to another. But the big story is the pattern I've discovered. When all the radiation that should be detected is left out, the remainder varies in intensity. And it is not a random variation at all, as you would expect. In fact, I've been recording it for months, and the damn stuff has the pattern and cadence of a spoken language!"

James Long sat bolt upright, and the scientist continued.

"The translator contains a miniature computer through which, for several months, I have been trying to decode the pattern of this radiation and convert it to English. Just this afternoon, I was able to get the first intelligible words out of the thing. Forgive me for sounding like a crazy old quack, James, but I heard the words, 'honor our agreement' come out of that box today. James, somebody up there in the heavens is saying something, and I intend to find out what it is!"

\* \* \*

James Long slept fitfully that night, having been confronted twice in the preceding hours with what could be described only as scientific impossibilities. Unable to drift off, he finally arose and sat down at his Diplomacy board, which was set up on a card table in his den. Postal Diplomacy was his idea of a good diversion from the day-to-day rigors of working for Dr. Isaacson, and right now he needed a distraction

from the events of the previous day. The board was set up for a game in which his Austrian position was rapidly going downhill. Sighing, he murmured under his breath, "Sorry about this, guys." Then he wrote the order to disband his army in Vienna, plucked the little red unit off the board, and tossed it into the box. Then he walked back into his bedroom, feeling uneasy about something he couldn't pin down, and finally fell fast asleep.

\* \* \*

The morning headlines blared it out in big, bold type: WORLD MYSTIFIED BY MARS'S DISAPPEARANCE. Around the world scientists, politicians, and military leaders were meeting to discuss and debate the possible causes of the disappearance of Mars. James Long awoke with a start, strode to the front porch, snatched up the newspaper and began reading. Nobody had any reasonable explanations yet, and the planet was still gone. There was to be a question-and-answer session at 9 o'clock in the main auditorium at the university across town, the paper said, hosted by the Astronomy Department. The professors would answer questions as well as they could. The public was invited. James glanced at the clock. He had time to make it there.

The meeting, though, was a disappointment. Not only did he not learn anything new, of course, but the ignorance of the general public on scientific matters never ceased to appall him on those rare occasions when he was exposed to it. The professors sat patiently through it all, fielding the questions without showing a trace of amusement. (Good acting, James thought.)

Some of the questions posed were well thought-out. One man asked if perhaps Mars had exploded somehow. One of the astronomers pointed out that if this had been the case, the gravitational field of the planet would still be present; aside from which such an explosion could not possibly occur spontaneously, given the laws of physics as we know them.

But most of the questions were absurd. A middle-aged woman stood up and inquired, "Couldn't the Martians have just gotten on a spaceship and gone somewhere else?" Much of the audience broke out into laughter at this, though the panel of professors kept its composure well. James got disgusted and finally left.

Driving to Dr. Isaacson's laboratory, the whole series of recent events paraded through James' mind like some fantastic nightmare revisited. The disappearance of Mars...the words that the old scientist had heard from outer space...what were they again? Something about keeping a bargain? James thought irrelevantly of his Diplomacy game, and felt even more uncomfortable. He sped up and reached the lab in ten minutes.

Knocking produced no response, but James heard voices in the room, so he opened the door and walked in. Dr. Isaacson was there, listening to words that were slowly emitting from the speaker connected to the cosmic translator. At James' entry, he jumped up and flicked a switch, stopping the voice, and faced the younger man. His face was chalk white. "I...I never really believed much in religion, James," he stammered. "We cannot find a scientific explanation for the Martian problem because there isn't one. We are so small, so unimportant..." His voice trailed off.

James, feeling a new thrill of fear but unable to restrain his curiosity any longer, strode quickly to the machine and flipped the switch back on. A low, quivering voice echoed through the lab. The voice was saturated with a despair that James instinctively knew was superhuman in both its origin and its depth.

"I have been betrayed again. My Handiwork...My Handiwork..." A huge sigh seemed to fill the room, a sigh of eternal regret. "I am so, so sorry...so sorry..." A terrible pause, then: "Disband the Earth!"

James Long had time only to exchange horrified glances with the scientist, and then there was oblivion.

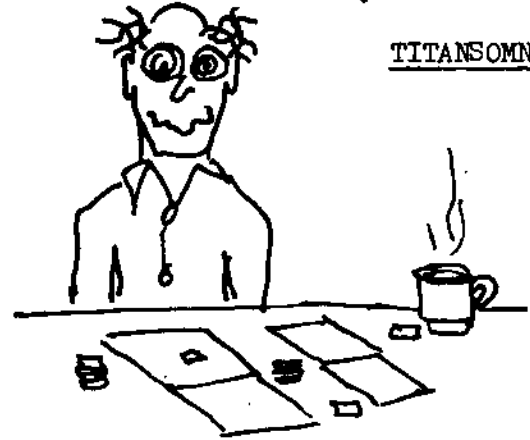
EVERYONE HAS HEARD OF "TENNIS ELBOW" OR ATHLETE'S FOOT. CERTAIN SPORTS AND GAMES SEEM TO SPUR A NUMBER OF DISEASES AND PROBLEMS. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE NEWER GAME RELEASES AND INVESTIGATE A FEW SICKNESSES THEY CAUSE.

by Mark Paul



G.I. FINGER

This disease gives the person stiff hands and waterlogged thumbs as he flips through the many rulebooks of the Squad Leader games while trying to play G.I. Anvil of Victory.



TITANSOMNIA

The symptom of this disease is the inability of a person to sleep for many hours while he plays this enjoyable but nonsensible game. Hopefully the gamers who have become addicted to Titan will realize there are other fantasy games of merit that don't take a lifetime of commitment.



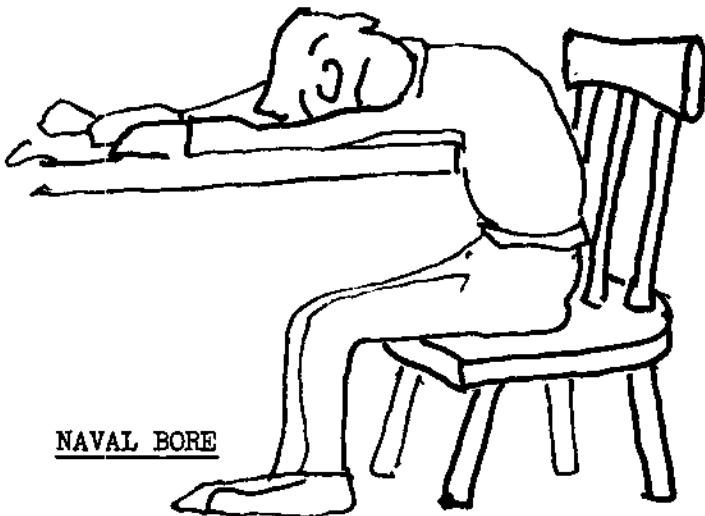
KENNS-RIPPING

This is a disturbance of the ears that results when a person mistakes the game of Kensington for a record album and attempts to play the mapboard on his stereo.

A.H. PRICE LIST SHOCK



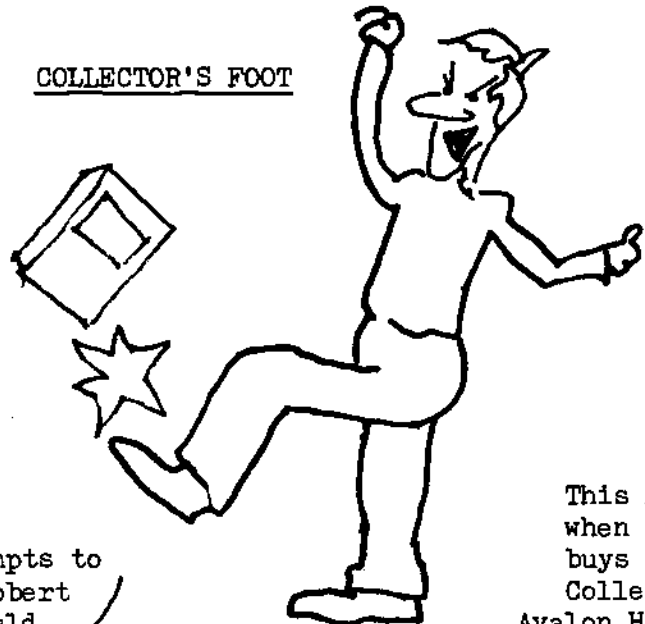
This has struck many gamers when they found out that Avalon Hill has lowered the prices of many games. They recover quickly when they see the change in quality of these games.



NAVAL BORE

A semi-coma which sets in when someone attempts to play Naval War. Remind them that Senator Robert Dole was almost Vice-President and this should snap them out of it.

COLLECTOR'S FOOT



This happens when someone buys The Collector by Avalon Hill and realizes it's that dumb 3M game High Bid. The kick in the trash bag provides the injury.

### How Not to Get a Puppet

So it's midgame and by gosh, you're doing a pretty decent job of growing. But how much easier the battle would become, if only you could get that little country nearby to order his pieces to suit your needs. The balance of power that currently exists would tip appreciably in your favor if he would use his one or two units to further your ends. Your situation is delicate, though; most players don't like to think they are being "used", and yet, that is precisely what you are trying to accomplish.

I can offer some good suggestions on what not to do, taken from my own experiences in the game Swedish Roundabout, which recently ended in Europa Express. Three times in that game, I tried to acquire a puppet, using different negotiational strategies each time. Three times, my attempts failed miserably. I have studied my correspondence regarding all of these attempts, and have arrived at some conclusions as to what I did wrong, and how I might have gotten what I wanted had I handled matters differently. You folks being the loyal, screaming, paying subscribers that you are; I may as well let you learn from my mistakes.

The first situation I shall describe was the entry into the game of John Kador as a standby for a three-center Turkey. My France was fighting a strong Austro-Italian alliance for control of the Med, and I wanted Turkish cooperation (not quite puppethood) in achieving a breakthrough.

#### The Letter

My letter to John opened with a rather lengthy (and not totally factual) history of the game, presented, as I put it, "so you can have a little more of an idea how things stand." Then I went on to talk about the present:

"...This game is far from over for you. It will take some doing for you to come back, but it's not impossible. To do this, you must overcome an Austria twice your size, not to mention Italy. But here's where I come in! I want to pick up where I left off with the previous Turk. Would you be willing to help me take down the other two Med powers? Logically, it's your best option as well as mine -- they are the players who are threatening to take you out. And I don't relish the thought of fighting them singlehanded. I'm hoping to take the Ionian Sea, and once I do then the camel's back will be broken. With your help, I have a good chance of success in 1½ or 2 game years.

What's in it for you? If you can stay friendly with Russia, I can help you turn the tide versus Austria. I expect to get three centers from Italy; and while it may seem far-fetched now, you could stand to gain several centers in the Balkans. If you are able to reach that point, your options will of course be greater in number than they are now.

And please don't feel that you're ultimately cutting your own throat if you aid the western triple. My eventual choice of an ally will be based on who I feel will be easiest to deal with in the long run. The triple won't last forever, and when it breaks I can assure you that I will consider you as a long-range ally. To be even more blunt about it... ((I then went on to badmouth Garry Hamlin, the English player.))

...So, how about it? At this point you can do little but stand and defend, but when I get in position to help you out, would you care to try and make a go of it?..."

#### The Result

John never wrote back to me in this game, though he did call and acknowledge receipt of the letter. He did, indeed, continue to fight his aggressors until he was eliminated, but I chalk this up more to mortal necessity than to what I had written. We never really cooperated, and in his endgame statement I finally discovered what his reaction was: "...I was impressed by the volume of mail that immediately came my way. Everyone, it seemed, was after my heart and mind. Soon I discovered that the part of my anatomy that they really wanted was considerably lower on my body than my heart or mind."

#### What was Wrong with the Letter?

I never achieved the cooperation I was hoping for with John because, I suspect, my

approach was too aggressive and too insulting to his intelligence. John being a player of considerably more experience than I, there is no way he could have found my attempts to pass off my requests for help as a mutually beneficial arrangement to be at all plausible. Hell, I even said outright that I was trying for the Ionian. What room for expansion did that leave him? "Several centers in the Balkans" was farfetched to the point of absurdity, and I suspect John knew it. And my bedmouthing of Haalin when in fact the Franco-English alliance was clear as day probably reinforced whatever fears John had that once French fleets reached the Ionian, they would continue to steam merrily eastward.

### What I Should Have Done

I should have been less pushy, and less extravagant in my predictions of what Turkey might gain out of all this. A far better strategy would have been to sound him out first -- where did he feel his chief threat lay, and what did he want to do? No great harm would have been done had I suggested that we "cooperate in taking the Ionian", rather than mentioning point-blank that I intended to get it.

Even silence on my part might have been preferable to the above letter; the natural Turkish reaction in this situation would be to fight off Austria/Italy, and he might have come to me asking for help eventually.

The game then proceeded rather favorably for me, and soon Bob Osuch's Italy was on the ropes. I wrote a quick letter which briefly mentioned the possibility of puppethood, and he wrote back that he would be agreeable. Whereupon I wrote one of the most horrendous letters I've ever written.

### The Letter

"...I'd like to discuss your offer to puppet. I must admit that I didn't think you'd agree to it, since I thought your desire to get revenge against me might be stronger than your desire to live. The fact that you're willing to change your course of action to help both yourself and me, despite all the garbage I've given you up till now, increases my respect for you as a player -- I think 95% of all players would just suicide out against me at this point.

Let me get specific about what I'd like, then. First, I will make a commitment to you: you will survive until this game ends, unless certain unlikely circumstances make it necessary for me to wipe you out. I'll get into those in just a minute. But, to add to my part of the deal, you are also free (per your request) to write any press that you wish, including goads at me. The more, the merrier.

Now, here's the help I need from you. First, I will ask for your cooperation from the standpoint of orders. What I will ask you to do will naturally serve my interests as well as, or more than, yours; but I will not ask you to do anything which might lead to your own elimination either. Secondly, I may at some point need your help from a diplomatic standpoint. That is, I may need to ask you to vote a certain way on a proposal or even say something to a certain player for me. I wouldn't ask you to go way out of your way in this regard, of course, but I may need your assistance in this respect somewhere down the line.

I must issue a warning: I would regard your failure to submit the correct orders as a termination of our agreement, and this holds even if you make a miswritten move or an NMR. While I think you're sincere, I'm just saying this so you'll know where I stand.

I wrote on the previous page about certain unlikely situations where I would find it necessary to eliminate you. One is described above: if you don't submit the orders I ask for. Two: if I discover that you are betraying me diplomatically; i.e. passing my letters or trying to get another player to stab me. Three: if your remaining centers are absolutely the only means for me to achieve a desired end in the game. That is, if it should happen that I need your last center to avoid being stalemated at 17 centers, then I would let you know that I must have it. This, of course, is extremely unlikely; I'm just clearing it with you in case it should occur.

You may be wondering if I will ever let you grow again. I am not opposed to this, but will permit it only if I can do so without jeopardizing my own well-being. In fact, it is not probable that I will be able let you get above 1 or 2 centers, and I must make sure you're aware of this at the start. In fact, if you are sincere, you will be down to 1 center after this turn unless you aren't stodd out of Trieste, or if you get Greece.

OK, what I need from you this turn is A Ven-Tri, A Rom-Nap, F Ion-Gre, F Eas-Smy. Given these moves by you, I will be taking Ven and Tun (which I will do anyway) and Rom (which would have had to wait a year had you not offered to work with me). You will keep Naples permanently, unless you are compensated elsewhere. It is important that you have Naples instead of, say, Venice; because I can assure that another player won't be able to grab Naples; whereas Randolph ((Germany)) or Dick ((Austria)) might conceivably wipe you out if your sole supply center was Venice...

The Result

Did anyone not guess it? Bob failed to deliver my requested moves that turn, and fought me tooth and nail until the end of the game.

What was Wrong with the Letter?

Jesus Christ on a crutch! I could write a whole book on what was wrong with the above letter. If Bob was sincere to begin with, that letter was certainly the best way to change his mind.

The suggestions themselves were airtight; he really could survive in Naples without fear of destruction from an outside power. But, oh, the condescending, demanding tone that I used!

Most of the stuff above would have been much better left unsaid. When someone offers to puppet for you, it should go without saying that he will make the moves you want, will not try to induce others to stab you, etc. There was no need for me to go into all that painful detail about how Bob would have to obey my wishes in every particular. As for the mentions that I might eventually need his help diplomatically or that I might have to take his last center to avoid being stalemated at 17; those were bridges best crossed if and when I got to them.

Nobody, let alone a player of Bob's experience, likes to be bossed around that much. Even a puppet needs freedom to enjoy the game. I was, in this letter, attempting to control Bob's every action. I didn't leave him any room to breathe. And so, if he really did plan to help me, I lost him.

What I Should Have Done

I should have said something along these lines: "I accept your offer to puppet. You will survive in Naples till game's end as no one else can take it from you. Please make the following moves this turn..." Now wouldn't that have been a much better letter?

The game proceeded, and I decided that I would like to try to get Bob Olsen's one-center Russia (he owned Ankara) on my side. I struck up a novel plan...

The Letter

"Sit down before you read this. I'm about to make you the god-damndest suggestion you've ever heard (outside of JUPITER). I'm basing this on your last letter, which has led me to a few conclusions: 1) you're not totally opposed to helping me; you just don't see much point to it; 2) you're more pissed at Dick than you are at me; 3) you either want somebody to take your last center, or to let you grow larger; 4) you are going to move to the Aegean this turn regardless of any request I may make; and 5) you'd like to inject just a bit more excitement into the game. Let me know if any of those are wrong, but I gather that they're all pretty close to true.

The suggestion I have now is compatible with all 5 of my assumptions. Without further preliminaries, it is this: move F Con-Aeg this turn, and then, in S '06, help me convoy an army from Apulia to Constantinople! (Well, I told you to sit down") Let me review how this jibes with the five points above: 1) you would certainly be helping me, 2) you would be helping me put the screws on Dick, 3) from

Constantinople. I would be in a position to take Ankara if this is what you really want; however, I'd rather be able to support you into Bulgaria (sc) in F '06 and conceivably (though not probably) you might eventually take back Sevastopol. Not likely; you'll probably end up having to work with one unit, but with my help you might even grow center-wise. I would view this as preferable to my taking Ankara, by the way, if only because the latter would be wasting valuable time in my fight against Krud ((Dick)). I'd do it if you want, though, 4) this is consistent with your upcoming move to the Aegean, and 5) it almost goes without saying that this will add excitement to a dull game. And I'd love to see Dick's face if we pull it off!

This will take trust on both sides; if you say you'll do it and then don't I'll have wasted two units next season (A Apu and F Ion), while on the other hand I could stab you by moving into Ankara the following season. But I won't unless you ask me to. Your fleet would be of far more value to me than any unit I could build in Marseilles, and I'd just as soon help you take Dick's centers, and grab a few for myself.

So is this exotic enough to capture your interest?..."

### The Result

It almost worked! I cannot resist quoting part of Bob's reply, to illustrate the delightful style he always maintained in his letters:

"What a degraded, disgusting, perverted, sinister, deviant, farfetched, ridiculous proposition! What am I, some kind of brainless toady, and a scoundrel too, who would toady to someone who would go so far as to put game propoganda in his zine, and, yes, to lie to a fellow-player? What, should I descend to whatever nether level you and your degenerate kind currently inhabit?

Well...maybe.

Your assumptions about my attitude to the game are correct, point by point. And the very stupidity of your suggestion is a great recommendation. About the only objection I have is that doing this would make the game a little too easy for you. Recently I was discussing who was a good player with Langley, and I said to him, "I can't tell if ERUX is any good, or not -- he's had such an easy time of it in Swedish Roundabout that I can't tell!" I mean, talk about your free rides! A couple of strategically placed Big Lies and you just walk into the whole board. It's really ridiculous. I'd be embarrassed if I were you; in fact, I suggest you resign right now in order to save yourself the disgrace of such an easy win.

As for your proposal...well. It's tempting, because it is so very ridiculous. I do have some feeling of responsibility toward Crud, however -- after all, he's one of the few people who has not attacked me in the game. And he has a very clever way of not having to tell lies; he just never says anything. In this particular case, I do have some time to decide, so here's my decision: ~~I'm going to defer action, and let my dear friend Crud determine what I do. No, I'm not going to ask the dear boy's permission -- I am going to give him a chance to save himself. If, before the deadline for whatever season this is supposed to occur (i.e. next season), Dick writes me a letter, any letter, then I won't do it; but in the meantime I'll write preliminary orders to convoy your army like you say, and let them stand until Crud gives me some reason to change them. This is a most satisfactory solution! Even as one might let a blind man "save" himself by reading a passage out of a book, so I will let Crud save himself if he can overcome the deficiencies of his play! I like it!"~~ I'm going to defer action, and let my dear friend Crud determine what I do. No, I'm not going to ask the dear boy's permission -- I am going to give him a chance to save himself. If, before the deadline for whatever season this is supposed to occur (i.e. next season), Dick writes me a letter, any letter, then I won't do it; but in the meantime I'll write preliminary orders to convoy your army like you say, and let them stand until Crud gives me some reason to change them. This is a most satisfactory solution! Even as one might let a blind man "save" himself by reading a passage out of a book, so I will let Crud save himself if he can overcome the deficiencies of his play! I like it!"

Alas, four letters from Russia later (in a letter that was labeled "From: the Viceroy of Vacillation To: The Bambino of Bruxism"), Olsen finally decided not to go through with the convoy. And he supported Austria for the rest of the game.

### What was Wrong with the Letter?

Actually, my letter to Bob wasn't nearly as bad as those I sent to Turkey or Italy earlier in the game. Olsen, like me, is the type of guy who would enjoy doing something totally absurd just for laughs, especially with the game out of reach. However, I wouldn't recommend making such a suggestion to a more serious player. It pays also



to walk on eggs in this sort of situation; my suggestions could easily have been passed on to my English ally and presented as evidence that I wanted to go for the win. (To cover myself, I had alerted England to the fact that I intended to try and get Russian help, though I didn't go into specifics at the time.)

What I Should Have Done

Well...now that I think about it, there wasn't a whole lot wrong with my letter to Russia, given all the circumstances. I'd probably do it exactly the same way if I had to do it again.

Out of all these examples can be drawn some general conclusions about how not to get a puppet.

- 1. Don't be pushy. Make suggestions, and if the puppet-to-be is interested he'll respond with some of his own. Don't try to control his every action as this will increase his desire to strike back at you. Pull his strings, but don't choke him.
- 2. Don't promise unreasonable riches to your potential puppet, unless he's the sort of fellow who can be very easily duped. The more credible he finds your statements, the likelier he is to go along with you.
- 3. Don't condescend. Just because you have a better position than he does in this game doesn't make you a better player than him -- and even if you are, keep it to yourself. Very few people like to be overtly treated as the inferior member of a partnership.

Keep these points in mind next time you're trying to get a puppet. Hey, I don't mind if you Doxmes learn from my mistakes. That's why I write these things, right?

The ongoing saga of BRUX's Houserules of Voice of Doom fame (or infamy).



BRUX the Law-Giver descending Mt. Sinai with the 10(,000) commandments . . .

Hail Brucifer!

by Gary L. Coughlan

"The more things change, the more they are the same." -- Alphonse Karr.

Every age in history has had its own heroes, villains, disputes, scandals and controversies. 1983, within our own Diplomacy hobby, is no exception.

Certain characters repeatedly appear throughout history, like the hen-packed husband, the prostitute with the proverbial "heart of gold" and the rebellious youth versus the "establishment". Even our own Beetle Bailey has his own counterpart in the ancient Romans' Miles Gloriosus.

It is not too fanciful to expect that others, with similar characteristics to ours, have lived in the past and will also exist in the future, and that is the premise of this play...

But before we take a journey back into time, let's see who we will meet. In a few cases, the words spoken by these characters or attributed to other persons were actually said by them. Such words are marked with an asterisk like so \*.

It is Halloween in the year 983 A.D., a thousand years ago and the era of the Viking raids in Europe, the bleakest period of the Dark Ages. In the area we now know as North America, petty warlords (a.k.a. pubbers) are constantly carving up fiefdoms, a state of almost constant war prevails and the jockeying for position seemingly never ends. In words familiar to our time, it is "palee against zine" and "pubber against pubber."

The following appear in this play:

- Bruce Linsey, a.k.a. BMOX -- the liege lord of Doom Castle.
- Mike Muzzer, Lord Linsey's 6 ft 6 in court jester (a.k.a. "The Fool").
- Bob Osuch, Lord Linsey's chief advisor and monster; he publishes Woodpecker.
- John Kelley, a Linsey loyalist in the constant battles of the East Coast Witches; he once pubbed The Republiken.
- Bob Olson, a simple peasant from far-away Kansas; he has a cat named Olga.
- Ed Wrobel, a 10th century activist and a thron in Lord Linsey's side.
- Mark Berch, a.k.a. "God", a powerful bald wizard whose only desire is to serve Lord Linsey.

(SCENE): We find ourselves in "Castle Doom" perched high atop a craggy mountain. Castle Doom is the fortress-stronghold of Lord Linsey who has been on the throne for four years.

But it is a fortress under heavy siege. War between the East Coast Witches is never pleasant and multitudes of their armies have been besieging Castle Doom for over 10 months now with no signs of lifting the siege soon.

However, Lord Linsey has decreed that the celebration of his fourth year of rule go on as scheduled and so it does. "Hail Brucifer" is my tribute to the enjoyment Bruce Linsey and VD have given me for four years.

Lord Linsey strides into the gigantic throne room. Burning wood crackles in the fireplace. There is a balcony where the inhabitants of Castle Doom may look down upon the armies of the East Coast Witches.

Lord Linsey looks just like Jerry Lewis in The Nutty Professor and although it's Halloween, he's not dressed in a costume. This is what he really looks like. He stands before an enormous mirror.

BMOX: Mirror, mirror on the wall,

Who's the most feared OM of all?

Mirror: From Coast to Coast,

BMOX is the one they fear most!

Mike: Then, I am the greatest! Did I point that to VD this month? You'll find the best fool! (His Majesty, 6 ft 6 in Mike Muzzer, dressed in his Fool's costume, enters from stage.)

Mike: Was that you calling me, my liege, or was it the voice of a god?!

BRUX: Oh, is Berch back? No, no, it was I. (hastily glances around) I hope John Kador isn't sneaking around corners again trying to catch me in grammatical errors!

Mike: What did you want, Lord Linsey?

BRUX: Oh yes, the mirror tells me I'm still the most feared GM of all. Did I mention that again last issue? And am I really truly feared as a GM?

Mike: I believe that last issue was scheduled to mention that you had the best letter column in the world. This coming issue you mean to say that you have the largest zine of all time coming out. The earliest you could again mention you're the most feared GM would be possibly late November.

BRUX: Drats! But am I feared?

Mike: You're asking me? I was in MILKY WAY, remember?! That game brought many of the East Coast Witches down on your head.

BRUX: Yes, and they're still out there too. ((Enter Bob Osuch, main advisor to Lord Linsey.))

BRUX: Ah, Bob, what's the latest news on the war front? Who's the strongest now -- me or my enemies?

Bob: Greetings, Lord! They've not breached the castle walls yet despite an intense battering. But I do feel we must work on your image more.

Mike: How about a telethon for Jerry's kids?

BRUX: Silence, Fool! But my image is great! Just watch this:  
Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Who's the most feared GM of all!

Mirror: BRUX BRUX BRUX BRUX  
BRUX keeps 'em in a flux!!

BRUX: See!

Bob: Well, "BRUX" is not exactly a fearsome name and the mirror's info has not been updated since last May.

BRUX: Then update it! Go on about my image. Speak freely.

Mike: I'm tired of being the butt of tall jokes and putting me in this clown suit is really the last straw and...

BRUX: Silence, Fool! I meant Bob to speak freely.

Bob: Well, liege, we've conducted a poll of the Doomies and the results are starting to trickle in. Some think you pat yourself on the back too much.

BRUX: But if I have the greatest something-or-other, why shouldn't I say it?

Mike: Ain't fittin'. Ain't fittin'. Lawsy Miz Scarlett, ain't fittin'.

Bob: The fool's right. Then you had that beer bust and no beer. Then you rejected a Rod Walker article. Then you've made several controversial GMing decisions.

BRUX: All they have to do is follow the rules of Doom Castle to the letter and the games run smoothly.

Bob: And speaking of games -- no one sees you playing a Diplomacy game anywhere, Liege -- not even are you on a standby list. Doomies wonder why and other GMs feel you think they aren't competent enough for the mighty Lord Linsey.

BRUX: That's only a superficial appearance -- not the reality.

Bob: But liege, in Diplomacy appearance is all most people see. They don't know the real you.

Mike: Yes, we happy band of brothers are so lucky!

BRUX: Silence, Fool! Go to the balcony and list those who are fighting me. ((The Jester goes to the balcony and surveys the outspread armies below.))

Mike: I see the Anduin Archers, the Lartzelancers, the Craustark Legions, and...

Bob: What about the Whitestonia Warriors?

Mike: Them too and the Martin Mercenaries and now the Modern Patriots...

BRUX: That is modern! Patriotism won't be invented until the 18th century!

- Mike: ...and a new ensign I've not seen before. The standard is of the image of a... woodpecker.
- BRUX: Oooooch!! That scurrilous fake which mocked me! Wait til I discover the perpetrator of that!
- Bob: (nervously) Uh, Liege, don't you have any allies in this neck of the woods?
- BRUX: The Shoguns were bringing their swords to help me but they've faltered and have been taken over by a Cunning weirdo who refuses to acknowledge my existence.
- Mike: She's probably in league with some orcs. Perhaps I should write a paper on "Magic in the Middle Ages."
- BRUX: Perhaps you should shut up before you lose your head.
- Bob: Speaking of losing, Lord Linsey, your image, even of controversy, has taken quite a beating lately. For one thing, you've considerably toned down controversy in the castle publication here.
- BRUX: That's not verifiable! I want proof!
- Bob: Okay! You're not even considered the most obnoxious hobby member! A year ago you'd have been a shoo-in. Now you are in a three-way tie for first place!
- Mike: I knew I should have voted!
- Bob: And, not only were you not elected Toad, you couldn't even win the Toady section. That was a 2-way tie!
- BRUX: I grow bored. Tell me of the anniversary celebrations.
- Bob: We've received many submissions from, let's see, Lady Joan, Squire Garry, Yeoman Chuff, Squire Ronald, Lady Alex, Squire Edmund and many others.
- BRUX: Very good, a wonderful turn-out postally. Now for face-to-face! Admit the loyal worshippers. ((Guards open the heavy oaken doors to admit the 99 zillion loyal, screaming Doomies. Only three enter! They are John Kelley, Bob Olsen with his cat Olga, and Ed Wrobel clutching a scroll of paper to his chest.))
- BRUX: This is it?
- Bob: Obviously the blockade of your enemies prevented the masses from attending, Lord!
- Mike: Talk about the 3 stooges and a cat!
- Olsen: Cosh, Olga, I don't think we're in Kansas any more!
- BRUX: No, you are not. You're my guests in Doomed, er, Doom Castle. Where are my They should have been here at least. Where are knights Coughlan, Baumeister, and Knight?
- Kelley: Sire, Knight Coughlan and Knight Baumeister send their regrets about not being able to attend. Since you have now forbidden jousting on the castle grounds, they have left for other castles -- perhaps even their own.
- BRUX: What about Knight Knight?!
- Olsen: Sounds good to me. I haven't had a decent night's sleep since I left Kansas!
- BRUX: The Knight, Steve Knight, Knavel!
- Mike: And I thought I was supposed to be the fool.
- Wrobel: Sire, Knight Knight was so exhausted after streamlining your houserules that he is unable to celebrate.
- Bob: Yes, Lord Linsey, 3 pages just for a table of contents for a further 16 pages of houserules is a massive hunk.
- Mike: C'est moi!
- Olsen: Now I see why you're the biggest fool I've ever seen. What time's the banquet -- I'm famished!
- Mike: The biggest fool, eh? Look in the mirror some time.
- Bob: Before we eat, we'd like to try to improve Lord Linsey's image. His enemies have garnered wide support and Lord Linsey would like to erode it. Any suggestions, loyal Doomies?
- Kelley: Get a catchy nickname!
- BRUX: I am called BRUX.
- Kelley: Get a catchy nickname! Where'd you get a name like "BRUX" anyway?
- BRUX: My friend, FRUX, called me that. Am I not a feared GM because of it?

Olsen: Sure you're feared! How art thou feared, let me count the ways thou are feared...

Mike: Thank you, Elizabeth Barrett Browning!

BRUX: What nickname would you suggest?

Wrobel: How about "Brucifer"? It sounds so evil and therefore so fitting as the most feared GM!

BRUX: Yes, I like it! "Brucifer."

Olsen: (to Wrobel) What did you mean, "most feared GM"? Lord Linsey is not feared the most.

All: WHAT!!!

Olsen: It's true. I used to be dumb and ignorant too, but I saw the light! Why not ask the mirror?

Bob: The mirror hasn't been updated since May and the last it said was BRUX was the most feared GM.

Olsen: Well, I'm a mirror specialist and I can adjust it in a jiffy.

Mike: You look like you've worked around funny mirrors in the circus anyway. ((Bob Olsen adjusts the mirror. Lord Linsey stands before it.))

BRUX: Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
Who's the most feared GM of all?

Mirror: BRUX, thou art feared, 'tis true,  
But Rusnak is more feared than you!!

BRUX: RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRUSNAK!!!!

Wrobel: But he doesn't have any houserules like unto Brucifer's!

Olsen: Maybe not, but Rusnak requires references to play in his games. And once you're in one, he demands quality press -- not quantity! Never have I felt so intimidated by a GM.

BRUX: Well, I will reverse this mirror's prediction when my 19 pages of revised, edited houserules see print! What else can I do to garner support away from my enemies?

Kelley: Why don't you take a wife? She can write letters in your defense and females automatically attract attention in our wars.

BRUX: No, I don't want to do anything drastic...

Olsen: Get a pet. I get lots of sympathy through Olga my cat here. Nice kitty.

BRUX: I had a dog once. Nothing but Trouble.

Wrobel: Perhaps you have a fellow pubber-lord who will make your enemies his enemies and back you 100% no matter what you do.

BRUX: No, I want people to join me of their own free will and for their own interests, not just because it's me.

Kelley: What about Berch?!

BRUX: Berch has criticized me. I wouldn't want a Linsey clone, or a mindless follower.

Bob: Thank all of you for expressing yourselves to Lord Linsey so openly. Now that all our business is concluded we can feast on roast duck.

Olsen: Oh goody! I love Chinese food!

Wrobel: But Liege Lord, our business is not concluded. I have a paper here I wish you to sign.

BRUX: What paper?

Wrobel: Call it the "Magna Carta" if you will. It is nothing less than a guarantee of players' rights in Castle Doom games!

Mike: I still thought I was supposed to be the fool!

Bob: Lord Linsey will sign no such paper!

BRUX: My houserules cover all possible situations. This comes under Section I, Paragraph 6, Sentence 1.

Wrobel: Your games hurt players!

BRUX: No, players hurt players!

Wrobel: But you should show more compassion for your people. Show some intelligence!

BRUX: "You have to assume that the GM has no intelligence." \*

Wrobel: No, you don't!

BRUX: "When you're dealing with a GM like me, you do!" "

Wrobel: You're an idiot!

All: Gasp!! Gasp!! Gasp!!

BRUX: This is an intolerable affront! Let loose the Kraken! I mean, let loose the Berch!

Kelley: No, Lord, not the Berch!

Olsen: Not him! Please spare us!!

Bob: Lord, please avoid using the bald-headed one!

Mike: Lord, what fools these mortals be! I demand job security!

BRUX: Silence!! Come to me, Berch! I have been assaulted right in the houserules. ((A short, bald-headed wizard appears in the middle of the quavering group. He looks just like Woody Allen but without the hair, height or humor. He's not dressed for Halloween either!))

Berch: You summoned me, Lord Linsey?

BRUX: Yes, Squire Wrobel here has insulted my houserules. Tell him what you do at level one.

Berch: Level one! I write an extremely long letter to VD designed to stun and cow the detractor.

BRUX: This is more serious; possibly level 2.

Berch: Level 2 is "add sarcasm." For example, in this case, I would say something like, "I'm sure what Ed Wrobel meant to say, and which would have been at least minimally effective had he expressed himself better..."

Wrobel: Oh no, what have I done?

BRUX: Level 3, level 3 Berch!!

Berch: Then I write letters to other zines, designed to reach yet a wider audience. Something like..."I've seen a situation like this before. Ed Wrobel has created quite an affair in VD and..."

Mike: An affair in VD. Sounds so venerable!

Wrobel: Oh no, not the Wrobel Affair! How much am I expected to be able to take?!

BRUX: Level 4, Berch!

Berch: At level 4, I begin a series of snippy comments in my publication Diplomacy Digest to prod the offender back into line.

BRUX: And the last level, level 5, the most ultimate step you have yet devised?

Berch: Only rarely done but level 5 is a full-scale 3 1/2-page editorial in Diplomacy Digest. On the offender's copy I write "I'm sending this to over 300 people. They must know about you!"

BRUX: Take that, Ed Wrobel!! ((Wrobel collapses, broken in mind and spirit.))

Mike: Sic Semper Wrobelitis!!

Bob: Lord Linsey, once outside the castle gates, he will receive new encouragement. Castle Doom is under heavy fire here. Have you considered moving to a new castle in a more friendly area?

BRUX: I have looked into a castle about an hour from here, but I hear you must pay a Mass of Taxes, or in the local language there, Massachusetts. Pittsboro I believe.

Bob: If it's near Foxburgh, you can watch the Patriots play!

BRUX: NO PATRIOTS! Don't mention Patriots to me!!

Bob: I meant the New England Patriots, Sir!

BRUX: Oh, that's a horse of a different color. I'll consider it then. Now let's eat, Doomies!!

All: HAIL BRUCIFER!!

((Gary Coughlan has brought much laughter and enjoyment to the people of the hobby through his delightfully satirical plays. Thanks, and a horrendous heap of free issues to you, Gary! Brucifer, indeed.))

PS. And I am the most feared, goddammit...

Diplomacy Euphemisms

by BRUX

Here in our hobby, we have diplomatic ways of expressing certain things. To wit:

What We Say

What We Mean

"Let's make it a game-long alliance!"

"Please don't stab me till I get a chance to stab you first."

"The zine is very good at being what it tries to be."

"It's a warehouse zine without much reading material."

"Congratulations on your win. I enjoyed crossing swords with you."

"I'll never forgive you for the way you stabbed me, you slime!"

"Hey, man, that's a drag. I'm sorry you drew Italy."

"HAHAHAHA!!"

"You'll have to trust me, of course, not to go to Munich..."

"Ha, sucker, you're helpless now!"

"I really think that my loss fleet might prove the difference for you..."

"P-p-please d-don't wipe me out!"

I'm sure you readers can think of others; send 'em in!

JUST POKING ABIT OF HUMOR AT BRUCE LINSEY'S WELL KNOWN HOUSERULES:

Game start

Your game, the Big Dippe- will begin in the next issue of Doom Houserules, please indicate below your preference as to method of shipment.

- United Parcel Service (UPS)
- US Parcel Post
- Motor Freight
- Barge (if you live on a waterway)

Sending by US Postal Service (regular mail) is prohibited due to weight and volume restrictions.

Bruce Linsey publishes The Voice of Doom, from a cave in the vicinity of 24A Quarry Drive, Albany, New York 12205

*Brux,  
I still have a few ideas for this section. Thanks for letting me run this bit of humor. Remember, we checkle with you and not at you.  
Bob*

The Raging Finchley Central Debats

Part of the reason for the discussion which ensues is that only five or six North American hobby members have much to do at all with the British hobby, and this is very much our loss. The hobby in Britain holds more attraction for me every time I receive an issue of one of the (now) five U.K. zines I trade for.

The big battle over there at this time seems to revolve around a game called Finchley Central. Rather than describe it myself, I shall quote first from Pete Tamlyn's The Acolyte, issue 50. Here it is, verbatim.

The game of Finchley Central has been receiving a good deal of publicity in the Hobby in recent months. Your fearless Acolyte reporters have been engaged in a full scale investigation of this phenomenon, even to the extent of participating in a game. We are now in a position to present our report. Firstly, as an introduction, we present the first known mention of the game within the Hobby. The following report was found in the MidCon 3 program booklet. It is possible that the whole thing is an invention of that booklet's editor, Chris Tringham. However, Chris attributes the article to someone called Kev Smith and says that the original appeared in a zine called Dot. Unfortunately, Kev Smith does not appear in any copy of Who's Where that I have, nor is Dot mentioned in Richard Walkerdine's listing of the Hobby Archives. Is Tringham responsible for Finchley Central? Read on, and make up your own minds.

A guy called the Berserker, because he sometimes carries a four-foot broadsword, told me about this game one day when we were both pretty scotched up.

"All we need," he said, "is a map of the London Underground."

"Yes, Allan," I said, since although he was not carrying his broadsword at the time, there was a small probability that he would remember this meeting some time when he would be carrying it. In fact there was no trouble about the map, as we were on King's Cross Underground station waiting for a train.

"Two people take turns to name an Underground station from the map," said the Berserker, "and the first one to say Finchley Central wins."

"Okay," I said, "Finchley Central."

He looked at me scornfully. "You win," he said, "but it shows no finesse. It has no class."

We tried again, and went on for several minutes trying to out-think each other in the matter of Finchley Central. It doesn't matter, I discovered, if you repeat a station, but it shows no finesse. Then the Berserker said he was growing tired of the game, and said Finchley Central to win it. I was thinking what a good thing it was that I had no potatoes wagered on the outcome when he asked me if I wanted another game. This time it was much better, as we approached Finchley Central station up the Northern Line, testing each other's nerve before cutting down the District Line. Finally I decided to win the game because our train had arrived.

Finchley Central is a very English game.

When I told Andrew Stephenson about Finchley Central, he fell quivering to the ground and called me a looney. Since he was pissed as three newts at the time I disregard his remarks utterly. Already I am preparing a three-volume boxed set of the rules with awful illustrations, together with expensive supplements without which the game cannot be played at all. And I am willing to begin a postal game of Finchley Central.

((Tamlyn again)): Are we any closer to the truth? Well, Andrew Stephenson does not appear in Who's Where either, so things are looking fairly black for Chris. However, Tringers is well known for his utter loathing of all things to do with fantasy and the mysterious Berserker, together with the veiled references to the original D&D combine to produce a powerful argument against his authorship. But could Tringham himself have been hoaxed? Is some secret Mastermind attempting to gain control



of the Hobby through this immensely popular game? Who has enough knowledge and influence in the Hobby to have fooled Tringham in this way? Only one man...

According to our theory, Dot never existed, and so "Kev Smith's" offer to run the game by post came to naught. However, in October 1982 the following appeared in the recently resuscitated Mad Policy.

((Pete then reprints the rules for Postal Finchley Central from Mad Policy, a zine whose name is an anagram for "Diplomacy." Rule #4 states that "The winner of a game will be the first player to provide the name of Finchley Central. If more than one player names Finchley Central on the same turn the result will be a tie."

Following this is an announcement that Acolyte will be running a game of Finchley Central by mail.

But some folks in Britain were unhappy with the rise to prominence of this new fad. Witness the following editorial, written in the unique style of Glover Rogerson in his Denver Glont number 19))

I suppose I'd better warn you that this piece is probably not going to go down well in certain sectors of the hobby, and i may well be going to blow my chances in the zine poll, but what the hell.

The thing is, it seems to me that Denver has been around long enough for me to legitimately stand up for what i think is right, and, as importantly, for what i think is wrong. As you have probably guessed, i think there is something wrong in the hobby today.

Now, i haven't exactly been free of controversy in my short time in the hobby, as i'm sure John Marsden, Pete Tamlyn, Pete Doubles and one or two others may agree. However, to date i haven't gone out of my way to start trouble. This editorial sees the end of that line, for which i feel slight regret, but i feel that the issue is worth getting worked up about. So i shall.

Enough of this self justification, i suppose i'd better get down to the subject at hand. For a long time, the hobby has gone on quite happily. We had Diplomacy, we had chat, we had En Garde, we diversified. We have magazines like Hopscotch to thank for bringing us United, and many others too numerous to mention. We had a nice hobby. You could talk about Politics, Religion, Edible Underwear, Poker, Bridge. Well, i'm using the past tense, because under the hobby's collective door has crept a viper. A cancer. A blot upon the face of the world.

I refer, of course, to Finchley Central. Here we have a game that is threatening the win ethic of a generation. It spars the will. It denies diplomacy. Skill is destroyed. It is, i am forced to admit, fast. However, it seems to me that the collective consciousness of the Diplomacy hobby is being sapped by the introduction of this child of minds that must be described as warped and twisted.

So. The time to strike back has come. A policy of blacklisting all those who have ever played the game has been suggested, but is this really the answer? Some of these souls are just misguided. Some of them are just weak willed wets (i know this because both Tamlyn and Dolton have fallen for the lure of Finchley). Some are of course totally evil; unless he recants, i recommend driving Walkerdine back to the darkness and obscurity from which he only recently re-emerged. No, mere ostracism is not sufficient. We must show that Diplomacy is ready and able to meet this challenge from the pits of hell straight on. We must face the fact that some pleasure seekers want more.

As a result, and with no apologies for the plagiarism, i hereby announce the opening of the once in a lifetime offer. Yes, you can play Diplomacy Central in Denver Glont, the zine that cares for the Diplomacy player. The rules of this ultimate game of skill and persuasion, and SPEED, are presented below.

- 1) All the normal rules of Diplomacy apply.
- 2) The first player to successfully order a unit to Albania wins.

I must say that a certain amount of the glory for the design of this variant of

all variants should go to Brian Dolton, with also present prizes going to Philly, Mark D. Clive P & Tim B. I will not go into the details; the strategies must veritably leap off the page at you. Preference lists are, of course, not mandatory, but are advised.

Death to Finchley Central! Support your local Dip game!

((In DG 20 Glover had five players signed up and the following comments in his letter column, from Derek Sutherland.))

A few observations about Dip Central.

Geographical proximity to Albania is an important factor in the innate strength of any country in the game. Geographical proximity to Gascony is not.

The balancing features of the game of Diplomacy will be tested to their very limit in this game -- is the threat of a several-way alliance against him enough to persuade Austria not to win on the first turn?

For E,F,G,I,R,T, the tactics initially must be a diplomatic onslaught on Austria to avoid a move to Alb. The threat of a 6-way alliance against Austria must be made by all. The threat of red hot slivers of steel under the fingernails must be made. Ice cold Lokasennas must be inserted in Austria's left nostril. Destruction of the post office would prove advantageous (whether it be in all of the UK or merely in Austria's vicinity). To complete this ploy, British Telecom must also be sabotaged.

Austria's death will achieve much.

From Austria's view, efforts must be made to convince the other 6 that these above methods are unneeded -- he won't order to Albania. However, he should then move to Albania (yeah, lie to the others!). F Tri-Alb should be ordered. In case of problems, A Bud-Alb should also be ordered. However, this is illegal, so other tactics must be tried. I'd advise:

Spring '01: F Tri-Adr, A Bud-Ser, A Vis-Tri (to stop the Wops, tricky, eh?)

Fall '01: NMR (throw the enemy into confusion) ((Glover puts in, "That anywhere near Albania?"))

Spring '02: A Bud-Alb, F Adr-Alb, A Vis-Alb (One of them is sure to make it.)

Fall '02: Doesn't exist. The escaton has been immanentized.

((Glover then responds with this:))

The above was typed by Clive Palmer, as a contribution to efficiency and peed. I mean speed. Never mind... Well, thank you Derek, for a masterful exposition of the tactics. Myself, I favour F Tri-Alb, but then I always was a killer player. What you've missed, however, is the true skill element in the game, the formation of the preference list.

Remember, in Denver I will maximize the utility function of the seven players. Think about it. Which country do you put second? Ah, you begin to appreciate it, don't you...

((Derek again, briefly...))

Support Civilisation Central -- first to build a city on the island of Crete wins.

((I dare say this has been a rather long session of reprinting from two British zines (out of the four I trade for; don't know why I said five earlier...), but Diplomacy players in North America would really do well to write to Glover Rogerson, Pete Tamlyn, Peter Birks, and Geoff Challenger for copies of their zines. There's a whole other hobby out there, and only Gary Coughlan, Cathy Cuning, Mark Berch, Steve Knight, Eric Kane, and I seem to have discovered it (much). And many of the zines are outstanding. All addresses can be found in the address list this issue; air mail costs 40¢ to Great Britain.

Oh, and there was one other reason for printing all of the above. Anybody want to play Diplomacy Central in YD? Send only your preference list...))

by Garry Hamlin

((Note: This manuscript was forwarded to me by Garry Hamlin's doctor, from a mental institution in northern Michigan where Garry is currently being confined. Get well cards may be sent to Garry, care of BRUX, VD.))

It all started when I was very young. We were choosing sides for baseball, a game I'd never played. It was second grade. I had no idea what was going on.

The first batter walked; I was on second base. The second batter hit a long one to left field. I didn't understand the rules of the game.

The first batter rounded my position on second. The ball was still in left field. Everyone was shouting at me; I couldn't hear what they were saying.

The second batter was running my way; the ball was still in left field. Everyone was looking at me like they were expecting me to do something.

I tackled the guy.  
"I got him," I yelled. "Get the ball! Get the ball!"

That was when I first realized that I was different from the others, a recognition that steadily deepened as I entered adult life.

In the first good paying job I ever got, I was supposed to make routine inspections inside the gates of a large production complex. All I had to do was be able to walk and drive a pickup.

Problems began when my midnight shift foreman told me to check the oil on the pickup and fill it with gas before starting my evening inspections.

When I got to the company's service station, there was no one around. After midnight, employees were expected to take care of routine vehicle maintenance themselves.

Though I had never pumped gas before, I started right in. I did a pretty good job, too, except that I kept shining my flashlight into the gas tank every few minutes to see if it was full yet. I didn't realize that the pump would stop automatically once the tank was full.

Then, much to my surprise, I was able to get the hood up. I considered this quite an achievement, since I had done this without any training whatsoever.

Once I had the engine exposed, though, I didn't know what to do. I knew the dipstick was in there someplace. Since it was pitch black at the time, I found myself groping at the distributor cap and yanking on spark plugs or anything that seemed likely to come loose, looking for a thin elusive rod in the dark that I probably couldn't have found in broad daylight.

After ten minutes of fruitless effort, I gave up and climbed back into the truck, muttering something about the inherent malice of machines. But just as I was about to drive off, I noticed a gauge on the console that read "low oil pressure." Of course, the truck was turned off at the time, so the gauge would have read that way in any case. Unfortunately, that didn't occur to me at the time.

Reasoning that I shouldn't be driving a vehicle with low oil pressure, I found the oil pumps in the deserted service station and drew off what I assumed was a quart of oil, figuring that should be enough.

Much to my surprise, once I got the oil cap off, I found that the engine sucked the oil right down. I shined my flashlight down the hole where the oil had gone and found that the oil was nowhere near the top. Of course, the gauge on the console still read "low oil pressure."

So I went back to the service station and got another quart, which still didn't top the engine off. Who on earth would be driving this truck around more than two quarts low, I thought. I didn't even let my own car get to that state.

So I went back into the service station and got another quart. I repeated this process five more times. The oil still had not risen to the top.

By this time I had begun to suspect that something was radically wrong. I'd

wasted half an hour and appeared to be getting nowhere. How much oil can a pickup truck hold, I thought. I even shined my flashlight under the chassis to see if the oil was leaking out somehow. Thorough examination provided no answers to my questions.

By now, I was getting behind in my inspections. After a moment's debate, I decided that I'd probably put enough oil in the truck to get by on. I could always come back later and fill it up. So off I went, the engine sounding like few engines have ever sounded before, and laying a truly impressive smoke screen behind me. Of course, I attributed this to the engine's obvious lack of oil.

Things went well for about an hour. Then I had to go outside the fence line to inspect a tank farm. I knew this would pose a problem, since the guard at the gate would see the smoke screen and make me go back to the service station and add more oil, which I didn't have time to do.

I determined that I had to get past the gate using as little gas as possible. So I built up speed and tried to coast through.

Unfortunately, I misgauged the momentum, and my speed dwindled too soon, leaving me idling through the gate at about two miles per hour. Not wanting to attract attention to myself, I just touched the gas pedal -- which sent such a cloud of smoke billowing out behind me that it completely obscured my vision in the rear-view mirror.

I didn't get 100 feet from the gate when my radio crackled, "Twenty-five," which was my call number.

"Twenty-five," I answered.

"Twenty-five," the radio crackled, "return to the gate immediately. The guard there says you're on fire."

"Twenty-five," I radioed back. "Don't worry. I just don't have enough oil in this thing."

So there was nothing to do but go back to the service station, where I was met by an employee from the company fire department, who'd been radioed to meet me at the scene. I willingly explained my problem to him.

"How much oil did you put in that truck?" the fireman asked.

"Eight of those quart containers."

"Those are two-quart containers," he said, his eyes widening. "You put how much oil in that truck?"

They didn't tell the guy they called in on overtime what had happened. His face was a study in amazement as the pickup on the hoist continued to drain, and drain, and drain.

This, of course, happened in the middle of the Arab oil embargo, when petroleum products were in short supply. Word went through the entire production complex like a laser beam. My name was mentioned on the company television program, which was broadcast by cable to the local community twice a week. I became a celebrity.

It was about this time that I first began having visions. Later, it was revealed to me in a dream that I was the reincarnation of Henry Ford, and that my mission on this earth was to redesign the internal combustion engine.

Until recently, I had been instructed by the angel Gabriel to keep these matters to myself. Now that the time is ripe for my public emergence into the world, I have been unlawfully confined here by a society fearful of learning the truth about engine mechanics.

Through great effort, I have managed to convince some of the local staff of the validity of my mission. They have warned me not to speak of my goal publicly, since it would result in undue persecution. But I must be true to my destiny.

Still, things are not all bad here. The food is good, and they let me work in the shop. In the month since I have been here, I have invented many things. My goal now is to discover what they are.

If anyone reading this has an open mind and a thorough understanding of non-Euclidean geometry and the laws of physics, please write to me. I have pressing news which the world has great need to hear.

((Thanks, and six free issues, to Garry for sharing his "experience" with us. Do they have someone there who can turn the pages for you so that you can read while in your straight jacket, Garry?))



Letter to My Ex-wife

Ladies and gentlemen, I used to be married. Of course, I'm not married any more, and I would like to read a letter to you that I wrote to my wife just before the divorce. And after you hear this letter, you will understand why I'm not married no more.

My Darling Wife:

During the past year I have tried to seduce you 365 times. However, I only succeeded 36 times. Now this is an average of once every 10 days or about 3 times a month, and the following is a list of reasons why I did not succeed more often.

17 times you said we would wake the kids, 23 times it was too late, 15 times it was too hot, 6 times it was too cold, 15 times it was too early, and 49 times you pretended to be asleep.

9 times the window was open and the neighbors would hear, 2 times you had a backache, and 4 times it was a toothache, and 19 times you had to go to the bathroom, and you stayed in there so long I fell asleep!

6 times you had a headache, and 11 times it was company in the next room; 10 times I asked you and you just started giggling, and 2 times I asked you and you said, "Edward, there ain't no way in hell we're gonna do it tonight because I am going to the doctor's office tomorrow for inspection." (A Pabst Blue Ribbon test or something like that!)

25 times you had a new hairdo, and 16 times you were too full; 4 times you just put on fresh make-up, 41 times you were not in the mood. 5 times you watched the Johnny Carson show, 17 times the baby was crying.

Now, during the 36 times that I did succeed, the activity was not entirely satisfactory because 6 times you chewed Juicy Fruit gum the whole time, and 5 times you watched Englebert Whats-his-dink the whole time, and 18 times you told me to hurry up and get it over with, and 6 times I had to wake you up to tell you when we were through!

And once, my darling, I thought I hurt you --- BECAUSE I FELT YOU MOVE!

And that's why I'm not married no more.



Cyclic Article (from page 24)

his hands triumphantly.

I saw a problem instantly, however. "But then it would have no beginning, either. I could never write it, because I could never start it!"

He looked at me as if I were an idiot. "So what? So you start in the middle, and you end in the middle right at the point where you began. And, as an added bonus, you don't even have to give it a title."

I began to like the idea more and more. "Hey, that's right! I could just sort of have a note at the bottom of the page telling people to go back up to the top, and at the top say that it was continued from the bottom, or some such."

"Now what would be the point of that? You might as well just make it a regular

(go to page 114)

Krazy Envelope Dept.

166

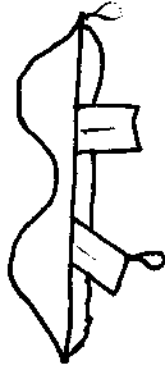
Thanx to Brian Orloff and Mark Paul...

ORLOFF  
110 S. 17th St.  
Manhattan, KS  
66502



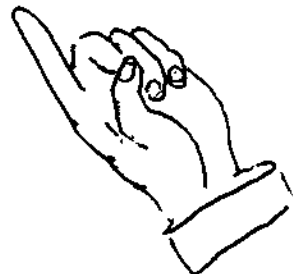
BROKE, BEATEN, AND BOMBER!

A BRUX after Origins...



FROM:  
Mark Paul  
P.O. Box 99  
Dover, NH 03820

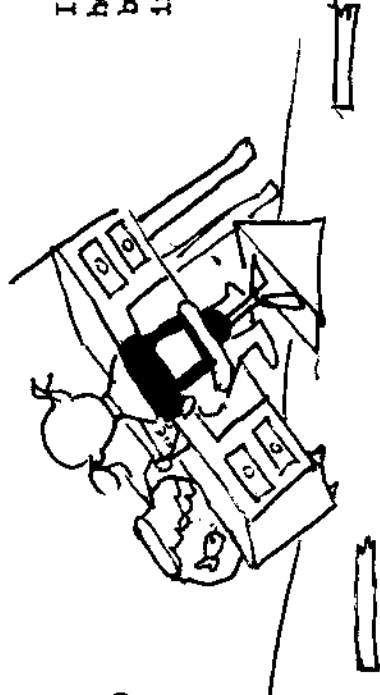
TO:



BRUCE LINSER  
24A QUARRY DRIVE  
ALBANY, NY 12205



It's a nice country. I hope Avalon Hill doesn't buy it out and remake it in a bookshelf format.



SOMEONE BROKE THE LEGS TO MY DESK,  
I'M SEEING THINGS FROM A DIFFERENT  
SLANT

by Chuff Afflerbach

(Maybe no one else has noticed, but lately BRUX has subjected me to some rather glowing praise of my prose. I am truly flattered. I am also paralyzed with fear. How do I live up to this reputation? It would seem the smartest course to simply retire while I'm on top. But without my occasional contributions, my free subscription would wither and die. Therefore, I propose a compromise. I'll submit this article only on the condition that it not be judged against my past achievements, whatever those were. This way I maintain both my subscription and my status as one of the premier writers in the hobby today. Agreed? Then let us proceed...)

Take a good look at the envelope this came in. Did you notice anything peculiar about it? Aside from the sand inside, and the lightning bolt above your name. I mean really peculiar. I mean that universal pricing code printed under your address. What's going on at the Post Office anyway? Don't they know by now how much a letter costs?

Just kidding. Being erudite, well-informed-type people, we Doornies know what is going on -- nine-digit Zip Codes. Oh, you hadn't heard? They went into official use on October 1st. Now, I'm not one to stand in the way of the march of progress, but I have been known to watch from the curb and make snide comments. For instance, do we really need 999,999,999 different Zip Codes? I've been thumbing through the almanac, and I'm more confused (read "suspicious") than ever. We've now got enough Zip Codes for every person in the country to have four. This is going to be more efficient? Of course, the idea is to subdivide the territory and not necessarily the people, so let's look at those figures.

With 3.6 million square miles in the U.S. and a billion Zip Codes, it works out to a code for every 2.3 acres. That is virtually every building in the country! What the heck -- Zip Codes for everybody! Asia, Africa, Greenland, even Antarctica -- the whole land mass. With only 57 million square miles to cover, we'll still have a Zip Code for every forty acres and a mule. Instead of "I reckon I'll let the back forty go to seed," it'll be "I'm applying for a federal subsidy to not cultivate zone 463-277-913." Your tax dollars at work.

On the subject of tax dollars at work, how much do you suppose it costs the Postal Service each year to cancel stamps? Certainly not as much as they lose in uncanceled stamps.

I bring this up for a reason, naturally. My very last issue of VD arrived with an uncanceled stamp. There I was, staring Robert Millikan in his unblemished face. Now I ask you -- how many of us, if we chanced upon 37¢ in a pay phone coin return, would return it to Mother Bell? But somehow this seemed different, so I called my postmaster for advice.

An uncanceled stamp? Understandable, he remarked, considering the USPS processes 110 billion pieces of mail each year. Just how many stamps are overlooked, though, he couldn't say. But my guess is that the postage missed must run at least a million dollars.

One thing he was adamant about -- reusing a postage stamp is a crime. When I pressed him for details, he referred me to Title 18 of the U.S. Code. Then he wanted to know if I had an infraction to report. No, I confessed, just curious. It was then I learned that he is a very busy man. What with 110 billion letters to sort, I don't doubt it. So I thanked him and let our tax dollars get back to work.

And he was sure right about Title 18. It's just chock full of felonies and misdemeanors. How about Section 1702? "Whoever takes any letter, postal card, or package... with design to obstruct the correspondence, or to pry into the business or secrets of another, or opens, secretes (yes, the government's word), embezzles, or destroys the same, shall be fined not more than \$2000 or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both." How doesn't that cut your basic Diplomatic player right to the quick? Also of interest is 1777: "Any matter advocating or urging treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to any law of the United States is punishable..." This is a biggie -- ten years and \$2000. And that's just for writing it, mind you. God help you if you go and do it.

Admittedly, they would have to read your mail to catch you on that. But the envelopes are there for all the world to see, so you'd better believe these are regulated. Any "language of libelous, scurrilous, defamatory, or threatening character" on an envelope or wrapper will cost you one year and/or \$1000. Cops! There goes BRUX's Crazy Envelope Department!

Law books on the whole are dry, but they do have interesting footnotes. Some sixty years ago a lady received an envelope with the inscription "PROS." following her name. The letter inside made it clear that this meant "prostitute". The sender was prosecuted (no doubt at the lady's instigation) under Section 1718, and was acquitted. Again, a moral: dipsters will be wise to keep their scurrilous comments safely sealed.

At last, there it is in black and white. Section 1720, expressly forbidding the willful removal of any attached stamp, or the reuse of any stamp already used for postage. This crime would appear to rank just below mailing libelous envelopes, since it carries a year in jail but only a \$500 fine. Interesting thing about these fines, though. One half can be claimed as a reward by the person who turns the violator in.

To all you bounty hunters with blood in your eye: forget it! Do you think I'm about to advocate via mail the resistance to any law of the U.S.? Not only would it make me a postal outlaw, but it would also implicate Bruce since he's probably fool enough to print this and mail it out. Nope, I'm advocating obeying the law regarding the reuse of postage stamps. I strongly urge you, be extremely careful when reading your mail over afternoon tea or leaky radiators. Those used stamps could fall right off. And should this still happen in spite of all your precautions, never, never, never accidentally spill a drop of Elmer's Glue on the back. It just might stick to an outgoing envelope and defraud the federal government. So don't say I didn't warn you.

I had planned to wrap this up with another fascinating footnote from our legal legacy. And it looked promising, too; the book listed Court of Military Appeals Volume 15 Case 213 as a reference. Great, thought I, here's some poor grunt dogface who peeled off an old stamp, sent a letter home, and got court-martialed for it. Eagerly I looked it up. Only the law book lied. (Can you believe it?) What we had instead was a case of some poor grunt dogface who sodomized a prostitute and received a "dishonorable discharge" (again, the government's term, not mine).

Wait a minute! Did I miss something? We were distinctly talking about mail fraud. What did he do -- pay her in postage? Or maybe he sent a thank-you note to her business address (attention: PROS.). Certainly they're not construing this as "whoever takes any package and opens, secretes, embezzles and destroys the same..." Well, hell. Now how am I going to get out of this mess, gracefully or otherwise?

Let's try this: Say! Have you heard about the new postage stamp? It's commemorating the oldest profession in the world -- twenty cents, or forty if you want to lick it.

((You would say that just as I'm about to go start licking stamps to send out this issue! Many thanks, and a fistful of free ones to you, for a very entertaining piece of writing.))

Well, the issue's winding down fast, so I just want to get in a couple of quick thoughts before wrapping it up with something I wrote a few days ago. I said it on page 2 and I'll say it again. We are all in a wonderful hobby full of great people, and this alone is a reason to celebrate. This issue has been my way of celebrating. I hope you all enjoyed it. I have tried hard to put out the best issue I can without all the raging controversy. At least, I hope I made up for the last skimpy issue!

Thanks very much (again) to all of you who helped me out by contributing to this. You're all the greatest. And now, we proceed to finish it off...



An Ode to VD's Fourth Anniversary Issue

169

It started as a brainstorm in a dreary August rainstorm  
Shortly after I put out my eighty-third.  
Though it seemed a far-fetched plan, I will do it if I can,  
And my nitch in dipdom then will be assured.  
And I thought, thought, thought, thought, thought, thought, thought;  
Don't let this crazy project come to naught.  
And I thought, thought, thought, thought, thought, thought, thought;  
And I thought, and I thought, and I thought.

Through the whole month of September all that I can now remember  
Is preparing this for all you rank-and-file.  
And some may say I'm crazy now, but no-one calls me lazy now,  
And the memory will linger for a while.  
And I planned, planned, planned, planned, planned, planned, planned;  
I know you folks will surely understand  
How I planned, planned, planned, planned, planned, planned, planned;  
And I planned, and I planned, and I planned.

Oh, you friends were nice about it, 'cause my mailbox got crowded  
And the postman started looking at me funny.  
With articles galore; letters, press and so much more,  
This issue's gonna be a real honey!  
Got my mail, mail, mail, mail, mail, mail, mail;  
It flooded in each weekday without fail.  
Got my mail, mail, mail, mail, mail, mail, mail.  
Got my mail, got my mail, got my mail.

Climbed the stairs up to my room, from whence issues Voice of Doom,  
And I sorted through the mountains of debris.  
Such volumes that I dreaded it, but I began to edit it;  
Till gradually the annish came to be.  
And I typed, typed, typed, typed, typed, typed, typed;  
Yeah -- even in the wee hours I was hyped.  
So I typed, typed, typed, typed, typed, typed, typed.  
And I typed, and I typed, and I typed.

But the pages can't be used till they all get reproduced  
So into the ditto room I quickly sneak;  
Then I moisten up the wick, breathing fumes until I'm sick  
And I run the zine off for a solid week.  
And I ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto;  
Reams of all this marvelous bullshit-o.  
And I ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto.  
And I ditto, and I ditto, and I ditto.

Like birdies of a feather, pages now must come together,  
So I spread the issue out across the floor;  
And I spend a dreary day getting pages the right way,  
And I work until my fingertips are sore.  
And I collate, collate, collate, collate, collate, collate, collate;  
Gotta hurry or this issue will be so late.  
So I collate, collate, collate, collate, collate, collate, collate.  
And I collate, and I collate, and I collate.

170

But the zine won't get to you till the posties get their due  
So I pay a whopping fee to Uncle Sam;  
And I take the first big lick, and the stamps begin to stick,  
Then into the envelopes the zines I cram.  
And I stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp;  
My tongue is dry, my throat is like a clamp.  
But I stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp.  
And I stamp, and I stamp, and I stamp.

Now the issue's finally done and the battle has been won;  
'Twas a lot of work and I feel nearly dead.  
But even though I'm dying it was greatly satisfying  
So I lay my weary bones upon the bed.  
And I sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep;  
My slumber hasn't ever been so deep.  
As I sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep.  
And I sleep, and I sleep, and I sleep.

Love,  
BRUX

Bruce Linsey  
24A Quarry Drive  
Albany, NY 12205

Your sub expires with issue # 109