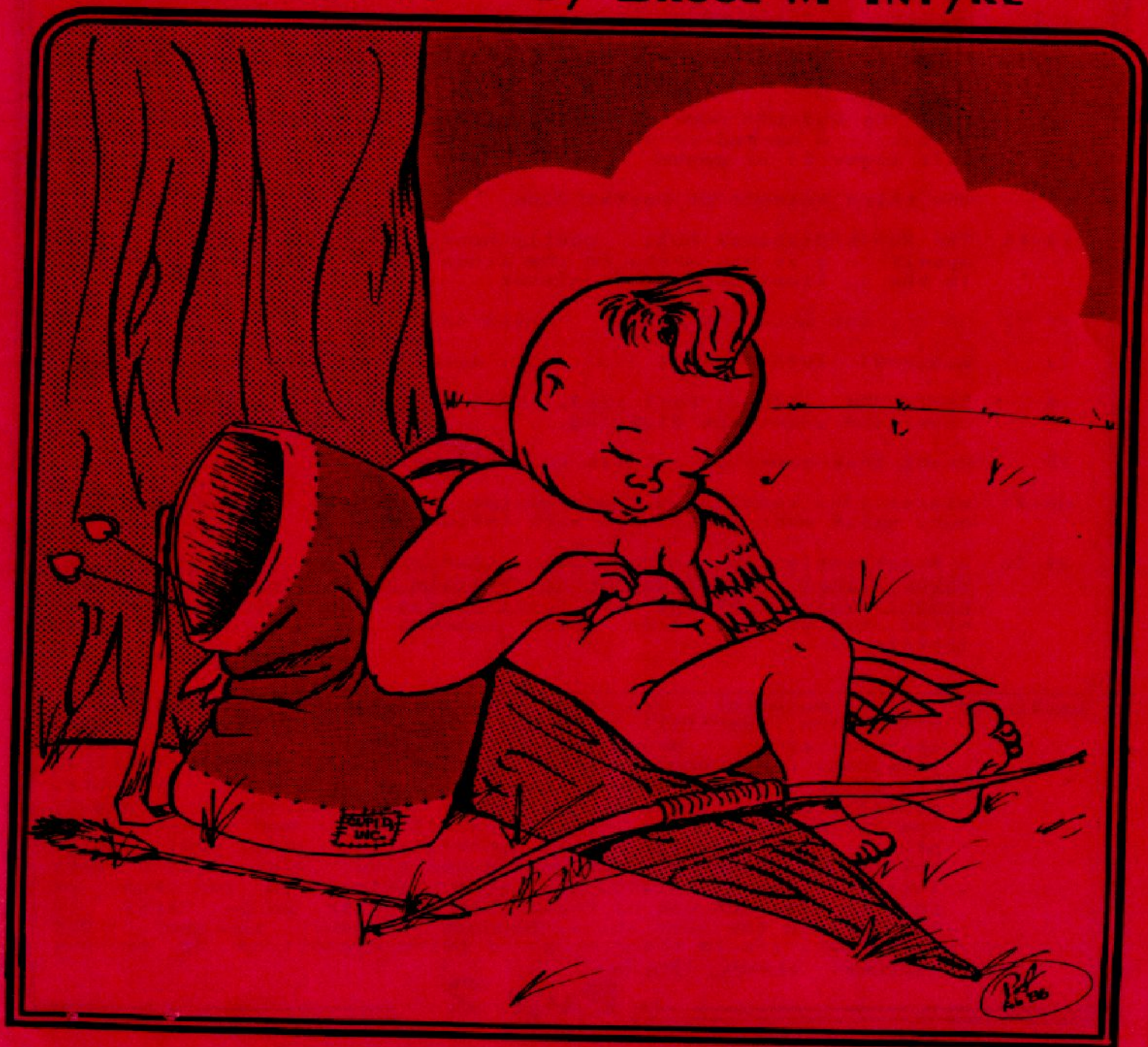


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# excelsior

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ISSUE No. 11 by BRUCE M<sup>c</sup>INTYRE





## DIRECTORY

EXCELSIOR #11 by Bruce McIntyre with a whole heaven of a lot of support from Nancy Hurrell. Printed a bit late, March 5, 1986 in Vancouver, BC Canada, by Chris Buck of Kinko's, under the eagle eye of the above mentioned Miss Hurrell.

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12	From The Podium: some editorializing on where we're going. Yes, I know it's marked <i>part one</i> , part two was cut when I trimmed this issue to 32 pages.
13	The third episode of Postal Clue.
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23	ALBINONI (1985AA) Fall 1903. Uh, doesn't anybody want Serbia???
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26-27	Winter 1901 results in Superbourse! (1985##). Wageler sells out, gains much money, not much influence.
28-32	A monstrously long lettercolumn. Letters from <u>Sean McGonigle</u> , <u>Wayne Wittal</u> , <u>Pierre Touchette</u> , <u>Malcolm Smith</u> , <u>Ken Peel</u> , <u>Steve Knight</u> , <u>Wallace Nicoll</u> , and <u>Scott Hanson</u> . Not only that but my hired typist has made some comments of her own to your letters...

Excelsior is a magazine dedicated to Diplomacy, spacefillers, discussion, spacefillers, hobby news, spacefillers, humour, spacefillers, masculine attributes, spacefillers, international hobby relations, spacefillers, hobby political commentary, spacefillers, state of the art cover artistry, spacefillers, computer bleah, spacefillers, reviews, spacefillers, sports talk, spacefillers, and lettercolumn stuff. Oh yes, there's also spacefillers, like what you're reading, and most of what you're about to. Sorry. It's very late. So late, in fact, that it's early. Do you know or remeber how much one of these things costs? Do you care? If so, look in the last issue, because I don't remember. Not only that, I'm in the process of being hypnotized by my own terminal screen G'nite



I never learn, do I... Just over a week before publication, and despite the fact I've already got the XL #11 disk bursting at the seams, I'm starting another one of these run-on columns I call...

## DipGAB

I'm glad to see in the mails that most of you have received your Expo '86 invitations from Premier Bennett. (For you foreigners, a provincial Premier in Canada is roughly equivalent to a state Governor in the U.S., only the Premier has more powers, as Canada is not quite as centrally-controlled.) I'm sure I'll be doing two or three long exposes on the Expo site in this summer's issues of XL. The invitations were part of an Expo promotion called "Invite The World", but the idea didn't occur to me to send them to the full subscriber list (as of about last October: for those of you who've joined since, sorry, t'ain't much I can do...) until 3/4 of the way through the promotion. But they assure me you were all placed on the last draw for the prize of an all-expenses-paid trip here, as well as, I believe, 1,986 separate draws for three-day passes. Unfortunately, you're about 100 out of over 1,000,000 who were on the mailing list. (Oh yes, I almost forgot, B.C. residents were also ineligible, which affects maybe two or three.) The latest news on the contest is quite funny, though: it appears a man named Terry Sakamoto made out a list of over two hundred people he wanted to invite, and one of them won a three day pass. What is interesting is that the winners name is Johnny Carson. (Yes, ~~the~~ Johnny Carson.) Carson's secretary didn't quite believe the story, saying that Carson had never heard of Sakamoto, and may feel he is being ~~used~~ by Expo. Sheesh! Try to give something away for free....

New in Vancouver since last time is SkyTrain, our new light rapid transit system, which goes nowhere near Winch St., but passes right near my parents house, meaning Nan can get a hour's extra sleep after she completes her late night shift on Sunday morning. You see, the fastest way from my place to my parents' is by car, about 15 minutes. Bus, because of awkward routing that forces either two connections or a long walk, takes 45-90 minutes on Sunday. But we've discovered a little-known and scarcely-used bus route that takes us right to SkyTrain in 15 minutes. It doesn't get us any closer, but from there we can get to my parents place in 10 minutes. Also, the view is better. SkyTrain is an above ground (for most of the way) train that goes from downtown to New Westminster in 27 minutes. By car it's about 45, by bus, more than an hour. The most exciting part of the ride is going through the Expo site: I mean literally through it. Apparently the big roller coaster at Expo makes it's first big plunge head on into SkyTrain's path before turning sharply at the last moment.

A few weeks ago, I woke up slowly, as usual, to Nan telling me what was on all the TV channels. I did not believe her at first, until I saw an actual replay of the tragedy of Challenger. Now, a month later, the shock of the tragedy has mostly subsided, and I feel a different emotion--anger mostly. The more I hear about this investigation, the more incredible it seems that something of this type has not happened before. From my vantage point at least, it would appear that NASA both knew about the potential problem, and ordered the launch to go ahead. But it appears that the distance between the "we have a potential problem here" level and the "cleared for launch" level was so great that there was no way for the two to meet. Could it be that NASA is growing



Too large for its own good? Or is there too much pressure on NASA to succeed, and succeed? But I have another problem with the whole affair, one that I'm sure will liven up our letter column next time, because it's sure to be quite unpopular. The show of grief for the fallen heroes was more drawn out than I could believe. There is nothing wrong with grief, but what will be the overall effect on us should, God forbid, we go to war somewhere? Seven died aboard Challenger, and the country (yours mine) is in shock for a week. Does it come as an equal shock to find out that twice that many died in the liberation of Granada? That at least that many were losing their lives every in Viet Nam? Or every in either of the wars of this century? Much more importantly, what about the effect on our views towards progress? Seven heroes lost their lives that morning. Do we also mourn for fifty times that many, at least, who have died in air disasters in the past year? For the God knows how many who have lost their lives in auto accidents? There is a certain hypocrisy here that bothers me. If we must mourn for the Challenger seven, let us also recall the President's brave words of that fateful day. "Nothing stops here." If we allow this tragedy to impede our progress into space, we don't deserve the technologies that have gotten us this far.

The inside postal workers in the main sorting plant in Vancouver protested a managerial scheme to improve attendance by spending their shifts in the cafeteria for three days. I phoned the PO after this all blew over and found out that mail for the XL games would not be delayed, but mail for the game in Sleepless Knights (where I'm the guest GM) would be delayed, possibly for a week or more. I therefore extended that deadline, but none of the XL ones, but apologies to Dave Carter for not phoning earlier to tell him of the problem. I'm amazed at how often some postal union (for there apparently are many) has a strike threat in the works. If the government mediators successfully fielded 95% of the disputes, we'd still have a postal strike every 2 years. But then, Canada is a loony place to live. The latest interesting tidbit concerns a Human Rights Board somewhere saying that East Indian Sikh members of the police may follow their religion and grow those bushy beards, wear their turbans on duty, and carry their sacrificial daggers: this is called freedom of religion! What I want to know is this: if a member of the force is a Krishna, is he then allowed to wear the robes, arm himself with tambourines, and chant for pay?

Actually heard on the radio department: during the pregame show of a Vancouver Canucks NHL game, this actually happened:

Gary: Well Al, we've got some interesting stats on the Canucks here. When they score four goals or more in a game their record is 9-2-4. And when they allow three goals or less, their record is 10-5-2.

Al: Gosh, I wonder what would happen if you combined those two stats.

Brilliant. I'm going to steal Alan Parr's idea of Colemanballs for XL. Alan runs a feature in Hopscotch called Colemanballs, named after, I assume, some notorious broadcaster of soccer there. A sample, from a coach: "That was the most diabolical penalty decision I've seen in a long time. It's the second time this week that's happened to us."

If you hear something on a sports show that's not quite right, send it to XL. Our panel will review all entries and the best one each issue will win three free issues. Be sure to mention who said it, the event concerned (include the teams and the date), and the sport. Brevity is an asset, as I'll be using these for spacefillers, and also because a long and necessary set-up usually isn't that funny. JOCKTALK will appear as long as you subbers keep sending them in.

I received for Xmas a sort of Stand-Up Comedian's version of



Trivial Pursuit. There are about 6000 jokes in place of questions, and the idea is to land on a space, read the joke, then perform it as best you can. If the others agree that you did well, you get the equivalent of the pieces of the pie in TP. This of course, is where the game falls down, as why should I laugh at anyone else if I want to win? But despite the fact that it really isn't a great game, I will be printing some of the jokes this time as spacefillers. The reason for this is that I've had enough with the musical excerpts already. For the reason why, check out From The Podium.

I'm not going to tell you about the hockey pool, because I'm getting killed. Unlike the Canucks, who are in a similar position in the NHL, I have done something about it, and if all goes well I should make the playoffs, but I'm going to have to wheel and deal a bit more to have any type of hope there. Details soon, I hope.

The hockey fans out there will be interested in this little discovery that I've made. The NHL is considering changing their OT format so that teams who have played a good hard game at the end of a long road trip don't lose points because of it. The proposal is one standings point for an OT loss, and this has apparently been tested in several minor and junior leagues. I don't like it, and am amazed that the obvious fallacy hasn't been exploited yet. Such a rule creates a no-lose situation, a catch-22 in reverse. They all have no reason to worry about losing, except in the few late season situations where you simply don't want the other team to get an extra point in the standings. So if you have no worries about letting the goal in, what is the use of defense? You may as well even pull the goalie! In fact, both teams may as well pull the goalie!! Why not go all out for the win if there's no danger in losing??? I hope they adopt the rule, because I'd love to see an NHL game with 12 skaters and no goalies.....

The great Brux Linsey has registered his first (to my knowledge) feud loss, to Nancy Hurrell, who recently (about 40 minutes ago) gave him the proverbial tirade over the long-distance telephone line for not typing up Polltalk! The previously undefeated Brux, caught in the shower, admitted defeat quickly, and apologized profusely. Can we have a feud number, Mr. Carrier?

The new Conservative government has come down with a budget that, among other things, calls for Canada Post to eliminate its debts and become a profitable or break-even operation by March 1988. The various unions, knowing trouble when they see it, have reacted vigorously, with the typical bleats of "WE'LL STRIKE" to the press. This, of course, is because the only solution to Canada Post's debts is to take a deep breath and kill the union's hold on Canada Post once and for all. Where's Ronald Reagan when we need him? Letter carriers are wimps compared to air traffic controllers.....

Seriously though, folks, those of you lucky enough to live in Canada would be able to receive a smaller XL for the duration of the strike, mostly because of my proximity to Pt. Roberts, and the likelihood of being able to get a post-office box there in an emergency. I'd try to keep the games going, but all concerned Canadian players would have to name substitutes living outside Canada for the games to continue. I talked with Alan Stewart about getting news from the other Canadian zines by courier or phone and keeping those subbers updated on the situation should there be a strike.

Now, I hear you out there saying that this is probably another false alarm. Fine if it is, but there hasn't been 6 weeks without a postal strike threat news item in the time I've been in the hobby, so I'm damn well gonna be prepared.



Computer news: the Sicilian Poker program has taken a temporary back seat with the acquisition of some new and exciting software. EPYX's *World's Greatest Football Game* lives up to its title. This is no four-aside attempt, this is a full fledged true-to-life NFL simulation. There is a playbook of over 200 plays (with an option on more through the "Chalkbook" option, in which all 11 players can be programmed to go anywhere the coach wants) from which to choose, and the play options (chosen as the game proceeds) are similar to real NFL situations. Most plays, whether designed for running or passing, have QB sneak options, and primary and secondary receivers. The screen graphics are excellent, and, as I said, the game is realistic: there are actually 11 men on the field for each side, and you can see them all on the screen. There are three views, a sideline view from the standard TV angle covering about a quarter of the field, an isolated view covering the ball carrier and everyone within 3-4 yards of him, and a view from "the blimp" with which you can see the whole field. There are a few drawbacks. The blimp view is up-down, while the others are left-right, so you have to reorient your joystick if that's what you're watching. Plays do take a short time (15 seconds) to be selected and loaded from the disk, so an offensive and a defensive play takes about 30 seconds to get going. But for two NFL nuts in the springtime, this is the most advanced armchair quarterback program I've heard about.

Other programs I've been playing around with are Grog's Revenge, Seafox, and a Star Trek game that seems to have been updated from the days when I played it on the school terminal after hours: those were the days when there were no video display terminals, and a game of Star Trek used about three rolls of paper!!

There's one other program I've been using. One of the programs on a disk I obtained was listed as taking up 86 blocks. When I loaded it and ran it, nothing happened. So I loaded the next program in the directory, a very short program. Suddenly the entire screen went blank and the computer said "HELLO!" It then asked me to type in my name, and made a valliant attempt to pronounce it, which was nearly 100% correct. Thus began my experience with speech-synthesis programming. I've created a "talking-alarm clock" program, which says "The time is now 6:14 and 58 seconds. P.M." (The long program simply adds a new command to the BASIC repertoire, SAY, which works like PRINT, and causes the speech patterns to say whatever is inside the quotes. 10 SAY "RATATATATATATATATATATATATATATATAT":END will cause the computer to make a machine gun sound, for example.) It's amazing to hear the computer talk and to be able to program it to seduce Nancy, but there really isn't much use for it. The biggest problem is the large amount of memory it uses to store the speech patterns and pronunciation guide, which is advanced enough to handle most of English's peculiarities.

Are there many Hulk Hogan fans out there? It is with some terpidation that I make the admission that a man of my intelligence is readily entertained by the World Wrestling Federation shows. Here in Vancouver we get their national show, and a show from Toronto. Both of these were quite entertaining at first, but it has gotten to the point where I can pick the winners on the basis of names alone. Not only that, the corner nearest the ringside camera has produced 15 straight winners in the last three weeks on the national show. But when they have a Saturday Nite Live's Main Event you get a different type of match. You see there are four types of WWF wrestlers. There are good-guys and bad-guys, and there are winners and losers. Hulk Hogan is a good winner, Randy "Macho Man" Savage is a bad winner. Steve Lombardi is a bad loser, and the names of good losers are so numerous I forget them quickly. On the weekly shows, you don't often see winners meet. But the TV Guide lineup for this Saturday's Main Event has so much potential, I asked five other people for predictions. Three of them know nothing about wrestling: will they do better than the three of us



who do?

Below are the predictions, good-guy on top, bad-guy on the bottom. Predictors 1-3 watch regularly (I'm #3, co-workers Ali Kassim, and George Goundar are 1-2), predictors 4-6 don't (Nancy, Albert Lam, the mechanic at work, and my mom.) Note that Ali and George have picked all the good guys, except for Bundy, who weighs 458 pounds and simply doesn't lose. This is how the WWF brainwashes viewers: I, on the other hand, get my entertainment out of watching how the various wrestlers are built up, in interviews and other happenings, to decide where the inevitable cheating is going to occur. (You don't seriously think Hulk Hogan is going to lose his title in a fair and square match, do you?) Actually, I usually just listen to Vince McMahon reporting the matches, the important thing to watch is the interviews, and player-manager interactions before and after the match. No, I don't delude myself into believing it's sport, although you must admit it takes a lot of fitness, guts, and timing much of the time. It is nothing more than pure entertainment, but I reserve the right to cheer my favorites.

Match	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hulk Hogan	*	*	*	*	*	*
The Magnificent Muraco					*	
The British Bulldogs	*	*		*		*
Greg "The Hammer" Valentine/Brutus Beefcake			*		*	
The Junkyard Dog	*	*		*		
Adrian Adonis			*	*	*	*
Mr. T	*	*	*	*	*	*
Boxing Bob Orton						
Steve Gatorwolf						
King Kong Bundy	*	*	*	*	*	*

I'll finish this report off late tonight when I get the results.

Well, blow me down. I picked four of five, including a mild upset. First Mr. T demolished Boxing Bob Orton, though Boxing Bob used a lot of illegal tactics such as thumbs-to-the-eye blows, and elbows while the referee was distracted. The real action came after the match when Orton infamous manager, Rowdy Roddy Piper, took off the kilt and attacked T with a strap while Orton was holding him down...Hulkster overcame early difficulties (as usual) in his match against Muraco, but after it was over, King Kong Bundy (who hadn't registered a drop of sweat in his half-minute match with Steve Gatorwolf) decided to get some knocks in, and the Hulkster was taken to hospital after Bundy's 458 pounds had dropped on him a few times. Then we had the mild upset, the Bulldogs getting about ten two counts before losing on a quick three count in a relatively long match. At this point I was 4-0, and for a while it looked as though Adonis was going to upset the Junkyard Dog as well, but JYD came back to win. So the four men picked 4 of 5, and the two women picked 3 of 5. Significant data? I dunno.....

A few things have happened since the typing of The Honor/Dishonor Roll. Keith Sherwood's The Inner Light has apparently folded, and the other inaccuracy is in the fact that it's all here, not just installment one as I had originally thought. Hope you enjoy it, and the rest of the zine as well!

News from Italy: A clock will be installed in the Leaning Tower. What good is it if you have the inclination and don't have the time?



## COUNTDOWN TO VALENTINE'S DAY

[What you are about to read is a diary, its reason for being a simple estimate that a very interesting situation will develop in the next few days here, something I want to keep up on. -BM]

### February 4:

Looking through my mail today, I failed to notice a small piece of cardboard in the bottom of the box. This often occurs, as my evening shifts and late nights at the computer often make it practical to stay up until the mail delivery at about quarter to nine, and of course by that time I am often quite tired. In any case, I found it later in the day, on a routine check of the mailbox while Nan and I were leaving: me for work, she on an important mission at the laundromat. Wondering what meaningful information such a small piece of paper could impart, I looked at it closely.

It was a notice from the Vancouver Province newspaper. Somebody, it proclaimed, had placed a Valentine's Day "Love-Lines" ad in the obligatory one-day special section. The person was not named, and there were no clues. Naturally, I immediately knew who it must have been. But my analytical mind, sacrificing accuracy for speed as usual, told me I should keep it from Nan, at least at the moment. In a split second, it pieced together the following scenario:

- 1) Nan goes to The Province ad office, having seen the ad for "Love Lines", and arranges the ad.
- 2) Clerk tells her that a small card will be sent to me (presumably so that I make certain to spend hours straining my eyes in search of the answer to my love-life problems), and asks for my address. Nan thinks, and decides that it will take .02 of a second for me to uncover the true identity of the secret admirer (which is twice as long as it actually took me), so she gives my address, but decides to *intercept* the card, and place it inside the paper (beside the hockey stats where I'd notice it) on Valentine's Day.
- 3) Mail gets here far earlier than Nancy expects, and M<sup>c</sup>Bruce gets card first.

With this scenario, there was only one possible action to take. Slip the card back into the box tonight while Nan sleeps. She will get the mail tomorrow, and have every confidence that her espionage trick has worked.

Now, as I say, this thinking all took place quickly, a speed for accuracy sacrifice. What I had failed to realize was that Nancy was right beside me at the time, and before I could hide the card, she asked me what it was. There was no other possible action but to own up.

I watched her face closely as I told her, and I am absolutely certain, now, twenty hours later, that she is not a good enough actress to deceive me on this. The simple, horrifying fact is that right this moment, while I am extremely satisfied with my love life, there is someone out there who waits anxiously for me to respond to a desperate ad in the Valentine's Day classifieds.

And there is somebody right this moment in the next room who wants to know who it is so she can tear the culprit limb from limb.

### February 5:

The phone at work rings.

"Coliseum Shell."

"Bruce, could it be your mother?"

"What could be my mother?"

"The card. For Valentine's. Could it be your mom?"

"Whatever would she want to do that for?"

"Well I don't know. Why don't you phone them?"



"All right, I will." (I won't really.)

"Will you really?"

"Yes, I will, as soon as I get a chance." (February 15th, likely.)

"I could do it now for you if you want."

"I'll do it now, OK?" (I'd better do it now.)

A minute later, I find out my Mom is out playing Bingo (she's a once-a-week 24-card pro: I thought I had a good memory for numbers until I went with her one night....) from Dad.

"Well Bruce, if anything like that's going on around here I haven't heard about it yet.....Yes, I'll tell you if I hear anything.....Oh, I can imagine she's a little anxious.....All right, we'll see the two of you on Sunday."

Right, Dad, assuming I'm still alive by then....

Later that night: "I think it's you doing this to me deliberately, Bruce."

"You think I put in that ad? That I walked into the Province office and penned an 'I love you, Bruce' ad? What do you think I signed as name? Butch? Warren? Do you think I'm capable of withstanding the embarrassment that would likely result from such an act?"

"Guess not, eh? How about....I know who it was."

"Stop making those growling noises and tell me who the latest suspect is, will ya?"

Long silence.

"Well?"

"I bet it was.....Patricia!"

"I seriously doubt that, based on the sound of the voice that usually answers when I call her. Now stop growling and go to bed."

"Bruce?"

"What? Or should I say who?"

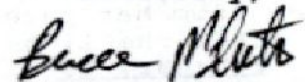
"What if it's a secret admirer? We might never find out who it is."

## February 6:

Dear Secret Admirer:

I have bad news for you. It was interesting to find out that I have a secret admirer, but I'm afraid I also have a public admirer, and in my book, public admirers outrank secret ones. I thought it would be only fair to write the Box number you provided so that you could start your search for another of the "fish in the sea." Finding one as attractive or more attractive than me shouldn't take too long.

Sincerely,



Bruce McIntyre

"That OK, Nan?"

"I guess so. You're gonna send it, eh?"

"Yes, if it is a secret admirer like you suspect."

"Okay. You're not going to hand deliver it to her door, are you?"

## February 7:

I found out today that Nancy likes Chinese food. You see, taking Nan out to dinner is not easy, as up until today she had maintained that she hated Chinese food. It turns out that she hates sweet & sour sauce, which could hardly be construed as the entire repertoire of Chinese cuisine. She loved the fried rice, and the chow mein, and the other stuff. I got my usual halfway through the meal with chopsticks before finally giving up and using the fork, but Nan ate the whole meal with the blasted things. She had a small problem with a large piece of fish,



until she decided the easiest way to get it with the sticks was to stab it. I think pointed end chopsticks, might just revolutionize Chinese dining.

"Bruce, you're not just taking me out to take my mind off the Valentine's card are you?"

"I wouldn't dream of it, Nancy."

February 8:

"Coliseum Shell....Oh, hi Mitch....No, I'm not gonna tell you who the murderer is, because I don't even remember. Aren't you supposed to be dead?....Boy have I got problems, Mitch. Somebody has given me an ad in the paper on Valentine's Day....No, it's not her: that's the problem....Yeah, she knows about it....Whatsat? A small box of chocolates, and flowers, huh? O.K., I'll try it. Yeah, O.K., bye."

February 9:

Dinner at Mom's today, and neither of us mentioned The Card to them. Could it be that Nancy has forgotten? Hmm, she's out now working her night shift, so I'll just take this card and place it on her bed.....

February 10:

"What?!"

"Oh, Bruce, they're soooo nice, and not that expensive: you could get it for me for Valen--"

"How expensive is this ring you want?" The Price is whispered, softly, along with the location. I hear it on the second repeat and blow up.

"How do you expect me to pay for it? Eh?? Tell me that."

Nan gives up all hope, and mopes around for a bit. But I've all the information I need, and know exactly where I'm going to go on my way to work tomorrow.

February 11:

You won't believe this, but I never knew rings had sizes. Not only that, it appears to make a difference what finger Nan is going to wear it on. And so many! There must be hundreds--well, tens maybe--of different ones. I know nothing about rings, having never worn one, and as a woodwind player I probably never will. (I'm told they take a while to get completely used to.) What the hell makes one ring nicer than another? To me, the most important distinguishing factor on a ring is the number on the price tag. All in all, I guess by now it comes as no surprise to you that I still don't have a present for Nan for the 14th. But I do have a plan, and it does involve the ring.

February 12:

Could it be that I've convinced her? There's no moping about The Card; indeed, it's almost forgotten. Course, the flowers that arrived today from her parents in Montreal have brightened Nan's spirits a bit, but I bet she'll be pretty jumpy tomorrow night.

February 13:

The time has come to sit at my typewriter and think about who, other than Nancy, would send a Valentine's card publicly to me through a newspaper. I've been wondering for the last two weeks, of course, but now, with barely twenty-four hours to go, I think it's time (with Nan safely asleep in the next room) to consolidate my thoughts, and decide on the appropriate action to take in case of trouble.

So, the question remains: Who could it be.

C'mon, think.

OK. Here, I guess, is a list of "suspects". I have serious doubts against all of them, but for the record, here goes.

1) Immediate Family. There is my mom, and my sister Jennifer, who are more suspicious than my brother Jeff and my dad only in that they're female. Knowing my family as well as I do, I can't possibly imagine any of them doing this sort of thing. But the possibilty, unlikely as it



is, must be considered.

2) Former University Friend. This is where fantasy has taken temporary holds on me the past two weeks, until I realize that since I left UBC two years ago, I've changed my address, and had little or no contact with anyone still there. The last time I saw the UBC Wind Symphony I recognized two names in the programme: one was the director; the other was a rookie when I was there. It is true that I shared quite a few classes and notes with a pretty thing in my last year there, but just when I had come within seconds of getting up enough courage to ask her out (Alan Stewart, move over!!), I found out that she was married! (I believe I said earlier that rings have no effect on me....) Who does that leave? A whole bunch of pretty things that I exchanged maybe ten words with in a semester, and one or two girls whom I taught to play Bridge (as Bridge club president) until they decided that the Bridge was secondary to the consumption of alcohol at most of our club meetings. We're getting nowhere fast here.

3) Somebody at work. By which I mean female, and think "God help me." All the girls at Coliseum Shell are either married or the type associated with having "a great personality." No, I can't bear to make this assumption either. It'd be far too embarrassing for me to be able to deal with. God help me. Please?

4) Someone I see a lot, but hardly know. I'm basically a person of habit, working a steady shift, going and coming from work on the same busses most of the time, and there are a few lovelies who are regular customers on my shift. It's unlikely but possible that I have a secret admirer that is about to go public, says my dreaming mind. Reality replies that I'm not attractive, hard to trace, and often seen with Nancy, which would be somewhat of a deterrent to any secret admirer. I can't even bear to think what Nancy would say in this case: the ad might say something like "I'm the one you've been eyeing on the bus" or something even worse! How else would someone in this category identify herself? The only consolation I can have is the extreme unlikelielihood of this type of scenario.

5) It's a Joke of some kind. Well, it certainly isn't a particularly nice one, with the effect it's had on Nan. But I have to admit that this is the only reasonable possibility I can come up with.

So who can it be???

February 14:

(12:50 AM) I get home from work, determined not to spoil dinner by mentioning anything about The Card. Nancy brings it up, and asks if I'll be staying up to wait for the delivery boy to bring me my answer. I tell her I'm not too concerned, and we go off to bed before 2:30.

(4:30 AM) I'm up, at the computer, playing Larry Bird against Julius Irving, two minutes left, and I'm down by six. I call my last time out.

This is not the reason I'm up. But it's impossible to sleep in these circumstances. So, while I'm waiting for the paper to get here, I'm trying to take my mind off it.

Twenty seconds left, score tied, and I foul Dr. J as he shoots. The shot misses, but he sinks the first free throw. Second one misses, and I have a chance to win with one shot. I move the ball to about ten feet to the left of the basket, shielding the ball until the last second. The house is completely silent.

I hear the drop of the paper at my door, and the joystick button is instinctively pressed.

The shot misses.

Halfway through the first of ten pages of Valentine ads, I entertain the thought of leaving it until the afternoon. Of course, this is complete lunacy. I keep searching.

Could it be a mistake? Maybe the Province got their subscribers



list mixed up with the Valentine notices list. That would seem to be the obvious answer: what a letdown. Ah well, I should have expected something like this.

Wrong.

I climbed back into bed, kissed Nan, and thought about The Message: "I will love you for ever and ever and ever", before falling asleep. Later, I took Nan out for lunch, and we laughed at how futile all the worrying had been. Then we went to the jewellers. Something was in the air: of the three rings shown to Nan, I actually distinguished between them just enough to rank them 1-2-3. Nan picked my third choice, of course, and told me later that the one I had first was really gross. Then, after work, Nan made a fantastic dinner, and we slept in till late afternoon Saturday, The Message not worrying us in the least.

I guess that's enough suspense. The girl who put the ad in the paper was the only person I hadn't considered. She identified herself as Nancy.

## from the podium

For a change of pace, I thought I'd try editorializing this time. Responses on the two editorials below are welcomed, of course, unless the response gets me back into the ranks of feuders. In that case, please send it to TNEH, following the ground rules laid out by that zine, and I'll see your response, and quite probably ignore it.

### Part I: An Uncertain Look at What's To Come.

In XL#1, I stated that I wanted this to be a reader participation zine, and that instead of printing encyclopedias of letters, I'd rather see y'all play the different games I could dream up. The naive thought behind this was something like "If it works for Alan Parr, it ought to work for me."

It hasn't.

Nobody wanted to participate in the zine poll game I devised. Nobody wanted to try out the baseball pool. Three people have sent in answers on the musical excerpts, and nobody seems to want to guess unless they're absolutely certain they're right. Nobody wanted to play Pente, and now it appears that nobody wants to really continue in Chess, Othello, or Bachgammon either. Nobody has even written about my World Cup soccer pool, and nobody wanted to try the hockey forecasting either. I know, I know, the word *nobody* isn't quite accurate here, there have been some people participating in these things, notably Bill Becker, Conrad Minshall, and a handful of others. But my success rate at creating new and novel diversions for you is abysmally poor.

Everything that's missing from this XL has been given up: kaput, finito. I'm sorry, but it is time we concentrated on things that aren't likely to fall apart from lack of participation.

What you will see in XL is more of the literary (?) stuff. Expo '86 is upon us, and so will be LepreCon and DipCon. My masculine attribute may flare up again, or I may even take Steve Hutton's suggestion and become a porn star if it does. There will be more room for me to print letters to their completion. More room for Diplomacy, if the first few that sign up can wait 8 months for the game to fill. Polltalk will continue to be run here under condition that it remains a suggestion box and not a complaints bin. Postal Clue may prove to be popular enough for a second game.

I just figured it'd be a good idea to tell you what's coming, in case any of you want out because of what's going.



## Postal Clue 3

"There's no way we'll be out of here before dinner time," said Ron Krukowski. "There are six suspects, six weapons, and nine rooms. This makes 324 possibilities, so we may as well go through them one by one. And we'd better go through them quickly, or we'll all starve."

This announcement brought mass confusion, as the other five players began to worry about when their next meal would be. Getting the murderer among them to own up was impossible because of the loss of memory imposed on the murderer in that eerie moment after Mitch had disappeared. The indignation of being held prisoner by a simple game of Clue finally took hold of the group, and all six rushed the Bathroom full of protests.

But once there, they all stopped dead (figuratively speaking...) in their tracks. Nobody wanted to be first in.

The door opened, slowly. A hideous creak shattered the silence. There was a gust of wind, then the door slammed shut.

"Look here," cried Bill Becker. "There's food on the pool table!"

Indeed there was, a lavish feast of tortilla chips, nacho dip, and three-colour sherbet. "But what will we drink?" asked Steve Dycus of no one in particular.

James Early screamed. With good reason. A bright red substance was seeping through the space between the floor and the bottom of the Bathroom door.

"Blood?" whispered Janet Cooley.

Ron Krukowski threw open the door, and the voice made another appearance. "Red Crystal Light, you fools." Inside there were three large jugs; one had spilled slightly.

After a long but rather unhealthy meal, Ron made his guess. "Billiard Room: anywhere that food can just appear has to be the most likely scene of a crime."

Knowing glances were passed around the table.

"Since there appears to be no blood involved, the Rope might be a good guess as to how it happened."

Tension was clearly rising quickly to an unbearable level. Finally Ron completed his guess.

"The only person who did not flinch at the sights we saw was.....Steve Dycus."

Dycus laughed heartily. "C'mere a minute," he said. "I wanna show you something."

[How does Steve know Ron's suggestion is flawed? Will his suggestion fare any better? Will any of the food be donated to the African relief fund? If so, will it be accepted as real food? For the answers to these questions, tune in next time. Steve's suggestion is due March 4th.]

"Doctor, you've got to help my husband. It's getting to be unbearable. You see, he thinks he's a horse. He lives in a stable, walks on all fours, and even sometimes eats hay. Please say you can help me, please."

"Ma'am, I assure you, with expert treatment, over a period of time, your husband can be completely cured. But I must warn you, the treatment may take years, and will likely be very, very expensive."

"Oh, money's no object. He's already won two races."



## The Honor/Dishonor Roll

Well, with the Runestone Poll coming up in a few months, it's about time I started looking through my zine collection, and figuring out what numbers I should give to what zines.

This report may take a few issues to complete, that's the reason this appears so early. Before I start, I should tell you about myself as a voter, or more specifically, how I evaluate zines for the purpose of giving them the Runestone 0-10 decision.

I do not believe in just saying this zine is a 7, this one a 4, this one an 8, etc. For one thing, zines are not numbers. But far more serious is the possibility, especially when you take in as many (30+) zines as I do, that the instinct by which you judge zines may have changed greatly from start to finish. So, I try to incorporate a system, assigning percentages of the ten possible points to arbitrary categories, like efficiency, writing, price, GMing, reproduction, etc. But I invariably find myself trapped in the system, because there is no zine that is the best in every category. More importantly, there is no zine that *tries* to be best in every category. Every zine, no matter what size or circulation, is missing something that another zine has. Europa Express does not have the-(pause here for a long moment)-the graphics that XL has. XL does not have the emphasis on Diplomacy of Dolchstoss. Dolchstoss does not have the no-holds-barred letter column of No Fixed Address. No Fixed Address doesn't have the unique California style of The Inner Light. The Inner Light doesn't have the international participation of Europa Express. It's a vicious circle, and the characteristics I mentioned aren't the only things that identify the zines I mentioned. For Sleepless Knights, giving perfect marks for GMing and reliability should be worth more than perfect marks (if anyone was stupid enough to give them) in those categories for XL. When I evaluate a zine, the first five points are allocated to gauging how well a zine fits its own image of itself. The main questions are: What is this zine trying to do? and How well has it done this? A four page zine, running four games without error, controversy or delay, should get a "10" if that's what it set out to do. (Unless, of course, subs are \$2 per issue....) A forty pager that has lots of writing and only 2-3 games needs to keep me interested in those other 30-odd pages to get the same "10". (Unless it's free, in which case I've no right to criticize.)

I had planned to do a Name/Pubber/Category Scores/Final Mark/Short Blurb type review for all the zines, but I think instead I'll increase the blurbs to include how and why I arrived at the final mark. So, you'll see the following information:

Name Of Zine (Publisher, address) Issues seen so far in polling period (which I assume shall be April 1 1985-now), average pages, format, last year's poll result, my mark, and (in *italics*) a description and explanation.

All that now remains is for me to sort out an entire box of zines. (You didn't think I was really ready, now did you?) See you again in two weeks.....

Well, it was only one, and I'm going to start off with an example, my own rating of XL(which I urge you not to take seriously: I'm *hard* on myself!):

\*\*\*Excelsior (Bruce McIntyre, 6191 Winch, Burnaby BC, Canada V5B 2L4), 3-11, 28pp, digest, 5th in Runestone '85, 7. *After a quick start, XL has faded a bit in efficiency (two rather late issues, and lots of hollows), a result of the increased average size, and the larger number list that greets a high-ranking newcomer. A few good issues before the poll close could bring up the mark a bit.*



And here is installment one of the rest of the zines: The three symbols in the margin before the zine name indicate nationality: (\*\*=-Canada, @=-U.S., #-European).

### Bohemian Rhapsody (Malc Smith, COA-bound, ask me for an address), Vol II Nos VI-VIII, 30pp, digest, 72nd in British Zine Poll '85, 7. Lots of interesting stuff in this zine, from music to films to games to hobby news to impressions of where Malc happens to be living at the moment. Even though I've not seen a lot of higher-ranked zines, 72nd seems rather harsh.

### Brutus (my contact is Jan Feringa, Radijsstraat 11B, 9741 BJ Groningen, The Netherlands, but he's one of four editors.), 26-31, 24pp, digest, 26th in BZP'85, no rating. I am not the slightest bit qualified to give a rating on a zine that is entirely in Dutch, though the English guide pages show that Brutus is quite an entertaining zine--if you understand Dutch.

@@@ Bushwacker (Fred Davis, Jr., 1427 Clairidge Rd., Baltimore MD, USA 21207), 163-170, 14pp, open, 25th in RP'85, 8. The definitive variant zine, Bush is always an interesting read, with news on Mensen activities, hobby news, and of course lots of interesting new variants.

\*\*\* The Canadian Diplomat (Bob Acheson, PO Box 4622, Station SE, Edmonton AB, Canada T6E 2A0), 4-10, 10pp, open, 46th in RP'85, 7. This zine came into being slightly before XL, and we've been slugging it out ever since. Latest blow is of course the rating I've just given ICD! But what can you say about a zine that took eight issues to make the double-sided copies breakthrough. Seriously though, this zine has a lot of games, lots of chatter, quizzes, and sportstalk. Frenzied fun under the northern lights.

@@@ Cathy's Ramblings (Cathy Ozog, 1526 N. Lawler Ave., Chicago IL, USA 60651), 16-18, open, 18pp, 34th in RP'85, 8. Among the highlights of the past year for CR has been Cathy's account of her trip to Britain, which I enjoyed. You'll find discussions, an international letter column, and some FRP as well.

### Denver Glont (Glover Rogerson, 31 Cornwall Road, Bishopston, Bristol, UK BS7 8LJ), 35-42, open, 40pp, 6th in BZP'85, 9. I may never live this one down, but I'm afraid I'm addicted to the SHOCK! HORROR! DRAMA! style of DG, even with its blatant disregard for the pickier rules of grammar. And it sure would be nice to be able to find a subzine editor like John Norris who wanted to run six zillion games in my zine and just leave me to publish it all. The amazing part is that Glover himself runs a lot of games in his section and still has the time and energy to entertain his readers with the SHOCK! HORROR! DRAMA! stuff too.

@@@ Diplomacy Digest (Mark Berch, 492 Naylor Pl., Alexandria VA, USA 22304.), 89-96, digest, 14pp, 8th in RP'85, 10. There's very little I can say except a description: DD runs articles from the past that are grouped around the theme of that particular issue. Mark takes the round-table discussion and puts it into the fourth dimension of time, so we can see how Dipsters thought and fought years ago, and compare or contrast with today's thinking on the subject. A must. Period.

@@@ The Diplomat (Dave Kleiman, 651 Fenster Ct., Indianapolis IN, USA 46234), 48-53, digest, 14pp, 9th in RP'85, 7. This zine runs a fair number of games, and also has a few contests. Steve Dycus' Kosarex ZNR has appeared a few times recently as a prominent subzine as well.

### Dolchstoss (Richard Sharp, 27 Elm Close, Amersham Bucks, UK HP6 5DD), 85-95, digest, 36pp, 2nd in BZP'85, 10. This is without a doubt my favorite zine, and I've stolen so much from it for XL I'm surprised I've not been slapped with a plagiarism suit from Amersham yet. Lots of games, discussions, letters, and the addictive allure of the Sharp pen make D a favorite of most who receive it.



- @@@Europa Express (Gary Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis TN, USA 38118), 43-50, digest, 40pp, 3rd in RP'85, 10. A truly international zine with regular contributions from many members on both sides of the Atlantic. It's well-covered, and games are run very competently. Gary has done a HMI Chronology, and on occasion has been disappointed to find out his long-distance telephone that he knows more about British history than I do! Well worth getting.
- @@@Everything (Bill Quinn, 301 Conroe Dr., Conroe TX, USA 77301; published by Dave Kleiman [The Diplomat]), 64-66, recently changed from open page to digest (which really does wonders for the files!), 12pp, 41st in RP'85, 10. This zine is the newsletter of the Boardman Table Custodian, Bill Quinn, and covers gamestarts, at least those on this side of the Atlantic, and endgame statistics, for games of regular Diplomacy, as well as the BNC rulings on the controversies that have sprung up. Bill has done an excellent job as BNC, and Everything is certainly everything it is supposed to be, thus I can't see myself giving it anything other than a ten.
- @@@Feuilletonist's Forum (Greg Ellis, 700 Rio Grande, Austin TX, USA 78701), 12-19, digest, 14pp, 26th in RP'85, 9. Someday I'll ask Greg or Jake Halverstadt to send along the rules for Presidential Politics, but even without them I enjoy watching the various campaigns going on in FF. Also worth watching is the letter column, if you like good political discussions.
- \*\*\*Pol Si Fie (Randolph Smyth, #119-70 Maryland St., Winnipeg MN, Canada R3G 1K7), 164-170, open-computer printout, 8pp:decreasing, 15th in RP'85, 6. Randolph Smyth is currently struggling to keep up his nine-Canada's longest running-while in law school. Although he can't possibly be blamed for the infrequency of the great negotiational articles which used to be the main attraction of FSE, I for one miss the Smyth pen. The current highlight is 1984HM, a game with GM commentary by Randolph that nearly makes up for the missing articles.
- @@@Frobozz (Jeff Richmond, 3313 Platt Rd., Ann Arbor MI, USA 48104), 14-24, open page, 6pp, 13th in RP'85, 8. This is easily the best looking zine in the hobby: typeset on a monster called, I believe, a Nexax 2900(?) with laser beams or something. Anyhow, Frobozz has all sorts of attractions, games, puzzles, and the occasional "fable."
- @@@The Gamer's Zine (The Connecticut Game Club, Earl E. Whiskeyman, 27 Mark St., Milford CT, USA 06460), 82-91, open page, 24pp, 36th in RP'85, 8. Of interest in the past year in IGZ has been the gradual listing of a computer program for the adjudication of Diplomacy games, written and used by the editor. Also, an interesting repertoire of games, none of which I've seen, but don't go by an uninitiated type like me...
- ###Hopscotch (Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring Herts, UK HP23 4DN), 50-56, until recently open page-now reduced and in three sideways columns on one 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet (very original Alan!), the equivalent of 10-12pp in very small type, 4th in BZP '85, 10. The fallible issue of Hopscotch was one of the best efforts I've seen from the other side of the Atlantic; with a history of the zine such like the hundredth issue of Voice of Doom. Alan is a talented game designer, and Hopscotch is always filled with many interesting gaming ideas, from the simplicity of Middleman to the complexity of United. I only wish I had space to reprint the most hilarious Con report I've ever read: the name of the con was NonCon, and I laugh each time I reread it! Some other time perhaps.

What are people who rely on the rhythm method of birth control called?  
Parents.



- @@@The Inner Light (Keith Sherwood, 4824 1/2 Muir Ave., San Diego CA, USA 92107), 7-12, open page, 8pp, 14th in RP'85, 9. I swear I can hear it. I really do. It could be snowing a hurricane out there, but when I read ILL for a bit, I can hear the California surf and feel the warmth of the sun. ILL is the "life in the fast lane" zine, noted for, among other things, it's Beatles lore, which in the past has included new Dipl lyrics for Side II of Abbey Road, and what albums we might have expected had the Fab Four not broken up.
- @@@It's A Trap! (Steve Knight, 2732 Grand Ave. S. #302, Minneapolis MN, USA 55408), 1-7, digest, 20pp, first year, 9. Steve's zine runs Diplomacy, United, and Steve personally challenges the talented subbers to Twist games on the side. As well, Steve is quickly becoming our hobby film critic, which makes for a very lively letter column.
- @@@The K-Zine from Kazoo (Bill Becker, 810 Turwill, Kalamazoo MI, USA 49007), 9-18, open page, 8pp, not ranked (non-Dip), ineligible for RP. The Kalamazoo Postal Soccer Leagues 30-odd teams regularly do battle in Bill's zine, and though there is no Diplomacy, I think we're soon going to have to recognize the existence of the other excellent postal games out there in our polls. When we do, I'll be ranking the K-Zine a 9.
- @@@Kaissa (Elmer Hinton, PO Box Letter S, Nashua NH, USA 03061), 99-105, digest, 20pp, not enough votes for main list RP'85, 7. Kaissa's highlight in the past year has been the big 100th issue, in which appeared a virtual novice packet in one long article, A Word To The Wise. While I don't always agree with Elmer's views, I find myself liking the style of his News & Views section.
- @@@Magus (Steve & Daf Langley, 2296 Eden Roc Lane #1, Sacramento CA, USA 95825), 46-54, digest, 50pp, 10th in RP'85, 10. I'm ashamed to admit that I get this zine and don't contribute to it! Probably the best regular hobby news bulletin around, with a question-response letter column that never fails to entertain: every time I read it I kick myself for not getting something in in time. Also, subzines galore, puzzles, and the very occasional reports of DafCons. As I type this, I'm stricken with fear that this has all been washed away with the northern California rains of late, but I'm sure the Magician found a way out.
- @@@The MegaDiplomat (Chris Carrier, 1215 P Street 12, Sacramento CA, USA), 1-3, open, 8pp, first year, 7. This is the zine that tracks the feuds, gives them numbers, and rates the feuders. Strong stuff if you're a feud weakling like me, but the humour is worth the price of admission.
- @@@Murd'ring Ministers (Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Pl., Bakersfield CA, USA 93304), 77-78, open, 24pp, 43rd in RP'85, 9. This zine is not appearing as frequently as it used to, apparently, but from what I've heard of its past, and what I've seen of it's present, I can say with confidence that the quality of MM has not been on the decline. A very entertaining letter column, articles, pictures, games, and the infamous Nixon award for the hobby's best liars.
- \*\*\*No Fixed Address (Steve Hutton, 1175 Broadview Ave #711, Toronto ON, Canada M4K 2S9), 31-35, open, 40pp--sometimes unexpectedly large, 2nd in RP'85, 9 1/2. I've not decided yet what to give Steve's zine yet. Last year I gave it a well deserved 10, when NFA was handling the feuders and keeping a remarkably brave face of it. This past year, the feud has died down, and I'm not at all certain I like where NFA seems to be headed. The brilliance of Hutton's writing is still there, and the humour has always made us fall off our chair in laughter. But I'm beginning to feel uncomfortable with the obscenity that is starting to be thrown in. That sounds each worse than it is, and I urge those of you who don't get NFA to send for a sample. I wouldn't give a bad zine a nine, but it is my opinion that the zine has been better.



@@@Rebel (Melinda Holley, PO Box 2793, Huntington WV, USA 25727), 7-14, 7-8 open, 9-14 digest (aarggh...), 24pp in new digest format, 53rd in RP'85, 8. Lots of lively press in this zine, and Melinda as GM is usually the star of the proceedings. In addition we have the subzine Nick Ingalls, by Steve and Linda Courtemanche, in which the still undisputed DipQueen of West Virginia was recently stripped (no typo!) by Woody Annahoodian. Verbally, of course.

\*\*\*Sleepless Knights (Dave Carter, 118 Horsham Ave., Willowdale ON, Canada M2N 1Z9), 41-49, open, 8pp, 6th in RP'85, 8. I think SK still runs more Dip games than all the other Canadian zines put together; if not, it's pretty close to it. How Dave fits in humour, trivia, Paul Baron, and baby news in eight pages is beyond me.

###War & Peace (Derek Caws, Ashby Rd., Loughborough Leics., UK LE11 3UA), 29-36, open, 30pp, 8th in BZP'85, 9. This zine runs umpteen games of Diplomacy, a letter column, British soccer news, and often covers important hobby topics with a large guest list of contributing writers, including Bruce Linsey and Bob O'Donnell.

@@@Xenogogic (Larry Peery, Box 8416, San Diego CA, USA 92102), numbers a bit blurry to me at this hour, digest, mucho, 20th in RP'85, 9. Larry's zine comes out four times a year, is big, and contains almost anything and everything! What else can I say? Peerybleah is addictive!

There once was a man named Parnell.  
Who thought, "They can all go to hell!  
"What they do to my wife  
"Is the bane of my life  
"And the worst is, they do it so well."

An Argentine gaucho named Bruno  
Exclaimed "There is one thing I do know.  
"A woman is fine  
"And a sheep is divine  
"But a llama is Numero Uno!"

Speaker: Oh my goodness, I've lost my wallet, with \$500 in it. I'll give \$50 to anyone who'll return it.  
Voice in the rear: I'll give \$100.

Bobby: My dad is better than yer dad!  
Mikey: No he's not!  
Bobby: My brother is better than yer brother!  
Mikey: No he's not!  
Bobby: My mom is better than yer mother!  
Long silence.  
Mikey: Guess you've got me there: my dad says the same thing.

What's purple and 5,000 miles long? (Not my masculine attribute.)  
The Grape Wall of China

Why don't Polacks like M&Ms?  
They're too hard to peel.



## POLL TALK

Thanx again for running "Polltalk" and for your insightful comments in response.

I have decided not to limit the means by which I'll solicit ballots in '86 (read: I may once again solicit votes by phone, though I don't expect to do it extensively). There are two reasons I've made this decision, which is admittedly not terribly popular. First, there is nothing inherently wrong with obtaining ballots this way. The argument you raise against it is that "there's certain to be a stink about just why BRUX didn't want Mr. XXX's vote, etc." But this could apply equally to mass mailed ballots too, unless I guarantee to hit everyone (which I can't). Besides, I want *anyone's* vote. My goal is to ensure that as many people as possible are given the opportunity to vote. Just because I don't call XXX doesn't mean his vote isn't wanted; if people want to infer that, I can't stop them.

The second reason I may continue the practice has to do with the current hobby climate. As you know, there is a group of people actively trying to destroy the Poll because of their animosity towards me. These people have been actively urging others to boycott the Poll, even to the extent of printing anti-Linsey coupons in their zines. Given that, I think I can be excused for taking unusual countermeasures to make sure such a campaign does not succeed. In fact, under other circumstances, I'd probably *not* take such an active role in "getting out the vote". But at this time, in my attempt to deal with an organized and unjustified boycott, I ask for understanding and support from reasonable hobbyists (such as you, Bruce). Fair enough?

On less controversial matters: I have so few volunteers as yet from anyone wanting to replace Pat Conlon as my assistant. Are any non-publishing non-GMs out there interested?

Your proposed change to the preference matrix scoring (deriving a raw score from a zine's record in terms of individual votes rather than against each other's zine) is quite reasonable and I'd adopt it if I didn't think the current method is equally good. Actually, I suppose your suggestion would yield a slightly more accurate reflection of voter preference than mine, but (and this is just a personal preference) I like the idea of basing each zine's result on head-to-head matchups against the other zines. This can be likened, I think, to considering a football team's record in terms of games won and lost rather than total points scored and yielded. Both methods have lots of merit; neither is necessarily "better".

As for people who want to see the order of finish without the preference matrix; since the modified mean scores are given for each zine, this is easy enough. In fact, I believe that Don Del Grande gave both sets of "sub-ranking" in *Life of Monty* last year -- by preference matrix only, and by modified mean only. So no problem. And if any "purists" want to see the zines' means (unmodified), they are welcome to do so by using the distributions of scores printed (ditto anyone who wants the medians or modes).

Your mathematical argument demonstrating that Olsen's "nobodies" didn't decide the Poll's outcome was cogent -- I only wish I'd thought to make it sooner! Also, you have demolished the arguments of those who faulted Nancy for voting. I suppose they'll have to look for a different example of a person who "had no connection with Dipcon during the polling period."

I'm still undecided regarding whether I should print a voter list (and if so, whether I should enforce completeness). In 1985, I doubt if many people abstained for that reason -- most people just don't think it's such a big deal.

In closing, hobbyists who want their letters printed in full should



send them directly to XL. I will attempt to answer letters sent to me on this topic, but will probably not quote letters in full, so as to keep this relatively brief.

*This is McBruce hiding behind the italics. That basically, was Bruce's response to my poll comments in XL#9. I've since learned that Nelson Neilson, who writes an excellent column in Gary Coughlan's Success Express called Only Yesterday, has volunteered to be Bruce's assistant this year: an alternate repository for the ballots (if for some reason you don't want to or can't send them to Bruce), as well as an independant check of the votes and results. Nelson's address for Runestone-related business (not his home address) is PO Box 203, Dunbar, MD 21501, USA 214026.*

*Since only Chris Carrier responded with anything, I guess we can assume that 100% of the rest of you feel the Runestone poll is in good hands?*

*After Chris's comments there's a short response by Bruce, then I'll try to wrap this up.*

These "for print" remarks are for EXCELSIOR POLLTALK. A cc is provided to Bruce Linsey so he may (hopefully) reply in the same issue.

Are as I would like to touch on are:

- 1) Should zines which have folded be eligible?
- 2) Should the preference matrix be extended or abolished?
- 3) Should a list of voters be published?
- 4) How should the Pollster solicit or accept votes?

1) I think zines which have folded should be voted on in the Poll. In the final year of a zine, the most important event in it was the fold itself. Were sub balances refunded? Did the zine come out fairly regularly up until the final issue, or just peter out? Did the final issue state that it was indeed the final issue? Did the GM of the folded zine find new homes for his games? These are all questions which relate to the fitness of the pubber if he starts up again, and deserve to come out in the poll.

2) I personally enjoyed the preference matrix, and if I were the Pollster I would ignore raw scores and make the preference matrix 100% of the score a zine gets. A zine needs 10 votes to make the main list, which is preference-matrixed; a subzine only 5. Therefore I can see Bruce Linsey's point about there not being enough of a statistical universe to make much sense; but even with five votes, I think that there should be a preference matrix. What I would REALLY like to see is a listing of how many 10's, 9's, 8's, etc... a specific subzine or GM got. This to me was the most interesting part of the poll document.

I might point out that when I first proposed this my interest was strictly academic; however, since then, I have come out with my own subzine (the MegaDiplomat in NFA) and am eligible for the 1986 poll!

3) On the one hand, we have those who favor keeping the names of the voters secret, and on the other, Bruce McIntyre suggested make all votes public. I think that the individual voter should have the right to choose whether his name be listed or not, although I have no objections to my name being listed this year and I am toying with the idea of making my vote public, with cc to all zines mentioned.

4) To tackle the thorniest question in regards to the 1985 poll, I think that the Poll should be treated, insofar as possible, as a giant game of Dip (like MegaDip, but that's not a subject for POLLTALK...).



Questions have been asked about the propriety of voting at cons and over the telephone.

I don't see anything wrong with handing a vote to the Pollster at a con, or calling the Pollster and telling him your vote on the phone. Why? Because it is accepted practice that you may personally visit or phone your GM to get orders in.

On the other hand, I do not think that the Pollster should telephone people to solicit their votes. Why? Because it would be unfair for a Diplomacy GM, say, to try to call some but not all of the players in a game on deadline day who have not gotten their orders in. (It is fair, of course, to attempt to call ALL of them.) But in a game of Dip the most potential NMRs is 7; in the Poll, there are > 1000 potential voters. Unless the Pollster were to call EVERY one of them (financially impossible, I would think, especially as we don't know exactly which persons meet the polling criterion). It may bias the statistical universe of the Poll for the Pollster to call some potential voters but not others, as it is obvious that a potential voter will much more likely vote if he receives a call instead of a letter from the Pollster.

What the Pollster might consider doing is send a letter to all eligible pubbers requesting the sub list, and mail SASEs traditional methods of plugging the Poll.

*This was part of a later letter from Brax dealing with the copy of the above comments, sent to him by Chris.*

Chris Carrier was kind enough to forward an advance copy of his comments on Polltalk. My as-yet unpublished remarks still stand: I'm not committed one way or the other on the question of telephone votes (solicited or otherwise). I understand that this is not extremely popular in some quarters, but I feel that so long as there is a group of people trying to discourage voters, I might as well go to unusual lengths to encourage them. In other words, I think that the general situation needs to be considered.

Moreover, I must reiterate that there is nothing wrong with votes obtained by phone, any more than there is anything wrong with game orders obtained by a GM via a phone call. It seems to me that it's the content of the ballot that counts, not the medium by which the voter communicates it to me.

*Well, Chris, as you see, I've made my votes public in this issue--though I reserve the right to change 'em before the final polling date. (I'll do that publically as well.) For my wrap-up comments, I'll abandon the italics, just in case they don't turn out dark enough.*

I predict that the poll this year will be a success, even more so than last year. The results will not be quite as polarized as the '85 poll, and the controversies will not be as great. Bruce may be forced to phone a lot of people--if the Canadian Postal Unions declare a strike, which is again (yes, again!) in the news at this writing--to get the vote out!

The preference matrix, or matrices, are a very interesting part of the poll. Here's a suggestion for you, Bruce, on how to conserve space, while making the results readable. Why not make a 2-D table for the preference matrix raw scores, and follow it with a preference standings chart. Let me give an example, using data from eight voters for three zines.



Name of Fictitious Zine	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Albanian Albatrosses	7	2	10	3	9	10	8	4
Bulgarian Bilge	6	10	8	7	5	7	3	10
Crimean Cartoons	6	6	4	10	7	1	6	3

The Preference Matrix

	AA	BB	CC
AA	xx	5	6
BB	3	xx	4
CC	2	3	xx

The Preference Standings Chart

Zine	Won	Lost	Tied	Individual Votes	Pref Score
AA	2	0	0	11-5-0	10.000
BB	1	1	0	7-8-1	5.000
CC	0	2	0	5-10-1	0.000

This way, you'd get all the results from the preference matrix in an easy format, both for reference and for printing (no triangular distance-chart-like monsters.) Also, the total individual votes are tallied. Yes, I admit that your comparison to a football team's record gave me this idea, but I think it might work out well. The Preference Matrix part has a minor weakness in that you can't show ties, but each entry might be two numbers, like 4-1, meaning 4 wins and a tie, or something.

I think most hobbyists trust that you won't use the phone terribly much. How about printing out with the list of voters an indication of how many votes were by personal contact, how many by phone, and how many by mail. You might even give some sort of prize for the most unusual method of getting the ballot to you! I think all concerned agree that there's nothing wrong with phoning in your vote. I'd even say that most believe that you won't abuse the phone in getting out the vote, and I agree with your rationale for doing that last year. This year, with less organized opposition, I hope that there'll be a corresponding drop in the use of the phone.

In any case, you surely know by now that it's your decision to use the phone, and you will take the heat for it in some of the hobby press, whether justified or not.

This may very well be the last Polltalk, so let's conclude by urging all reading this to vote in the hobby's most popular and most organized zine poll. I assume that the promotional material will be out soon, and you'll see rules and ballots in XL as always in an upcoming issue.

Returning from her business trip, Johnny's mother was asking Johnny what had happened while she was away. "Well," said the little boy, "one night there was a big thunderstorm, and Daddy and me slept together."

"Johnny!" corrected his attractive young nanny. "Don't you mean daddy and I?"

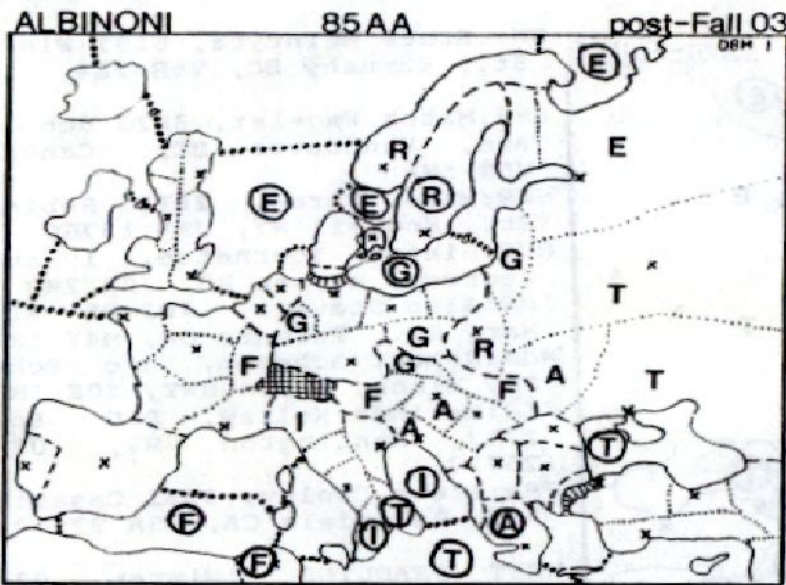
"No," said Johnny. "That was last Thursday. I'm talking about Monday night."

We are evolving slowly into a stronger race. Consider: twenty years ago it took two people to carry \$10 of groceries home. Now a typical five-year old can do it.



## THREE WAY STANDOFF IN DENMARK

### Italy declares new president



#### ALBINONI Dramatis Personae

- GM: Bruce McIntyre, 6191 Winch St., Burnaby B.C., V5B 2L4
- ENG: Bill Shirley, 618 Main St., Yarmouth NS, B5A 1J9
- GER: Charles Arsenaault, Voie Du Car D'Or 2/102, 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve, BELGIUM
- RUS: Kevin Brown, 100 Patton Dr., Warner Robins GA, USA 31093
- TUR: Melinda Holley, P.O. Box 2793, Huntington WV, USA 25727
- AUS: Michael Ditz, 5785 Danube Way #C, Orlando FL, USA 32807
- ITA: Lynn Torkelson, 992 Rosedale Rd NE, Atlanta GA, USA 30306.
- FRA: Ron Krukowski, 5339 W. Eddy, Chicago IL, USA 60641

Summer 1903 Retreats: ENG: F Nwy r Nth ITA: F Ion r Nap

NEXT DEADLINE (Winter 03-Spring 04) is Friday, April 4, 1986--one day earlier if phoned in.

#### ALBINONI 1985AA Fall 1903 Orders

- ENGLAND F Ska-Nwy, F Bar S F Ska-Nwy, A StP-Mos, F Nth-Den
- GERMANY A Bel-Ruh, A Mun-Boh, A Sil S Fra A Boh-Gal, A Lva S Rus A Mos (moving), F Bal-Den,
- RUSSIA A War-Mos, A Most-StP (BOOM!), F Swe-Den, A Nwy s A Mos-StP
- TURKEY A Bul-Sev, A Sev-Mos, F Bla C A Bul-Sev, F EMe-Ion, F Ion-Apu
- AUSTRIA A Ukr S Tur A Sev-Mos, A Galx-War, A Tri S A Bud-Vie, A Bud-Vie, F Gre S Tur F EMe-Ion
- ITALY A Tunx-H, F Ven-Adr, A Pie-Mar, F Nap S F Aeq-Ion (no such unit)
- FRANCE A Boh-Gal, A Tyr-Vie, F TyS-Tun, F WMe S F TyS-Tun, A Bur-Mar

#### PRESS:

GM: I'd like to thank former Italian president Steve Dycus profusely and publically for resigning -- and not dropping -- the way it should be done. Steve gave me advance warning, a good reason (declining quantities of spare time), and submitted final orders for his country. I only wish more (including myself in a few cases) would follow his example.

The replacement is Lynn Torkelson, 992 Rosedale Rd NE, Atlanta GA, USA 30306. For his role as a standby, Lynn will receive all pertinent issues of XL free until the game is over, providing he doesn't resign or drop out. Welcome aboard, Lynn, and best of luck!

Munich-Moscow: How about that!

Germany-Austria: Je ne t'ai jamais promis un jardin de roses.

Maestro's retreats for next times:

AUS: A Gal r (Bud, Rum, OTB)

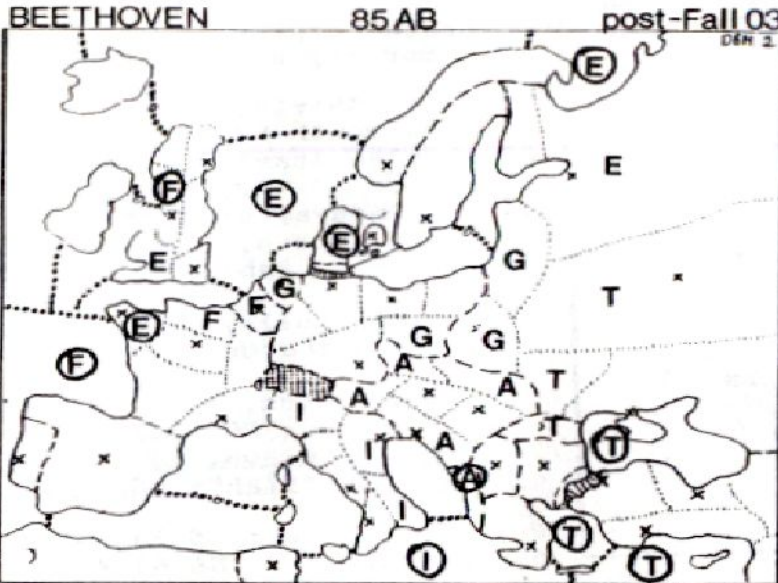
ITA: A Tun r (NAE, OTB)



BEETHOVEN

## THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK ENGLAND back up AND NOW IN

BEETHOVEN Dramatis Personae



GM: Bruce McIntyre, 6191 Winch St., Burnaby BC, V5B 2L4

ENG: Mitch Wageler, 3623 School Ave, Vancouver BC, Canada V5R 5N6

GER: Mike Barno, 2811 Robins St., Endwell NY, USA 13760

RUS: Pierre Touchette, 1 rue Georges, Masson PQ, J0X 2H0

TUR: Alan Stewart, 702-25 St. Mary St., Toronto ON, M4Y 1R2

AUS: Robert Acheson, c/o Echo Bay Mines, Lupin NWT, X0E 1M0

ITA: Melinda Holley, P.O. Box 2793, Huntington WV, USA 25727

FRA: Steve Cooley, 3551 Casamia Ave, Palmdale CA, USA 93550

NEXT DEADLINE (Winter 03/ Spring 04), is Friday, April 4, 1986--one day earlier if phoned in.

Summer 1903 Retreat: FRA: F Eng r OTB (no retreat recieved)

### BEETHOVEN 1985AB Fall 1903 Orders

- ENGLAND A Nwy-StP, F Eng-Bre, F Nth S F Swe-Den, A Lon-Wal, F Swe-Den, F Bar S A Nwy-StP
- GERMANY A Hol S Fra A Bel, A Sil S A War, A War H, A Lva-StP, F Den\*-Swe
- RUSSIA F StP\* H
- TURKEY A Rum S A Ukr, A Ukr S A Mos, A Mos S, F Aeg doubly ordered, F Bla S, F EMe S F Aeg-Ion (no such legal order)
- AUSTRIA A Gal-Sil, A Tyr \* A Vie-Boh, A Vie-Boh, A Tri S A Tyr, F Gre-Alb
- ITALY A Pie-Tyr, A Rom-Apu, A Ven S A Pie-Tyr, F Tun-Ion
- FRANCE NMR!! A Pic S, A Bel S, F Lpl S, F MAO S

#### PRESS:

GM: I'm a bit surprised at Steve's NMR, as he's normally a reliable player. I hope the recent tragedies in California had nothing to do with this. In any case, the standby is Chris Carrier, 1215 P St.12, Sacramento CA, USA 95814. Chris escaped the aforementioned tragedies: at least I think so; a letter I got from him recently mentioned nothing of them.

While I'm here, and it looks like I've got space, I'll just explain some of the notation above that might be confusing if you don't know my personal system. The letter S means *Stands*, and implies that the unit was unordered: I also use H for *ordered to hold*. Of course, if there's more after the S, it then means *Supports*. A dollar sign (\$) means a



## Supplies OWNERSHIP OF CENTRES

GAME: BEETHOVEN 1985 AB

post-FALL 1903

ENGLAND 7 (+1)	TURKEY 7 (+1)	NEUTRALS 0
Edi (E) E	Ank (T) T	Bel (E) F
Lpl (E) F	Con (T) T	Bul (T) T
Lon (E) E	Smy (T) T	Den (G) E
GERMANY 5 (+1)	AUSTRIA 5	Gre (A) A
Ber (G) G	Bud (A) A	Hol (G) G
Kie (G) G	Tri (A) A	Nwy (E) E
Mun (G) G	Vie (A) A	Por (F) F
RUSSIA 0 (OUT)	ITALY 4	Rum (T) T
Mos (R) T	Nap (I) I	Ser (A) A
StP (R) E	Rom (I) I	Spa (F) F
Sev (T) T	Ven (I) I	Swe (E) E
War (R) G	FRANCE 6 (+2)	Tun (I) I
	Bre (F) F	IF GERMANY retreats
	Mar (F) F	F Den, he doesn't get
	Par (F) F	a build.

support was cut; any other reason the support failed will result in an underline and an explanation.

Does a non-multinational support for one of two different orders given to the same unit imply which of those orders is meant to be used? I've misplaced my rulebook, and ruled no. If the answer is yes, which I doubt, we have a problem, and to avoid delaying the game, I'll just say now that the effect would be a Turkish F Ion, and the Italian move Tun-Ion would then not succeed. If anyone wants to make orders conditional on such a change, fine. I'd assume Melinda or Alan, both GM/publishers, will be able to tell me if I'm wrong, and act accordingly.

StP-Berlin: Thanks!

Kaln: Sorry for the lack of communication; chaos reigns supreme here.

Maestro's retreats for next time:

GER: F Den r (Ska, Bal, Kie, Hel, OTB)

RUS: F StP r (GoB, Fin, OTB) not too important....

## Supplies OWNERSHIP OF CENTRES

GAME: ALBINONI 1985 AA

post-FALL 1903

ENGLAND 4	TURKEY 6 (+1)	NEUTRALS 1
Edi (E) E	Ank (T) T	Bel (G) G
Lpl (E) E	Con (T) T	Bul (T) T
Lon (E) E	Smy (T) T	Den (G) G
GERMANY 6 (+1)	AUSTRIA 5 (+1)	Gre (A) A
Ber (G) G	Bud (A) A	Hol (G) G
Kie (G) G	Tri (A) A	Nwy (E) R
Mun (G) G	Vie (A) A	Por (F) F
RUSSIA 3	ITALY 3	Rum (A) A
Mos (R) T	Nap (I) I	Ser (N) N (in 1903?)
StP (R) E	Rom (I) I	Spa (F) F
Sev (T) T	Ven (I) I	Swe (R) R
War (R) R	FRANCE 6 (+1)	Tun (I) F
IF AUSTRIA re-	Bre (F) F	IF ITALY retreats
treats A Gal, he	Mar (F) F	A Tun, he must remove
gets no build.	Par (F) F	one.

Sue lay sprawled in sweet exhaustion on the bed. Beside her, smoking a cigarette, was Mark. The minutes passed. Finally, she turned to him and said, "My mother always told me to be good....was I?"

Old Lady to Cop: I've been attacked!! I've been attacked!!

Cop: When?

Old Lady: Twenty-seven years ago.

Cop: Why ya telling me now?

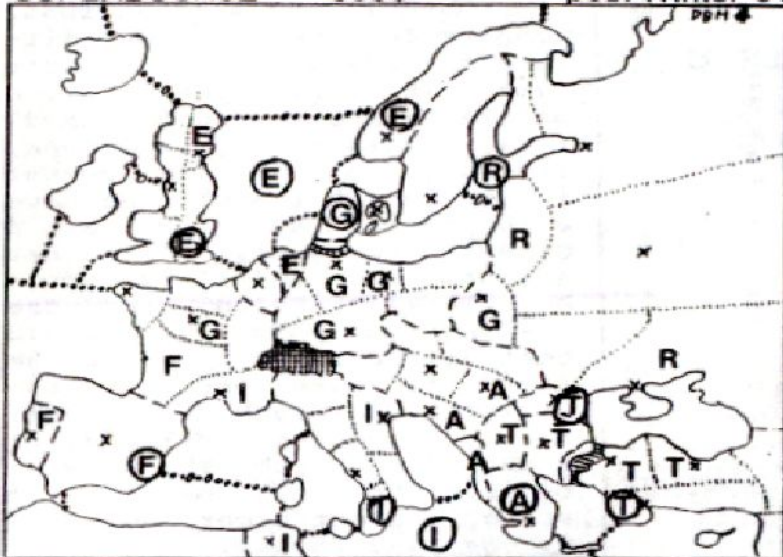
Old Lady: I like to talk about it once in a while.



## SUPERBOURSE!

SUPERBOURSE 85\$\$ post-Winter 01

SUPERBOURSE! participants



MB: Mike Barno, 2811 Robins St., Endwell NY, USA 13760  
 RL: Rob Lowes, RR#9, Peterborough ON, Canada K9J 6X1  
 SP: Sean P. McGonigle, [Back to:] 44B Kelvin Rd., Papakura, NEW ZEALAND  
 SM: Simon Matthews, 432 N. Dollarton Hwy, N. Vancouver BC, V7G 1N1  
 CM: Conrad Minshall, 3702 Tarragona Lane, Austin TX, USA 78727  
 RS: Richard Sharp, 27 Elm Close, Amersham Bucks, UK HP6 5DD  
 BW: Bruce Waddell, 4247 Winnifred, Burnaby BC, V5J 2S5  
 MW: Mitchell Wageler, 3623 School Ave., Vancouver BC, Canada V5R 5N6

### SUPERBOURSE! Winter 1901 Results

**ENGLAND** SM builds F Edi, F Lon. Has F Nth, F Nwy, A Hol, F Edi, F Lon  
**GERMANY** MW builds three new armies. Has F Den, A Par, A War, A Ber, A Mun, A Kie  
**RUSSIA** RS removes F Arm. Has A Sev, F GoB, A Lva.  
**TURKEY** RS builds A Con, A Ank, F Smy. Has A Ser, A Bul, F Rum, A Con, A Ank, F Smy  
**AUSTRIA** MW retreats A Ser-Alb, builds A Tri. Has A Alb, F Gre, A Bud, A Tri  
**ITALY** BW builds F Nap, A Ven. Has A Mar, A Tun, F Ion, F Nap, A Ven  
**FRANCE** No adjustments. Has F Spa (sc), A Por, A Gas

### PRESS:

**GM:** On the map this time, fleets are designated by circling the letter used. The simple reason for this is that the major complaint about XL's maps is not that they're too small, but that the letters, when handwritten are hard to read. The drawback to using letter press sheets is that you go through a lot of sheets using just AEFGIRT and nothing else. The only solution is to use letter press strips: but unfortunately they aren't available in lower case.

Claude Gautron expressed interest in this game, and it appears he will join next time, so if you want to conduct any negotiations with him, his address is 150 Rue Masson, Winnipeg MN, Canada R2H 0H2. Claude hasn't directed any of the money he's sent to the Superbourse game yet, but his sub credit is enough to keep him going for awhile.

I hope nobody minds too much if I make a very minor rule change. As pointed out by two of you, it is rather difficult to plan much if you have to give up 13% of your shares per year, so for all Winter periods, there will be no obligatory offers required of the majority shareholders. Another reminder: the player who holds the least number of shares in the country with the lowest SC total after Winter 1902 (and all subsequent Winters) forfeits his shares, and those shares change



colour to the country in the lead, and are sold by the GM at the next Bourse period. All ties will be split evenly, and non-integers will be rounded up, so if three people each hold two shares in the two countries tied for last place, one share will be confiscated from each. Complicated? I thought so. Conrad Minshall, Mike Barno, and Rob Lowes didn't send in orders, but since they had no orders to send, it's kinda difficult for me to NMR them. Maybe they just didn't want to deal.

Player	Credit	SUPERBOURSE								Total Shares	Total Assets	
		Cash	ENG	GER	RUS	TUR	AUS	ITA	FRA			
GM		85.66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	85.66	
Sharp	24.00	1.36			26	86	48				160	16.83
McGonigle	6.00	1.19		20	10	5					35	5.04
Lowes	10.00	2.81	4	10	10			4	27		55	7.33
Barno	6.80	3.49		4		5	5	5			19	5.61
Matthews	35.00	15.06	91		25				46		162	29.36
Minshall	8.00	5.85	5		18						23	7.54
Wageler	40.00	28.26		66	11		47			8	132	41.99
Waddell	20.00	6.01				5		91	19		115	17.62
Market Prices			17	17	13	11	18	17	13			
Actual Value / Share			0.71	2.85	6.42	2.85	8.57	0.71	6.42			

The Stock Exchange

ENGLAND Offers: None. Bids: SM(9 at 15). Result: No sales.  
 AUSTRIA Offers: MW(95 at 17). Bids: SM(5 at 12), RS(48 at 18). Result: RS buys 48 from MW at 18.  
 GERMANY Offers: MW(66 at 17). Bids: SM(5 at 12). Result: No sales.  
 RUSSIA Offers: MW(11 at 13), SP(10 at 15), RS(1 at 13, 25 at 14). Bids: None. Result: No sales.  
 FRANCE Offers: MW(8 at 13), SM(36 at 12). Bids: None. Result: No sales.  
 TURKEY Offers: BW(1 at 1). Bids: SM(5 at 12), RS(15 at 20). Result: RS buys 1 from BW at 11.  
 ITALY Offers: BW(91 at 21). Bids: BW(9 at 17), SM(5 at 12). Result: No sales, unsurprisingly.

Deadline for Spring 1902 is: Friday, April 4th, 1986. D'ya think if we have a relatively simple situation (say 3 or less adjustments/retreats) next Autumn/Winter, we can go on right through to a combined Autumn/Winter/Spring? If not, we could be here a while. Let me know.



## Most of the Post

For this edition of *Most of The Post*, we have a guest typist (of your letters at least), Nancy (anti-Significant Other) Hurrell. I am adding my comments (and cutting where necessary) after all the pertinent letters have been typed, though the miracle of word processing.

SEAN McSONIGLE: Thanks for your letter of 15 January. No one has ever called my accent 'georgeous' before. Quite a buzz! In actual fact, my voice is quite restrained, and more English in sound than some Kiwis, who sound very nasally, almost like Aussies. I hope to have results for you vis-a-vis Air Supply shortly. I will forward them as soon as possible; I was waiting to see what you already had. With luck you will hear from me shortly Nancy. By the way, you spoke very well-Bruce made it sound as if you couldn't string a sentence together!. I suppose being French makes it difficult to get the correct tense - I quite liked the sound of "He didn't print the zine yet". Of course we say zine as "zeen", but never mind.

NH: First, I like the way Aussies speak to such a point that I've been trying to talk the same way. Secondly, I don't know who told you that I was French but they were (or he was) wrong, I'm an English Canadian and will remain so for the rest of my life. My last name is "HURRELL".

BM: By which I assume she means to imply that Hurrell is an English name, a fact I know by now after hearing it 20,000 times. Nancy is so bilingual it hurts my pride, so I viciously cut her down when she makes the slightest grammatical error. I'm beginning to like some of them, though. Among my favorites is "Did you like it, the supper?" But I must admit that Nan's virtually undetectable accent goes unnoticed in Vancouver, which is rather multicultural, with Italy, India and China leading the way.

MAYNE MITTAL: As you will note from the letterhead I have moved. I would have notified you earlier but your address got packed away and is currently in storage in Prince George with the rest of my life. My mail from last December just caught up with me yesterday (I'm sure it was only a fluke that I have received me forwarded mail this quickly from Canada Post) and thank goodness XL #9 was in it. I now have your address on file (something I usually do right away but didn't) so I will notify you with the rest of the mailing list when I move again. We have sold our hotel in Wells and are now staying at the family farm just outside of Dawson Creek for the time being. I am dealing on several other hotels so we will be moving again, but when and where is still up in the air. I would love to get into a game right now since I have lots of free time on my hands but I do not think I should until I get to a final location. I would hate to get into a game and have everyone let down because my mail takes forever to find me. At any rate I think it would be best if I waited. As for a list of my preferences that's really quite hard to put down. You see it would depend on the group of people that I was playing with. If I was playing with a more experienced group I would not want to spoil the game for them by making a "rookie mistake". On the other hand I like to be in the thick of things as it were. If I was playing my first game with less experienced players who would not be offended by my novice blunderings I would like a more demanding role. I think the best thing would be to trust to your judgement as to what should be my first country and go from there. I will be more than happy with whatever you choose.

Gaming by mail is something that I have never tried before, partly because I thought I would not like the mail delays on the tempo of the game and partly because I did not have to as I always had opponents on hand. Now that I am a little older my patience has improved. I am looking forward to mail gaming as I believe that it will allow me to fit my gaming into the rest of my life instead of fitting the rest of my



life around my gaming time. I have enjoyed receiving EXCELSIOR and always read it as soon as it arrives. I find it well written and generally most interesting. I do however have one question. What is the almost overpowering fixation on soccer about? I do have one small favor to ask now that I think about it. If you know of or in the future come to know of any individual or group that game (any game) by mail could you please get me a contact name and address.

BM: Something tells me you're going to like the "mini-Zine Register" listing in this issue. There is so much play by mail gaming going on now that it's getting hard to separate the Diplomacy hobby from the hobbies based on other games; from what I've seen of the British situation, they seem to have all but lost the distinction: several zines there run one game of Dip and lots of other stuff.

The overpowering fixation on soccer is about soccer. What can I say, I'm a nut. I remember sending two preference lists in for my first game, based on the GMs estimation of the experience of the opposition. He figured (quite correctly) that they were all relatively new, and gave me my first choice, Germany. Unfortunately, they were all very good rookies, and I was eliminated in short order. I'd advise playing your first game as England in your first game: mistakes are not quite as costly; with all that water around you can usually recover int time to salvage something, and the neighbour situation is about average, though of course unique like the other six. You'll see, therefore, a preference of EXXXXXX beside your name in this issue's new game. OK?

PIERRE TOUCLETTE: Thanks Bruce for putting my name for EXPO '86. You probably know that I had planned to go to B.C. in the summer to study English but I really don't know if I will be able to go. It depends on so many things... Best!!

BM: Y'all are welcome to stay, but our place is not terribly spacious: unless you like curling up with 100 lbs of zines and bedposts....

MALCOLM SMITH: Thanks ever so much for the xyn wrapper/address table! You see, that's all that arrived this morning. It seems that the Belgian Post Office has lost the contents of the wrapper. Therefore, I'd appreciate another attempt at mailing me a copy. But, please, for God's sake, make the binding a little stronger as the Belgie Post Office employ a bunch of apes from the local zoo to perform the sorting & delivering. Looking forward to reading the xyn & to playing in the International game.

BM: The list of people who lost their copies of XL#9 due to postal incompetence is now up to about six, including Larry Peery, Bill Shirley, Jaap Jacobs, Richard Sharp, Scott Hanson, and now Malc Smith. This issue looks like another biggie. I better buy some staples. By the way envelopes are too expensive for my blood, at these at local prices, but I may start using them for overseas shipments. Sigh....

KEN PEEL: Thanks for the Expo info. Susan (my significant other) and I have been thinking of taking a train trip across Canada for some time. If she can get time off we may see you in late August! In any case, see you at DipCon, eh?

NH: I wonder if Susan thinks she is a "significant other", I know I'm NOT!!!

BM: The rantings of an overworked typist: please take them in fun! I thought "significant other" was unique and rather quaint (I may be misusing this word in order to avoid using the only other I can think of for this situation: cute) myself. Does Nan feel she's an insignificant other? Probably not. Will I feel significant pain shortly after Nan reads this? Rather likely.

STEVE KNIGHT: Publishing's a bitch isn't it? I know I'm going though a bit of post-adolescence drop in intensity as the newness wears off and things become routine. Definitely not an easy burden to have assumed. We shall do what we must, I suppose.

BM: Publishing, to me at least, is only a bitch when you're meaning to get it done, but have to console yourself with excuses. While you're



actually doing it it's always fun, to me at least, and this has always offset the hard work involved. But I sure wish I had time to fill out more of the backs of mailing covers though.

WALLACE NICOLL: Many thanks for the latest Excelsior, and the note on the wrapper. A note of puzzlement regarding how you got issue 7 of PoW before issue 6. Well, you're about to find out, unless you've worked it out yourself - and if not, with your well publicised sleuthing abilities, why not? The reason is quite simple you see. With issue 6 coming in at a total of 72 pages, and a postal charge of 93 pence, prining charge of 59 pence plus the envelope at 2 pence, I decided to send it by surface mail rather than by air. A saving of 43 pence, in fact, which with a handful of American and Canadian trades means a couple of quid saved. Issue 8 was mailed to you on 30th December, again by surface, since it's also 72 pages, plus a loose subbers list. Not that we have many loose subscribers! Issue 7 was slightly smaller, so I sent it airmail. I think you said previously that you didn't mind if the zine was sent surface. If you were playing in a game, or are Steve Knight or Simon Billeness, or get the ISE link sorted out, or are special, then I send the zine out by air.

I hope you have had a good festive season. I went over to Derek Sutherland's for the New Year, and a friend of his had discovered an American football in his Christmas stocking. So with a few friends we threw it about a bit. It was definately chilly, resulting in us doing lots of running plays, since we couldn't feel the laces with frozen fingers. Derek ended up covered in mud and grit - we were playing on an 'all weather' soccer pitch which means cinder/gravel, rather than, grass! It was good fun though!!

With the computer on I find I can't have my stereo FM radio on since there's a lot of interference - a trifle annoying.

The 12 Days of Christmas you printed in XL9. I have seen it before probably in a student ragmag. Do you have ragmags? They are done by most of the Universities in this country. The Students Charities Committee Appoints an editor to collect sexist, racist, rude, and the occasional amusing joke or cartoon. Sounds like being a zine editor? These are then published in a zine-shaped/sized booklet and sold to the general public, the profits going to various charities. My collection of ragmags lives next to the XLS in the bookcase - maybe this tells you something?

"Ygorra" is the Ragmag of Glasow University, and in it's forst 24 years, the Charities' Cttee have given out in excess of £500,000 to hundreds of different charities. Most of the jokes are recycled from year to year, and from ragmag to ragmag. However there are some ragmags which tread the ever so dangerous line of sexism an racism, resulting in them being banned. Over the years, there has been a degree of cleaning-up an a result, and in general they are less offensive now than they were, say, ten years ago.

Next, the World Cup. Scotland are there too, though only after a struggle against Australia. Mind you, they've landed in a difficult group - West Germany, Uruguay and Denmark. It's probably quite open, though, since all of the teams could qualify if they put their minds too it. Scotland have suffered in the past since they tended to slip up against teams they were expected to do well against, yet play out of their skins against the Brazil's of this world. Only time will tell if they can get past the first round this time. I hope they do.

Briefly, a comment for Polltalk! I, personally would be against telephone voting. What proof is there for the Poll custodian that the person voting by phone, is in fact who he says he is. Unless, the poll custodian is willing to pay the expense of returning the call to check. I'm not saying the hobby is dishonest, but the temptation is always there. Similarly, I'd object to canvassing of votes by telephone. In this country, the hobby is generally regarded as the POSTAL hobby, and people ar unwilling to diplome etc. over the phone. Zines are sent out



by post. We are not quite in the realms of electronic zine transfer. Not quite. On the point of mass mailing ballots and SSAEs, it would be hideously expensive, and how could you be sure of getting everybody in the Hobby. In "The Fat Lady Sings" an occasional publication by Geoff Challenger in this country, he lists over 300 active "Diplomacy" players, not including those involved in other games like Railway Rivals, sports games etc. Could the Pollster afford such a financial outlay, since I would reckon the US scene to be much larger than the UKs? Outsiders/marginals have as much right as anyone else to their vote, though it might be fair to say the likes of Nancy shouldn't vote for XL though in her defense she doesn't contribute to it directly. In the UK poll, you must vote for at least two zines, and you don't have to say how you're involved in the hobby. A list is published - I think it should be - and while voters could ask for anonymity, what's the point? Perhaps where a vote return of less than a hundred occurred, then OK, but with 200+ votes, those wanting to be faceless will be lost amidst the rest.

Snafu! Ron's comments about Christmas in the middle of summer reminds me of comments I got when I went over to Maine for Christmas back in 1980. New Englanders asked, in puzzlement, "Why come over in the middle of Winter? You should come over in the Fall" Now, I would like to be there in the Fall, for they do say it is very colourful, but you can't have Christmas and New Year celebrations at any other time of year, can you? What I will be doing, however, is coming over in the Spring of 1986, probably April/May time, and hope to make it over to the west coast, if it's OK with you. I will fly into New York, or Boston, visit relations in New England, then travel across to Chicago, down to Indiana, and then probably head out to the west for a week or so before going back to Scotland. Plans are going to be pretty vague, and ought to be a bit more concrete within the next couple of months. I plan to be over for about four weeks in all - I haven't taken all my 1985 leave, and must use it up by the end of June.

BM: I guess I must have sounded a bit more irate than I really was about getting your zine in jumbled order. Course I don't mind you sending it surface mail, I only wish Canada Post had deals like the one you describe. Remember my Canadian football article? It seems to me that without at least eight aside, running plays in a freindly football match are rather stacked against the offense, since everyone has to stay back to block. When we played street football, we always had a system of Steamboats to replace the function of the offensive line. We'd send five or so guys out for a pass, and the defense would have to count aloud ten or so Steamboats before they could cross the line of scrimmage, unless the QB tried a sneak. Another thing we changed, which I think is popular, is the 4 downs for ten yards rule, since who wants to spend all afternoon measuring? We'd usually play 4 downs to the field, or 4 downs to the center line, depending upon the size of the field. I don't think there's any problem here with the FM interference, but then I usually play tapes or AM radio, and my makeshift FM antenna is ten feet away from the machine. The UBC Engineers, whose antics have included suspending a Volkswagon from the Lions Gate Bridge (a smaller Golden Gate clone linking Vancouver to North Van) to stealing the Speaker's chair from the BC Legislature, had until recently a ragmag called the Red Rag, which was, apparently, quite awful. While I was at UBC a few years ago, a new student paper called simply FRED was started up to challenge the traditional stronghold of the campus paper The Ubyyssey. On Engineering Week FRED included a four page supplement called The FRED Rag. Not terribly rude, but FRED did not appear again. Canada's makeshift team (while the pros play human pinball - oops, indoor soccer I believe they call it - in America) has given up three goals in nine games against teams of similar calibre, except for the game they lost 3-1 to Uruguay in the Miami Cup. Yes, that does mean 8 shutouts. I think they've a shot at an upset. I'm dreaming, of course.



I forgot about your Polltalk stuff: most interesting, and I hope Brux will respond. The voters list is a problem over here because people who oppose Brux in hobby politics are seen by some as "defectors" if they're names are seen on the list. It sounds childish, but you have to be here... As for visiting, we'd be honoured, but see my response to Pierre above.

**SCOTT HANSON:** Sorry to hear you've been sick. I thought something was wrong when it had been an inordinant amount of time between XLs. Then I was very confused when I saw a lot of things in XL#10 I didn't recognize. (Clue? What Postal Clue?) Then I remembered you claimed in your phone message that you had mailed in some orders. (Orders? What orders?) Then I decided to check my files. Sure enough, my previous issue was XL#9. Number nine (number nine, number nine, number...oops, sorry) seems to have reached never never land. Do you think you can see fit to send me another copy? Pretty please?

Don't ask me personal questions about the 128, all I do is type on the thing! Well, about 80% of the time, anyway. But since you asked it has 3 voices like the 64. Speaking of computer mysteries, imagine my surprise to see the final two lines of POMMES 55 in a different type than the rest of the issue. Turns out that the printer's NLQ is different from the interface's NLQ. The printer moves the paper slightly for the second pass, the interface doesn't. The interface wouldn't print the German characters in NLQ, so I switched for the Christmas greeting. The things you learn...

Good news. Or at least strange news. My officemate at school is from BC. I knew she was telling the truth about being Canadian when she told about crossing the border on Greyhound. She too said something about the trip being farther than she expected. I'll show her the Expo '86 pamphlet you had sent to me. She'll be thrilled. Plus a letter signed by Bill Bennett. I'm impressed.

BM: I bet that 80% typing time will slowly go down when you start collecting software for the thing! I'd estimate I type about 50% of the time. Even on hectic deadline weekends I often take time off for a short game of something or other. That bus trip from Winnipeg-Minneapolis wouldn't be so long if they didn't a) go through Fargo, which isn't exactly on the shortest route, and b) didn't make you wait in Fargo for 90 minutes for the bus from Seattle. Nan never tires of giving me shit for not arranging it so we met in the Minneapolis airport, but then we'd not have had that precious day in Winnipeg, where we really got to know one another again after six years of writing. The long bus trip helped in that regard too, so as it turns out, I'm glad it was longer than we (I) expected.

## DEBUSSY

The DEBUSSY seasons Autumn/Winter 1902 and Spring 1903 have been held over due to player request. Here's what has happened.

**Autumn 1902 Retreats:** GER: F Den r OTB      AUS: A Gre r OTB

NEXT DEADLINE (Spring 03) is Wednesday, April 2, 1986, to Mitch: I'm just his designated typist this time.

### DEBUSSY 1985CH Winter 1902 Adjustments

ENGLAND	Builds F Lpl.	Has F Lon, F Lpl, F Den, F Nth, A Hwy
GERMANY	Builds A Ber.	Has A Hun, A Hol, A Ber, F Bal
RUSSIA	Builds A War.	Has A Sil, A War, A Gal, A Rum, A StP, F Swe.
TURKEY	Builds F Smy.	Has A Ser, A Bul, F Gre, F Aeq, F Smy, F Bla.
AUSTRIA	No adjustments.	Has A Vie, A Bud.
ITALY	No adjustments.	Has A Tyr, A Ven, A Apu, F Ion.
FRANCE	No adjustments.	Has F MAO, F IrS, F Bre, A Gas, A Bur, A Bel.