

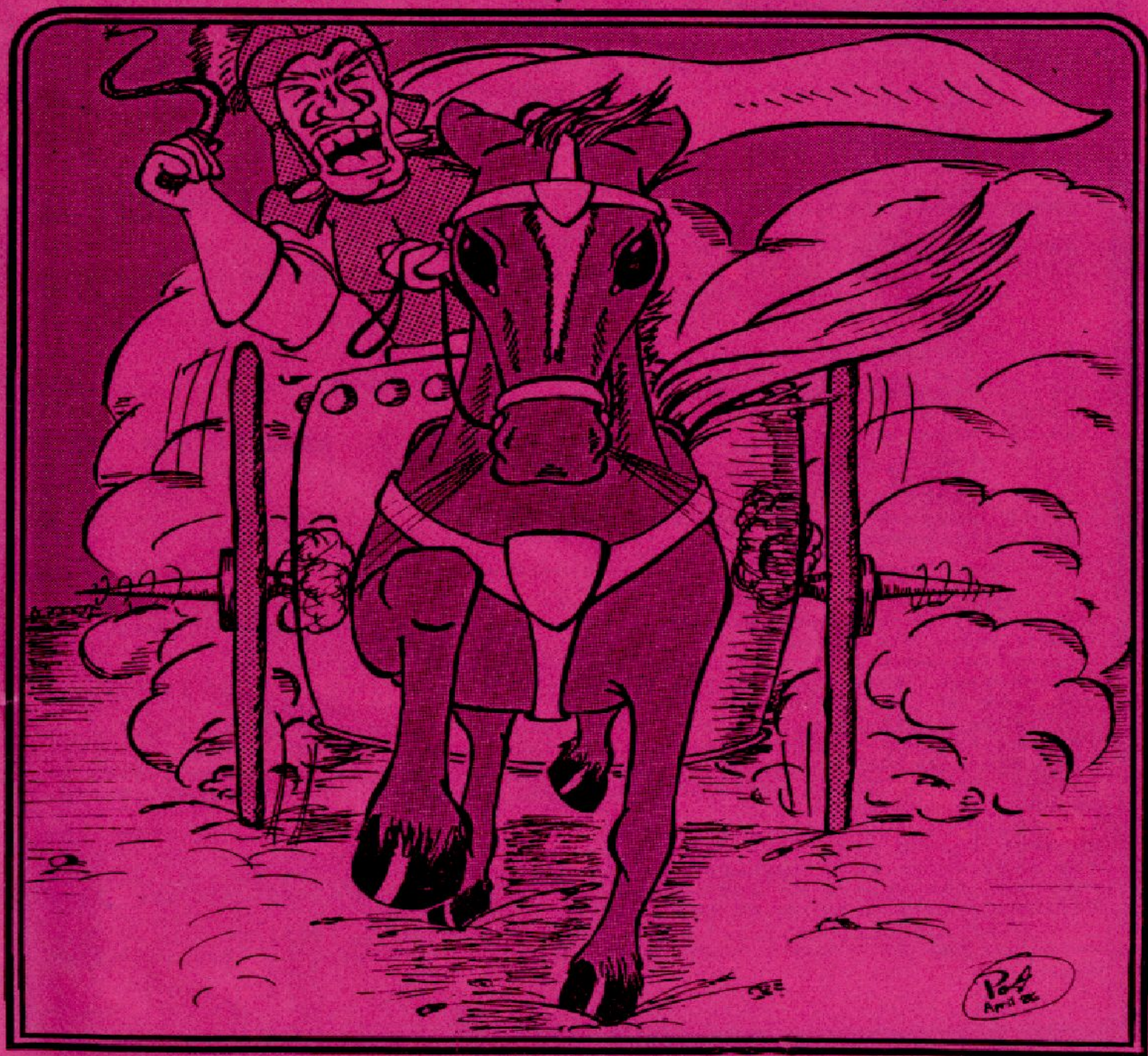
RUSSNAK CHARIOTS TO LEPRECON '86

excelsior

APRIL-MAY 1986

ISSUE No.12

by BRUCE MCINTYRE



DIRECTORY

EXCELSIOR #12 by Bruce McIntyre with a whole heaven of a lot of support from Nancy Hurrell. Printed April 20, 1986 in Vancouver, BC Canada, by Chris Buck of Kinko's.

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Excelsior is a postal gaming zine dedicated firstly to the game of Diplomacy, copyrighted by Avalon Hill in the U.S., and made by House of Games above the line. It is published every five weeks, barring disruptive acts of God, Canada Post, or Extra Strength Tylenol. Any resemblance this paragraph bears to actual law-abiding statements required of professional magazines is purely coincidental.

Subscriptions Dept.: 3/\$2 in Canada, 60 cents cash (70 cents cheque) in U.S. funds to the U.S.A., and \$1 Canadian to anywhere else. That this amounts to about 50% of the cost of production doesn't seem to bother the editorial board in the least, so we'll just hush that matter up and tread softly.

Editorial Correspondance Dept.: Well, you could try checking the address listed after the letters GM in the game reports. Failing that, try 6191 Winch St., Burnaby BC, CANADA V5B 2L4. As long as you do not make out the letter to S.C. Chang, it will be received if the Post Office decides it's worth delivering.

"Yeah, surrrrrre....." dept.: Next issue of XL (#13) is due in the mails by May 27. Don't count on it though, I'm flying to Toronto that day.

DipGab

If I ever figure out what I did to my printer that made it want to give up printing in English (at the moment it is amusing itself by punctuating my text with characters at random), I'll be able to put this issue out, but if it's abnormally late (as opposed to the usual seven day wait), there you have my excuse. If it's not one thing it's another, and I don't even own a typewriter anymore (I traded the thing to Ron--my former roommate--for his B&W TV set.

Which brings me to another new item at XL headquarters. At this moment, I'm looking at yellow letters on a purple background, with light blue borders. The black and white TV has been switched with the rented colour one and I feel like Judy Garland opening her eyes to the land of Oz. Wow! Maybe I should start working on a TV Dip Board, with all the colours of the pieces and everything!

Surprise of the month (perhaps of the decade) was microcomputer hater Richard Sharp (Dolchstoss) buying a snazzy new computer/word processor, and using it to print his zine almost immediately. I counted about 5 different typefaces, all proportionally spaced and typeset, with much expertise in the use of italics, boldface, and double width printing. All this after Dolchstoss had spent time ranting on about how word processors tend to slow down zine production rather than speed them up! More surprising than the fact that Richard had actually bought a WP was the quickness with which he seems to have grasped the skills. Well done!

I am beginning to seriously contemplate one (not both) of two changes. First, I want six weeks between deadlines for XL games, except for the international games. Five weeks is too short, as I never get orders from all (or even eighty percent) of you in time, and because of the geographical situation, I feel obligated to contact you, which of course takes time and money if there are 4-5 sets of orders missing. The BEETHOVEN holdover is good evidence of the problems I'm going through with the geography: It'd be so much easier if I lived in the east.

I'm also thinking of going the route of Europa Express and Murd'ring Ministers: that is, keeping the games going by flyer, but only doing a full-fledged issue when I have the time, money, and working equipment. I personally don't like this as a "solution" to the lateness problems I've been having, but if I do go back to university this fall, it may be the only way XL is to survive. My conscience would forbid me from neglecting the subbers for two game deadlines in a row, so you needn't worry about missing XL for too long. I think one of these solutions would allow me to keep the zine going now as my spare time is starting to diminish. Let me know your views: 6 weeks between deadlines, or irregular issues with games by flyer?

The Excelsiors hockey pool team squeaked into sixth place (the last playoff spot) with a penultimate week victory over the second-place Dirty Dozen. We now are playing the No-Names in the first round of ... pool playoffs, which use the NHL stats from their first round. I have four Washington players, and two each from Calgary, Minnesota, Los Angeles, and Boston. Unfortunately, L.A. didn't make the playoffs, and Bengt Gustaffsson of Washington broke his leg in the final week of the regular season, so I really only have nine players: Gartner, Haworth, and Christian of the Capitals, Linseman and Simmer of the Bruins, Ciccarelli and Bellows of the North Stars, and Tonelli and Mullen of the

Flames. By next time I should know how they did.

Here are my predictions for the baseball season:

N.L.		A.L.	
East	West	East	West
NYM	CIN	NYN	SEA
CHI	SD	DET	KC
STL	ATLA	BALT	CHI
MTL	LA	TOR	CAL
PITT	HOU	BOS	MINN
PHIL	SF	MIL	TEX
		CLE	OAK

No. I'm not going to comment. We'll see how it goes.

When I was younger, I used to enjoy playing manager in those table-top statistical replay baseball games. I had just enough imagination to make a private little baseball drama out of the numbers generated by the dice, and at one point I had a league going. Now I have a computer program that does the same thing, only better. If a batter hit a home run in the dice games, you'd simply mark up a HR on your scoresheet and try to imagine him running around the bases. In the computer game, you actually *see* the pitch coming down the alley, and then you see it fly through the air, the outfielder running towards the wall and only when it sails into the stands do you know a hom run has been hit. Not only that, you can have the computer make the decisions for the opposition, or just watch the computer play one team against another. About the only thing you *don't* see is the pitches that do not produce a result of some kind; thus, you get on the scoreboard (which doubles as a play-by-play announcer) messages like "Oglivie will be taken out..." (batter is replaced by pinch hitter from dugout) "Brouhard is the new batter..." (pitcher winds up and delivers) "the 2-2 slider" (batter connects) "a fly ball to deep right. Jackson is going for it..." (ball sails over fence) "No! It's outta here!" This takes all of thirty seconds, whereas the real thing might take two minutes just to have the pitcher heave four pitches over the plate so the count could get to 2-2 in the first place. It takes about 20-30 minutes to play a full game, and is every bit as exciting. You feel more like a manager if you don't have to keep in mind dice probabilities.

Once I realized the capabilities of this wonderful program that I'd bought in Seattle last year and confined to a shelf while I played joystick-coordination games, I immediately formed a league using the teams on the disk that comes with the game. (I'm too cheap and distrusting of the mails to send away for more team disks.) So here are the standings in the Micro Baseball League so far.

	AL Division				NL Division				
Team	W	L	Pct.	GBL	Team	W	L	Pct.	GBL
'82 Brewers	3	1	.750	---	'75 Reds	4	0	1.000	--
'75 Red Sox	2	2	.500	1	'63 Dodgers	3	1	.750	1
'83 Orioles	2	2	.500	1	'82 Cardinals	2	1	.667	1.5
'68 Tigers	2	1	.667	.5	'79 Pirates	1	2	.333	2.5
'73 Athletics	1	3	.250	2	'69 Mets	1	3	.250	3
'80 Royals	1	3	.250	2	'80 Phillies	0	3	.000	3.5

I'm managing the 1982 Milwaukee Brewers, because that's the team I know the most about, Vancouver Canadians being the triple A farm team of the Brewers. My only loss was a 2-1 defeat in 12 innings to the '68 Tigers, but with a league like that, things are not going to be easy. The schedule is 32 games long, four times against division rivals and twice against the rest. I'll keep you posted in future issues.

I went to see Wrestlemania 2 last Monday, on closed circuit TV, and it was well worth it. Hulk Hogan successfully defended his title

against 458-pound King Kong Bundy in a cage match. Bundy had to go through the door sideways to get into the caged-up ring. The British Bulldogs took the tag team title from Greg "The Hammer" Valentine and Brutus Beefcake, in another lightning fast match that went to about 10 2-counts (equally distributed to both sides, perhaps suggesting that Valentine and Beefcake will be back for revenge) before the Bulldogs won it. The 20-man over the top rope battle royal was won by (of course) 511-pound Andre the Giant, with William "The Refrigerator" Perry about 6th, forced out by Big John Studd, then pulling Studd out after him, proving that battle royals really do have no rules. The Pacific Coliseum was packed with 10,000 screaming wrestling fans for the event, all of whom got their money's worth. And for those of you who think it's all fake and therefore not worth paying good money to go and see: you're half right. It's about as realistic as a soap opera, but soap operas have been running for years now, haven't they???

At this precise moment, I'm 10 days late, and new developments in the "what the #\$%& is wrong with this #\$%&ing thing?" question have surfaced, enabling me to tell you that this will be mailed two weeks later than it should've been. (Just *why* I'm giving you information that is probably obvious to you by now is not quite clear even to me at the moment.) Since you are all probably seething with rage at this inconsistency, let me give you The Excuse for *this* time:

As mentioned above, the printer did not work when I asked it to. When confronted with a problem like this, the mind boggles. How can I get it fixed if I'm not sure what's wrong? And how do I even get game results out if I haven't got any means to print them out, since I don't own a typewriter? It wasn't until last week that I decided (with considerable desperation) to try some experiments with the system (as suggested in extremely vague language in one of the users manuals I have in my growing collection). I disciplined myself to think like a computer, and narrow the source of the problem to as little a range as possible before deciding what exactly was the best course of action.

There are four wires leading from my power bar: to the printer, disk drive, TV, and computer. The outlet-computer line passes through a thing called a power supply, but since the computer works fine, obviously there's no problem there. The disk drive works alright, the TV is fine and dandy, and the printer's built-in self test works perfectly. Thus, I reasoned, the problem must be with the passing around of information between these three sources. The computer-TV information is fine, and contained in one cord that concerns no other component. The only other cord is called a *serial bus* and has a few parts. It starts at the computer, and goes to the back of the disk drive. This cord is symmetrical, it doesn't matter which end goes into which component. Also, the disk drive has two serial bus sockets on the back; again, it doesn't matter which one the cord goes into, because another serial bus cord goes into the other socket from the printer. So, I loaded a file into the word processor program, turned off the disk drive, and unplugged the serial bus from the computer, and disconnected the printers serial bus cord from the disk drive. I then plugged this cord directly into the computer, and everything printed hunky dory. Thus the printer and its associated cords were not at fault. This left the disk drive as possible sources of the problem. I plugged the serial buses back into the drive, but this time I plugged the computer one into where the printer one had been, and vice versa. Now neither the printer nor the disk drive would accept any commands from the computer. Thus it became apparent that the one socket at the back of the computer was not receiving the information properly, and since this is such a simple repair job that the fix-it firm may screw up to the tune of 3 weeks like last time, I'm going to put up with the problem and make sure everything's perfect on the word processor first, then rewire and print everything out next. As I say this should be out early next

About THAT LAST ISSUE....

XL number 11 was not a fake, but it might have been better if it were. Let me take up some space here and tell you just what went wrong last time. If you're thinking of publishing, this is probably what you want to avoid.

We start our post-publication disclaimer with the cover. No, Patricia, there's nothing wrong with the cover, except the background colour. It's red. Again. I have a box of old XL's that eventually will find their way to Simo Billeness's zine bank, but before they do I'll swipe a few complete s's and keep them for reference. With three red issues, it will confuse the matter somewhat. What happened is that Nan went to the printers and went out for dinner while the zine was being copied. My rule, when I go there on Sundays, is to patiently wait with a newspaper, book, or sometimes a Beethoven tape, until Chris Buck, our printer, is ready for me to get out my chequebook. This requires a lot of patience, as sometimes the job can take a few hours, but my presence there can sometimes prevent errors from occurring, and keeps the job going. Unfortunately, the zine wasn't completed until Wednesday last time, so Nan had to go to the printers while I worked. They're much more crowded on the weekdays than the weekends, so I don't blame Nan for leaving for a while.

Now we come to the page numbering. Luckily, XL boasts (though not too often) the largest page numbers in the hobby, so I can't imagine anyone being misled by the insertion of page 29 betwixt pages 3 and 5, and, to balance the inequality, the subsequent appearance of page 4 between pages 28 and 30. I rather liked the sentence "Could it be that NASA is growing life around my gaming time" (page 3-29), but the simple fact is that the person who took the single pages to the printers put two of them together incorrectly. After the single pages are reduced 80%, they are then taped together (cover with back cover, inside front cover, with inside back cover, etc.) and then reduced 80% again before the mass copying begins. Of course it helps if you get the left one on the left and the right one on the right, but I'm sure the crowd was quite a distraction for Nan, and quite frankly I'm relieved that she didn't make any further mistakes.

Yes, the layout is awful. The reason for this is that I had a really wonderful issue in single pages all completed when I discovered to my dismay that there were 34 pages. At 6AM Tuesday morning, after slaving over a hot disk drive for five straight nights, I could not even think about creating enough material to fill two more pages, so I chopped two pages off, as neatly as I could. Let me tell you, I'm not much of a surgeon. It appears I chopped off a whole page of zine reviews (you guys didn't really think I don't get any zines whose names start with O, P, or Q, did you? Well, maybe Q...), and part 2 of From The Podium. The former chop is definite malpractice; the latter may be a lucky break, as on rereading Part 2, I find I don't really want to print it this time to make amends.

Those of you who wrote to scream about the hideous quality of the italics have a point, but a closer inspection of the zine (and the last few issues) would reveal that to be a ribbon problem, not a printer problem. The italics for the games, spacefillers, and directory page are quite legible, because I printed them after I changed the ribbon. The mistake was in not getting Nancy to ask Chris to turn a switch on the photocopier for the lighter pages. In any case, I'm going to start figuring on one \$15 ribbon every two issues, and change ribbons just before printing the final copies of things so the print stays dark.

There are a few problems with the games, except (amazingly enough) for Superbourse!, but I'll go into the specifics in the game reports themselves.

Now as we've got through all that, what did you think of the last issue. I still don't like it. Taking out the musical excerpts dissappointed me more than I thought it would. This undoubtedly was due to the poor quality of the substitute spacefiller. Those jokes sounded a lot better when I typed them up at 3AM! Now they look way out of place. However the problem with the music remains: there are maybe 20 readers who can read music, and out of those maybe 5 who have any chance at naming the excerpts I include, which usually translates to 1 or 2 guessers, those only when the guesser is certain. So we'll change the rules a bit. The excerpts in this issue are all from ragtime compositions by Scott Joplin. Only the melody line is included, and they have all been transposed to the key of C-major (or its relative minor). Joplin's music usually formed itself into groups of sixteen-measure themes, repeated in one of the standard ragtime forms (ABCD or ABCD or some such). What you have throughout this issue is a typical passage from one of these themes, and as usual you get two issues if you can tell me which rag any passage comes from, but there are five issues to be divided among any person who can tell me which two excerpts are from the *same* rag. Identify them by the pages they appear on. Oh yes: since I've given you such a big hint this time, to get two issues for identifying the excerpts, you can't have any incorrect guesses. Can't have some smartass guessing "Pineapple Rag" for all of them, and getting two free XL's just because I included it.

DIPGAB continued

week, but I'm not certain at this point just how much it'll slow me down, so wish me luck....

By the way, I haven't sorted the mail yet, but at this point it looks to me as though there may be a few NMRs, and at two weeks after the deadline I'm not doing any phoning for orders. I've grouched about the postal service for long enough that you should know by now to get a set in *early*, so you're not caught later. Apparently some of you need a harsh reminder of the disadvantages of NMRing, because, except for a very few cases, I never get orders from anyone until two weeks before the deadline at the earliest. NMR insurance costs 32 cents (14 cents, apparently, in the U.S.) and consists of a short note with orders and the phrase "I got the zine today." And don't try telling me this if your postmark is within 10 days of the deadline. If that's the case, you should have phoned much earlier.

Conrad van Metzke's Costaquana has been seeking (and apparently obtaining) 9-digit zip codes from all players, leading me to wonder whether it wouldn't be faster for you all to send me your new nine-digit ones. It would appear to me that the first five narrow the address down to one specific city or suburb, whereas the last four probably enable the post office to put the letter in the correct mailbag much easier. In Canada the first letter designates either one of the ten provinces or a territory (Yukon or Northwest), and the remaining five alphanumeric characters pin it down to one side of a street. Everyone in the 6100 block of Winch St has V5B 2L4 or V5B 2L5, depending on what side of the street they're on. So you can see how much faster it is for the Post Office.

LepreCon 86

I hope nobody minds too much if I begin my obligatory article on LepreCon '86 with a general apology. I'm sorry. Why? Mostly because I find I can't remember all the names of all the people who were there, despite the fact that I had a great time. This doesn't mean that they were no more than opponents in my memory: we shared the good times more in casual conversation than in games. Nor does it mean that I don't remember *anyone* who attended: many of the 20-odd people I spent the weekend of March 21-23 with would be exceptionally hard to forget. There's just a few (more than a few, regrettably) people whom I can't fit a full name to now, and for that I feel a bit ashamed. I think I'll bring a guest book to all cons from now on: but then what do I do when I get to my keyboard and find a name I can't put with a face? Eh?

Whatever. We tried a new approach this year in getting to the infamous site of LepreCon, which I'll go into later. Buses from Vancouver to Seattle have been dropped in frequency since DipCon, and the fare has gone up 66% (though it may simply be that the American prices have risen at the rate of inflation while the Canadabuck has gone down the toilet), so our only choice was between a 9:00-12:30 ride, and a 5:45-9:50 ride. Our Seattle-LepreCon chauffeur, Terry Tallman, suggested that we try the early ride, and since I've gotten into the habit of staying up at least that late (till 5AM), I said sure. This was a good move, as we got there before dusk, making Joan & Ken's house rather easier to find.

First surprise: the Vancouver bus depot doesn't open until 5:30 AM. Our taxi got there at 5:15, and we shivered for a few minutes, more in excitement of the trip ahead than from the cool temperature. I should mention that Nan and I had both worked the Thursday evening, and although Nan had tried, we both had failed to get any sleep all night. It sure was nice to be able to stay in the bus at the border crossing, but I guess when there's only seven people in a bus it's a waste of time to get them all off to go through customs. I remember going through the Manitoba/North Dakota border with about 30 people on, and not having to get off, but usually on the Vancouver/Seattle run you're asked to get all your personal belongings and face the customs people, so it was a pleasant surprise.

Anyhow, we got into the Seattle depot at about 9:45, and were off by 10:30, with Terry driving, and a fellow named Rich (whose last name I can't recall) completing the foursome. I fell asleep hearing Nancy tell Terry and Rich how "it never rains like this in Montreal", and "Don't you people ever get snow in March?" I have this knack of waking up whenever the vehicle I'm travelling in stops (acquired no doubt in early-morning bus rides to UBC), so I got up just in time to eat just south of Portland (I think), and again to hit the latrines near Salem (approximately). From Albany (where we got off Interstate 5) to LepreCon, I claim to have been awake. We stopped just short of Philomath, Oregon to pick up some coffee for Terry and some drinks. I made the mistake of buying only one 6-pack of Pepsi, which was downed before going to bed Friday night (though I accounted for only 2/3 of the six). Anyhow, a quick drive through Philomath, and we got to Wren, which is about three houses, eighty yards of roadway, and a tavern that looks like it hasn't poured a drop of anything in years. The official LepreCon turnoff is about a mile on from the Wren city limits. Compared to last year, when Terry and I negotiated this stretch of the world in darkness, this year's scavenger hunt to get there was made simple by the daylight still remaining. We arrived at about 5:00, nearly running over the dogs that covered the car on three sides while announcing our presence.

Among those inside were Joan Extrom, Ken Corbin, the infamous

Samantha, Kevin Tighe, and Bob O'Donnell. There were a few others to whom I can't fit a last name also. Joan delivered on her promise of a private room for Nan & I, and we unloaded our stuff there. I must have passed out for a bit at that point because the next thing I remember is two tables of hearts (for some reason the number one game this year) shortly after the arrival of Michael Lee, Mike "T-Bone" Ehli, and (how 'bout this, Russ?) Diplomacy's living legend, Russ Russnak. Hearts is not my game. At one point I was lectured on card passing, as though I were a beginner: "Bruce, don't pass low cards, they're valuable." My theory on hearts is that if you can't pass all your good cards away, you may as well keep them and hope you get a shot at taking all the points. Unfortunately, I do this far too often, and my Bridge training gets the better of me, so I forget to throw high cards on higher ones, etc. A typical midgame score had me in the fifties while the others were pushing twenty.

Another game we played was Can't Stop. Joan & Ken run the only household, I'm sure, where two sets of this simple but addictive game are owned. The game board has eleven lanes for the numbers 2-12, with 3 spaces in the outside lanes, increasing gradually to 13 for the 7-lane. By rolling four dice and splitting them into two pairs, you have to move in at least one of three lanes. Thus if you were working on the 4, 6, and 9 lanes and you rolled a 1-4-6-6, you'd lose all ground gained in that turn, since you cannot make any of those numbers with any two of the dice. But you can stop and mark your position at any time, if you feel a bad roll coming. The first thing I did with the computer on returning home was to create a program to figure the easiest and worst three number combos to work on. Interestingly enough, almost any combination gives you better than even odds to hit one of your numbers: the worst combo, 2-3-12 (or 2-11-12; same odds) has a 56+% chance of crashing. The best combos are 6-7-8 at 93.0%, 5-7-8 (or 6-7-9) at 91.4%, and 4-6-8 (or 6-8-10) at 91.1%. There's one other combination above ninety percent, and the first to name it (or its inverse) gets three free XL's.

Another game I enjoyed after initial disaster was Empire Builder. I enjoyed this game so much I'm almost ashamed to admit I own a Rail Baron set. In Rail Baron, a roll of the dice tells you where you have to go to collect yer dough; in Empire Builder, you have nine choices, and you not only have to go to the place on the contract card, but you have to bring them some commodity or other, which is only available in certain other cities. In RB the track is all laid out to be bought up; in EB there is no track: it must be built as strategically and economically as possible. In RB, you roll the dice to see how far you move, and a bad run can cause opponents to travel at six times your speed. In EB, speed of travel depends only upon the type of train you have: there are no dice. You can see which game has a higher percentage of skill vs. luck. In the first game, I stranded myself by building track that I couldn't use. But there was a rematch Saturday night, and although the game was not finished (I doubt that six-player versions ever do), it was an eye-opener for a guy who thought Rail Baron was the state of the art. Silly me.

Early Saturday afternoon, Russ Russnak introduced us to CIRCUS MAXIMVS, a Roman-age chariot racing game, as only a Russnak would. After we'd set up our chariot's characteristics (I had grabbed the orange counter, and dubbed my driver Orange Julius, we one by one moved them out into the front straightaway. It was then that Russ made his move, driving over horses, whipping opposing drivers, ramming chariot carts, and causing general havoc that to our dismay turned out to be what the rules were all about instead of what the rules were trying to prevent! This was a four player game in which all four of us were managing two chariots. Russnak had strategically created one quicksilver chariot to win with, and one goon chariot to prevent the six others from coming second!! By the backstretch of lap one (out of

three), my other chariot, Red Pepperius, was in grave danger of losing a wheel, and Orange Julius was forced to manually cut an outside horse loose (because it had died at the relentless whip of Russnak's Captain Innocent). I remember that one of Russnak's chariots won, but I think Terry started attacking the goon, and I don't think anyone else survived the three laps.

Also played on Saturday was a full game of Win, Place & Show (a horse racing game *not* outlawed by the SPCA) between Nan, Kevin Tighe, Ken Corbin and I. This is an excellent game for novices, as the first two races contribute very little to the final outcome, as the purse money increases steadily for the final four. In the second race, however, we all but proved that the 20-1 long shot, Peace Corps, is overrated on the tote board. Nan guided him through the inside track on the turn, and got three separate bonuses of three squares, but he still finished out of the money. It was in the third race that Nan made her move. Ken, Kevin and I bid highly for the three favoured horses, and Nancy bid aggressively to get the three longshots. Nancy's horses were three lengths behind coming out of the first turn, but she got a good roll and blocked all three of our horses in the backstretch, then escorted the three longshots through the inside track on the clubhouse turn for a 15-1 odds victory, which somehow she had bet on heavily. From that point on, Ken decided that the best strategy would be to bet on one of Nancy's horses (he always got the wrong one, though) and Kevin and I could only watch in awe as she beat the hell out of us for a large victory.

Don Tinker arrived with a friend of his on Saturday afternoon, and what I guess was a near-perfect game of Diplomacy, a four-hour seven-way draw, was played on the back porch during the afternoon. After supper (a seven-nation feast including English tea, French bread, German beer, Italian Spaghetti, Austrian pastry, Russian dressing for the salad, and some Turkey. Yes, some Turkey. If this *hummus* stuff that Steve Hutton hates so much is Turkish, I'm glad nobody told Joan...), there was an informal vote. Nancy had been telling everyone what a messy person I am at home, and the motion to make McBruce do the dishes (moved by Terry Tallman) was carried about 17-2, with myself and Nancy opposed (she was concerned for the dishes).

We tried a game of Scruples on Saturday night, and the game is very ingenious, but unfortunately sagged because we didn't really know one another well enough to accurately predict a response. Also, there wasn't enough lying! The game has a massive deck of question cards, and about 25 answer cards. Your job is to get rid of the five question cards originally dealt to you face down. On your turn, you pick up a question card, read the question, and then get an answer card. The answer card says Yes, No, or Depends. You then read the question to somebody in the group you feel will match the answer. If his answer matches the one on the answer card, you have successfully gotten rid of that card. If not, you can either accept his answer, or challenge. You then have a minute to argue against his answer, followed by his minute to defend himself. Then the players vote, using the delightful voting cards that have a pitchfork on one side and a halo on the other. (This seems to be a possible weak point: why should the other players vote in favour of a player trying to get rid of his last card?) The questions range from ethics to manners to etiquette to "make up your own question." As Mike Lee explained, a No answer card and a make up your own question makes for unusual questions: *Your neighbour's house is burning down. Flames engulf the entire house, but he and his family have escaped safely. Do you attempt to save the screwdriver he borrowed yesterday, trapped in the basement inferno?* Try to answer Yes to this one and win the challenge....

After Scruples had died down with no clear winner, another shot at the chariots was started up. This time there were enough players to restrict things to one chariot apiece, with new faces like Bob

O'Donnell, Michael Lee, and Mike Ehli in the arena. The early leaders were Orange Julius and Mike Lee's Kid Flash, but it was not Orange Julius's day. On the first backstretch, Captain Innocent killed a horse and racked up a wheel, and while I tried to cut the first horse free, he killed another. But Kid Flash escaped, and suddenly Russnak was giving tense instructions on the damage we would have to do when The Kid came around again. Ehli and O'Donnell were the first line of defense, having been dismembered to a max of five squares per turn. A little further up the track were the two remaining horses of Orange Julius, and then the duo of Kevin Tighe's horse and Captain Innocent, who would administer the death blow if all worked well. Kid Flash was shaking in his boots, but managed to make it past for the win, running over top of Mike Ehli, who had pushed the eject button and was frantically fleeing the arena.

The LepreCon Chinese Checkers Challenge was played around 11PM, between Nancy, Joan, Mike Lee, Kevin Tighe, Bob O'Donnell, and myself. Along for the ride via long-distance telephone was Gary Coughlan, who heard a blow-by-blow description of the game, including a round of applause as Nancy found an amazing series of jumps that took her from the point nearest her to the opposite end of the star, visiting almost every place possible in transit. Joan was the first major threat, and was stopped by Nancy's sacrificial block, then there was a threat by Kevin, stopped, again by Nancy, and finally the turn came around to me and I saw an unstoppable sequence, which made me the winner. After that was the six-player Empire Builder game which was abandoned at 4AM, just when I had two loads of fruit for Montreal and Toronto, and was about to make a financial breakthrough. Oh well..

Going back to the Friday night, for a moment, at about 3AM, which was apparently two or three hours later by Russ Russnak's clock, a certificate attesting that he was still up at that late hour. Actually, he was the most lively of all of us. At least while he was asleep. Saturday morning there was a ruckus about who was making all the noise just before we all passed out. Nan & I had heard the noise, but it appears we were partly at fault, because we couldn't stop giggling. Why were we giggling? To discombobulate some famous lyrics, *the house was alive/ with the sound of Russnak!* At least on Saturday night they put Russ behind a door in a room somewhere, so you couldn't hear him unless you tried!!

I slept too long on Sunday morning, and Orange Julius didn't get his chance to win the dreaded bottle of Diet RC, the first prize of the CIRCUS MAXIMVS finale. (Rumours that the second prize was *two* bottles of Diet RC are greatly exaggerated.) I watched long enough to see Kid Flash killed off before he got into the first turn. This was quite enough blood & guts for me on a Sunday morning, and I retired to the front room to play a mindless but peaceful game of Can't Stop. While this was happening, Jim & Linda Bumpas arrived with a van stock full of computer games, computer, and two kids, Aden, 3, and Eric, just about to celebrate his first birthday. Miraculously, this volatile mixture made it to LepreCon from Eugene unharmed, but the computer and games were useless anyhow, because Joan & Ken don't own a TV. Ooops.

Samantha, like last year, was overjoyed to see that she was bigger than somebody, and immediately taught Aden how to jump from chairs onto teddy bears. Meanwhile, I spent some time banging plastic blocks together with Eric, who at nine months looks just like a real leprechaun, with his red hair and cheeky smile. I succeeded in keeping the Nerf ball out of this smile for ten minutes of mutual goo-goo talk, and then it was time to get going.

The trip home was interesting in that we missed the turnoff to I-5, and decided to catch it at Portland. I had a vague memory of the highway system through Portland from the M^oIntyre family trip to Disneyland 15 years ago, and what I remembered was getting lost in a complicated system of stacked-up bridges. (The trip to and from LepreCon last year had avoided all this trouble by taking the by-pass

route.) I suppose many of you think nothing of three-level freeway bridges, and off ramps leading into the wild blue yonder, but around Vancouver we tend to keep our roads as simple as possible. Another interesting point came when I realized that we would get to Seattle at about 7:30, give or take 10 minutes. Our bus was scheduled to leave at 7:30. It came down to whether or not the 38 miles to Seattle on the distance sign was to Seattle city center, or to Seattle city limits. Luckily, it was to the city center, and we arrived at the bus depot at 7:25, and were home in bed by 1AM.

No con report would be complete without the inventory of what we left there. I left all my keys on a St. Cloud-Winnipeg Greyhound, and Nan left a large coat at MinnCon. This time, I took back everything I took down, but Nan says she left a towel there. Oh well, she can use it next year, I guess!

from the podium

[There follows an editorial revamped from the one I edited from last issue when time was short and space was tight. The reason it was revamped was that it was vague in its criticism, controversial in the individuals it accused, and did not offer a possible solution or better way. You can decide for yourself whether this one lives up to the high standards of that last sentence.]

Part II-Obligatory duties???

I've come to the conclusion that there are three things that delay Excelsior.

One is the bad feeling I get when it looks like a game is about to be spoiled by countless NMRs. A few phone calls usually takes care of this problem.

Another is simple procrastination. It's not particularly difficult to do the work that goes into the making of XL. But if I realize that I won't be able to play a certain computer game this weekend, or work on a personal project, or have time for Nan, it makes it rather hard just to get started.

A third is when I take stock of all the different things I've been asked to do in this issue. I don't want to put anybody off, but why should I plug your zine, poll, event, or whatever it is that you want to see on the pages of XL. Maybe a guy who is only up to twelve issues shouldn't be saying this, but I think we've got enough zines. I think we've got too many polls. And ratings don't really mean much to me, other than simple fascination that anyone could have the question "what makes a Diplomacy player good" reduced to a simple mathematical equation.

I counted the number of pages I got that I was asked to reprint as inserts in the last three months. It came to a whole issue of XL (which I'm funding, at current subscription rates, about 50% of) worth of Diplomacy junk mail.

It occurs to me that the flyer people could save themselves and a lot of publishers money if we had a Hobby Junk Mail Custodian. This person would have a twofold job. First, he would be in charge of the hobby census. Second, he would reprint and send out a collection of junk mail to the hobby at large, at the expenses of those who wished to advertise their schemes/polls/events/deals/games/etc. in it.

Because I don't see why I should use my money to publicize other people's schemes. Especially if other publishers are going to do it for me. Call me greedy if you want: I call it thrifty.

POLL TALK

[Nothing for Polltalk! this month other than one letter from Ken Peel. I'd better point out that the letter is directed at Bruce Linsey, so you know who Ken is referring to when he says *you*.-BM]

I feel that I agree down the line with the position of McBruce. I have no problem with a listing of those who participate in the poll. I have been convinced that my initial misgivings on this issue last year were unfounded. The one very serious objection I have the way the poll was conducted last year was with the actual solicitation of votes by phone. The action might appear less dubious in 1986 than in 1985, because you will not have a zine in the listing (although an unscientific opinion, I would guess that the "Runestone effect" would be even greater in telephone votes -- I would be interested to know if you ever specifically asked for someone's vote on VoD in a telephone vote), but I am still convinced of the basic unsound nature of the practice. That fact is revealed most strongly in the fact that you justified your inclination to continue the practice because of the need to counter the effect of those who will be attempting to convince others not to vote in the poll. With the feud pretty much wound down, I feel that you are overestimating "the threat" (a common practice by the Department of Defense to justify questionable programs). In any case, the questionable practices by one party hardly justify the same by another. The basic issue seems to me whether you intend the Runestone poll to be closer to an opinion poll or an election. Only in the former can telephone solicitations be an acceptable practice, and then only if conducted scientifically. To poll by phone scientifically, you would either have to call everyone eligible, or conduct a true random sample, neither of which are possible in this case. There is a difference in kind between soliciting by mail--really only an invitation to vote--and soliciting by phone--which except in a few rare occasions, would actually be obtaining a vote. If, however, you intend the Runestone Poll to be as close to an election as possible, which appears logical to me, then telephone solicitation is even more questionable a practice. The election authority must only register possible voters, not call them for their votes or solicit them door-to-door. Getting out the vote is something that is legitimately done only by political parties. The analogy here would be with hopeful zines that plug the poll and energetic publishers who try to get out the vote from among their subbers. Not a pretty sight if done by the neutral election authority.

[Ken, without any intended offense, let me say that what I've just typed will quite likely set the XL record for post-inserted conditional hyphens. That means that I'm going to have to put conditional hyphens--break with hyphen if at end of line--in all of those big words, so that my word processor doesn't leave large spaces in the justification process. In any case, I'm sure Brux's response will appear here next time.]



JOCKTALK

[Though there haven't been any responses yet, I would hope that JOCKTALK is to become a regular feature of XL, focussing on the worst quotes from the sporting world. Example: Howie Meeker's oft-repeated claim that "any NHL coach whose team allows more than three goals a game should be fired." If you look at the final NHL standings, you'll see that Philadelphia had the fewest goals against, with 241 in 80 games, for a 3.01 average. Should we fire 'em all, Howie?

Quotes should include who said them (doesn't have to be famous--local broadcasters often have the best fumblemouths), the event concerned (teams and date) and the sport. Three free issues go to the best of the bunch each time.]

If only George Carlin was a sports reporter! JOCKTALK! would be filled to the gills all the time. Because you didn't send anything in for this feature, I'll give you an idea or two. Let's start with some zany stuff from an old George Carlin album, which, although completely fictional (and perhaps slightly misquoted), should start things off with a bang:

"Biff Barf here with your sports report; here's the basketball scores: 103-97, 132-121, 111-86, and 100-98. Close one there. And here's a overtime score: 121-119.

"In golf today, Gary Fairway shot an eagle, two birdies, and a duck.

"One afternoon baseball score: Minnesota 4, Cleveland 2, Kansas City 1.

"Recapping college football from last night, William & Mary 16, Danny & Louie 12. Cal Tech 14 point 5, M.I.T. two to the third power....and here's a partial score: Penn State 7."

A recent Tank McNamara strip has a beautifully appropriate theme. The whole strip consists of one box, a picture of the inside of a TV sports coverage van. There are 4 TV sets on the side, and one of them shows an announcer saying "To win the Masters, you've gotta put the ball in the cup." The reactions to this beautiful statement by the technicians inside the van range from "brilliant!" to "quick, make a copy, so I can save it for my children." Too bad it was fictional.

Then there's the sports announcers all over North America who tell us about NHL "overtime ties", as though a tie can be reached without going to overtime. Redundancy.

It surprises me to see the amount of basketball coverage on the American stations in the first three months of a new year, as though hockey (which, with curling, skiing, and figure skating, dominates the Canadian sports reports) just doesn't exist. When you do get hockey it is sometimes so blatantly erroneous it's amazing. A Seattle sportcaster once described fifteen seconds of film of a Boston/Montreal game by first mispronouncing Jeff Courtnall's name, then telling us that the guy scoring the tying goal was Larry Robinson (right) of the Boston Bruins (dead \$\$\$&ing wrong). Robinsn's only been with the Canadiens for, oh, ten-odd years. 'heesh.

John McKeachie of BCTV sports uttered the best line I ever heard in instant sports reporting, and then made it a recurring gag. In a Vancouver/Detroit matchup at the old Olympia ice rink in Detroit (before the new Joe Louis arena was built), a Vancouver player went down with a injury after being hit by a shot. As we watched the replay in slow

JOCKTALK continued

motion, John said "Looks like it hit him...right...in...the...", and then it became clear that the Vancouver player had had his bell rung. McKeachie never missed a beat. He said "Hit him right in the Olympia!" From that point on, for years he would substitute the name of the facility whenever anybody got hit in the balls during a live sporting event. It didn't even matter what sport it was, soccer, football, hockey, whatever. "Hit him right in the Coliseum." Or "Hit him right in the Spectrum." It was funny, brilliant, and best of all, safe--no more going halway with words like "groin" or phrases like "had his bell rung", "hit him where it counts", "right in the five hole." It was left up to the fans imagination just *where* the player had been hit.

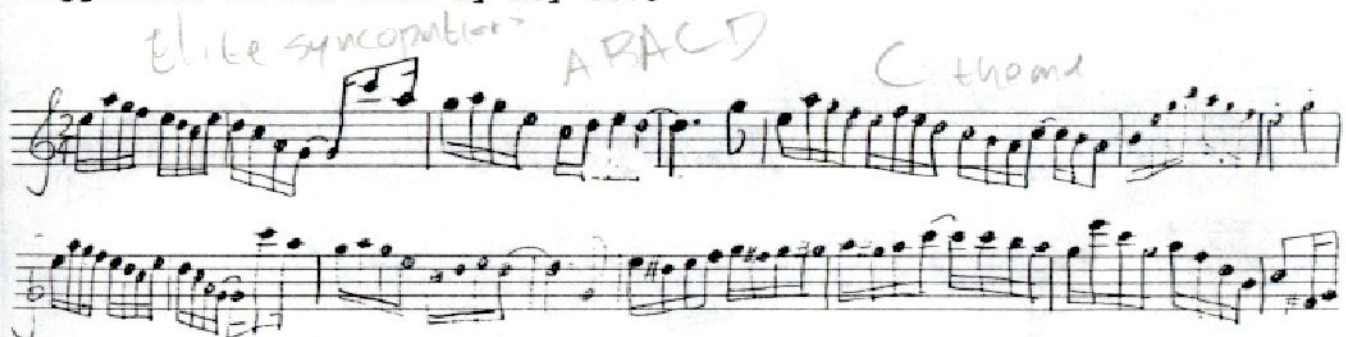
During last year's World Series, the most hilarious play I ever witnessed in that sport occurred. With a speedster on first, the catcher signalled a pitchout (which means that they throw the pitch away from the batter to give the catcher a better chance of throwing out the runner--if he's trying to steal). Unfortunately, the pitcher thought he meant fastball. As the 90MPH pitch came hurtling for the strike zone, the catcher, still thinking pitchout, *got up and stepped out of its way, leaving the umpire, understandably petrified, behind the plate!!!* The funniest thing was watching the whites of the umpire's eyes as he realized what he was in for. Whack!! Even in slow motion, I'm sure 40 million male sports fans groaned in compassionate agony. In the highlight package on the news that night, they showed it again in slow motion, then cut to McKeachie, who looked at the camera and said, with a straight face: "Hit him right in the stadium."

POSTAL CLUE 4

Meanwhile, in the Postal Clue game, strange and unnatural things were happening:

Steve Dycus had just returned from the Kitchen. He was visibly shaken. Here he was, ready to tell everyone the big secret about where all the food had come from, and it turned out that somehow, all the kitchen cupboards were bare, when only minutes before they had contained a hearty supply of junk food. The thing that was bothering him was what was in the fridge. He made feeble motions towards the fridge as he returned to where the others were. They waited and waited, but no guess was forthcoming, and finally the wimpy voice of McBruce had demanded a guess. But still Steve was mute. McBruce had just finished speaking in his wimpy voice, telling them that the game would have to go on, when Janet Cooley, who was scheduled to make the next guess, noticed what was inside the fridge.

[What is inside the fridge? Why did Steve lose his voice? Will there be a guess next time? tune in next time for the answers. Janet's suggestion is due here by May 23.]



MORE ZINE REVIEWS

[These are the zines I missed out in my attempt at editing which backfired. Sorry, guys, but hopefully this way at least you'll be able to read what's in the italics, unlike the last batch.]

- ### Prisoners Of War (Wallace Nicoll/Doug Rowling, 228 Kinnell Ave., Cardonald, Galsgow, SCOTLAND UK G52 3RU), 3-8, digest, 60pp, 23rd in BZP'85, 10. *A knockout zine from Scotland: there seems to be something in each issue that just knocks me silly with envy. Well written, well managed, good looking, and very varied, PoW is another must for those hooked on British zines. Deadlines six weeks apart mean North Americans have time to get in on the action.*
- @@@ Pommes mit Mayo (Scott Hanson/Frauke Petersen, 3508 Fourth Ave. S., Minneapolis MN, USA 55408), 51-55, open, 4pp, previous publication, Big Hits Of Mid-America 52 in RP'85, 8. *PoM is a very international letter column mostly about news and other stuff not strictly related to the Dip hobby except for the identities of the people discussing them. Very interesting reading, makes you realize how feelings differ across the miles on a news topic.*
- @@@ Perelandra (Pete Gaughan, 3121 E. Park Row #165, Arlington TX, USA 76010), 33-39, open, 16pp, 7th in RP'85, 8. *This zine runs some interesting games, including Snowball Fighting, Sopwith, and a literature quiz, along with Dip. In addition, the cover is always an interesting passage from a book or poem that I'd probably never hear of otherwise.*
- *** Praxis (Alan Stewart, 702-25, St. Mary St., Toronto ON, Canada M4Y 1R2), 1-3, open, 22pp, new, 9. *Another great Canadian zine has been launched, just when we thought Toronto was full of them. Alan's zine is currently running round table discussions on quite a lot of things, including the romantic life-or lack of it, and what to do about it-of the editor. There is also a top 100 songs of the last 30 years being compiled issue by issue, and generally lots of stuff.*

[Here's a relative newcomer to my trading collection that I omitted last time because I'd not seen enough issues to vote on it.]

- @@@ Costaguana (Conrad von Metzke, PO Box 17602, San Diego CA, USA 92117-0602), Vol 10, 16-19, digest, 28pp, 44th in RP'85, 10. *I can't believe I missed this one for as long as I did! Excellently written, extremely outgoing, and very punctual, I'd say this zine has an excellent shot at most improved this year. Conrad even did a April Fool's fake issue of his own zine, which was so completely crazy I believed all of it, at least on initial perusal. Forget most improved: I wouldn't be surprised to see Costa win the Runestone this year. Don't miss this one!*

eugena ABC-C brio luean C5



***No Fixed Publisher (Ron Brown, 70F Chesterton Dr., Nepean ON, Canada K2E 5S9), 1-3, digest, 12pp, first year, 9. This was a temporary zine to run the NFA games while Steve Hutton was in Europe over the summer. Ron added the games of his own zine, D-Day, as well as news and reports on holiday excursions, and the growing pains of Ron's two young sons.

@@@The Not For Hire (c/o Steve Langley, 2296 Eden Roc Lane #1, Sacramento CA, USA 95825), 1-6, digest, 28pp, first year, 10. INFH is "a letterzine for DipDom". It appears to have taken the con from NFA for the 'state of the union' feud speeches, with one important exception: it is impartial, unbiased, and will not comment. (Steve's comments are apart from any editorial policy the zine might have.) I'd have to credit INFH for the relative lack of feud material that's been appearing in other zines lately; it certainly appears to me that INFH is the place to do your feuding, though of course any type of discussion is welcomed.

***Quinipique (Claude Gautron, 150 rue Masson, Winnipeg MN, Canada R2H 0H2), 13-15, forme plaine, 3 pages, pas de marque dans le Runestone Poll '85, 7. Quinipique est un zine en francais. Pas du mauvais francais de ce idiot de la Colombie britannique, mais le vrai francais de Claude, qui habite au Manitoba. Le zine n'a que un jeu de Diplomatie, des articles, et de toutes sortes de nouvelles. Et, dans le no.15, un article interessant au sujet de Louis Riel. Si vous avez compris cette critique, vous aimeriez Quinipique. Je suppose que mes erreurs grammaticales seront corriger par Nancy avant la publication, ou par Claude dans la prochain issue....

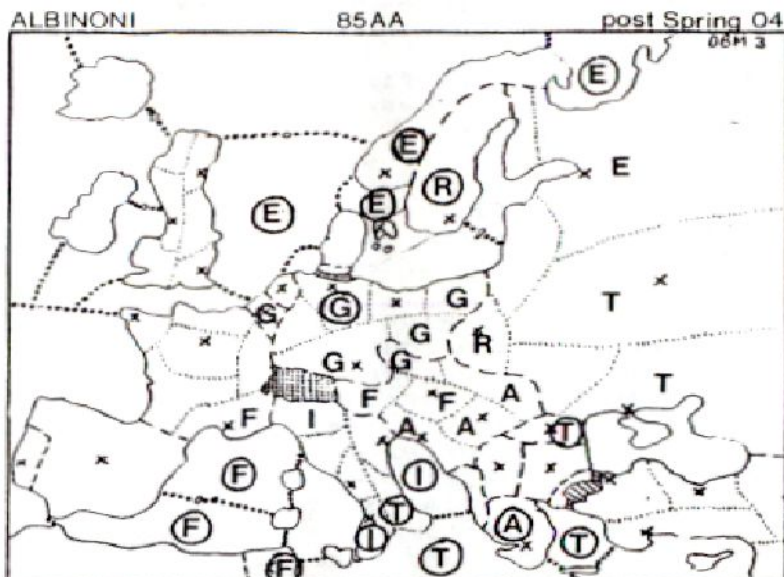
###Oxymoron (Jaap Jacobs, Kaiserstraat 10B, 2311GR Leiden, THE NETHERLANDS), 42-51, digest, 36 pages, =31st in BZP'85, 9. Oxy is a zine with a good balance of writing in Dutch and English, and thus is one of the best zines that lay claim to the title "international." Of interest to me lately has been the enormous issue #50, containing the rules for umpteen number of variants, with maps. There's also an article on games in general by Teun Spaans that I've enjoyed, as well as much more, with the continental hobby news, always interesting to decipher!



TURKS & FRENCH FIGHT FOR MED

ITALY FORGETS WHO TO SUPPORT

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 Arsenaull, 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

Autumn 1903 Retreats: AUS: A Gal r OTB

RUS: F Nwy r OTB (NRR)

Winter 1903 Adjustments: ENG: +F Edi

GER: +A Mun

TUR: +F Smy

AUS: +A Bud

FRA: +F Mar

ITA: A Tun r OTB (NRR)

NEXT DEADLINE (Summer 04-Fall 04) is Friday, May 23, 1986--one day earlier if phoned in.

ALBINONI 1985AA Spring 1904 Orders

ENGLAND F Bar S A StP, A StP H, F Nwy-Swe, F Nth-Ska, F Edi-Nth

GERMANY A Mun-Sil, F Bal-Kie, A Lva-Pru, A Boh S Fre A Gal-Vie, A Sil-Gal, A Ruh-Bei

RUSSIA NMR! F Swe, A War stand unordered

TURKEY F Smy-Aeg, A Mos T, A Sev S A Mos, F Bla-Rum, F Ion-TyS, F Apu-Ion (self dislodgement prohibited)

AUSTRIA A Bud S A Ukr-Gal, F Gre S Tur F Apu-Ion, A Ukr-Gal, A Tri-Tyr, A Vie† \$ A Ukr-Gal (BOOM!)

ITALY NMR! F Adr, A Pie, F Nap stand unordered.

FRANCE F Mar-GoL, A Gal-Vie, A Tyr \$ A Gal-Vie, F Tun-Ion, F WMe-TyS, A Bur-Mar

PRESS:

GM: As most of you pointed out, England's attack on Norway last time should have succeeded, and thus England had an extra build coming to him. I phoned those who sent in orders for this season and affected by the screwup, so we could keep the game going.

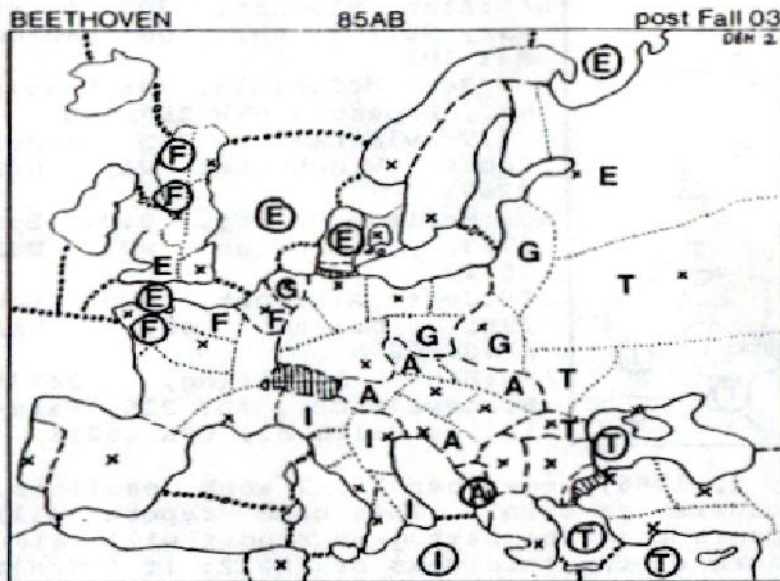
Two NMRs this time, one from Kevin Brown, the other from standby Lynn Torkelson. I don't know if other GMs would do this, but it seems to me that I should take Lynn off the list if he doesn't respond this time. In any case the stand-by for Russia this time is Claude Gautron (150 rue Masson, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2H 0H2) and the stand-by for Italy is Bob Acheson (c/o Echo Bay Mines, Lupin NWT, Canada X0E 1M0). I think we

BEETHOVEN

NEW POSTAL RECORD

PALMDALE-BURNABY in only 28 days

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 IrS
 Fall
 BEETHOVEN 1985AB ~~1903~~ 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 Fre A Bel, A Sil & A War, A War H, A Lva-StP, F Denf-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 A Pic-Bre, A Bel S Ger A Hol, F Lpl-Cly, F MAO-Bre, F IrS-Lpl

PRESS:

GM: OK, so France didn't NMR. So I gave up too early in trying to find his phone number, and gave up completely when the operator told me it was unlisted. So what if it was right in front of my nose in my files? There ought to be a law against late delivery of letters. I got Steve's orders the day we were scheduled to go to Pt. Roberts last time, although the postmark said February 7th. Yes, it arrived after the deadline, but I should have phoned him, and got the orders, so I have to redo this game. Apologies all around, of course.

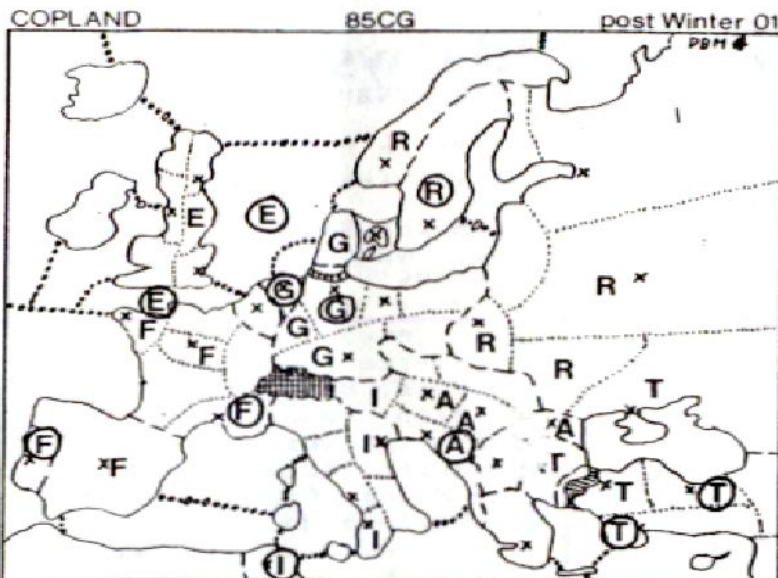
StP-Berlin: Thanks!

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

Dieppe-StP: I've a feeling you'll have to suffer through another year or

COPLAND

INTERNATIONAL BUILDS



COPLAND Dramatis Personae

- ENG: Charles Arsenault, Voie Du Car D'Or 2/102, 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve, BELGIUM
 GER: Alan Stewart, 702-25 St Mary St. Toronto ON Canada M4Y 1R2
 RUS: Sean McGonigle, 44B Kelvin Rd., Papakura NEW ZEALAND
 TUR: Travis Laster, 125 Garden Court, Winchester VA, USA 22601
 AUS: Melinda Holley, P.O. Box 2793, Huntington WV, USA 25727
 ITA: Jeff Albrecht, P.O. Box 295, Doland SD, USA 57436-0295
 FRA: Ben Schilling, 24730 Roosevelt Ct., Apt 315, Farmington Hills MI, USA 48018

Deadline for Spring 1902 is May 9, 1986, under our 7 1/2 week deadlines. One day earlier for phoned in orders, as usual. This game report will see print in XL#12. It now appears that the next game report will also be mailed to you by flyer, because of the tardiness of XL#12: if I don't start getting issues out on time, the postal costs alone from all these flyers may break me! In any case, the next game report will see print in XL#13, though when that'll come out I haven't a clue. Funny business. That Russian unit dislodged last time was, as a couple of you pointed out, annihilated. So, Russia actually has two builds coming to him. You should try phoning Sean once in a while....the phone takes 20 minutes to start ringing (it takes 20 minutes just to dial the number!) and it rings funny, in groups of 2 short bursts, instead of the one by one style we get here. (Nan thought it was busy.) Anyhow, assuming Sean survives Night Watch (he's a cop, if I remember correctly) and gets our message, he'll phone and I'll tell him wots up. It appears none of you others did: 'course I don't blame you.....

COPLAND 1905CG Winter 1901 Orders

- ENGLAND No adjustments. Has A Yor, F Eng, F Nth.
 GERMANY Builds F Kie, A Mun. Has F Kie, A Mun, A Den, A Ruh, F Hol.
 RUSSIA Builds A War, A Mos. Has A Ukr, A Mos, A War, A Nwy, F Swe.
 TURKEY Builds F Smy, A Con. Has F Smy, A Con, F Ank, A Sev, A Bul.
 AUSTRIA Builds A Bud. Has A Bud, A Rum, A Vie, F Tri.
 ITALY Builds F Nap. Has A Tyr, A Ven, F Tun, F Nap.
 FRANCE Builds A Par, F Mar. Has A Par, F Mar, A Spa, F Por, A Bre.

PRESS:

The King says: I want Belgium!
Sultan Laster - Czar McGonigle: I sincerely apologize for the mistakes of my zealous generals. Even now, messengers are pursuing their armies

ALBINONI (85 AA) continued

need to top up our supply of standbys: every time I need one, I find the list is filled with players already in the affected game! That's why I call the same ones over and over. Sure, I could call Larry Peery or Chris Carrier, but both are swamped with hobby duties at the moment, so I thought it best to call Claude and Bob this time.

Austrian Press: ARCHDUKE ATTACKED BY BUSH: Last week, while strolling through the lovely rose garden from Germany the illustrious Duke noticed one of the roses had fallen off. As he examined the rose he was dismayed to find the thorns on the bushes had grown quite large. Furthermore, the thorns were growing larger by the minute. As he stepped backwards from this horrid sight he did trip over a sign and fall into another bush with equally long thorns. The Duke is currently in the hospital. The secret police believe it may be a French plot. The belief is based on the sign the Duke tripped over. It read "*un jardin de roses.*"

Munich-Paris: You see that the Germans and the Englishmen can be really good friends.

Munich-Constantinople: Don't try to make a fool of me!

To Charles: Remember you told me you were going there. I just don't want you too close.

BEETHOVEN--1985 AB continued

so.

Par-Rom: I trust you so completely I was willing to give you a free shot--**WAS!**

Maestro's retreats for next time:

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

RUS: F StP r (GoB, Fin, OTB)

Supplies OWNERSHIP OF CENTRES

GAME: BEETHOVEN (1985 AB)

post-FALL 1903

ENGLAND 6	TURKEY 7	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 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 7 (12)	Tun (I) I
	Bre (F) F	
	Mar (F) F	
	Par (F) F	

No build for GERMANY if F Den retreats.

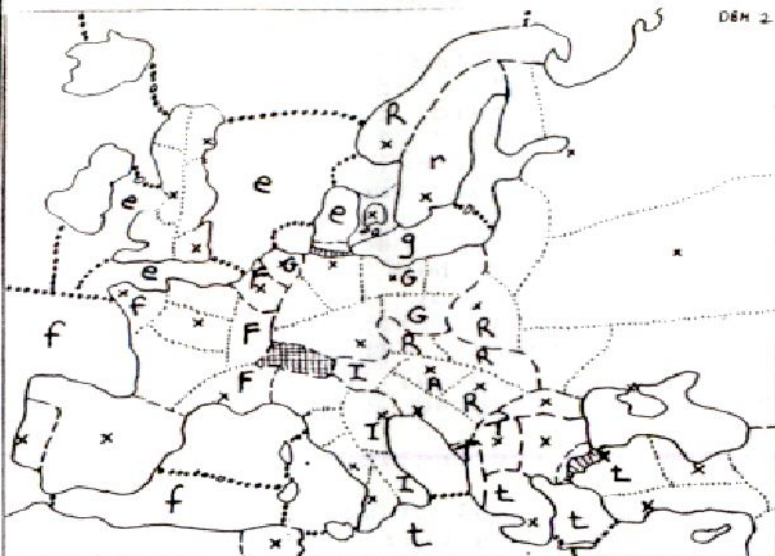
COPLAND continued

to inform them of their errors and upcoming court-martials. Until then, please excuse any acts of aggression perpetrated by these officers, they are not officially sanctioned actions of the Turkish Government (which is obviously entirely innocent in this issue).

DEBU 33Y

SPRING 03

DEBUSSY



- GM: Mitchell Wageler 3263 School Ave
Vancouver, BC V5P 5N6
(604) 435-3299
- E: Dennis Quine 55 Rosemoor Drive
Little Rock, Ark, 72209
- G: Pierre Touche 1 Rue Georges,
Masson PQ JOX 2H0
- R: Alan Stewart 702-25 St. Mary St.
Toronto, ON M4Y 1R2
- T: Ron Krukowski 5339 W. Eddy
Chicago, IL 60641
- A: Randolph Smyth 119-70 Mayland St.
Winnipeg MB R3C 1K7
- I: Kevin Brown 100 Patton Drive
Warner Robbins, GA 31093
- F: Bruce Waddell 4247 Winnifred St.
Burnaby, BC V5J 2S5

MOVES SPRING 03

- F: A GAS - MAR, A BUR S A BEL, F BEL S A BUR, F MID - WMED, F IRI - MID, F BRE - ENG
- R: A RUM - BUD, A BAL S A RUM - BUD, A SIL - BOH, A ST P - NWY, F SWE S A ST P - NWY,
A WAR - SIL
- T: F AEG - ION, F GRE SF AEG - ION, F SMY - AEG, F BLA - CON, A SER - AIB, A BUL - SER
- E: F LIV - IFI, F LON - ENG, F NTH S F LON - ENG, A NOI S (RUS) F SWE, F DEN - KIE
- G: A HOL - KIE, A MUN - SIL, A BER S A NUM - SIL, F BAL S (ENG) F DEN - SWE (NSO)
- A: NMR! A VIE S, A BUD S
- I: NMR! A TYR S, A VEN S, A APU S, F ION S

Standby is Chris Carrier Addresses
Standby is Bill Shirley on page 30-31

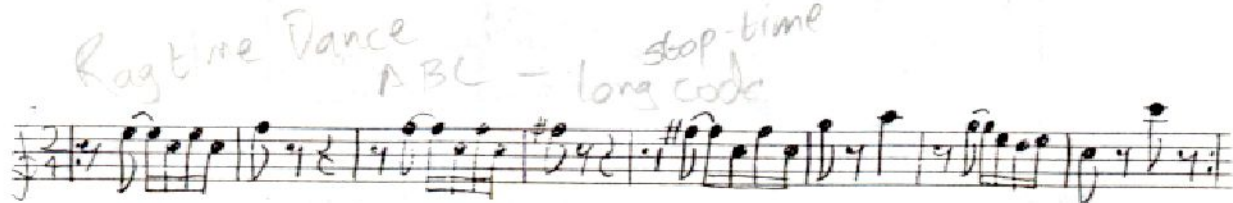
RETREATS

- E: A NOR (OTN)
- I: F ION (TUN, NAP, TYS, ADR OR OTB)
- A: A BUD (TRE OR OTB)

PROPOSAL R/T DRAW FAILS

PRESS:

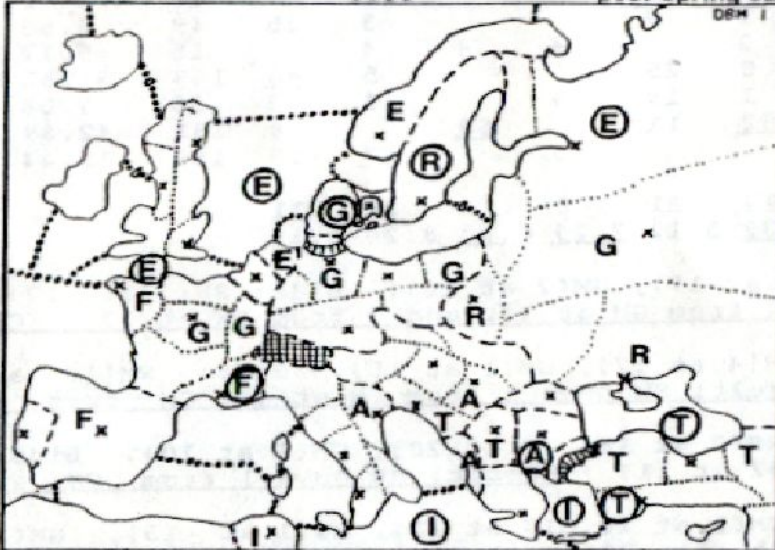
BERLIN TO WORLD: SINCE THE GERMAN PROPAGANDA WAS NOT WORKING WELL, WE CHANGE OUR APPROACH THEN THE MINISTER OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SEND OFFER ALL OVER THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL, NOW WE AREN'T EXPECTING NOTHING FROM THE REST OF WORLD.



SUPERBOURSE

SUPERBOURSE! participants

SUPERBOURSE! 85\$\$ post Spring 02



MB: Mike Barno, 2811 Robins St., Endwell NY, USA 13760
 RL: Rob Lowes, RR#9, Peterborough ON, Canada K9J 6X1
 SP: Sean P. McGonigle, 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

Mike Barno and Rob Lowes didn't get orders in, and lost 5% of all their shares in each country to the GM, thereby increasing the pot, 'cause I sold 'em for a handsome profit, of course.

SUPERBOURSE! Spring 1902 Results

ENGLAND 61F Nwy-StP, 5F Lon-Eng, 5F Nth C A Edi-Nwy, 5A Edi-Nwy, 10A Hol H
 GERMANY 4A Mun-Bur, 35A Ber-Pru, 30A War-Mos, 5A Kie-Hol, 0A Par S, 0F Den S
 RUSSIA 21A Sev-Mos, 9F GoB-Swe, 14A Lva-War
 TURKEY 2F Smy-Aeg, 1F Rum-Bla, 1A Ank-Arm, 1A Con-Bul, 1A Bul-Ser, 81A Ser-Tri
 AUSTRIA 48A Tri-Ven, 47F Gre-Bul(sc), 0A Bud S, 0A Alb S
 ITALY 85F Ion-Aeg, 6F Nap-Ion, 0A Mar# S, 0A Tun S, 0A Ven# S
 FRANCE 5A Por-Spa, 8A Gas-Bre, 22F Spa-Mar

PRESS:

GM: So here's the information on last time. One error: BW had only 4 Turkish shares, not 5. (Somebody had to have one extra, there were 101 shares listed under Turkey....) This time we had some pretty silly things ordered. First off, you can only make bids for shares you dont own. If you own x shares in a country, you can bid for up to 100-x shares. Second, you must name a price for offers. Somebody said, in effect, buy at any price, and sell at any price. Sell at any price, I interpret as an offer to sell at 1. Buy at any price is difficult. Should I make your bid 60? 80? A few million? The one bid "at any price" I got was discarded. The first event in this time's Bourse period was the taking of shares from NMRing participants. These shares were offered at 10 cents with the rest of the offers. As you'll see, my offers were the lowest in every country except Turkey, where there seems to have been a conscious effort to get the market price down. The chart's actual value per share is calculated on a guess as to how many centres you'll have at the next builds season.

Player	Credit	SUPERBOURSE								Total	
		Cash	ENG	GER	RUS	TUR	AUS	ITA	FRA	Shares	Assets
GM		87.09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	87.09
Sharp	24.00	1.59			26	89	46			161	18.57
McGonigle	6.00	1.59		20	10					30	4.77
Lowes	10.00	2.81	3	9	9			3	25	49	6.68
Barno	6.80	3.49		3		4	4	4		15	5.12
Matthews	35.00	14.02	88	5	25			5	46	169	31.82
Minshall	8.00	3.99	9	1	19	4		1	2	36	7.08
Wageler	40.00	28.45		62	11		50		8	131	42.89
Waddell	20.00	6.77				3		87	19	109	15.44

Market Prices 14 14 11 8 13 14 11

Actual Value / Share 4.34 3.32 5.12 2.29 0.25 8.20 6.15

The Stock Exchange

ITALY Offers: BW(87 at 21, 4 at 17), GM(2 at 10). Bids: SM(5 at 17), CN(1 at 17). Result: SM buys 2 from GM at 14, and 3 from BW at 17. CM buys 1 from BW at 17.

ENGLAND Offers: CM(5 at 19), SM(4 at 17), GM(1 at 10). Bids: SM(10 at 18), CM(5 at 17, 90 at 15). Result: SM buys 1 from GM at 14, CM buys 4 from SM at 17.

AUSTRIA Offers: MW(47 at 18), RS(2 at 18, 20 at 20), GM(1 at 10). Bids: SP(10 at 16), MW(2 at 18), RS(52 at 11). Result: MW buys 1 from GM at 13, and 2 from RS at 18.

RUSSIA Offers: MW(11 at 13), CM(1 at 12, 17 at 13), RS(1 at 13), GM(1 at 10). Bids: CM(80 at 10, 2 at 11), RS(74 at 4). Result: CM buys 1 from GM at 11.

FRANCE Offers: MW(8 at 13), GM(2 at 10). Bids: CM(99 at 11, 1 at 13). Result: CM buys 2 from GM, 1 at 11, and 1 at 12.

GERMANY Offers: MW(66 at 17), GM(2 at 10). Bids: SM(5 at 17), CM(1 at 17). Result: SM buys 2 from GM at 14, and 3 from MW at 17. CM buys 1 from MW at 17.

TURKEY Offers: BW(1 at 1), SP(5 at 1), RS(4 at 11), GM(1 at 10). Bids: MW(4 at 11), CM(5 at 13), RS(14 at 15). Result: RS buys 5 from SP and 1 from BW at 8, and 1 from GM at 13. CM buys 4 from RS at 12.

Retreats for next time: ITA: A Mar r (Pie, Gas, OTB)

A Ven r (Apu, Rom, Tus, Pie, Tyr, OTB)

****Next deadline is Friday May 23, 1986. One day earlier if phoned in.****

Bethena
A



Most of the Post

The first letter in this issue's letter column is on a subject some of you may want to avoid: professional wrestling. I have received two letters on the subject; the other made me uncertain as to whether or not I could print it, so I'll print this one. If enough of you are interested in the WWF scene (the other wrestling organizations are pretty minor and local in comparison), we may have a separate letter column for the discussions. I might even call it *Fighting Words*.

TOM HISE: *In reading Excelsior for the month of March I noticed that you made one mistake in your predictions for Saturday Nite Live Wrestling. While you were right that King Kong Bundy is a badwinner you missed that Brutus Beefcake is also a badwinner on the rise. I personally believe that Beefcake is being groomed to take the heavyweight title in a few years. Brutus Beefcake will not get the title until Hulk [Hogan] has brought the sport to a frenzy, the the Hulk will make a "Rocky"-style comeback.*

One thing you're definitely right about is that King Kong Bundy is nearly unstoppable. I have seen him beaten rarely myself. The two most memorable moments were the time that Fritz von Erich put Bundy in a headlock, ran him into the parking lot, and smashed his head into the grill of a Monte Carlo. (Do I believe this? Who cares, it's fun to watch!) The second time was a mat victory. The von Erich brothers vs. Bundy, Kamola, and the Magic Dragon in a six-man tag team championship. Kerry von Erich body-slammed Bundy (Kerry could not lift higher than chest high though) while David and Kevin kept Kamola and Dragon away as Kerry got the pin. That was definitely one of the best matches that Dallas has ever seen.

I do not own a T.V. while attending school now so I have not kept up but I want to let you know that there is a fan in Arlington and that I enjoyed your article.

BM: *I think Beefcake and Valentine are, or were, excellent tag team title-holders for the WWF, because they are from the west, ensuring good draws when the WWF makes one of its infrequent live forays to Seattle or Portland or Frisco, and because they are good fast wrestlers, without the reliance on too many dirty tactics or--especially--one gimmick too often repeated, like Terry Funk's "I'm all wrapped up in these ropes, beat on me awhile" trick. The best matches I've seen are between those two and the British Bulldogs, lightning fast, and very close. But as long as Brutus sticks with manager Johnny Valiant, he'll be a bad guy. And this feud between the Bulldogs and Valentine/Beefcake could go on for awhile, as neither has really proven dominance over the other. As for 458-pound King Kong Bundy (or, as one WWF announcer calls him, the "Walking Condominium"), his bald head didn't look too good after Hogan mashed it into the steel cage a few times in the Wrestlemania 2 title match, but I think Bundy looked bad in his poor acting when he tried to get through the open door. It was obvious that he wouldn't make it when we saw how long it took him to walk ten feet. He seemed to be saying "when's Hogan gonna grab me?" You'll be interested to know that Hogan tried one body-slam, and collapsed under the weight. But later in the match Bundy came off the rope fast enough for Hogan to power-slam him, which looked good to the crowd, but they didn't replay it because it was obvious that Bundy jumped at just the right moment.*

PETE GAUGHAN: *I'm dissapointed that you didn't rate my zine. It doesn't seem you missed too many from your files--is it because I missed an issue a couple of months ago? Not that I'm all that eager for your rating (I panic at the idea of being examined), but I'd like to know if this was just oversight.*

The Poll in general has never held much interest for me, so now that it has become an argument I don't care how it goes. I will predict

that Pete moves up a notch or two but loses a few points of score--"grade inflation" last year will go away this time.

"Significant other"--this is a fairly common term for devoted (especially live-in) non-married couples, except for social classes under \$10,000 income. I tend to use "girlfreind" since we don't live together, but I just love "posslq" (pronounced "poss-el-queue"): person of opposite sex sharing living quarters.

Beethoven: If Cooley lives in Palmdale, Carrier is much closer to the storms & floods. I don't know of a Palmdale. I would have matched your ruling on the double ordered Turkish A.

Re: From the Podium. I'm not surprised, or distressed. Every zine goes thorough overhauls. I don't think there are nearly as many hockey fans in Dipdom as you thought (ditto to some extent soccer)--and few people will participate in a game they don't feel a 50-50 chance of winning. I can't predict; even as much of a baseball fan as I am I always buff the predictions, so how am I to survive in pools on hockey, or Academy Awards?

And I don't have a piano so I couldn't guess the excerpts (and my flute is in mothballs).

So what to do? Pick one thing and do it well. Music, in some other form, is still an option. A game like Clue, or even a FRP campaign, would naturally generate "reader participation." A running sports column might be more successful than pools.

Good luck, whatever your choice.

BM: Thanks for a very helpful letter, Pete. You seem to have seen the ugly mood I was in when the mail started to slow down and the participation suffered, and your help is greatly appreciated. I hope this latest episode in the XL identity crisis will seal it once and for all. You should find your zine rating in here, as you see in the "About That Last Issue" piece elsewhere, it was oversight. Maybe somehow Tom Hise and I could work together on a FRP Pro Wrestling game to be played by mail if there's enough interest....

FRED DAVIS: Did everyone get a copy of XL#11 with Pg. 29 following Pg. 3, and Pg. 4 after page 28, or was I the only lucky one? Also, pages 13 and 20 were blank on my copy. Don't send another issue, but if you could send a photocopy of Pg. 13, so I'd know the rest of What's to Come, it would be appreciated. Just slip it in with the next issue.

It looks like the italic type doesn't print very well. To bad as the material was interesting. I really enjoyed reading your Valentine's Day special feature.

I hope I thanked you for sending me the World's Fair and Transit material. If I didn't before, I do now. I'd love to visit the Fair, but I have some problems. I'm supposed to be in San Diego for PeerCon, and don't know whether the airlines would consider Vancouver as a stopover on my "return" trip. Probably not.

BM: I hope you can make it here somehow, but you can be sure that XL will be filled with reports of Expo from here to October, perhaps even with pictures. I hope to do one issue with just pictures and captions, along with the games at the back. I'll send along the page you were missing, but all you're missing on Pg. 13 is Postal Clue, and as you probably gathered, Pg 20 is mostly Polltalk. As for the italics, this issue is their last chance, and I'm going to personally check the pages after the first reduction. They looked fine on Pages 23-27 last time, so they can work.

WALLACE NICOLL: Looks as though the British Zine Poll is the one to suffer from boycotts this year, mainly over the decision whether or not to include any mainland European zines in it (like Bohemian Rhapsody), and whether the poll ought to include any zines which don't run a certain number of Dip games and have produced so many copies per year. The debate is likely to heat up as the weeks go by, though I doubt whether it will reach the same level of media coverage as the Runestone Poll did last year.

Black marks this time for your printer, though it made for interesting reading....though I have every sympathy with a printer who has to put up with you...era....any...printer who has to collate 68 pages of a zine from typed sheet and get them in the right place. Mind you it should be up to them to check that their work has been completed satisfactorily.

Thanks too for the EXPO 86 brochure, thereby adding to the attraction of Vancouver.....give me a bedpost any time....and as for zines to snuggle up with, can you suggest any good ones? [The Voice of Doom #100's 270 pages might make a good, albeit hard, pillow.] We buy our envelopes by the thousand, working out at about 1 1/2 pence per envelope. The biggest pain are the overseas ones, as to cut costs we send them printed matter, and just to prove that we've not tried to sneak a letter through, the Postal Services demand that you leave the ends open, or at least in a condition that they may be opened, the contents read, drugs confiscated, addresses of contacts noted on your security file.....and then resealed so that nobody is any the wiser.

Looking on through the last XL, and the zine review section, can you explain what happened to Prisoners of War. Surely we are more memorable than that, and we do try to produce covers that will stick in the memory like a poke in the eye with a sharp stick. Maybe it's just that we never made it into the general box of zines and are lying either in some dark and dingy corner, forgotten, neglected; or else you hold us in such esteem that you didn't consider it fair to store us in the same neck of the woods as the other zines and give us a place of reverence, an altar, a raised pedestal even, maybe a bookshelf? Upset? Me? Guess!

Brief comment in reply to the comments about phoning for votes, as a GM might phone up players for missing orders, or check why they've NMRd. I must admit, I would like to phone for orders, at least when a normally regular player misses, as it's not fair on the other players to have a game ruined by dropouts and NMRs. However, not everyone can be reached by phone, which does lead to the dilemma--if I can't contact everyone, should I therefore contact ANY of the players should they disgrace themselves?

Well here's the itinerary.....

Fly out Prestwick-Boston.....26 April
Stay Boston.....27-28 April
Travel to Chester CT, via New York, to enable me to get even cheaper flight tickets.....28 April
Stay Chester.....29-30 April, 1 May
Travel to Chicago via NY.....2 May
Stay Chicago.....3-7 May (incl. trips to Minneapolis, Kalamazoo)
Travel to Bloomington.....8 May
Stay Bloomington.....9-15 May
Travel to Seattle via Chicago....16 May
Travel to Vancouver.....17 May
Stay Vancouver.....18-20 May
Travel to San Francisco.....21 May
Stay San Francisco.....22 May
Travel to Boston.....23-24 May
Return to Prestwick.....24 May

As you can see, quite hectic. My internal flights each cost me £22, so long as I use the first one before the end of April. I presume that it is quite easy to get up to Vancouver from Seattle by Greyhound, as the Northwest Orient flights only take me as far as Seattle...

Well, that's about all for now, other than to congratulate Nancy for what must have been a fine bit of acting for her valentine thing to

succeed...or is it just that you're paranoid? PoW10 is at the printers at the moment--I think I'll just hold back on any of the non-essential North American copies and bring them with me on the 26th--more baggage--anything you'd like brought over (within reason)?

Well, have fun between now and then. I hope my plans are suitable for meeting you both. All the best.

BM: Very suitable as it turns out. We still celebrate Victoria Day in this colony, and thus you'll likely be here for most of a long weekend. It may be possible for you to get the 7:30 Greyhound from Seattle that arrives at Vancouver around 11:30 PM, on the 17th, which would leave us Sunday, Victoria Day Monday, and Tuesday. The first bus to Seattle on the Wednesday would get you there about 9:30 AM, so make certain your flight to Frisco leaves no earlier than, say 11AM, or you'll have to stay the night in Seattle. All in all, it looks like a fun time. By the way, don't forget to be wide awake when your bus gets to Vancouver: the bus goes right past the Expo site on its way to the depot.

The British Zine Poll controversy is going to be interesting to follow. North America hasn't many zines which aren't "substantially devoted to Diplomacy", as the Runestone Poll rules state, and those that are, like Bill Becker's K-Zine for his United game, don't generally make a hassle about not being included. But in Britain I see the same names appearing in, say Dolchstoss (a predominantly Diplomacy zine) and Hopscotch (which to the best of my knowledge has not run a game of Diplomacy for some time). Perhaps the idea of having two polls is fine, but I don't like the idea of anyone ruling what is a DipZine and what is a GameZine. Why not let the voters decide by their votes?

1 1/2 p for one (I guess 9" by 6"?) envelope? That's about 3.6 cents Canadian. Last time I went to the stationary store, I paid 12 cents per, but I only bought about 25. Perhaps I should check into the bulk buying prices, but I can't imagine anything like that.

The reason I do so much phoning for moves here is because when I don't, the moves neede inevitably come with a month-old postmark on them. Players are at their own risk if they haven't got a phone, or if it is unlisted. I've spent twelve issues telling everyone how bad the mail is to this corner of the continent, so I have to rely on this a lot more than I'd like.

RON KRUKOWSKI: A few comments on DipGabs:

Yes, I must agree that NASA is most likely to blame for the Challenger disaster. It seems that maintaining "prestige" and an overly ambitious launch schedule have compromised their safety program, although funding could also be a factor in this as well. This makes me angry as I believe Man's future lies in space. This is the "dream" of our generation (I was born in 1957, the year of Sputnik) and every effort should be made to ensure its success. Perhaps we will learn from this terrible lesson. Your comments about hypocrisy in mourning for the Challenger 7 and not others were off base. If, as I mentioned before, space exploration and ultimately colonization is the dream for the future of mankind, then a little of that dream resides in all of us. In a way, the explosion of the Challenger shattered that dream for a time. For me, it was a very intense personal tragedy. I was shocked and moved to tears. It was as if some one I knew had died. I was incredulous and asked myself "How could this have happened and why?" This is not the same feeling I experienced when I hear of other people's deaths. Although meaningful to family and friends, news of the tragic deaths of others is somehow impersonal to me. I believe it has to do with a sense of loss. But I grew up with the space program and the hopes and dreams of the future it has promised, "to go where no man has gone before," and therefore feel that I am a part of it. When the Challenger exploded, a part of me was there and was lost...but I will always remember.

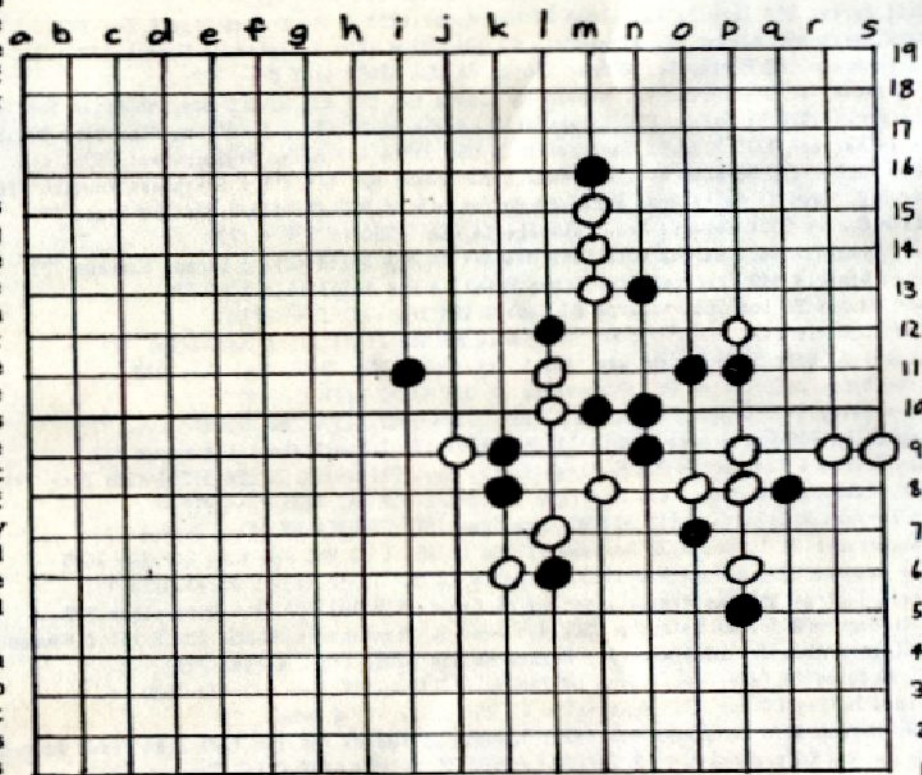
BM: Thanks, Ron, for sharing your feelings on this: I'm sure most of us went through much the same thing. It still makes me angry to

think that we've had all these successful shuttle flights and the fate of our best manned spacecraft ever depends on the temperature at launch time. If we've got that far to go before we get to the easy space travel of the Star Trek age (or at least a start), then we'd better quit drawing out this investigation and get on with the work of designing a better shuttle that doesn't explode if you try to fly it in cold weather. I mean, it's like Commodore coming out with a new computer, only to discover that it only works in the precise atmospheric conditions of the testing laboratory, and crashes anywhere else. Except that the tragedy of Challenger is a million times more high-profile, lethal, and amazing in its stupidity.

Correctly solving this Pente puzzle will get you five issues of XL. If you don't remember the rules of Pente, this is them:

On a 19 by 19 board, two players alternate placing stones, until one person has a Pente (five stones in a row, orthagonally or diagonally), or one person has made five captures. Captures are made Othello-style, but only pairs of opposing stones may be captured, and captured stones are immediately removed from the board.

In this problem you are White, no captures have yet been made, and it is your move. What's the best play? There is one play which will ensure victory.



CENSUS

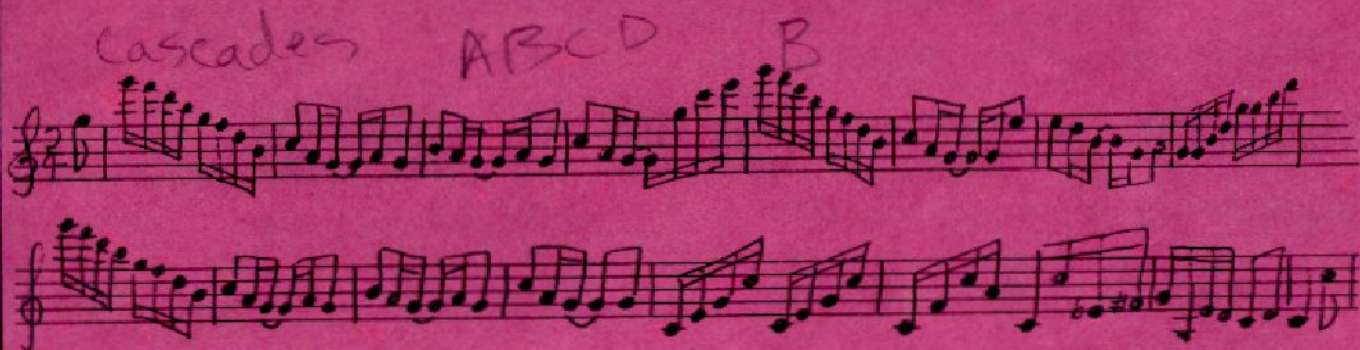
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 Don Clancy ??? Vancouver BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-876-6200
 John Cooper ??? Vancouver BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-876-8396
 Randy Davis ??? Surrey? BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-581-6964
 Greg Jansen ??? Surrey? BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-594-9126
 Simon Matthews ??? North Vancouver BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-929-3708
 Laurie McIlvina ??? New Westainster BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-522-9132
 Bruce McIntyre & Nancy Hurrell 6191 Winch St. Burnaby BC Canada V5B 2L4 (X) Z XL, CC 604-299-2382
 Klaig Morton ??? New Westainster BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-524-3368
 Mischa Sandberg ??? Burnaby BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-298-6710
 Bruce Waddell ??? Burnaby BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-434-6523
 Mitchell Wageler 665 E 29th Ave. Vancouver BC Canada ??? (C) Z -- 604-874-3605

Bob Acheson c/o Echo Bay Mines Lupin NWT Canada X0E 1M0 (T) S The Canadian Diplomat ???
 Jeff Albrecht PO Box 295 Doland SD USA 57436-0295 (17) Z -- ???
 Charles Arsenault Voie Du Car D'Or 2/102 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve ~~XXX~~ BELGIUM (14) S --
 Mike Barro 2811 Robins St. Endwell NY USA 13760 (12) Z -- ???
 Bill Becker 810 Turvill Kalamazoo MI USA 49007 (21) Z The K-Zine From K-Zoo ???
 Mark Berch 492 Naylor Pl. Alexandria VA USA 22304 (MS) Z Diplomacy Digest ???
 Kevin Brown 100 Patton Dr. Warner Robins GA USA 31093 (14) S -- ???
 Ron Brown 70F Chesterton Dr. Nepean ON Canada K2E 5S9 (32.5) Z D-Day, No Fixed Publisher ???
 Ron Brown 1528 El Sereno Pl. Bakersfield CA USA 93304 (T) Z Murd'ring Ministers 805-834-8409
 Chris Carrier 1215 P St.12 Sacramento CA USA 95814 (T) S The MegaDiplomat ???
 Dave Carter 118 Horsham Ave. Willowdale ON Canada M2N 1Z9 (T) Z Sleepless Knights 416-221-8066
 Derek R. Caws 17 Malta Road Buckland Portsmouth UK PO2 7P2 (T) Z War and Peace ???
 Steve Cooley 3551 Casamia Ave. Palmdale CA USA 93550 (12) Z -- ???
 Gary Coughlan 4614 Martha Cole Lane Memphis TN USA 38118 (21) Z Europa Express ???
 Derek Daniels 440 Fairview Ave. Crown Point IN USA 46307 (12) Z -- ???
 John Davies PO Box 968 Pt.Hardy BC Canada V0N 2P0 (13) Z -- ???
 Fred C. Davis 1427 Clairidge Rd. Baltimore MD USA 21207 (T) Z Bushwacker ???
 Michael J. Ditz 5785 Danube Way, Apt.C Orlando FL USA 32807 (14) Z -- ???
 Steve Dycus 3450 Koring Rd. Evansville IN USA 47712 (14) Z -- ???
 James Early 3705 Uruguay Pasadena TX USA 77504-2321 (T) Z The Razor's Edge ???
 Greg Ellis 700 Rio Grande Austin TX USA 78701 (T) Z Feuilletonist's Forum ???
 Joan Extrom & Ken Corbin 35096 Kings Valley Hwy. Philomath OR USA 97370 (20) Z -- ???
 Jerry Falkiner 10 Spiers Cr. Cambridge ON Canada M1R 1B2 (13) Z -- ???
 Jan Feringa Radijstraat 11B 9741BJ Groningen THE NETHERLANDS (T) Z Brutus ???
 Paul Gardner Rt 1, Box 2338 Newfane VT USA 05345 (T) Z Not New York 802-365-7635
 Pete Gaughan 3121 E.Park Row #165 Arlington TX USA 76010 (13) Z Perelandra ???
 Claude Gautron 150 rue Masson Winnipeg MB Canada R2H 0H2 (17.5) S Quinipique ???
 Scott Hanson & Frauke Petersen 3508 4th Ave. S. Minneapolis MN USA 55408 (T) Z Pommes Mit Mayo ???
 W. Elmer Hinton Jr. 20 Almont St. Nashua NH USA 03060 (T) Z Kaissa ???
 J.C. Hodgins 16 Farr Ave. Sharon ON Canada L06 1V0 (13) Z -- ???-478-4630
 Melinda Holley PO Box 2793 Huntington WV USA 25727 (T) Z Rebel ???
 Steve Hutton 1175 Broadview Ave. #711 Toronto ON Canada M4K 2S9 (22) Z No Fixed Address ???
 Jaap Jacobs Kaiserstraat 10-B 2311GR Leiden THE NETHERLANDS (T) Z Oxyoron ???
 Thomas E. Johnson 2 Chaucer Dr. Newark DE USA 19713 (17) Z -- ???
 Dave Kleiman 651 Fenster Court Indianapolis IN USA 46234 (17) Z The Diplomat 317-271-9217
 Steve Knight 2732 Grand Ave. S. Minneapolis MN USA 55057 (11) Z It's a Trap! ???
 Ron Krukowski 5339 W.Eddy Chicago IL USA 60641 (36) S -- ???
 Steve & Daf Langley 2296 Eden Roc Lane #1 Sacramento CA USA 95825 (MS) Z Magus ???
 Travis Laster 125 Garden Court Winchester VA USA 22601 (11) Z -- ???
 BRUX Linsey 73 Ashuelot St. Apt.3 Dalton MA USA 01226 (20) Z The Cream Shall Rise, TRAI ???
 Brian Lorber 1927 Orrington Ave. Evanston IL USA 60201 (21) Z -- ???
 Rob Loves RR#9 Peterborough ON Canada K9J 6X1 (10) Z -- ???

Scott Harley c/o GAMES Magazine, 515 Madison Ave. New York NY USA 10022 (14) Z -- ???
Alain Martine 47 Chartres Dollard-des-Orneaux PR Canada H9A 1J6 (37) Z -- ???
Sean McGonigle 44B Kelvin Rd. Papakura NEW ZEALAND #1 (10+45.505B) Z -- ???
Conrad von Metzke PO Box 17602 San Diego CA USA 92117-0602 (T) Z Costaguana 619-276-2937
Paul Milevski PO Box 256 Batavia OH USA 45103 (11) Z -- ???
Conrad Minshall 3702 Tarragona Lane Austin TX USA 78727 (14) Z (Butter Battles) ???
Wallace Nicoll & Doug Rowling 228 Kinnell Ave Cardonald Glasgow, SCOTLAND UK G52 3RU (T) Z POW ???
Cathy & Eric Drog 1526 N. Lavler Ave. Chicago IL USA 60651 (T) Z Cathy's Raablings ???
D.S. Palter 999 Central Ave #300 Woodmere NY USA 11598 (12) Z -- ???
Alan Parr 6 Longfield Gardens Tring Herts UK HP23 4DN (T) Z Hopscotch ???
Ken Peel 8708 First Avenue, No. T-2 Silver Spring MD USA 20910 (18) Z -- ???-495-2799
Larry Peery Box 8416 San Diego CA USA 92102 (T) S Xenogogic ???
Dennis Quine 55 Rosemoor Rd. Little Rock AR USA 72209 (21+6F) Z -- ???
Bill Quinn 301 Conroe Dr. Conroe TX USA 77301 (T) Z Everything (BNC) ???
Craig Reges 16W761 White Plains Rd. Bensenville IL USA 60106 (11) S -- ???
Jeff Richmond 3133 Platt Rd. Ann Arbor MI USA 48104 (T) Z Frobozz ???
Rosie Roberts Ziegeleivog 4 2126 Adendorf WEST GERMANY #11 (51) Z -- ???
Glover Rogerson The Basement, 11 Buckingham Place Clifton Bristol UK BS8 1LJ (T) Z Denver Glont ??
Ben Schilling 24730 Roosevelt Ct. Apt.315 Farmington Hills MI USA 48018 (13) Z -- ???
Johannes Schwagerleit Am Kiefernain 10 D-4030 Ratingen 5 WEST GERMANY #11 (T) Z Spielwiese ???
Richard Sharp 27 Elm Close Amersham Bucks UK HP6 5DB (Comp.) Z Dolchstoss ???
Keith Sherwood 4824 1/2 Muir San Diego CA USA 92107 (T) Z The Inner Light 619-224-8037
Bill Shirley 618 Main St. Yarmouth NS Canada B5A 1J9 (13) S -- ???
Malcolm Smith Granliveien 11 1086 Oslo 10 1 : NORWAY (T) Z Bohemian Rhapsody ???
Randolph Sayth 8119-70 Maryland St Winnipeg MB Canada R3G 1K7 (12.5) Z Fol Si Fie 204-772-6825
Ron Snyder PO Box 2721 Charlottetown PEI Canada C1A 8C3 (24) Z -- ??
Ron Spitzer 761 N. Bundy Dr. Los Angeles CA USA 90049 (16+16F) Z -- 213-476-2077
Alan Stewart 702-25 St Mary St. Toronto ON Canada M4Y 1R2 (14) S -- ???
Jacques-Henri Strauss Ambassade de France en Uruguay Casilla de Corillo 580 Montevideo URUGUAY (39) Z -- ???
Stephen Wigger 35 Sharrowbay Ct. Scarborough ON Canada M1W 3T1 (14.5) Z -- ???
Terry Tallan 7239 Sand Point Way NE #308 Seattle WA USA 98115 (T) Z NSW6 ???
Lynn Torkelson 992 Rosedale Rd NE Atlanta GA USA 30306 (11) S -- ???
Pierre Touchette 1 rue Georges Masson PQ Canada J01 2H0 (17) S -- ???
Don Wagner 5251 Argyle St. Pt. Alberni BC Canada V9Y 1V1 (22????) Z -- ???
Earl E. Whiskeyman Jr. 27 Mark St. Milford CT USA 06460 (T) Z The CT Gamers Zine ???
Wayne Mittal 5251 Argyle St. Pt. Alberni BC Canada V9Y 1V1 (22) Z -- ???

added since: Paul Simpkins (Bruce) & Simon Billenness (N.A. Zine Register)



HOUSEKEEPING

It's been rather too long since I last did one of these, so PLEASE check your mailing cover to make sure I'm up to date, because I'm probably not. If I've room, I'll print my address list as well this issue, so you can see how out of date I really am.

Welcome to:

Conrad von Metzke, PO Box 17602, San Diego CA, USA (*Costaguana*).
 James Early, 3705 Uruguay, Pasadena TX, USA 77504-2321 (*The Razor's Edge*).
 Jacques-Henri Strauss, Ambassade de France en Uruguay, Casilla de Corillo 580, Montevideo URUGUAY.
 Malcolm Smith, Granliveien 11, 1086 Oslo 10, NORWAY (*Bohemian Rhapsody*).
 Ron Snyder, PO Box 2721, Charlottetown PEI, Canada C1A 8C3

Good-bye to:

Ralph Morton
 Ted Shannon

Assorted items of subscription-extending monetary value received from:

Ben Schilling, Claude Gautron, Brian Lorber, and the new subbers above. If I've missed you in this, better tell me, because I don't have one of them snazzy accounts, where I get a copy of all the cheques I cash, back.

Sub Warnings.: (*NONE, One, or Two issues left in your sub before this one. If you didn't have any issues left going in to this one, you're only seeing this because a) I'm a nice guy, and b) you're in a game in XL. You should know the following: a) One can only be nice for so long, and b) you might be replaced next time.*): Mike Barno, Steve Cooley, Derek Daniels, John Davies, Jerry Falkiner, Pete Gaughan, J.C. Hodgins, STEVE KNIGHT, TRAVIS LASTER, ROB LOWES, Sean McGonigle, PAUL MILEWSKI, D.S. Palter, CRAIG REGES, Ben Schilling, Bill Shirley, Randolph Smyth, LYNN TORKELSON. Sheesh. Looks like we might have a smaller subscription list soon.

Stand-bys for regular Diplomacy are: Bob Acheson, Charles Arsenault, Kevin Brown, Chris Carrier, Claude Gautron, Ron Krukowski, Paul Milewski, Craig Reges, Bill Shirley, Alan Stewart, Lynn Torkelson, Pierre Touchette. Want in or out? Just ask! Stand-bys play for free--including their subscription. If you're called here, you will receive one free issue of XL tacked onto your sub for each season you played, including holdovers, provided you do not drop. Lynn, this means you can either pay me or send in orders for ALBINONI.

Gamestarts:

Diplomacy: FAURE: Paul Milewski, Pete Fuchs (who will sub when I have seven, apparently), Dennis Quine, Derek Daniels, Jerry Falkiner, Wayne Wittal. 1 needed.

Superbourse: Anyone can enter at any time, rules straddled betwixt XL#6-7.

International Diplomacy: ELGAR: Jeff Albrecht, Charles Arsenault, Sean McGonigle, Rosie Roberts, Malc Smith, Jacques-Henri Strauss. One needed--I'm waiting for a reply from Finland on this, should be off by next time.

Stand-bys called:

Bob Acheson (Italy, ALBINONI), and Claude Gautron (Russia, ALBINONI), plus Chris Carrier (Austria, DEBUSSY), and Bill Shirley (Italy, DEBUSSY).