

A very special Christmas wish to my good friend Jim "Dinner" Williams and his wife Marti, to whom I hereby dedicate this issue of...

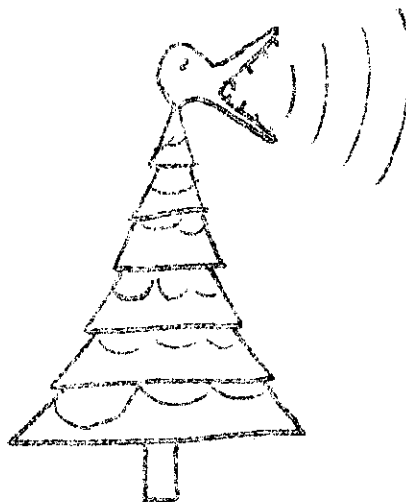
THE VOICE OF DOOM

#87

December 13, 1983

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by BRUK



This special issue is my Christmas gift to Doonies everywhere. It is distributed free of charge (all subs are extended by one). Enjoy your holidays, my friends!

BRUK

The Voice of Doom is a journal of postal Diplomacy published every now and then by Bruce Lindsey, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. #3, Dalton, MA 01226. Phone (413) 684-0567. Subs are 10 issues for \$5.00. Standbys are wanted. There are no game openings, nor will there be any for an awful long time.

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The deadline for all games contained herein is January 20, 1984. This is two weeks longer than usual to account for the slow holiday mail.

Anybody mind if I chatter about nothing for a whole page? Good. Lots of poop going on in the hobby lately. Bear with me.

Apologies and all that; this is going to be a small issue. Price is right, though, so don't complain too much or I'll drop a copy of my house rules on your head. Oh, and since this is a freebie, I'm going to send each of my European traders a couple of old back issues to compensate. John Marsden becomes a Doonie once again with this issue after a several-year hiatus; I just received a couple of Odes in the mail from him so I figure we're trading again. My trade total is five; VD isn't traded for American or Canadian sines.

Of note in this issue is the Shep Rose letter, wherein the writer defends himself against recent Mark Berch attacks in Diplomacy World. Changed a couple of places in his letter from "Voice of Doon" to "Poy Sippi Dippi" since it appeared that's what he meant; the rest is photocopied verbatim. Most of the stuff you readers keep sending me will be held over till the upcoming mid-monthly issue, due out shortly, so don't panic if you sent us something that isn't in here.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: That special Doonie on whom you desperately want to inflict the honor (?) of Doonie of the Year cannot possibly win unless you get your nomination in by the deadline of December 30, 1983 (I said '84 last issue). Stop farting around and write that essay now.

Jake Halverstad recently dubbed VD the "official Diplomacy sine of High Plains Gonna," and I hereby return the compliment. HRC is the official Presidential Politics sine of VD. On an unrelated note, I erred last issue in attributing the hunting article to Jean; she had dug it up out of her files, touched it up, and sent it to me for print. Just had to mention this in case anyone was losing any sleep over it...

For poll freaks, Gary Coughlan took Best Zine in the Marco Poll (well, actually, his sine did), Kathy Byrne won Best Flayer in the Whitestonia Poll, and Bob Olsen won Best Writer. All very deserving winners, though the writer poll featured such results as Woody placing ahead of Randolph and me beating out Chuff. Oh, well.

Great Idea of the Month and Quote of the Month both come from Terry Tallman's latest North Sealth, West George. Great Idea is called "Deadwood Roulette", wherein Terry selects one of his Holes of Silence each issue and gives the lucky winner a choice between writing something for his next issue or getting thrown off the sub list. I don't think it'd go over too well in VD, but for a sine that doesn't generate much response from the audience, why not? If you can't inspire 'em, twist their arms a bit. I suppose. The Great Quote was part of Terry's glowing plug for my recent amish: "Sadly very little of it was new material". OK, folks, where did you copy all those 20+ articles from, anyway?

I don't think Terry likes me very much.

Speaking of the amish, lots of folks have asked how long it took. VD usually takes me around an hour per page (all told, not just the typing), so the answer's somewhere around 170 hours. Which is just a little over a week, so it wasn't all that much work after all. Cost? I don't want to figure it out as I'll probably be appalled at the result. I've got one spare copy left but could make up more in a pinch.

Some of the strategy articles therein seem to have titillated the fancies of certain readers, by the way, so I might as well mention Randolph Smyth as the inspiration for the sort of stuff I've been writing lately. Pol Si Fie used to run excellent play-of-the-game type articles, stressing the negotiational aspects of playing rather than tactics. Aside from the quality of the writing itself, that's what attracted me so to Randolph's articles. The only American sine which consistently features articles on the psychological aspects of the game is Midlife Crisis, so I figure I'll be filling somewhat of a void by going in that direction. Comments pro or con?

I had anchovies on my pizza last weekend.

Steve Hutton called to say he's a definite for BRUXCON, and Ty Hare dropped a line to the effect that his terrible face may show up too, from California. Maybe it won't be another ByrneCon, but you oughta try and get here anyway. Outta room.

NEPTUNE

1982X

Game-end Chart:

	1901	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
AUSTRIA	5	4	3	2	0	-	-	-	-	
ENGLAND	5	5	4	4	4	4	6	8	6	
FRANCE	5	5	6	8	9	8	8	6	4	
GERMANY	5	4	3	0	-	-	-	-	-	
ITALY	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	
RUSSIA	6	8	9	10	12	13	12	13	18	wins!
TURKEY	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	1	

Game: 1982X
 Zine: The Voice of Doom
 GM: Bruce Linsey

Cast of Players:

- AUSTRIA: Tim Lynch (out 1905)
- ENGLAND: Mark Duarte
- FRANCE: Jeff Voto (resigned S '03), Pat Conlon
- GERMANY: Lanny Myers (dropped S '02), Brian Orloff (out 1904)
- ITALY: Craig Cameron (resigned S '06), Edmund Jedry
- RUSSIA: Eric Kane (won 1909)
- TURKEY: Ed Wrobel (resigned Su '06), Rob Schmunk

End Game Statements:

Pat Conlon (standby for FRANCE): Now that NEPTUNE has ended, Eric Kane can take a vacation, revitalize those creative juices, and return with the three pre-quals to Return of the Cossacks. But never will he grasp the ever-elusive Obi-wan-Conlon!

The press is what made this game worth looking at. There were some imaginative and hilarious releases. Definitely one of the most enjoyable press games I've been in.

On the board, this was a most boring war. No surprises or imagination here. I supported Orloff all the way, until he could be eliminated entirely. Then, I suggested the idea to Kane and in one season Germany went from 3 to 0. But that was the end of the action.

A stop-the-leader alliance was duly formed. But Duarte continued his erratic play. And two critical errors by Turkey kept Russia on a roll in the south. After a couple of game-years of Duarte's intransigence, any chance to stop the leader was gone. So why drag it out? The result was inevitable. A game loses much of its appeal when the handwriting is on the wall.

Bless that press. It was like sugar on porridge.

Eric Kane (RUSSIA): My first postal win. It seems fitting somehow that it should come in VD, in a game surrounded by controversy, to which I added my own share of fuel in Anduin. Sure, I knew that several NEPTUNE players were receiving Anduin, so I used that to my advantage. This was a fantastic game, in my opinion. The press was superb, there was a fair amount of negotiating, and the GMing, though somewhat controversial, was superb in that Bruce was never late and hardly ever made errors. And of course the game was doubly satisfying for me in that I won. Here's a blow-by-blow description. (Sorry, folks, I'm gonna toot my own horn here for a while. Give me a break, though; after all, it is my first postal win...)

This was one of those games where everything went right. I hardly could have done better if I had been ordering everyone's units for them. Anyway, I started subbing to VD with issue #56. #57 announced game openings and I sent in, asking for Russia as I had yet to play it postally. The gamestart came in #58. Ed and I were playing together in a game in Bushmacker (we still are, as a matter of fact) but I was Sweden and he was Turkey, so we hardly ever communicated. I had met Lanny Myers once and I had seen

((NEPTUNE continues next page))

Jeff Note's name mentioned in other sines. As for England, Italy and Austria, I know nothing of them and assumed them to be "BRUX" novices, a point I would later use to my advantage. Anyway, my initial negotiations were highly successful. I proposed an E/T sweep-the-board alliance to Ed, and he accepted. I also proposed a secret game-long alliance to France, to be revealed later. England wrote more than most of the others, so I got on well with him, and since he was a novice, I offered advice as best I could. I tried to be honest with him and at the same time tried to get him on my side, and he agreed. Germany never wrote, Austria only wrote once, and Italy constantly complained that I never wrote. Tough.

Spring 1901 comes in #60, and things really couldn't have gone better. I bounced with Turkey in Armenia (a little fake war designed to hopefully confuse the board a bit and to insure mutual trust). I successfully invade Gal and Germany doesn't go to Den, insuring that I will get Swe in the fall. And even better, the west is a mess; England is in the Channel and Germany and France have bounced in Eur. I can pick and choose my allies there! Perhaps the only bad thing to happen in the season is that Italy opens with a Lepanto, and is definitely pro-Austrian. Of course, this isn't entirely bad, as Italy will slow Turkey while Russia hardly suffers from this alliance (at least not directly). So far, so good.

Fall doesn't go quite as well. Turkey and I make small tactical errors; he doesn't attack Gre and I guessed incorrectly about Bud and Vie. I should have supported Austrian A Ser-Bud. This would have left Austria at three, and virtually dead. Ed's mistake was inexcusable, but I guess we all make mental errors.

I've got England eating out of my hand and I convince him to build F Lvp and F Lon and to attack France. Germany NERs and thus signs his own death warrant. In S '02, Austria, Italy and Russia converge on him, though not in a concerted effort (at least not between me and them, I was moving to Sil so that I could get into Boh next year, honest!). Spring '02 brings several other surprises. E and F seem to have made up and England takes Mol while France moves on Italy (!). Germany now has five enemies but give Orloff (the new German player) some credit. He did manage to get some people off his back. I have nothing but respect for him (not to mention the knife I later planted in his back!). Anyway, now the famous NEPTUNE controversy starts. I talk at length with Ed and finally come up with a sure-fire way of taking Greece and holding. Of course, my error came in underestimating the enemy. I didn't reckon with Bruce's Houserules!!!! Yup, BRUX knocked Ed right out of Greece, and when Ed called foul, Bruce hid behind his HRs (ya gotta give him credit for at least choosing a good hiding place, we'd never find him there!). Anyway, I didn't mind too much; with a little work I could use the event to my advantage. But I cried foul right along with Ed to insure his eternal gratitude. I even started up the controversy in Anduin to add fuel to the fire. I honestly believed what I was saying, and still disagree with the ruling, but I'm glad it happened! The rest of the fall goes well for me. France changes directions and attacks England while I slip into Bud and Nvy, growing to 8. I claim that taking Nvy was a mistake, and had thought he was conveying it away (jus^o a small lie, guys, but England eats it up). So now I am allied with France indirectly, England, Germany, Italy (also indirectly) and of course Turkey and I are great pals. Knowing as all good little Russias know that to win requires fleets in the north, I build F StP(no) and plan to stab Germany by shifting everything towards him. I'm not sure if this was a good move. England and France were fighting and I had agreed to attack England if Germany attacked France, which he agreed to do. However, I got greedy and saw I could gain more by stabbing Germany. He moves out and I move in. Sigh... Meanwhile, Italy cleverly conveys his A Tur-Alb; progress in the Balkans is going slow but we're moving. Things are going nicely in the north, though, and then the unexpected happens again: Jeff Note resigns as France and in comes Pat Conlon who immediately organizes a stop the leader (no) alliance. He pulls back from England, who by the way is the next to feel BRUX's knife. Yup, the old BRUXer strikes again as

Quarto tries in vain to order F Hal S Bel, F Bel S Hal. Naturally one cannot support a province, now can one? Actually, I as a GM also insist that units be labeled correctly, but I didn't tell the English player that. I told him he had my sympathies but going to an ambassador would be a waste of time -- he might as well just avenge the loss over the board, and get Conlon back. However, he was more keen on getting Nwy back, so I prepared for the worst. By now, though, things were going well in the Balkans, at least for me. Turkey, unfortunately, had guessed wrong and wasted an entire season. Something that a Turk can ill afford to do.

In 1904, England got Nwy back, but Germany was eliminated. One down. France, however, had grown to 8 and I honestly felt he had a good chance of winning the game. If England kept up his attack on me, and Italy and Austria continued to resist, the best I could hope for was a (yechh) 4-way draw. I thus surmised that my only chance was to talk extensively to the English player. After all, I hadn't really ever stabbed him, had I? And I did eliminate the Germans, didn't I? And it wasn't me who had taken Bel, and had been nibbling off my allies, was it? Lo and behold, it worked! So at the cost of only Nwy, I had England and France at each other's throats again! As for the south, I was still genuinely allied with Turkey, and had vacated Serbia for him so he could catch up a bit to me. Unfortunately again for Ed, Italy bounced him out of Serbia in both the spring and fall, so I retained it. At the end of 1905, I was at 12 and Turkey was still at 5. Austria was out, Italy wasn't moving, and England and France were fighting tooth and nail. My only problem, I saw, was that Turkey might be afraid that I was too far ahead for him to ever catch up. So I cull up Ed and swear up and down that he can even have Rum, anything to keep the alliance alive. But to my utter shock, Ed suggests that I stab him, since his sub is almost up and he has no intention of sending Bruce any more money. Well, who am I to turn down a win, eh? What could possibly go wrong with the rest of the board in its sad state? So with the 8 '06 moves, I declared war on all the remaining nations and moved to the Black Sea, as well as renewing my attack on England. I might point out that at this time, England and I had been negotiating pretty heavily, and I was suitably amused by a letter he passed to me from Conlon. Conlon literally called me the best Diplomacy player ever! In a roundabout way, mind you ("Why should Kane's lies be more believable now? You saw what happened when Germany trusted him!", etc.). I might also point out that at this time, Italy was BRUX's next victim. Yes, the poor sap tried to retreat his A Alb off the board, which is, of course, impossible during a winter season! One must always remove units in winter, and retreat them in autumn and summer! Fortunately for Italy, the furthest unit from home was A Alb, so Bruce was kind enough to remove it for him. ((Slight correction: VD doesn't use the "furthest from home" rule, since it is terribly ambiguous. A Alb was removed under the VD house rules because it was not only last in the heart of its countryman, but first in alphabetical order!)) Anyway, I'm all set to receive the fall moves, complete with Turkey's evacuation of his homeland, when I find out that the seasons were separated by player request! Now this might not seem so bad to the uninformed onlooker, but to me it was disaster! Ed had formally resigned that turn, and so was replaced for the fall moves!!!! That one season's advantage could mean the end of me. Oh well, what could go wrong, eh? Everything went wrong: I took a gamble and lost, so I didn't keep Trieste, Turkey retreated from Italy and took Ser in exchange for Ank, and I guessed wrong in Germany against France, thus giving him the upper hand there. England and France had made peace, and the new Italian player was doing an awful lot of damage by organizing another stop-the-lander alliance. Still, I did gain a center and so was at thirteen, when I started looking for stalemate lines...

1907 saw the worst of my fears realized. I lost Sve and Den, and didn't gain any ground against Turkey or I/P. I was down to 12, and England had two builds. The thought of blue armies in the Russian heartland made my stomach turn, but to my good fortune England built two fleets! And what's more, France NRs!!!! I still had a

((NEPTUNE continues next page))

chance to win! This is where the game took its final turn, and entered its last phase. I don't know why, but when Conlon returned in the fall, he stabbed England! I can only guess that what must have occurred is that Duarte wrote Conlon a nasty letter scolding him for NRRing, and Conlon got pissed and tore it up. With England and France back at war, it was now just a matter of time...

But wait, once again I had neglected the BRUX factor! The game ended in a fitting way, with BRUX giving the new Turkey a taste of what it's like to play in the big leagues, and he screwed England once more for good measure, by disallowing "F England to Bre". Sheesh, you'd think these guys would learn how to write their orders after 9 years of this!! I wouldn't have wanted to win the game any other way... Which brings up the next question, would I have gone on to win next year? Or would R/S make up and come to their senses? Well, England still kept building fleets, so I think it's safe to say that at the very least, I couldn't be eliminated. Also, I did have three builds coming, and by this time France was in no position to do me any harm. I wasn't going to get any further in Italy, but there were other centers to be grabbed.

So this was a fun game, full of controversy, press, and good tactical battles. Not to mention the diplomatic side of it. And what have we learned from this game, children? Well, for one thing, BRUX's SMING definitely has an effect on the game. More so than other GIs. He's sort of like an eighth player.

Yet, still this is cause for one to think. Does this harm the game? I think not. Nor do I feel that it makes VD games irregular (only in the strict sense of the word, not as far as labeling games for records in Everything). In fact, I would join another VD game in a second, and as a matter of fact, I have just joined the SIRIUS game. The reason is simple. Bruce is very strict about interpreting orders. Well, I NEVER MISWROTE A SINGLE ORDER during the entire game. As a matter of fact, I don't believe that I have ever misordered a single unit, not in postal play. And it's not that I check and recheck my orders six or seven times. I guess it comes from playing chess a lot, and recording hundreds of games. Now England had a couple of slip-ups, France did once or twice, so did Germany while he was around, and Italy, and of course Turkey. Who will ever forget what some have called possibly the most ridiculous interpretation of a set of orders, NEVER; what others have called a work of genius; and still others have labeled purely silly? How many pages were spent debating/discussing and joking over this event? How many poems were written about it? How many... well, you get the picture. So to get back to my concluding point, if I can negotiate better than other players, that should be to my advantage. If I can lie and stab better than other players can, that should be to my advantage. And if I can write my orders better than other players can, that should be to my advantage! I'm sorry that this is rather lengthy, and even sorer that it is so disjointed, but that sort of fits into the game. I'll end this with some comments about the other players:

Tim Lynch: Didn't negotiate enough, didn't last long enough.

Craig Cameron: Obnoxious, but obviously a good ally. Though not mine...

Edmund Jedry: Better luck next time.

Rob Shumok: How do you spell your name?

Jeff Note: Wrote steadily enough, his problem came in making up his mind which direction to go.

Pat Conlon: Good player, I have nothing but respect for him.

Mark Duarte: Has good potential. I hope he learned some things from this game. He's got to learn not to be obnoxious when he's upset. Think before you write.

Larry Myers: Anyone remember him? NRR'd out, which is of course the ultimate sin. Especially in VD. Still, the circumstances were slightly extenuating, so we'll forgive him, hey?

Brian Orloff: Not bad, you could do some work on strategy, though. And of course...

Ed Kriebel: Things finally worked out, Ed! I'm glad that you and Bruce are

((NEPTUNE continues next page))

NEPTUNE (continued)

friends again, and you played a good game while you were around. You just got the tough breaks, that's all...

Finally, I'd like to know who proposed those draws and concessions. I proposed some of them, but not all.

Thanks for an enjoyable game, and you too, BRUX. I hope you don't have any bad feelings about any of this. Most of the stuff directed at you is in jest.

Mark Darts (ENGLAND): Bruce, thank you for the opportunity to play in VD. NEPTUNE was my first game of postal Diplomacy. I want to play again and if you ever have an opening, please put me in, as England of course! I feel that I played England pretty well for a while and you know I would appreciate your analysis if you care to share it. I really can't thank you enough for inviting me to play in VD through your Supernova packet and encouraging comment early on.

My congratulations to Eric Kern. Eric, you played consistently well throughout and offered me, by example, a clear idea of what a good Diplomacy player can be. You lied convincingly and supported appropriately. You opened boldly and followed with over-increasing momentum. Fine play, congratulations, and thanks for the lessons!

I believe this game contained several major factors: there were significant player changes in all countries except England and Russia ((and Austria)). Alliances shifted and fell apart accordingly as each new player injected their plans. Picking up the pieces was the situation for most of the non-Russian players in this game. I believe the English-French-Italian front could have worked. Why didn't it? Because three strong personalities were brought together too late in the game to develop any trust. Pat inherited a situation from Noto of facing off with England. I thought that Pat wanted to win something from this game and yet he gave it away when it didn't go just the way he wanted it to. Too bad. I figure that each of us wanted to do reasonably well, which requires give and take. I am suspicious of anyone who says he wants to "lead" me. So I believe a novice England did pretty well with the experienced, prideful veterans in this game. We wrestled, and were defeated by a diligent Russia. I would open more aggressively against Russia if I had to do it again. Pat shouldn't have quit playing.

What is this Jedry fellow ranting about? He had a reasonable position to play. I guess you just don't like me. OK, so I'll look forward to getting to know you better next game. I really missed Craig when he left the game and I believe this was one of the crucial factors for the clean Russian victory. Italy has a unique position in the middle of this game to help or hurt the whole momentum. Craig, I wish you well, wherever you are.

So I feel very good about my first PFM game, and the people who I've encountered. Diplomacy is truly a fascinating game and I'm looking forward to my next adventure. Hopefully, Bruce, you'll get into peeing games soon so the little boy in me can come out and play some soldier. Thank you very much and until next time, Shalom.

Rob Schank (standby for TURKEY): What with the end of the quarter assignments coupled with a GPA in imminent danger of dropping 25%, I can really lay back and give this game the consideration that I'd like to. Suffice it to say, it was my first game in VD and even though I came in as a standby (thanks for giving me this shit position, BRUX), I've learned quite a bit about national PFM Dippy. Of course, as my final set of moves and another earlier set showed quite aptly, pay attention to the damn game and check that your moves are legal (or at least what you intend). Consequently, I may have gained a reputation in the zine as a careless fuck-up. Well, it may or may not be

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NEPTUNE (continued)

true; I need another chance to be sure.

It was obvious when I came into the game that I was doomed unless everybody allied against Russia and knocked him down before he took me out. Inevitably, the alliance cracked for reasons I'll have to read the other endgame statements to find out. As my demise came ever closer, my strategy just became one of surviving as long as possible and writing press releases of such astonishing literary merit that Kane would back off eliminating me so that he could see what I'd write the next turn or two. Also, the game finally ended, but I was still on the board. Though only a one-center power, I'd accomplished my primary goal of living to see the end of the game.

As for communications with the other players; a fair amount with Ed and Pat, nothing with Duarte and Kane. Fretty much to be expected, I suppose.

Hope to catch the rest of you in another game sometime.

BRUX Linsey (GM): I really enjoyed NEPTUNE. To me the game just seemed a confused squabble among all the powers except Russia, who just laid back and collected whatever loose supply centers came flying out of the fray. The stop-the-leader alliance didn't hold up, it seemed to me, when Conlon got pissed at Duarte's nibbling in the face of a clear Russian threat, couldn't do anything about it, and finally attacked back in frustration. Maybe I've got it all wrong, but that's how it looked to me. Turkey was the only one who consistently fought to keep Russia down to size, and he couldn't do it on his own.

Eric is wrong, in my opinion, to say that my GMing affects the game more than that of other GMs. But you all know our views on that by now.

I may as well point it out now, because Olsen probably will if I don't: Eric's use of Anduin as a vehicle for arguing in favor of Wrobel's side of the double-orders dispute in order to carry his favor was alarmingly BRUXian.

Finally, one more quick endgame statement...

Edmund Jedry (standby for ITALY): "ALL QUIET ON THE MEDITERRAEN FRONT!"



ORION

1982Y

WAR BREAKS OUT ALL THE HELL OVER THE PLACE!

Summer 1910

ITALY: F Spa(so) r LYC

Fall 1910

ENGLAND (Ansoff): A Fin-STP (F NWY S), F Mid-NAT, F Neg-NIH

FRANCE (Bennett?): NMR! F ENG U, A BUR U, A SPA U, F POR U, A WAR U (d; r Gas, OTB)

GERMANY (Wittson): A SIL-Bar, A MUN-Bar, A LVN-Mos, A Ruh-BEL, F Nth-EDI, F Bal-SWE

ITALY (Howerton): F Wes-MID, F Tyr-ROM, A Pis-MAR (F LYC S), A Tyc-VIE (A TRI S)

RUSSIA (Beyerlein): A WAR H (A MOS S), A PRU-Bar, A Ukr-SEV

TURKEY (Leritte?): NMR! A Vic U (d; r Boh, Gal, OTB), A ARM U, A BUL U, F AEG U,

A BUD U, A HUM U, F NAP U, F TUN U, F NAF U

Supply Center Chart:

ENGLAND: ~~1~~, Lvp, ~~2~~, Nwy, STP

3, remove 1

FRANCE: Par, Bre, ~~3~~, Por, Lon, SPA

5, even

GERMANY: Home, Den, Hol, Bal, SWE, EDI

8, build 2

ITALY: Ven, Rom, Gre, Tri, ~~4~~, ~~5~~, VIE, MAR

6, even

RUSSIA: Mos, War, Sev, ~~6~~

3, remove 1

TURKEY: Home, Bul, Ser, Bud, Rum, ~~7~~, Nap, TUN

9, even

((ORION continues next page))

ORION (continued)

Game Notes: "MAR" should not be capitalized in the French orders.

An E/F/G/I/R/T draw has been proposed. Please vote by next deadline.

According to a recent Whitston's game report, George Leritte has a CDA to 116 Pebble Beach Dr., Youngsville, LA 70592. Would Pat Conlon, Box 17014, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70893 please stand by for Turkey, and would Don Williams, 185 New Ludlow Rd. #106, Chicopee, MA 01020 please stand by for France? Thanks, guys.

Press:

BERLIN to FRANCE: I mean no threat to you, but in the face of your silence I have no choice but to take defensive measures.

BERLIN: Germany has two aims in the current conflict:

- 1) The destruction of Russia. This is necessary, not only from a moral point of view, but also to give my people the Lebensraum they need.
- 2) The liberation of Scandinavia from English domination. This had to be tolerated in the past to fight the Russian scourge, but as I have said before, I cannot allow a nation of shepherds to rule the descendants of the Vikings.

SCAPA FLOW ((via ENGLAND)): Rattray Head had been passed to starboard just after daybreak, a dim shape in the blowing mist. The wind had risen to gale force, flinging green walls of water against the bridge windows and moaning eerily in the signal halyards.

"Masthead lookout reports smoke, bearing three one oh sir!"

The conning officer snapped from his reverie and fingered the cap of the voice-tube. "Port fifteen!" And, in a slightly calmer voice, "Messenger -- my respects to the Captain, and we have them in sight."

"Port fifteen on the wheel sir!"

"Very good. Steady on three double-oh."

"Three double-oh, aye sir!"

The laboring cruiser swung slowly on her heel and plowed forward toward the contact. Twenty minutes later, the Captain pointed his spyglass at the dark shape now visible off the starboard bow. The waves broke against the distant hull as over a reef, and above the grim mass of turrets and mounts the flag of Imperial Germany streamed in the racing wind.

The Captain shut his spyglass with a snap. "Send the signal," he ordered, "and get us back to the main body." Within minutes the radioman was tapping out the code...

The Admiral looked up from his desk as the Flag Lieutenant entered. "Sighting report sir -- from the Norwegian Sea Fleet Scouting Force."

The Admiral glanced at the paper and then turned to the gridded chart that covered the wall behind his desk. He knew what he would find. "Sixteen delta grid square," he said softly, "the same as two days ago." Then, in a voice tinged with irony, "Get me the Prime Minister."

The conversation was brief. The Admiral listened for ninety seconds, his face a mask. Then, firmly: "Very good sir. We will continue to watch them. Goodbye."

"Well, Sir?" said the Flag Lieutenant.

The Admiral permitted himself a grin chuckle. "He says that they were asked to leave. Says that the Kaiser forgot to give the order. Says we must continue as before...that will be all, Lieutenant, I'll call if I need you."

Alone, the Admiral turned again to the chart. "Continue as before," he murmured. "Wait, watch and avoid. If we fire so much as a saluting cannon in their direction, they will be at Leith Pier by nightfall."

From the opposite wall, portraits of Hawkins and Drake glared down at their successor, and from the far corner a bronze bust of Nelson looked on in frozen dismay. "What have you done with my hearts of oak?" he seemed to be saying. "Have you forgotten what England expects?"

Skip PEGASUS, BRUX! Send the results out by flyer and print the game in your mid-monthly issue! (And the crowd roars its approval.)
 Skip QUASAR, BRUX! Only the players have to see it now; everyone else can wait a couple of weeks! (And the ovation is thunderous.)
 Let's get right to the Game of all Games...

R I G E L

1983K

"I LIKE MY OUPCAKES IN LTTY BITTY CRUMBS, PLEASE..."

Summer 1904

GERMANY: A Ven r PIE

Fall 1904

AUSTRIA (Knight): A Rus-SER, A BOH-Man, A Vis-TYO, A Ven S A Vis-Tyo (d; r Tca, OTB),
 A THI S A Ven, F Adr-APU

ENGLAND (Sweeney): F LVP Stands Defiant (H) (d; r Nat, Cly, OTB)

FRANCE (Hare): A Gas-BUR, A Spa-CAS, F Lya-TYB, F WES S ITALIAN F Tyr-Tun,
 F Wal-LVP (F IRI S)

GERMANY (Heintzman): A RDI H, F Rth-LOH, A MUN-Boh, F DEN H, A Tyc-VEN (A PIE S),
 F Nvy H (d; r Bar, Nwg, Sca, OTB)

ITALY (Ellis): A ROM S GERMAN A Tyc-Ven, F Tyr-TUN

RUSSIA (Kleisan): F Nwg-NTH, A Sve-NWY (A SEP S), A Ukr-RUM (F SEV S), A Mos-UKR,
 A Sil-GAL

TURKEY (Reilly): A SNY H, F Con-ANG, A Bul-GRE, F Tun S F Gre-Ion (d; r WAF, OTB),
 F Gre-ION

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA: Home, Ser, Pol , Pol	4, remove 2
ENGLAND: Pol	0, remove 1 (out)
FRANCE: Home, Spa, Por, Pol , LVP	6, even
GERMANY: Home, Hol, Den, Bol, Ven, RDI, LOH	9, build 2
ITALY: Nap, ROM, Tun	3, build 1
RUSSIA: Home, Sve, Nwy, Pol , RUM	7, even
TURKEY: Home, Bul, Gre	5, even

Game Notes: Rich Reilly will be home for the holidays. From 12/16 to 1/7, he will be at 3067 Gustafson Circle, Idaho Falls, ID 83402. After that, he'll be back in Moscow, Moscow, Idaho, that is.

Ty Hare's terrible face did not pass. Dave Kleisan writes: "I cannot vote on Ty's face, as I do not have a copy of his face on which to inscribe my vote. If I were to have a copy of his face on which to inscribe my vote, I would probably vote YES, as any face would be terrible with all of those votes on it." Steve Knight voted yes, and did not want this vote made public, so please ignore this sentence.

The following proposals should all be voted on by next month:

1. A/E/G/R/T draw.
2. That BRUX follow in the footsteps of the illustrious Mr. Luedi of Bloomington, Indiana, and establish a judging panel for press. Whether this panel administers all Voice of Doom press, or just the significant efforts (i.e. any for the RIGEL game), is a matter for more consideration.
3. A concession to Turkey for the press war.
4. A concession to Russia for the press war.
5. An R/T draw in the press war.
6. That all Austrian units be changed into fleets.

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

7. That one page of press per RIGEL player be required.
8. That Ty Hare be required to send a copy of his face to be published with this game next issue (that should be good for a laugh).
9. That all the misordered Russian units be shot blindfolded for foolishness.

Press:

MOSCOW: In a statement today, the Tsar made it perfectly clear that even he does not know what his military forces are up to.

ROME (!!!) to BOARD: THE SOUTH SHALL RISE AGAIN!

LVP to BRUX ((LVP releases here are English)): It looks better now (see press).

GERMANY to ENGLAND: No can do, sorry. Fare well, Bob...

FRANCE to WORLD: Does anyone know what's going on?

MOSCOW to GERMANY: 1) P-Q/4 P-K3

2) P-Q/5 ??

MOSCOW to BRUX: Chess Wars! How dare you steal my line? I had that one planned for weeks.

KAISER to TSAR: P-Q/3

ITALY to GM: Diplomacy Central? You're not SIRIUS, are you?

ITALY to GM: That was to retaliate for the overstated and overemphasized headline last time. I think it should have read, "The hatpin!"

KAISER to SULTAN: Ask and ye shall receive...

FRANCE to GERMANY: It's not that I don't want to trust you, it's just that I can't trust you.

ROME to GM: Wanna article on how to negotiate effectively through the press?

BRUX: Yeah.

LVP to ITALY: Here today! Gone tomorrow!

ROME to CON: Do not, I repeat, do not EVER call me a "droogie" again!

ROME to GM: You have the audacity to say that Bally's press is the best that you have seen in the same issue that you printed NEPTUNE's Turkish press? That was excellent writing, by any standard.

BRUX to ITALY: True, but I was also counting the Jeopardy release toward Bally's total.

MOSCOW to LIVERPOOL (OR WHEREVER THAT SILLY ENGLISH FLEET IS NOW):

JUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITER.

Please note that according to HR IX.1, even though you do not control any centers, any player who was in a game at one time may write press. I would suggest that only our PRESS WAR could possibly be won by England (and that, of course, is next to impossible as long as I write press).

JUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITERJUPITER.

THOR (GERMANY) to TOMMY THE WONDERCROFT: The Talking Heads and Dip? Assassack...!

LVP to BRUX: AAAAAAAAAAGGGGGGGGHHHHHH. That word! It hurts our ears, my precious, it hurts!

BRUX to LVP: What word is that? JUPITER?

PARIS to BRUX: Three men in a tub? Turkey, Russia, Germany, maybe? One of them holding a Cupcake. Now what could that mean...as I gonna have to explain all my press to you, BRUX?

ROME to MUNICH (IS IT STILL YOURS, NELSON?): You are a braver man than I am, Von Heintzman. Good luck.

LVP to CRAZY SOB: I don't know who to pity most: BRUX or you for being able to understand him! (It?)

SNEAK #6 ((via FRANCE)) to STEVE PAYNE: Persuasive. Very persuasive. It'll go in Cascoxy, but will it play in Piedmont?

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

ROME (WOP): (Reprint from the official newspaper of the Pope, affectionately known as "The Vatican Bug"); Police have estimated the crowds to have been in excess of 250,000 when the word that the Italian troops were heading into the city was passed from house to house. Cheering citizens threw rose petals and kisses to the returning heroes, with the Prime Minister receiving the greatest accolade as his men carried him down the street. When the Prime Minister reached the main plaza he spoke with the crowd, interrupted frequently by thunderous applause. During the speech he praised the spirit and determination of his army, and the people of Rome. The Prime Minister used the occasion to confirm the dissolution of the Austro-German alliance, and stated that the Italian fleet would not allow the infidel Turks to retain control of Tunis. After the speech, he sought and received an audience with the Pope.

In a press conference this morning, the Prime Minister pointed out that the fight was far from over. The various countries involved had all been communicating on a regular basis, although there had been several rough spots in the negotiations. He then announced that in spite of the Pope's admonition against attacking the Catholic Austrians, the Italian army would be adding their support to the German attempt to retake Venice. When asked for his reasons he replied, "We still are not sure if the Austrian unit was ordered out of Rome in accordance with the last proposal we sent them, or if it was simply an attempt to save their troops from certain defeat. The German unit had been ready to support our assault on Rome, until they were forced to retreat. We feel the Kaiser is trustworthy, although we do occasionally question his tactics."

When asked about the rumors concerning the Kaiser's being influenced by the Devil and involved in some arcane ritual, the Prime Minister said that it was not his duty to moralize on the religious practices of the Italian Allies, but to free Italy from all outside influences. The Pope had no comment, but insiders say that a showdown may be imminent. No Prime Minister has lasted more than a year after falling from the favor of the Pope.

The Prime Minister answered a few questions concerning the potential of an invasion by the French, mostly answering that the French were allies and could be trusted to honor the sovereignty of Italian soil. "If they choose to ignore the alliance agreement, then they do so to their own detriment. They will be dealt with in the same manner that the rest have. The heads of state in Europe must realize that the Italians are concerned only with regaining Italian territory; all other considerations are secondary."

The Prime Minister ended the conference by extending his personal congratulations to the leaders of the two Italian forces, and announced a call for more troops to be formed in Naples. He said that if the supply lines from Tunis could be maintained then the new unit could be formed within six months. On his way out of the room, he ignored several questions regarding his family, who are still reportedly in Venice, the site of some of the heaviest fighting in all of Europe.

THE BLACK FOREST (GERMANY): By late afternoon, the approach of huge black clouds churning silently in the heavens had cast a shroud of darkness over the landscape surrounding the German citadel. Soon the last rays of sunlight were rudely pushed aside by a quickly descending nightfall. For a time, a heavy stillness hung in the air when suddenly a monstrous rush of wind brought with it flashes of lightning, deep claps of thunder, and a torrent of driving rain. For hours, as the evening wore on, the storm raged unabated. Gradually the atmosphere chilled causing the hard rain to form into icy pellets which mercilessly pounded against the walls, doors, and shuttered windows of the castle. Shriill winds gibbered madly in the forest and alternately screamed and whispered through the cracks and apertures within the fortress itself.

((RIGEL continues next page))

Inside the manor walls, high atop a tall tower, within a tiny, cramped and cold cubicle, once again could be found the German Kaiser and his royal seer, Rasputmann.

As usual the Kaiser and his wizard dwarf were awkwardly crouched over an illuminated chart of Europe. Made of some unknown substance, the manuscript shimmered benignly upon the cold stone floor. Directly above it, an ebony pendulum twirled quixotically about in an uncontrolled fashion. The Kaiser, at the moment, was not looking at the tableau before him, but had fixed his seer with a haunted gaze.

"Well, warlock, what has gone wrong?" the Kaiser whispered. "From our previous session a clear summons was issued requiring the destruction of my Austrian namesake." He paused and drew in a shuddering breath. "But look, my dear sorcerer, look." A gloved finger pointed at the glowing map. "Somewhere, somehow, he knew, he knew!" The Kaiser's voice rose to a hoarse shout. "He has driven my troops from Venice and occupies Bohemia! He dares to camp on our very doorstep!" The Kaiser glared at the immobile face of the wizard dwarf. "By what arcane method did he perceive our intentions? And, look again, my little servant," he snapped as his trembling finger pointed at the Russian southern hinterland. "Three, count them, one, two, three misordered units, ha! Three units holding, three units that BOTH the Turks and Austrians have fallen back from..."

The Kaiser sat back, gasping slightly. His portly frame now shrunken, he turned a gaunt face back to the court seer. "Disengagement, my fine little friend," he rasped. "Disengagement. Now what do you think that Russian army in Silesia will do, eh, eh?"

The lowered gaze of Rasputmann slowly lifted. His expressionless face turned toward his royal master. Those particularly reptilian eyes stared blankly at the Kaiser. Suddenly, the waxen countenance of the seer began to ripple and contort. Love and hate, joy and sorrow, pride and servility, all flashed kaleidoscopically across his visage. The spellbound Kaiser watched in horrid fascination as calm returned to the gnomish features before him. Slowly the wizard dwarf arched his neck, his snake-like gaze pinning the Kaiser's eyes with his own.

"My dear Sir," the dwarf gently murmured, "all is not as it seems; but, if it were, it would not remain so."

Affronted by the strangeness of the wizard dwarf's manner and his cryptic response, the Kaiser rebuked him. "You are too bold, magician. The situation is grave, the pendulum is erratic, and what you say is no answer."

Many seconds passed as the gaze of Rasputmann bored steadily into the Kaiser's eyes. A feeling of alarm suddenly befell the Kaiser as a vision arose before him. He was now outside the castle walls in this torn-wracked night. He looked up into the violent skies and to his horror espied in the air the flight of some ghastly creature. Gigantic scaly wings flapped furiously and a lizard's head attached to a long serpentine neck wove to and fro, searching for prey. The Kaiser turned to flee as the dragon spotted him and spat forth an arc of fire. Breathing the scorched, steamy air, the Kaiser fled toward a small copse only to stumble to a halt and with appalled fascination watch a fire-breathing chimera emerge from its shelter and lope towards him through the rainy night. Wet and fearful, his very soul shriveled within him, the Kaiser numbly heard a shrill cackling. Looking up at the rags of his castle, he saw the ugly faces of the stone gargoyles thereon convulsed in a living and frightful laughter. His heart seemed to stop and a wave of blackness passed over him...

Slowly, ever so slowly, the Kaiser felt the emotions of alarm and fear receding from his mind. He opened his eyes and he was back in the room, still staring straight into the flat gaze of Rasputmann. For many moments not a sound was heard but the ticking of a clock. Then the wizard dwarf softly hissed, "Yes, my Lord, I am bold. And my answer to you is answer enough." Once again silence reigned while the Kaiser tried frantically to clear his mind. Rasputmann abruptly leaned forward over the chart.

his stubby, unjeweled fingers pointing this way and that. "Try this, sire," he smiled up at the Kaiser. "Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue..."

Ever so carefully the Kaiser cleared his throat. "Why, yes, Seer Rasputzmann, I suppose you are right. Let us do that and await this season's outcome." It was about then that the Kaiser felt the itching in his hands. Slowly he stripped off his gloves and noted with mild wonder the numerous spots darkening his pale skin. He looked about for a wash basin to get out those damned spots. But Rasputzmann touched his shoulder, diverting him; the two men of power smiled at each other and together turned as one to regard once again the shimmering map and the spinning pendulum.

THE WAR ROOM (ENGLAND): A shot rings out in the war room. Horrified, the ministers rush in, fearing the worst. The war hasn't gone well -- the French and Germans swarm over England -- the minister was so despondent and just this morning France's Ty Hare had come to gloat and demand England's surrender. As they burst into the room, they see a body on the floor -- a fresh hole in the skull -- the Prime Minister's gun lies smoking beside the body. It all began innocently enough...

"Mr. Prime Minister, show the French monarch Ty Hare is here to see you..."

"See me?" I ask. "The French have arrived already?"

"No, he's here to demand England's surrender."

"Very well, show him in." I feel tears well in my eyes over the thought of England's end. Ty Hare meanwhile enters with a snide smirk on his face.

"Well, well -- at last we meet!"

"Have a seat, Ty -- what do you want?"

"Your surrender, of course." (I mutter a few phrases dealing with surrender under my breath.) "My forces even now march upon you -- I see you have it all on the Master Board." Ty then stands before the board, gloating, sailing -- anger fills my heart.

I scream, "Yeah! What if England supports me to hold! What if A Tus retreats to Piedmont and marches on Marseilles! What if, what if..." I begin to sob. Heintzman will bide his time well before applying the knife to this FROG. I know there's no hope left.

Ty merely chuckles and reaches under his great coat withdrawing a massive .38 revolver.

"Don't shoot me!" I scream as I crawl under the table. "Guards! Guards! Save me!" I say the last even though I know that every soldier awaits death on the First English Fleet -- maybe he'll hesitate.

"Tak, tak," I hear Ty say and I hear him unload five cartridges and throw them on the table. "Here," he says, "there's one left -- die proudly so that France can say she defeated a proud, but inferior, nation. Go ahead, do it now, don't make us hang you in front of your defeated nation!"

Realistically, my shaking hand reaches out and grasps the butt of the revolver. I know he's right, a public trial to humiliate me, taking my good name and dragging it in the mud, being remembered as the leader who lost England to invading forces...

He's right, at least I'll die with honor! I raise the pistol to my head and remember the past. There are a few things I regret...

...Italy not going first...

...Germany not giving it to France...

...Not raping more French women...

...Not having Ty do this instead of me...

I'm filled with resolve. My hand steadies, Ty smiles encouragement. BANG!

...The ministers stare horrified! The Prime Minister has killed Ty! He's dancing and singing:

"...I got the bastard! Tee hee! Commit suicide, will I! Ha, ha, ha! Got him right between the eyes!..."

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE: JEOPARDY!

(Linsey) To recap the scores, we have Kleiman with \$30, Knight with \$20, Heintzman with \$20, Sweeney with \$10 and Ellis and Hare have yet to score. Our categories are "VD Trivia", "European Geography", "Colors", "Ugly Rumors", and "Potpourri". Our last correct questioner was General Sweeney, who will continue today's game of Jeopardy.

General, what answer would you like?

(Sweeney) Well, let's try Colors for \$30.

(Linsey) The answer is "navy blue".

(Sweeney) What is the most hated color in Europe today?

(Linsey) Correct for \$30.

(Sweeney) OK, let's try Potpourri for \$10.

(Linsey) Potpourri for \$10: The lie detector.

(Kleiman) What law-enforcement device can be applied to a suspect in his sleep to determine who really wrote the original Jeopardy episode?

(Linsey) True, but not the question for our answer.

(Heintzman) Let's go to VD Trivia for \$20.

(Linsey) The answer is Dave Kleiman.

(Hare) Oh, wow, an easy one. Who was the only Doobie to read the "Cyclic Article" from beginning to end?

(Linsey) Yes, for \$20. Oh, a side note, Mr. Kleiman is still reading today. Your next answer, Mr. Hare?

(Hare) Now, let's try VD Trivia for \$30.

(Linsey) Albany, NY.

(Reilly) What's the hometown of VD?

(Linsey) Wrongo.

(Kleiman) What's the previous hometown of VD? And I hope Reilly sends his next press dribblings to Albany where they are sure to be mangled (thank God) to a non-readable form by our postal service in an attempt to forward them. ((Says he, who was the only player in VD to send his stuff to Albany this month...))

(Linsey) Correct for \$30. Although, Mr. Kleiman, I will have to punish you \$10 for insulting Mr. Reilly.

(Kleiman) Mr. Linsey, I did not insult the gentleman from Idaho; it was a compliment. I meant to imply that anyone from that sheepland who can write has got to be a plus.

(Linsey) I stand corrected -- no penalty. Next answer?

(Kleiman) Let's try Ugly Rumors for \$20.

(Linsey) A poster of Richard M. Nixon.

After some time...

(Linsey) Well, what a surprising question. Guess we'll keep that one a secret for a while longer. Well, Mr. Kleiman, as our last correct questioner, you may continue.

(Kleiman) OK. How about European Geography for \$30?

(Linsey) DING! DING! DING! THE DAILY DOUBLE!!!!!! As you know, Mr. Kleiman, you may wager all or part of your money on this question on European Geography. How much would you like to wager?

(Kleiman) \$50.

(Linsey) Good, and the answer is "NORWAY".

Doc-dae doc-dae doc-dae doc-dae doc-dae.

Doc-dae doc-dae daet dae dae dae dae.

Doc-dae doc-dae doc-dae doc-dae doc-dae.

Daet-dae dae-dae doc-dae doc-dae doc-dae.

Time's up, Mr. Kleiman.

(Kleiman) Where was the first German stab of this war!

(Linsey) Correct for \$50! And what a silly stab, too.

(Kleiman) Yes, the stupid northlander. How about Ugly Rumors for \$30?

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

(Linsey) The answer is Ty Hare's face.

(Hare) What's sooooo ugly, that it was voted on in TD?

(Linsey) Right.

(Hare) How about Colors for \$40?

(Linsey) The answer is "Pepsodent" and Spring 1904.

(Heintzman) What is "You'll wonder where the yellow went...?"

(Linsey) I knew somebody would be old enough to remember that one.

BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG.

(Linsey) That indicates the end of our first round of Jeopardy. The second round will be brought to you by Pepsodent. And now for a word from our sponsor...

RUSSIA to RIGEL: Hahaha. Not a very good Jeopardy. Now, if each of you were to submit a series of questions and answers (or should I say answers and questions) to me by next deadline -- I might be able to spice this up...

BRUX to RIGEL: Hey! Reilly was right! He does get other people to write his press...

GERMANY to PARIS: Called several times, you weren't home. I need the build; look at the board. Everything's fine, though; write or call me, please. It'll work out OK, I'm sure.

PARIS to NEPTUNE PARIS: Yes, I can hear them. Hadn't noticed till you mentioned it. I live about 3 miles from the bay, so only hear them at night, when the air is still.

LVP to BRUX: Why isn't Ty Hare in the DOG STAR game? I mean...ahem...that is to say... oh dear...

KAISER to POPE: We shall see what we shall see, shan't we?

MOSCOW to GASCONY: How's Gascony this time of year? You having an army reunion in southern France or what?

FRANCE to RIGEL: I have a confession to make. All my press last season was written by Rich. Yes, I know it's a terrible thing to have to admit to, but as Rich says, I have to tell it like it is. Sorry, buddy, but my ethical principles against taking credit for nothing were bothering me.

MOSCOW to REILLY: Taking credit for Jeopardy: I knew you were out of your mind.

ROME to BOARD: Michelob for the winner!

ROME to ENGLAND: You get root beer. Don't drink too fast, I may join you in a season or two.

MOSCOW to SULTAN: Nicely said last issue (you scumbunny).

PARIS to ANKARA: Texas called "Baja Oklahoma"? Wonder what Greg thinks...

MOSCOW to ROME: I believe it is now time for our annual Italian player change.

Thanks for playing -- you are certainly more colorful than either of your predecessors.

ROME to BOARD: I swear! You can't believe a word Reilly says. I gave Rich the idea for claiming that he was the one who wrote the Jeopardy article. But did you see any credit given? Then, on top of that, I was leafing through some old copies of Granstark and I found his press releases! All of them, verbatim, out of '70AD! What a cad!

BRUX to ROME: Greg, Greg. I was only kidding when I sent you that paragraph and suggested that you might submit it as RIGEL press, for chrissakes...

GERMANY to RIGEL BOARD: Just like to express my feelings about this particular game in the immortal words of Sam Phillips: "I like to play against people I like. If you're gonna get beat it's a helluva lot better to get beat from a friend...than from somebody you don't like." This RIGEL game is a grand game, folks. Mucho sincere thanks...

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(Sigh) Not enough room to print SIRIUS's wrap-up in this issue, so it's held over to the mid-monthly. Players are getting the results via flyer -- and no, Austria did not win the game! NEPTUNE and RIGEL hogged all the room in this ish...

November 24, 1983

17

Dear BRUX,

I'm taking the trouble to write to you, in response to unfounded and perfectly scurrilous attacks upon my reputation in *Diplomacy World*, because of your reputation for publishing an unbiased zine, and for GMing a fair and well-run game. I've never had the pleasure of playing in a game run by you, nor in subscribing to *Voice of Doom*, and just to prove my good faith, and my confidence in your sense of fair play, enclosed is a personal check for my first ten issues, and I further wish for you to enroll me in your very next game.

This is an open letter, and while you are free to publish any portion of it, I hope that you'll set aside the space to reprint it in toto. Every beaten dog deserves shelter, BRUX, and I'm sure you'll agree, after once reading my story, that I've been as sorely mistreated as the mangiest cur. And the bitter irony is, the man who has leveled these libelous attacks on my reputation is without a doubt the most thoroughly disreputable person it has ever been my misfortune to have known.

We've all heard the talk about there existing within our hobby an "elite" establishment, or Eastern Press, to use but two of the milder labels that have sprung up from time to time. For those of your readers who've imagined this to be just talk, let me now tell them and all of you my story, and then you may judge for yourselves whether this "segment" of the hobby deserves to be called elite, or whether it is in reality merely a select few individuals creating obnoxious noise, individuals who, at least in the case of one of them, could hardly be less deserving of our time and attention.

As a preface for those new to the hobby, in *Diplomacy World* issues #33/34, the editor and publisher, Rod Walker, saw fit to publish two "articles" relating to one Shep Rose. The first of these, entitled "The Sleaziest Player Of All Time! -- Shep Rose," appeared over the byline of Mark Berch. The second story, "SHEP replies," was underscored with the following credit: "by Shep Rose ???". I can only assume Mark is responsible for both efforts, for I can hardly believe there can be two nitwits out there writing to the same zine with identical adolescent styles; nor is it likely there are many individuals within our hobby who would stoop so low as to get a few laughs (and with a brand of humor I can only term sophomoric) at the expense of someone who has, in spite of other character flaws to which I freely admit, devoted his entire *Diplomacy* playing career to the betterment and general enhancement of the hobby.

Space does not permit me to make a lot specific references to the *Diplomacy World* articles to which I refer, BRUX, (though I do urge the readers of *Voice of Doom* to dig into their old *DW* issues and refresh their memories, or write Mr. Walker for free copies--he certainly owes the hobby this much). However, I would like to offer, as a general refutation of the stories Mark wrote, an explanation to your readers as to where this guy is coming from.

First of all, there really IS a Shep Rose. Indeed, since the first of Mark's stories was published I've received more than my share of negative mail and abusive press, and several of my friends have even gone so far as to seriously urge me to change my name for gaming purposes. But this I have resolutely refused to do. I'm proud of my name, and I will not allow some eastern creep with a deranged sense of humor to run me out of the hobby. I'll fight back with everything I have for as long as it takes, both as a "person" (and I mean that in the best sense of the word), and as a respected member of the dippy community. The whole story is a long one, but I don't feel it's necessary at this time for me to go into every single detail. Instead, I'll attempt to be representative by mentioning SOME of the facts, and limit any interjection of "color" to those instances when I deem its inclusion as being constructive of a clearer understanding by the reader. The Mark Berch Story goes like this.

I first met Mark Berch in Oshkosh, Wisconsin the summer of 1970. This girl and I (her name escapes me now) had just driven in from California. It was a Monday morning. I remember it was Monday because WDSH had this dopey DJ who came on with a Moody Blues song making some silly remark like "This'll give ya an idea of what TOMORROW'S gonna be like!" or some such nonsense. Anyway, this girl and I were just coming into town in my '69 Mustang and we saw this guy on the other side of the road standing by the Osho sign with his arms out trying to hitch a ride. We didn't pay such attention to him until all of sudden he darts right in front of us and waves his arms for us to stop. I was pretty burned out at the time myself--I'd been doing a good imitation of Iron Man since Omaha--so I pulled over and let him in. I asked him why he ran across the road like that when he was hitchhiking in the opposite direction, and he told me "Because I was getting tired traveling the other way." That was the first time I ever saw Mark Berch, and I certainly wish today that I never had.

Mark, despite his diminutive physical stature, has always been a real take-charge sort of guy. It's chiefly his voice, I'd say. It sort of gets into your head, like a little worm. In any event, he was into us for a joint before we were halfway downtown. Before long it was just as though we'd known him forever, and by noon he'd talked the two of us into sharing his digs with him, a shabby little place for \$35 a week that sat directly across from the Unemployment Office on High St. That was about as apropos an address as you could ever find for someone like Mark, for I never knew him to hold down a job for more than a month or two at a time. Any job. EVER!

Well, one thing led to another, but inside of a month this girl and I had had enough of ol' Berch, and we duly told him we were moving out. The main reason we couldn't stomach him any longer was that he was such a mooch. But then that's Mark Berch all over. He walked through life preaching a philosophy of "What's yours is mine and what's mine is yours," which happened to be extremely convenient for Mark, since he never had anything of his own. Of course neither did we at the time. Not to speak of. I was recently divorced, and all I possessed was my car and the clothes on my back. The girl was hardly out of high school, and the only reason we had any money in the first place was because she'd thrown all the bread that her parents had given her for a vacation to Europe into the kitty just to get us as far as Wisconsin. Nevertheless, I was willing to pitch-in for groceries, and she did the cooking and kept the place looking nice, and it could be fairly stated that we pulled our own weight. I even offered to help out with the rent, and that was a huge mistake, for Mark immediately asked if we could pay the entire amount *only for the first week or so*, as he was "in between" jobs. The girl and I talked it over, and I reluctantly agreed. More on this in a minute.

To give you just one example of how really moochy and basically dishonest Mark was, one Friday afternoon while I was out looking for a job so I could afford to pay HIS rent, he asked to borrow \$20 from the girl for a couple of lids. He gave her a line about how he knew some guy who would pay twice that much later that night at a bar called Wage Peace. He said he'd be able to repay her and still have a lid left over for all of us to share. Right. Well, she was just dumb enough to swallow it, and sure enough Mark didn't show up until the next Monday. He told us this cock and bull story about how he'd been ripped off at the bar that night, and when he'd come back to the apartment to tell us no one was there. When I told him we had been home all that night (the whole weekend in fact) because we were too broke to go anywhere (that \$20 had been almost the last of our money, though I'd managed to find a job that day sorting bottles at Coke), he then glibly told me that actually he'd been so embarrassed that he'd spent the rest of the weekend with some friends up in Appleton. I knew that was a load of shit, but it wasn't until later that I found out what really happened to our money. It seems Mark took off that Friday afternoon for the Almond Rock Festival where the Abbey Dukes were playing. A guy I knew told me Mark was front and

center the whole time, three sheets to the wind and dancing in the sunshine on *who knows* how many hits of Purple Passion, listening to Ted Nugent play "the highest note in the universe." That's how Mark described it when I later confronted him with the facts. Boy, Mark could really shovel it. By the time he finished telling me all about the concert my ears were watering. Not only wasn't I even mad at him anymore, but he'd actually made me feel bad that I'd missed it in the first place! But I'm getting ahead of myself.

It was just for things like that, and a whole lot more, that the girl and I left Mark's apartment. And then, not too long after that, the girl in turn decided to leave me and return to her parents in California. It was probably for the best. Her father was a strict Irish cop who drank, and her mother was a general flake who liked to sit on the front porch of their summer cabin in Clearlake Highlands and go Oooooo and Ahhhhh a lot at the fireworks on The Fourth. Her mother told me once that she used to actually keep count of the Ooooo's and Ahhhh's by other people when she was a girl. According to her childhood survey the Ooooo's usually had it 2 to 1. Anyway, the girl was forever giving me this crap about how mad her parents would be if she stayed with me too long, especially since circumstances had forced me to use her dad's Sinclair credit card more than I'd originally planned. I'm not sure how she made it back, though I suppose her parents were happy to send her the fare. She never bothered to write, and I didn't have her California address, so I couldn't say. In any event, I didn't miss her much because of how stupid she was, though I'd like to say that I never wished her anything but good fortune. Come to think of it, in a way she and Mark would have made a good team (she was just dumb enough to have been the perfect shill for his deals), only I didn't have any really good reason to be that mean to his then. He would have gone nuts listening to her rattle on all the time, especially when she started telling him about her parents.

To tie up a loose end, some time later I learned that the nice old couple who ran the apartment house, a Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Hildebrandt (*Close their little hearts!*) found themselves duly burned by Mark when he skinned out on his last three

Things weren't as well-organized in the hobby back then as they are now--which might, come to think of it, have been a blessing for Scott--and besides, Scott would be the last person to start writing letters to other zines in an effort to defend himself. The resulting publicity would have surely pushed him to the breaking point. He's such too introverted for that sort of scandal. Indeed, there aren't but a handful of hobby people who know anything of this affair, and those that do apparently decided long ago not to air the laundry in the general press. This is only fair, for as I've already implied, Scott was the victim of an unspeakable practical joke that only one person I've ever known would have dared to inflict on anyone, much less a "friend."

Though I've never been able to come up with all the details, I've been able to piece together most of it, and as far as I know this is how Mark worked it.

You have to understand that Mark didn't really *dislike* Scott. It was just that Scott was always so sensitive about everything, and therefore he made, at least from the peculiar perspective of Mark Berch, the perfect subject for one of his "jokes." Indeed, Scott was so innocent and unsuspecting that I'm sure it worked much better than Mark ever hoped, though since he refuses to own up to it in the first place it's doubtful we'll ever be certain of this, and knowing Mark like I do it's doubtful he'd ever get enough of such a "good thing." Mark always did dream big.

Like I said, this all took place during the wintertime, and Mark had hired on at the Post Office Annex, which was right behind the fieldhouse, for the holiday rush. All the mail to and from the outlying Post Offices passed through the Goshawk annex, and Mark must have somehow talked his way into sorting the mail that was going to the Poy Sippi Zip Code area. However he managed it (Lord knows what scam he pulled there!), I suppose what he did was simply pale every letter he ran across addressed to the *Poy Sippi Dippi*, while letting all correspondence sent to Scott Leipzig personally through, or something similar. This way only part of the zine's mail would flounder. I always thought that was a nice touch, and one characteristic of Mark Berch. Knowing him, he undoubtedly waylaid only a few letters at first, then gradually a few more, until towards the end, as I've already noted, Scott was receiving only part of his mail. Then, to make matters even more manageable, Mark took out some insurance in the form of at least one alias that he had subscribe to *Poy Sippi Dippi*, one Cooper Daniels. There may have been more, I'm not sure. Mark must have had a friend (or two) back east who was willing to receive and then pass along his letters, and with the eastern postmarks Scott never suspected a thing. I prefer to think Mark's "confederate" had no idea what was happening, for its very unsettling to think the hobby might be populated with people like this. More likely, Mark told him he was simply playing a pbs game under an alias, giving him one plausible excuse or another. In fact, now that I think about it, I'm sure Mark was playing "more than one hand," for it's only reasonable to suppose a guy like him would take out more than one insurance policy. He never was a trusting sort.

My thinking is Copper Daniels, Florence Hotchkiss, and another name I didn't mention, Pete Lowry (Montgomery, Alabama postmark), were all Berch "puppets." If I'm wrong, I apologize to these people, and if they'll take the trouble to write to me I'd be happy to set the record straight with another open letter to the hobby.

By the way, Mike Marsh has since written to Scott and apologized for his own role in the vilifications, though at the time Mike had no way of knowing that he was being had, too. He even received a letter from Hotchkiss (Mike was Austria in that game, and temporarily got rich at "her" expense) about a month after *Poy Sippi Dippi* collapsed. According to Mike, Hotchkiss swore that she wouldn't rest until Scott was made to pay for his "utter incompetence," and she further urged Mike to write to the other players and convince them to join in a letter campaign to other zines. Mike related all of this to me at the time, and I was able to dissuade him from taking any of these actions himself. I didn't outright accuse Mark, but kept my suspicions secret. Instead, I merely indicated to Mike that Scott had been somehow had, and it would be only fair to lay off for awhile until the matter could be cleared up. A year later I told Mike all I knew of it, especially Mark's involvement, and he in turn wrote to Scott with his apology. But of course by then Scott had moved west and wanted nothing so much as to forget the entire incident. For his part, Mike vowed to "wring that Berch's scrawny neck for him" if he ever laid eyes on him again. But then Mark affects a lot of people that way.

Even after reading the stories in *Diplomacy World* I would have made none of this public, except that about a month ago I received an anonymous letter asking me if I'd heard from Scott Leipzig lately. At first I thought maybe it was from one of the people who'd been burned in Scott's zine, and somehow or other the person had found out my address--from another zine where I was playing, probably. But then I took a closer look at the postmark. The letter had been mailed from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which if memory serves was the same place from which the Cooper Daniels letters emanated. Immediately I knew it must be Mark, up to his old tricks with me. Well, all I can say is you better keep away from me, Mark. What you did to Scott, not to mention the other innocent players who got caught up in your nonsense, was bad enough. Add to this your recent publication of those sick stories with the bogus attribution to me and I can't tell you how angry I am. But on top of all of this, I still figure you owe me half of that rent money, and something on account for all those dope deals we did, too. In fact, as far as I'm concerned it's the last straw, Mark. So again, I give you fair warning. If you don't keep away from me,

Perhaps even the most dishonest types require an exercise in which they become the victims. Diplomacy seemed to serve this role in Mark's case. He wasn't always the big loser, mind you, but he NEVER won.

I always figured that sort of thing would gall a guy like Mark plenty, but as he never said anything at the time I saw no reason to dwell on it. But now I can see how all the residual resentment he's harbored for me over the years has continued to build in him, until now I find myself feeling the full effects of his twisted personality.

Actually, many of the dirty tricks he "credits" me with are old ideas of his that he never had the nerve to play in his own games. You should have been there with us, Mark and I, sitting up all night drinking wine and soaking, and his scheming like you wouldn't believe. And let me tell you he came up with some real shitty things that he never got to mentioning in his "Shep Rose" stories (saving those for someone special, Mark?). Of course I don't deny that Mark wasn't entirely lying about what he wrote. I've pulled one or two things that might be frowned upon in some circles, and for which today I am deeply ashamed. But I never did anything like he says. I've always liked people more than that. But then that's always been one of the secrets to his success. He blends truth with fiction so neatly that it's hard to tell when he's pulling your leg and when he's serious. Of course he wrote the Shep Rose pieces as though they were fiction, knowing that I would be one of the few people to recognize them for what they really were. Why? The only reason I can think of is that he's lonely and craves attention. Also, I suspect he's been figuring all along he could get away with it, for I'm sure he believes that I'd be the last one to intentionally involve myself in that sort of dirt after all these years, and there aren't many others still around in the hobby who know what really happened. That's another thing about him. He first gets to know the people he screws with, and then he plays them according to whatever weaknesses they have. But this time he's misjudged his victim. For instance, I WAS once involved with a zine that unfortunately folded under a cloud of controversy, and now I think the time is proper for the story of that shameful incident to come out.

A mutual "friend" of ours, Scott Leipzig, decided to start his own zine. I encouraged him all I could, but Mark acted jealous as hell and would have no part in the project. Well, Scott went through the usual motions of getting his new zine known, including sending notices around to a number of different publishers asking for plugs. To help him out, I volunteered to do articles and write letters to other players I knew asking them to subscribe. By the way, it wasn't a subzine called Boise and Girls. Scott named it Poy Sippi Dippi after the town he was from.

Scott was a simple sort. Trusting, you know what I mean? So pretty soon he began getting all these letters from players asking if there were any game openings. I was surprised at the volume, and in all my time had a circulation of 57 inside of the first month or so. With that sort of support Scott figured he was justified in opening up an additional three games, up from the two he started with initially, each game starting one issue apart. Scott was making every effort to get his issues out every two weeks, so you can see how much work he was putting into this thing, but I can tell you that Scott was having the time of his life.

I was in Oshkosh reading Scott's fourth or fifth issue when the bubble threatened to burst. Some guy in Pennsylvania named Cooper Daniels wrote a real nasty letter to Scott, accusing him of being a nerd when it came to GMing, and suggesting that he first learn the basics of games like Monopoly before he "...presume to moderate games of some complexity, and ones which demand some intelligence on the part of their participants at that." This sort of abuse isn't all that unusual, maybe, except in this case the game was only in the Spring '02 season and as far as I knew everything had been going smoothly. Daniels was France and Scott NMRed him, though Daniels swore up and down he'd sent in two sets of orders, one of which he claimed should have been received at least ten days before the deadline. Scott responded politely to him, suggesting that in the future it might not be a bad idea if Mr. Daniels called to be sure his orders had been received by the GM. This was in the winter, and there was a big blizzard back east, so Scott reasoned that could have been the cause of the mail not getting through. By this time I could smell something rotten, and I remember mentioning as such to Scott. He pook-pooked the idea, but like I said, Scott was a simple sort.

Next issue it got a whole lot worse. This time Daniels accused Scott of misinterpreting his orders, causing him to miss a build in Spain. (Scott showed me this particular set of Daniel's orders. They were handwritten--hardly more than a scrawl--on a postcard, and I didn't find it hard to imagine how Scott might have "misinterpreted" them, as they made no sense to me at all.) Had it just been Daniels complaining I think it would have all blown over. Unfortunately, that same issue two more players were NMRed. A Mike Flanagan in New Jersey claimed his orders were sent in at least a week before the deadline, while a girl named Florence Hotchkiss (Florida) was nearly in tears over a similar gaff by her. She was brand new to the hobby and didn't know what she was going to do now, seeing as how she was Turkey, with her armies still sitting in Con, and Say, and her fleet doing nothing worthwhile in Ank, after the first season. She claimed that she was positive she had sent her orders in, but she was also courteous enough to apologize to Scott for the mistake, and promised him she would take steps to ensure this never happened again.

By the NEXT issue the situation was beginning to get away from Scott. The press in general was getting on Scott in a heavy way. There was yet another NMR by poor Florence (she was about to be overwhelmed by a hostile Italian-Austrian steamroller), and the derisive comments from the other players ranged from "How long did you say you'd been GMing?" to "If you know what's good for you, buster, you'd better start getting your shit together, and fast!" the latter coming from none other than Scott's good friend Cooper Daniels, who by this time was really in Scott's shorts. However, in spite of the constant criticism, Scott continued to publish every letter and comment he received (and if it required an extra couple pages for space, then he ate the paper cost) no matter how acidic they became, and, believe me, towards the end things got real tacky.

To make a long story longer, it wasn't long before Scott's subscribers started dropping out of their games. After awhile even the stand-by players left. Daniels hung in there till the end, getting in his shots every issue without fail, a fact which later proved to be of not a little significance. Even one of the players I'd recruited, Mike Marsh, who knew both Mark and I, and who was living down on the Peninsula in the Bay Area at the time, finally dropped out of his game with only a year and a half's moves completed. I tried to talk him out of it, but to no avail. I remember the letter he wrote to me about it, in which he told me he had better things to do than "train doltish GMs, no matter how well you know them."

Hotchkiss, Flanagan, Beadie, Ruddy, Anderson, Wills, Zuern, the Pratts (Bobby and Jim were brothers who had enrolled in different games), and a lot of other people who were unfortunate to get caught up in this unpleasant affair, they all started resigning in ever more rapid succession, until finally, Scott had no choice but to fold Poy Sippi Dippi. And to his everlasting credit he made every effort to make prorated refunds to his former subscribers. In all, I'd guess he lost a couple of hundred dollars on the deal, though the real cost to him could hardly be measured in such currency.

His self-confidence sagged, his ego deflated like a pricked balloon, Scott could think of nothing better than to pack his things and move away. He first went to Colorado Springs, then downstate to Pueblo, where he hitched on with some branch of the federal highway department. In all, he was absent from the Oshkosh scene, and totally ignored Diplomacy, for the next four or five years, though now I'm happy to report that he's back in the area doing survey work in the Fox River Valley. He swears he'll never get involved in the hobby ever again, so it's doubtful he'll even read this. This is best, for he still goes into spasmodic jerks whenever he hears Mark's name mentioned.

Things weren't as well-organized in the hobby back then as they are now--which might, come to think of it, have been a blessing for Scott--and besides, Scott would be the last person to start writing letters to other zines in an effort to defend himself. The resulting publicity would have surely pushed him to the breaking point. He's such too introverted for that sort of scandal. Indeed, there aren't but a handful of hobby people who know anything of this affair, and those that do apparently decided long ago not to air the laundry in the general press. This is only fair, for as I've already implied, Scott was the victim of an unspeakable practical joke that only one person I've ever known would have dared to inflict on anyone, much less a "friend."

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At last, BRUX, you'll understand why I wish to keep my own whereabouts anonymous, though I'm currently playing games in three separate zines, so I suppose it's inevitable that my whereabouts will be leaked. I ask only that you believe me when I say I'm trying to go straight these days--call it a kind of Mark Berch withdrawal. I pay my dues and I play the game fairly. I wish to forget I ever knew the man, though I probably never will. After all, as we all know Mr. Berch is very active these days with his own zine, and has even managed to cloak himself with a few rags of respectability, though there are several zine publishers out there that have felt the tip of the dagger with which I remember him as being so proficient. I would appreciate any feedback you and your readers might have, especially anything along the lines of encouragement for Scott. He just isn't "right" anymore. And I certainly encourage all of you to be on the lookout for names like Cooper Daniels, Florence Hotchkiss or anything that remotely sounds like an alias. I can guarantee if you play in a game with the likes of them, you won't believe what happens to you, not even while it's happening.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Shep

PS BRUX, all responses to this letter should be addressed to:

Shep Rose  
c/o Janet R. Papenfuss  
3501 Crown Blvd.  
LaCrosse WI 54601

Back in an early issue of VD, I ran a strategy article entitled "Spitting on the Spard". I received dozens of responses begging me please not to run a piece entitled "Picking Your Nose". Therefore, VD proudly presents...

### Picking Your Nose

#### Another Diplomatic Option

The truly skillful Diplomacy player will strive to use every resource at his disposal in order to gain an edge over the opposition in his games. One of the more obscure resources, often overlooked, can be found nestled snugly inside a player's nostrils.

It is well to remember that, by sheer coincidence, a healthy majority of Diplomacy players have an instinctive aversion to the art of nose-picking and will react with disgust. Consequently, this tactic is best used sparingly, but there are situations in which it can be harnessed to one's advantage (else why print this article, right?)

Consider, for example, the French player who is battling the Italian for control of the Western Med. Italy, superior in fleet power, is about to succeed in taking this crucial space. But France has noticed a fatal flaw in the Italian armor: Italy is nauseated by the sight of a finger inserted into a nostril. Now there are two options for the Frenchman in this scenario: either he can sit back with his thumb up his rear doing nothing; or he can corner Italy during negotiations, poke a finger deep into his nostril, pull out a big, juicy greener and warn Italy, "Look, pal, you go to the Western Med and I'm really going to stick it to you!"

Still on the theme of using the disgust factor to your advantage is a more bold tactical ploy known as the "Flying Boogerman". We all know about the "Flying Dutchman", in which an extra unit is surreptitiously added to the board. Well, why not do this with something other than an army or fleet? Some players may think it snot fair, but suppose you, as Germany, are losing your war with the Russian. When everyone's out of the room, stealthily delve into your nose and place the result right in the middle of Berlin. If Russia is the squeamish sort, he is sure to avoid dirtying his lily-white army by ordering it into this contaminated province. This knowledge frees up your units for the defense of Munich, and you may even end up holding him off while the rest of the board sympathetically flocks to your assistance. If a historical justification is needed for this ploy, just remember that throughout history armies have always been reluctant to invade a foreign province which was infested with the plague.

It is wise, though, to avoid doing this too often. We are dealing with a limited resource here, and even though you may have picked good allies, they may not always submit to letting you pick their noses should your supply become exhausted.

A variation on the theme of the Flying Dutchman is to switch an opponent's unit for one of your own; this too has an equivalent ploy involving the nasal passages. Suppose now that you are Italy, being invaded by France, and that his army in Tuscany is about to receive an order crucial to your demise. If France will not listen to your pleas for mercy, you may slyly insert a few fingers into your nose (preferably one at a time), pick up the French army and fondle it lovingly for a few seconds, and replace it on the board. The greenish tinge it has now assumed may lead the French to forget it is his, and as a result it may be left unordered. And, to add insult to injury, if the other players are equally oblivious, you might even get away with ordering it as your own unit -- leading to some very easy wins as Italy.

Does she or doesn't she? Only Capuso nose for sure.

Back to the topic of boogers on the board, it is very easy to mess up an enemy's moves by affixing a small bit of the stuff to the bottom of one of his pieces. Depending on its consistency, you may either make his units stick to the provinces they are currently occupying, or slide farther than intended when he pushes them to a bordering space. If your nostrils operate independently of each other, then you are luckier still as you may have both of these tactics at your disposal simultaneously.

The choice of nostril can be a crucial factor in other ways as well. If you, as Austria, have been truthful with Turkey up till now and have been picking religiously from your left nostril when talking to him each turn, don't suddenly switch nostrils in mid-game! If he's at all competent, he'll notice the change and suspect it as a "tell" that you are about to stab.

If the choice of nostril is an important consideration, then so is the choice of which finger to use. Nobody is likely to notice you if you are able merely to get the tip of your pinky into your nose, but even your most bitter adversary will be moved to grudging admiration if you manage to insert the whole of your middle finger. And, if you are down to your last dot, you will need to do something to hold onto your scenter.

Some players have been known to carry this to extremes, though. I distinctly remember a young lady in one of my games a while back who, as France, had run out of clean fingers and ordered a breast to pic. This action rather distracted us other players, naturally, and we conceded her the win.

I'll wrap this up by mentioning an extreme ploy I invented some time ago, called the Nasal Nourisher. I wouldn't have dreamt this up except that my sister Judy was a nutrition major at Cornell. It should only be used as a last resort by starving, freezing victims of a plane crash in the Andes Mountains. If you find yourself in these unhappy circumstances, playing what well may be your very last Dippy game ever, remember that your opponents as well as you are on the verge of death by exposure and starvation. As the players die off one by one, their positions must be placed in civil disorder. Last to die will win, of course. In this rather unlikely scenario, you should keep in mind that the matter inside your nose contains several nutrients essential to human life. Overcome your aversions and nosh away; no spoon or fork is needed for you etiquette buffs as it's finger food. Just don't let the others see you as they may get the same idea and follow suit, diminishing your advantage.

I suppose this article may have aggravated a few cranky souls, but then again some people frown at letter-passing or stabbing as well. But the truly serious player will do anything to gain an edge, and these are just some ideas to be used as the situation warrents. Look at it this way -- it's just a variation on the more popular strategy of using your head.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

BRUX

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