

EXCELSIOR 38

A True C.D.O. Zine: Correspondance, Diplomacy, and Opinions

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We have three games here that were previously sent out by flyer. FAURE (p22), GREGORY (p.21), and MAHLER, formerly ELGIN (Praxis), but now renamed (p.20-21). All 3

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OUR NEW ADDRESS
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are due November 16, but GREGORY and MAHLER have a slight error: I thought the 15th was the Friday. FAURE has been redone--no deadline extension has been given. -BM

Diplomacy is a simple game--ask any novice. Well, maybe that's not the best person to ask. Novices make bonthead plays, which, for the most part, are unrelated to their playing ability. But any good Diplomat will take any advantage offered him, so with that in mind, we present

The Top Ten Tip-Off Lines Uttered By Novices Before the First Move, And Your Best Strategy Against Them

(read from bottom up--even if you're a novice)

1. "Are you sure there aren't any differences between the board and the conference map?" (Novices are best on your side--so resist the urge to dryly say, "actually, I suspect the board is much bigger.")
2. "What if I move two of my units to the same spot?" (Tell him, "nothing happens"--and say no more.)
3. "Could you help me with this convoy order?" (On the first move? Surre. . . .)
4. "Can my ally help me write my orders?" (Agree to this, and note well who comes forward.)
5. "Can my army go across the water in Con?" (Tell him he needs a fleet in the Aegean or the Black Sea. If you're Russia just tell him he needs a fleet in the Aegean.)
6. "Harry says you're going to attack me." (Deny it--revise your orders, then bad mouth Harry and get the novice to help you knock him out.)
7. "What do you think of Harry? Does he lie a lot?" (Say, "Almost as much as I used to".)
8. "We have adjacent centres here. It seems to me that we shouldn't waste a unit defending them." (Agree, discuss the alternatives, agree on one, then strike!)
9. "I can only stay 5 hours. Is that long enough?" (Tell him yes, but not to make it public, or he'll be attacked. Then after four hours go after him.)
10. "First three letters are enough for abbreviations?" (Say yes--especially if he's England.)

DIRECTORY

EXCELSIOR #38, printed November 2, 1990, in Burnaby BC, CANADA by a most eager and helpful new face (who tells me that David Peng has been promoted to the head office downtown) at Budget Printing. With the usual heaven of a lot of support from Nancy Hurrell, and the miraculous arrival of a second issue of Fred Davis's subzine--with such a quick (well, for me this is quick) turnaround, I was sure I was gonna be by myself this issue!

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5-10	Leacock section. The final third of <u>Afternoon Adventures at My Club</u> , which is well timed, as I have hundreds of Leacock's Christmas essays to choose from for next issue.
11-13	McBruce on Backgammon. (Strike two called by Tom Nash, who thinks <u>XL</u> is full of Backgammon stuff even when it isn't.) The computer as teacher: you can learn many things by watching a computer play against itself--like how to lose.
13-14	Most Of The Post. Sorry, make that <u>One</u> of The Post. Not many letters this month, but I do have a nice juicy one from <u>David Mond</u> , included the debut of the word "nother" (obviously the 90s replacement for "y'all") in <u>XL</u> .
15-16	The It's Your Call quiz (part 3), repeated from last issue, because nobody's really had enough time to get anything it yet.
16-17	Seismic Diplomacy rules (once more): last call for those who feel their level of play is particularly earth-moving....
18-19	Silent 7 Diplomacy rules, another repeat. 7x7 Gunboat with cross-gaming. Like the notion? Read it and see what you think.
20-22	Diplomacy games. What's where, you ask? Details on cover gamefinder.
23-24	FRED'S COLUMN #2, by Fred C. Davis, Jr. In #2 Fred looks at the Baltimore area war between transit and commuting, while simultaneously causing me to search out my old calculus texts, because he has photo-reduced two sections of the same article to slightly different sizes! A few hours from now I am going to be making some very strange sounding requests ("could you reduce this to 99.4% of original size please?"), which may get some interesting reactions ("All right. Would you mind very much telling me why?") from the printer!
24	BURNABY GAME OPENINGS #3. It used to appear on the Addenda sheet, but now, in an all-out, reckless bid to get onto the Runestone Poll subzine ballot, it's in the zine itself! Eric Brosius please note.

SOMEWHERE IN HERE: The DiploScrabble puzzle, repeated from last time.

Excelsior is a postal gaming zine dedicated firstly to the game of Diplomacy, copyrighted by Avalon Hill in the U.S., and sold by Waddington-Sanders above the line, which tries to be published about 8-10 times a year. Excelsior are wood shavings used in packaging--this zine is quite unsuitable for that purpose.

This issue costs \$1.26 to Canada, US 85¢ in the USA, and US \$1.00 elsewhere, except for those overseas subbers playing in a Diplomacy game or variant here, for whom the cost is halved. The normal overseas rate is fixed (but has been cut by 50% this time), the others are [postage] + [(2¢ CDN) or (1.75¢ US) per page], but the last page you pay for is page 28.

The address to which things must be sent is 6636 Dow Ave., #203, Burnaby BC, Canada V5H 3C9. Phone number is 604/438-9735, and Monday through Friday from midnight to 8 AM, 604/524-9915. Eventually I'll have some sort of E-Mail account too, but I'm concerned about the costs, and the requirement that I get myself a credit card or a chequing account on a U.S. bank.

Cutoff date for next issue (not counting the separate deadlines the Dip game always have) is Friday, November 30. Players in games: if your deadline says "Friday, November 15, 1990," I will accept orders on Friday, November 16, 1990. Sorry about that....

DipGab

I guess this issue will arrive about 2-3 weeks after the last one. This kind of eliminates any possibility of it being real large, since nobody will have any time to get stuff in from the last issue. But I think we all agree that it's about time I put out two issues in two months, even if the first of the two is so late that the two issues go out almost simultaneously.

As I write, I've got 100 XL #37s sitting on my kitchen table, and this weekend I will stuff a bunch of envelopes with them, and Monday morning I'll be getting a paycheque and will mail them. There are three main reasons for the cash flow problem. First, the new boss pays every second Monday instead of twice a month, so I had to adjust spending habits a bit. Second, as you see, I've bought a new printer, completely disregarding the first problem as I did so. Third, on September 29, I lost one-hundred and ninety-two points in fifteen minutes of backgammon. In a seven player chouette, I found myself in the box after eleven hours (the game began at midnight) and played the last game I ever will play with unlimited automatic doubles. The cube started at eight after three of these, I took the early lead, doubled to 16, saw an amazing series of 17-1 and 35-1 shots destroy my position, and could not accept taking a loss of 96 points (16 times six players) while I was only slightly behind, so I took the cube back at 32, and promptly was beaten. Luckily, the points were representing quarters and not dollars or fims or double sawbucks or anything. Anyhow, I saddled myself with a \$50 debt to two people on that occasion (the other \$50 was for a hockey pool I entered the next day at the invite of one of the players), and resolved not to play unlimited automatics again. The amazing thing is that I won far more games than I lost in the eleven hours I played: I just lost the big ones and won the meaningless ones.

Anyhow, I should be back on my feet for a while now. The situation at work is very solid, I'll have the debts paid off next week with lots to spare (especially since the old printer is going to fetch \$100 from a co-worker of Nancy's when they get their paycheques), and the zine will look nicer with the new printer. Which is the next subject:

The new printer I've bought not only looks quite a bit better, but also is a charm to operate. Strange how the salesmen never seem to tell you the things that would sell the product. They say, look at this self test, isn't that great? What I want to know is whether it's compatible with C64 graphics programs, whether it will do microspacing, whether the ribbons are widely available, etc. The answers are almost,

yes, and yes, but there's rather more. If I had known that the thing could do off-line things like "set top-of-page", "paper park", "forward and reverse microfeed", "buffer clearing", as well as power-up functions like "stay in panel pitch/style", "hex dump"; if I had known how simple it was to feed single sheets through, if I had known about the easily available options like ornamentation (outlines and shadows and combinations of them), if I had known that you could buy font cards to add to the printer, I'd have bought it in three seconds flat. And the moral of the story is that salesmen ought to recognize customers like me who know what they're talking about technically, and just leave them alone with the display model and the manual and wait until they give in. Why do the stores figure I'm more likely to buy based on what the sales guy says it can do than based on what the manual says it can do? The manual is well-written, and has a complete summary of the things it can do on page 3: better than the self test they showed me. If they were going to show me something, they might have demonstrated paper parking (while using single-sheets you can reverse-feed the fanfold paper to a spot where it is unaffected by the single-sheet printing and doesn't need to be reloaded when you next use it) and especially how easy it is to load single-sheets.

The only serious problem I've had so far is that the GEOS program I use to create maps and graphics is producing output that is smaller than the program says it should be, about 88% of normal size. The old printer distorted the dimensions so that the units on maps, which were supposed to be squares and circles, were a bit too tall for their widths. This has been corrected, and the result is a slightly different look to the headline fonts, and the maps. But the 88% I suspect results from the machine printing 90 dots per inch instead of 80. I'll see what can be done, but I may not be able to fix this one. Maybe with the extra space (because the maps aren't quite as wide now) I'll relocate the supply centre charts down the right hand side. There's a thought.

Anyhow, with the help of the "hex dump" option (which prints all the codes sent to the printer verbatim instead of executing the various embedded commands, allowing you to see in detail what your software is instructing the printer to do), I had no trouble at all creating a printer file for the word processor that would do more even microspace justification, and I may even be able to do proportional justification by next time. If a 64 can do that, who needs more?

About eight years ago, I took a former girlfriend to see the latest touch-up of Fantasia, Disney's wonderful adaptation of classical music to animation. Since that

time, I have come to know and love nearly all of the music used: Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony*, Dukas's *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, even Stravinsky's *Rite Of Spring*. (The original idea was to bring *Fantasia* back every 5-10 years with new additions to the programme, but unfortunately this has never been done.) I expected, therefore, to enjoy it even more when it hit Vancouver-area cinemas last month.

I was wrong, for three reasons: first, we attended a Saturday afternoon matinee, an obvious blunder on our part; second, the theatre we attended was not the best in terms of sound quality; third, the 1940 Stokowsky versions of the music is frightfully out of date with today's standards--especially in the modern works like the Stravinsky and the Dukas.

I've talked to a few people about this, and I have a hard time convincing them that I could perceive the third problem through the distractions of the other two. Yes, there were babies crying and kids doing gymnastics in the front row and wiggling and burping and giggling and chattering kids all around us, and we were totally pissed off at this, and yes, the sound was not tremendous, but I don't even own a CD player--I'm used to sub-par sound quality. But the most astonishing thing about the soundtrack was not the distractions or the local acoustics, but instead the god-awful playing. The Stravinsky in parts sounded like the attempt of a high school band, with blatant guessing at difficult passages and wrong notes. The Dukas was also very imprecise in spots. I understand that the animation dictates the tempo, but John Williams has proved that this is not an inhibiting factor. If Disney really wanted to modernize *Fantasia*, they would hire a modern orchestra to redo the soundtrack (it would be a fitting finale to Charles Dutoit's wonderful run with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra), perhaps add a new piece or two to the programme, and decree to all cinema owners that everyone gets in at reduced price for the matinee's and nobody gets in at kiddie price for the late show. Music lovers do not want to smolder in a crowd of jittery kiddies.

What's going on with DipCon '91? I have seen many scoring systems proposed/discussed in zines, but no official releases from Doug Acheson, nor any CanCon report. Is his printer broken or something?

The former Praxis game named ELGIN has been renamed MAHLER for this zine. Ol' Gustave isn't my favorite composer in the M section of Grove (Mussorgsky and Mendelssohn are slightly higher in the rankings, and of course forgetting Mozart would be a crime), but MAHLER's *Symphony No. 2* is nicknamed "The Resurrection." Seems logical. Anyhow, Mahler players didn't get last issue because I didn't copy enough of

the darned things! I actually have only two copies of XL #38 left. Does anyone want to send back their copy (whenever you prefer) for double credit? Having only two left is asking for trouble in the future when I go looking for stuff I've written in this issue.

Our hockey pool teams this year are as follows: In the Davis pool (\$20 in, 15 people, 12 players, top 10 count, redraft in January), Nancy and I are both in separately, and these are our teams:

Nancy (1st after two weeks): Sakic (Que), Hawerchuk (Buf), Stevens (Pit), Statsny (NJ), Courtnall (StL), Ranheim (Cgy), Bullard (???), Lebeau (Mtl), Ashton (Wpg), King (NYI), McBain (Vcr), Mallette (NYR).

McBruce (15th...): Bellows (Min), Damphousse (Tor), Shanahan (NJ), Sundstrom (NJ), Roberts (Cgy), Barber (Min), Norton (NYI), Eklund (Phi), Wood (NYI), Schneider (Mtl), Holik (Hfd), Ysebaert (NJ).

I'm also in a \$50 pool, with 14 players, all 14 count but you can substitute players in a draft in January: I have Yzerman (Det), Bellows (Min), Shanahan (NJ), MacLean (NJ), Fleury (Cgy), Hatcher (Wsh), Barber (Min), Eklund (Phi), Wood (NYI), Schneider (Mtl), M.Hunter (Cgy), Tucker (Buf), Hrkac (Que), Svoboda (Mtl). So far in this one I'm back in the pack, 9th out of 13. I figure I'm out \$70 unless most of the players I have in both pools have great years.

Anybody noticed the difference the new nets are making this year in the NHL? They moved them out from the boards a foot. Doesn't seem to be affecting much, but then Mario Lemieux is injured, and it's regarded as "his" rule, so maybe we'll see more of it when (if?) he returns. Gretzky might have used the extra space in the old days, but his stated pace of 2.5 points a game is already off after a Kings homestand--you can't expect him to perform better on the road. The Canucks are starting off well, 5-4 at this writing, and most of the team harmony stems from the fact that the team brass has told Vladimir "The Tank" Krutov (also known as Vlad the Inhaler for his love of Western food, notably hot dogs, and his inability to get himself into shape outside the concentration camp of Soviet hockey) to go suck an egg. Seems the Tank was told to report to camp in shape and wasn't even close, and now the Canucks are refusing to pay him--which was the problem last year: the guy's making twice as much as anyone else and he dies after a forty-five second shift. The other Soviet player here, Igor Larionov, has brought his contract up to NHL standards by agreeing to provisions whereby he can be traded, sent down, or bought out. Larionov is playing well under the new contract, but understandably Krutov wants to get his paycheques coming in before he agrees to anything like that. He is

...by STEPHEN LEACOCK

[Concluding Stephen Leacock's Afternoon Adventures At My Club, we start with an essay which must have been potentially explosive in 1917...]

7. THE WAR MANIA OF MR. JINKS AND MR. BLINKS

They were sitting face to face at a lunch table at the club so near to me that I couldn't avoid hearing what they said. In any case they are both stout men with gurgling voices which carry.

"What Kitchener ought to do," Jinks was saying in a loud voice.

So I knew at once that he had the prevailing hallucination. He thought he was commanding armies in Europe.

After which I watched him show with three bits of bread and two olives and a dessert knife the way in which the German army could be destroyed.

Blinks looks at Jinks's diagram with a stern impassive face, modelled on the Sunday supplement photogravures of Lord Kitchener.

"Your flank would be too much exposed," he said, pointing to Jinks's bread. He spoke with the hard taciturnity of a Joffre.

"My reserves cover it," said Jinks,

currently being whipped into shape by working out with UBC, but there may be a legal battle ahead.

Quote of the year in the Hockey News: it seems Bob Probert of the Wings is off drugs and alcohol, proven by bi-weekly testing agreed to as a condition of his rejoining the team after his suspension. However, he still spends time with his drinking buddies, which has caused rumours to fly in Detroit, and in an attempt to clarify things, a Wings executive had this to say: "Unfortunately, Bob like to hang out in bars where people drink." I guess in Detroit you have to make the distinction, but around these parts there aren't many bars where people refuse to drink.

A nice little modem function I've discovered is access to the Burnaby Public Library database. You can search for titles, subjects, or authors, and the database can tell you where any book is at the moment. There are even ways to reserve a book via modem to ensure it's not picked up while you hightail it to the branch that has it. Excellent idea.

As most expected, David Hood did a fine job in the new Diplomacy World. DW #60 has some very interesting pieces, including a fascinating article on a game which ended in an 18 center win by England in 1935, with four players reaching double figures at one point or another during the game. Another

moving two pepper pots to the support of the bread.

"Mind you," Jinks went on, "I don't say Kitchener will do this, I say this is what he ought to do: it's exactly the tactics of Kuropatkin outside of Mukden and it's precisely the same turning movement that Grant used before Richmond."

Blinks nodded gravely. Anybody who has seen the Grand Duke Nicholaievitch quietly accepting the advice of General Ruski, under heavy artillery fire, will realize Blinks's manner to a nicety.

And, oddly enough, neither of them, I am certain, has ever had any larger ideas about the history of the Civil War than what can be got from reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and seeing Gillette play *Secret Service*. But this is part of the mania. Jinks and Blinks had suddenly developed the hallucination that they knew the history of all wars by a sort of instinct.

They rose soon after that, dusted their waistcoats with their napkins and waddled heavily towards the door. I could hear them, as they went, talking eagerly of the need of keeping the troops in hard training. They were almost brutal in their severity. As they passed out the door--one at a time to avoid crowding--they were still talking about it. Jinks was saying that our whole generation is over-fed and soft. If he has

interesting zine to arrive here is Pierre Touchette's Diplodocus, which is going bilingual! I wish Pierre the best in this venture, a natural for the Canadian hobby.

The bridge hand on the last addenda sheet was not as obvious as it looked:

♠ AJ8 ♥ KQ42 ♦ J4 ♣ T962

5♠ led

♠ KQ975 ♥ AJ85 ♦ A6 ♣ KJ

In 4♠ doubled (by the opening leader), you won the opening lead with the K♠ (beating RHO's Queen), and led a spade to the Ace, with RHO showing out. If you now fell into the trap I fell into, and led a heart back to finesse the 8♠, you will suffer a ruff, as RHO has all the missing hearts, and eventually lose a diamond and a club and another spade. LHO will return a diamond, knocking out the ace, and if you now finesse the 8♠, you can't get back to your hand without giving up a trump trick. If you finesse the 8♠, unblock the J♠, and then lose the club, a diamond and then another diamond will come back, causing you to ruff, and you still have a trump loser. Trust me: I watched it happen. One way to make the hand (with the vital overtrick) is to continue with the J♠, then the 8♠ to the King, Q♠, and then, with LHO holding the master trump, play the J♠. If he takes it, he can take his trump as well, but you then have four hearts, the T9♠ and the A♠ and can claim the rest. To bad this eluded me at the table, because I redoubled the damn thing!

EXCELSIOR

his way, he would take every man in the United States up to forty-seven years of age (Jinks is forty-eight) and train him to a shadow. Blinks went further. He said they should be trained hard up to fifty. He is fifty-one.

After that I used to notice Jinks and Blinks always together in the club, and always carrying on about the European War.

I never knew which side they were on. They seemed to be on both. One day they commanded huge armies of Russians, and there was one week when Blinks and Jinks at the head of vast levies of Cossacks threatened to overrun the whole of Western Europe. It was dreadful to watch them burning churches and monasteries and to see Jinks throw whole convents of white-robed nuns into the flames like so much waste paper.

For a time I feared they would obliterate civilization itself. Then suddenly Blinks decided that Jinks's Cossacks were no good, not properly trained. He converted himself on the spot into a Prussian Field-Marshal, declared himself organized to a pitch of organization of which Jinks could form no idea, and swept Jinks's army off the earth, without using any men at all, by sheer organization.

In this way they moved to and fro all the winter over the map of Europe, carrying death and destruction everywhere and revelling in it.

But I think I liked best the wild excitement of their naval battles.

Jinks generally fancied himself a submarine and Blinks acted the part of a first class battleship. Jinks would pop his periscope out of the water, take a look at Blinks merely for the fraction of a second, and then, like a flash, would dive under water again and start firing his torpedoes. He explained that he carried six.

But he was never quick enough for Blinks. One glimpse of his periscope miles and miles away was enough. Blinks landed him a contact shell in the side, sunk him with all hands, and then lined his yards with men and cheered. I have known Blinks sink Jinks at two miles, six miles, and once--in the club billiard room just after the battle of the Falkland Islands--he got him fair and square at ten nautical miles.

Jinks of course claimed that he was not sunk. He had dived. He was two hundred feet under water quietly smiling at Blinks through his periscope. In fact the number of things that Jinks has learned to do through his periscope passes imagination.

Whenever I see him looking at Blinks with his eyes half closed and with a baffling, quizzical expression in them, I know that he is looking at him through his periscope. Now is the time for Blinks to watch out. If he relaxes his vigilance for a moment he'll be torpedoed as he sits, and sent flying, whiskey and soda and all, through the roof of the club, while Jinks dives into the basement.

Indeed, it has come about of late, I don't know just how, that Jinks has got more or less command of the sea. A sort of tacit understanding has been reached that Blinks, whichever army he happens at the moment to command, is invincible on land. But Jinks, whether as a submarine or a battleship, controls the sea. No doubt this grew up in the natural evolution of their conversation. It makes things easier for both. Jinks even asks Blinks how many men there are in an army division, a what a sotnia of Cossacks is, and what the Army Service Corps means. And Jinks in return has become a recognized expert in torpedoes and has taken to wearing a blue serge suit and referring to Lord Charles Beresford as "Charlie."

But what I noticed chiefly about the war mania of Jinks and Blinks was their splendid indifference to slaughter. They had gone into the war with a grim resolution to fight it out to a finish. If Blinks thought to terrify Jinks by threatening to burn London, he little knew his man. "All right," said Jinks, taking a fresh light for his cigar, "burn it! By doing so, you destroy, let us say, two million of my women and children? Very good. Am I injured by that? No. You merely stimulate me to recruiting."

There was something awful in the grimness of the struggle as carried on by Blinks and Jinks.

The rights of neutrals and non-combatants, Red Cross nurses, and regimental clergymen they laughed to scorn. As for moving-picture men and newspaper correspondants, Jinks and Blinks hanged them on every tree in Belgium and Poland.

With combatants in this frame of mind the war, I suppose, might have lasted for ever.

But it came to an end accidentally--fortuitously, as all great wars are apt to. And, by accident also, I happened to see it.

It was late one evening, Jinks and Blinks were coming down the steps of the club, and as they came they were speaking with some vehemance on their favorite topic.

"I tell you," Jinks was saying, "war is a great thing. We needed it, Blinks. We were all getting too soft, too scared of suffering and pain. We wilt at a bayonet charge, we shudder at the thought of wounds. Bah!" he continued, "what does it matter if a few hundred thousands of human beings are cut to pieces? We need to get back to the old Viking standard, the old pagan ideas of suffering--"

And as he spoke he got it.

The steps of the club were slippery with the evening's rain, not so slippery as the frozen lakes of East Prussia or the hills were Jinks and Blinks had been campaigning all winter, but slippery enough for a stout man whose nation has neglected his training. As Jinks waved his stick in the air to illustrate the glory of a bayonet charge, he slipped and fell sideways on the strong

steps. His shin bone smacked against the edge of the stone in such a way that was pretty well up to the old Viking standard of such things. Blinks with the shock of the collision fell also--backwards on the top step, his head striking first. He lay, to all appearance, as dead as the most insignificant casualty in Serbia.

I watched the waiters carrying them into the club, with that new field-ambulance attitude towards pain which is getting so popular. They had evidently acquired precisely the old pagan attitude that Blinks and Jinks desired.

And the evening after that I saw Blinks and Jinks, both more or less bandaged, sitting in a corner of the club beneath a rubber-tree, making piece.

Jinks was moving out of Montenegro and Blinks was foregoing all claims to Polish Prussia; Jinks was offering Alsace-Lorraine to Blinks, and Blinks in a fit of chivalrous enthusiasm was refusing to take it. They were disbanding troops, blowing up fortresses, sinking their war-ships, and offering indemnities which they both refused to take. Then, as they talked, Jinks leaned forward and said something to Blinks in a low voice--a final proposal of terms evidently.

Blinks nodded, and Jinks turned and beckoned to a waiter, with the words:

"One Scotch whisky and soda, and one stein of Würtemberger Bier--"

And, when I heard this, I knew that the war was over.

* * *

B. THE GROUND FLOOR

I hadn't seen Ellesworth since our college days, twenty years before, at the time when he used to borrow two dollars and a half from the professor of Public Finance to tide him over the week end.

Then quite suddenly he turned up and the club one afternoon and had teas with me.

His big clean-shaven face had lost nothing of its impressiveness, and his spectacles had the same glittering magnetism as in the days when he used to get the college bursar to accept his note of hand for his fees.

And he was still talking European politics just as he used to in the days of our earlier acquaintance.

"Mark my words," he said across the little tea-table, with one of the most piercing glances I have ever seen, "the whole Balkan situation was only a beginning. We are on the eve of a great pan-Slavonic upheaval." And then he added, in a very quiet, casual tone, "By the way, could you let me have twenty-five dollars until tomorrow?"

"A pan-Slavonic movement!" I ejaculated. "Do you really think it possible? No I couldn't."

"You must remember," Ellesworth went on, "Russia means to reach out and take all she can get." And he added, "How about fifteen till Friday?"

"She may reach for it," I said, "but I doubt if she'll get anything. I'm sorry. I haven't got it."

"You're forgetting the Bulgarian element," he continued, his animation just as eager as before. "The Slavs never forget what they owe to one another." Here Ellesworth drank a sip of tea and then said quietly, "Could you make it ten till Saturday at twelve?"

I looked at him more closely. I noticed now his frayed cuffs and the dinginess of his over-brushed clothes. Not even the magnetism of his spectacles could conceal it. Perhaps I had been forgetting something, whether the Bulgarian element or not.

I compromised at ten dollars till Saturday.

"The Slav," said Ellesworth, as he pocketed the money, "is peculiar. He never forgets."

"What are you doing now?" I asked him. "Are you still in insurance?" I had a vague recollection of him as employed in that business.

"No," he answered. "I gave it up. I didn't like the outlook. It was too narrow. The atmosphere cramped me. I want," he said, "a bigger horizon."

"Quite so," I answered quietly. I had known men before who had lost their jobs. It is generally the cramping of the atmosphere that does it. Some of them can use up a tremendous lot of horizon.

"At present," Ellesworth went on, "I am in finance. I'm promoting companies."

"Oh, yes," I said. I had seen companies promoted before.

"Just now," continued Ellesworth, "I'm working on a thing that I think will be rather a big thing. I shouldn't want it talked about outside, but it's a matter of taking hold of the cod fisheries of the Grand Banks--practically amalgamating them--and perhaps combining with them the entire herring output, and the whole of the sardine catch of the Mediterranean. If it goes through," he added, "I shall be in a position to let you in on the ground floor."

I knew the ground floor of old. I have already many friends sitting on it; and others who have fallen through it into the basement.

I said, "thank you," and he left me.

"That was Ellesworth, wasn't it?" said a friend of mine who was near me. "Poor devil. I knew him slightly--always full of some new and wild idea of making money. He was talking to me the other day of the possibility of cornering all the huckleberry crop and making refined sugar. Isn't it amazing what fool ideas fellows like him are always putting up to business men?"

We both laughed.

After that I didn't see Ellesworth for some weeks.

Then I met him in the club again. How he paid his fees there I do not know.

This time he was seated among a litter of foreign newspapers with a cup of tea and a ten-cent package of cigarettes beside him.

"Have one of these cigarettes," he said. "I get them specially. They are milder than what we have in the club here."

They certainly were.

"Note what I say," Ellesworth went on, "The French Republic is going to gain from now on a stability that it never had." He seemed greatly excited by it. But his voice changed to a quiet tone as he added, "Could you, without inconvenience, let me have five dollars?"

So I knew that the cod-fish and the sardines were still unamalgamated.

"What about the fisheries thing?" I asked. "Did it go through?"

"The fisheries? No, I gave it up. I refused to go forward with it. The New York people concerned were too shy, too timid to tackle it. I finally had to put it to them very straight that they must either stop shilly-shallying and declare themselves, or the whole business was off."

"Did they declare themselves?" I questioned.

"They did," said Ellesworth, "but I don't regret it. I'm working now on a much bigger thing--something with greater possibilities in it. When the right moment comes along I'll let you in on the ground floor."

I thanked him and we parted.

The next time I saw Ellesworth he told me at once that he regarded Albania as unable to stand by itself. So I gave him five dollars on the spot and left him.

A few days after that he called me up on the telephone to tell me that the whole of Asia Minor would have to be redistributed. The redistribution cost me five dollars more.

Then I met him in the street, and he said that Persia was disintegrating, and took from me a dollar and a half.

When I passed him next in the street he was very busy amalgamating Chinese tramways. It appeared that there was a ground floor in China, but I kept off it.

Each time I saw Ellesworth he looked a little shabbier than the last. Then one day he called me up on the telephone, and made an appointment.

His manner when I joined him was full of importance.

"I want you at once," he said in a commanding tone, "to write me your cheque for a hundred dollars."

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"I am now able," said Ellesworth, "to put you in on the ground floor of one of the biggest things in years."

"Thanks," I said, "the ground floor is no place for me."

"Don't misunderstand me," said Ellesworth. "This is a big thing. It's an idea I've been working on for some time--making refined sugar from the huckleberry crop. It's a certainty. I can get you shares now at five dollars. They'll go to five hundred when we put them on the market, and I can run you in for a block of stock promotion services as well. All you have to do is to give me right now a hundred dollars--cash or your cheque--and I can arrange the whole thing for you."

I smiled.

"My dear Ellesworth," I said, "I hope you won't mind if I give you a little bit of good advice. Why not drop all this idea of quick money? There's nothing in it. The business world has grown too shrewd for it. Take an ordinary decent job and stick to it. Let me use my influence," I said, "to try and get you into something with a steady salary, and with your brains you're bound to get on in time."

Ellesworth looked pained. A "steady job" sounded to him like a "ground floor" to me.

After that I saw nothing of him for weeks. But I didn't forget him. I looked about and secured for him a job as a canvassing agent for a book firm at a salary of five dollars a week, and a commission of one-tenth of one percent.

I was waiting to tell him of his good luck, when I chanced to see him at the club again.

But he looked transformed.

He had on a long frock coat that reached nearly to his knees. He was leading a little procession of very heavy men, in morning coats, upstairs towards the private luncheon rooms. They moved like a funeral, puffing as they went. I had seen company directors before and I knew what they were at sight.

"It's a small club and rather inconvenient," Ellesworth was saying, "and the horizon of some of the members rather narrow," here he nodded to me as he passed, "but I can give you a fairly decent lunch."

I watched them as they disappeared upstairs.

"That's Ellesworth, isn't it?" said a man near me. It was the same man who had asked about him before.

"Yes," I answered.

"Giving a lunch to his directors, I suppose," said my friend. "Lucky dog."

"His directors?"

"Yes, hadn't you heard? He's just cleaned up half a million or more--some new scheme for making refined sugar out of huckleberries. Isn't it amazing what shrewd ideas these big business men get hold of? They say they're unloading the stock at five hundred dollars. It cost them about five to organize. If only one could get on to one of these things early enough, eh?"

I assented sadly.

And the next time I am offered a chance

on the ground floor I am going to take it, even if it's only the barley floor of a brewery.

It appears that there is such a place after all.

9. THE HALLUCINATION OF MR. BUTT

It is the hallucination of Mr. Butt's life that he lives to do good. At whatever cost of time or trouble to himself, he does it. Whether people appear to desire it or not, he insists on helping them along.

His time, his company, and his advice are at the service not only of those who seek them but of those who, in the mere appearances of things, are not asking for them.

You may see the beaming face of Mr. Butt appear at the door of all those of his friends who are stricken with the minor troubles of life. Whenever Mr. Butt learns that any of his friends are moving, buying furniture, selling furniture, looking for a maid, dismissing a maid, seeking a chauffeur, suing a plumber, or buying a piano--he is at their side in a moment.

So when I met him one night in the cloak-room of the club putting on his raincoat and his galoshes with a peculiar beaming look on his face, I knew that he was up to some sort of benevolence.

"Come upstairs," I said, "and play billiards." I saw from his general appearance that it was a perfectly safe offer.

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Butt, "I only wish I could. I wish I had the time. I am sure it would cheer you up immensely if I could. But I'm just going out."

"Where are you off to?" I asked, for I knew he wanted me to say it.

"I'm going out to see the Everleigh-Joneses--you know them? no?--just come to the city, you know, moving into their new house, out on Seldom Avenue."

"But," I said, "that's away out in the suburbs, is it not, a mile or so beyond the car tracks?"

"Something like that," answered Mr. Butt.

"And it's going on for ten o'clock and it's starting to rain--"

"Pooh, pooh," said Mr. Butt cheerfully, adjusting his galoshes. "I never mind the rain--does one good. As to their house, I've not been there yet but I can easily find it. I've a very simple system for finding a house at night by merely knocking at the doors in the neighbourhood till I get it."

"Isn't it rather late to go there?" I protested.

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Butt warmly, "I don't mind that a bit. The way I look at it is, here are these two young people, only married a few weeks, just moving into their

new house, everything probably upside down, no one there but themselves, no one to cheer them up"--he was wriggling into his raincoat as he spoke and working himself into a frenzy of benevolence--"good gracious, I only learned at dinner time that they had come to town, or I'd have been out there days ago--days ago--"

And with that Mr. Butt went bursting forth into the rain, his face shining with goodwill under the street lamps.

The next day I saw him again at the club at lunch time.

"Well," I said, "did you find the Joneses?"

"I did," said Mr. Butt, "and, by George, I was glad that I'd gone. Quite a lot of trouble to find the house--though I didn't mind that, I'd expected it--had to knock at twenty houses at least to get it, very dark and wet out there--no street lights yet. However, I simply pounded at the doors until someone showed a light; at every house I called out the same thing, 'Do you know where the Everleigh-Joneses live?' They didn't. 'All right,' I said, 'Go back to bed. Don't bother to come down.'

"But I got the right sopt at last. I found the house all dark. Jones put his head out of an upper window. 'Hullo,' I called out, 'It's Butt.' 'I'm awfully sorry,' he said, 'we've gone to bed.' 'My dear boy,' I called back, 'don't apologize at all. Throw me down the key and I'll wait while you dress. I don't mind a bit.'

"Just think of bit," continued Mr. Butt, "those two poor souls going to bed at half-past ten, through sheer dullness! By George, I was glad I'd come. 'Now then,' I said to myself, 'let's cheer them up a little, let's make things a little brighter here.'

"Well, down they came and we sat there on furniture cases and things and had a chat. Mrs. Jones wanted to make me some coffee. 'My dear girl,' I said (I knew them both when they were children), 'I absolutely refuse. Let me make it.' They protested. I insisted. I went at it--kitchen all upset, had to open at least twenty tins to get the coffee. However, I made it at last. 'Now,' I said, 'drink it.' They said they had some an hour or so ago. 'Nonsense,' I said, 'drink it.' Well, we sat and chatted away till midnight. They were dull at first and I had to do all the talking. But I set myself to it. I can talk, you know, when I try. Presently about midnight they seemed to brighten up a little. Jones looked at his watch. 'By Jove,' he said, in an animated way, 'it's after midnight.' I think he was pleased at the way the evening was going; after that we chatted away more comfortably. Every little while Jones would say, 'By Jove, it's half-past twelve,' or 'it's one o'clock,' and so on.

"I took care, of course, not to stay too late. But when I left them I promised that I'd come back to-day to help straighten

things up. They protested, but I insisted."

That same day Mr. Butt went out to the suburbs and put the Joneses' furniture to rights.

"I worked all afternoon," he told me afterwards, "hard at it with my coat off. Got the pictures up first--they'd been trying to put them up in the morning. I had to take down every one of them--not a single one right. 'Down they come,' I said, and went at it with a will."

A few days later Mr. Butt gave me a further report.

"Yes," he said, "the furniture is all unpacked and straightened out, but I don't like it. There's a lot of it I don't quite like. I half feel like advising Jones to sell it and get some more. But I don't want to do that till I'm quite certain about it." After that Mr. Butt seemed much occupied, and I didn't see him at the club for some time.

"How about the Everleigh-Joneses?" I asked. "Are they comfortable in their new house?"

Mr. Butt shook his head.

"It won't do," he said. "I was afraid of it from the first. I'm moving Jones nearer to town. I've been out all morning looking for an apartment; when I get the right one I shall move him. I like an apartment far better than a house."

So the Joneses in due course of time were moved. After that, Mr. Butt was very busy selecting a piano, and advising them on wallpaper and woodwork.

They were hardly settled in their new home when fresh trouble came to them.

"Have you heard about the Everleigh-Joneses?" said Mr. Butt one day with an anxious face.

"No," I answered.

"He's ill--some sort of fever, poor chap--been ill three days, and they never told me or sent for me. Just like their grit--meant to fight it out all alone. I'm going out there at once."

From day to day I had reports of the progress of Jones's illness.

"I sit with him every day," he said. "Poor chap, he was very bad yesterday for a while--mind wandered, quite delirious. I could hear him from the next room, seemed to think some one was hunting him. 'Is that damn old fool gone?' I heard him say.

"I went in and soothed him. 'There is no one here, my dear boy,' I said, 'no one, only Butt.' He turned over and groaned. Mrs. Jones begged me to leave him. 'You look quite used up,' she said. 'Go out into the open air.' 'My dear Mrs. Jones,' I said, 'what *does* it matter about me?'"

Eventually, thanks no doubt to Mr. Butt's assiduous care, Everleigh-Jones got well.

"Yes," said Mr. Butt to me a few weeks later, "Jones is all right again now, but his illness has been a long hard pull. I haven't had an evening to myself since it

began. But I'm paid, sir, now, more than paid for anything I've done. The gratitude of those two people--it's unbelievable. You ought to see it. Why, do you know that dear little woman is so worried for fear that my strength has been overtaxed that she wants me to take a complete rest and go on a long trip somewhere, suggested first that I should go south. 'My dear Mrs. Jones,' I said, laughing, 'that's the one place I will not go. Heat is the one thing I can't stand.' She wasn't nonplussed for a moment. 'Then go north,' she said. 'Go up to Canada, or better still go to Labrador,' and in a minute the kind little woman was hunting up railway maps to see how far north I could get by rail. 'After that,' she said, 'you can go on snowshoes.' She found that there's a steamer to Ungava every spring and she wants me to run up there on one steamer and come back on the next."

"It must be very gratifying," I said.

"Oh, it is, it is," said Mr. Butt warmly. "It's well worth anything I do. It more than repays me. I'm alone in the world and my friends are all I have. I can't tell you how it goes to my heart when I think of all my friends, here in the club and in the town, always glad to see me, always protesting against my little kindnesses and yet never quite satisfied about anything unless they can get my advice and hear what I have to say.

"Take Jones, for instance," he continued, "do you know, really now as a fact--the hall porter assures me of it--every time Everleigh-Jones enters the club here the first thing he does is to sing out, 'Is Mr. Butt in the club?' It warms me to think of it." Mr. Butt paused, one would have said there were tears in his eyes. But if so the kindly beam of his spectacles shone through them like the sun through April rain. He left me and passed into the cloak-room.

He had just left the hall when a stranger appeared, a narrow, meek man with a hunted face. He came in with a furtive step and looked about him apprehensively.

"Is Mr. Butt in the club?" he whispered to the hall porter.

"Yes, sir, he's just gone into the cloak-room, shall I--"

But the man had turned and made a dive for the front door and had vanished.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"That's a new member, sir, Mr. Evetleigh-Jones," said the hall porter.

{from Moonbeams
from the Larger
Lunacy (1917)}

THIRTY-EIGHT

McB. ON BACKGAMMON

Can you learn something from artificial intelligence? Sure. Just kibbitz (watch) a few games of microchip vs. itself backgammon with me, and see if you agree with my comments on the computer's deficiencies.

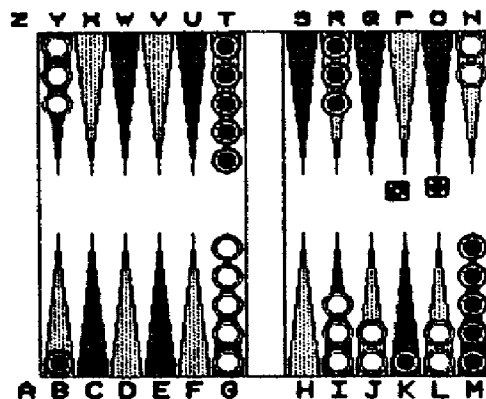
The microchip is Fidelity Electronics Micro Backgammon Challenger (Model 8004) at its highest of 8 levels. I've called the players Mike and Chip--Chip starts; Mike moves the Black pieces from A-Z.

Notation is the logical but seldom seen Kansil system where the 24 points are lettered B through Y. A and Z are used in two ways: to denote moves where men are entered from the bar, and to denote moves where men are borne off. A move hitting a piece gets a quote mark. A dash denotes a combined move: BE EH is abbreviated to B-H (unless there's a blot at E which is hit; you'd then see BE' EH for clarity). Numbers indicate multiple moves on doubles, like 2JF 2YU.

THE CUBE: On the Fidelity machine I can't have the computer play itself except by "switching sides" each move. At all times the computer assumes it is playing a human opponent, and when the machine doubles, it's asking me whether to take or drop. I'll always take, but will comment if I'd rather drop.

I'll try to make it possible to follow along without setting up a board and marking letters all over it, but I haven't room for diagrams every move, so in a few cases you may have to make a few moves mentally from the last diagram to get the picture. I may even be proven wrong on some comments--I'm rolling the dice, deciding on what move I'd make, then checking the machine's move. Sometimes a move I despise will turn out well--backgammon's like that. Ready to start? Here's Game #1:

CHIP (white)	MIKE (black)
roll move	roll move
1. 4-3 NJ NK	5-4 B-K'
2. 4-1 ZY NJ	4-3 ???



2. ... 4-3 K-R
Mike's guilty here of "lily padding"--moving

men to established points instead of taking reasonable risks to make new points. You lily pad when you're way ahead and have nothing better. Here, Mike is only slightly ahead, and has something better: KO MP is safe 83% of the time, and even if ht rates to leave him in the lead, as the unhit blot is still well placed to make a valuable point.

3. 2-2 2YW 2JH

Lots of possibilities here, including making F, U, H and E, W and E, or the Move Chip made, making W abd H. There are good arguments for all of them; I would slightly favour U, but this is a close decision. Note that the 2-2 wouldn't hit any blot left by my previous suggestion, but the real point in taking risks is that the opponent often needs to use an otherwise good number to hit, instead of making points as he normally would.

3. ...

6-4 B-L

4. 2-1 NL' IH

IH is weak; better is YX. Don't ever make purposeless moves like IH if there's something better. We're talking about five seconds of extra thought as opposed to a slow leak on the level of your game. (YX makes 5-5 a palatable throw. Somebody tell me what the hell IH does...)

4. ...

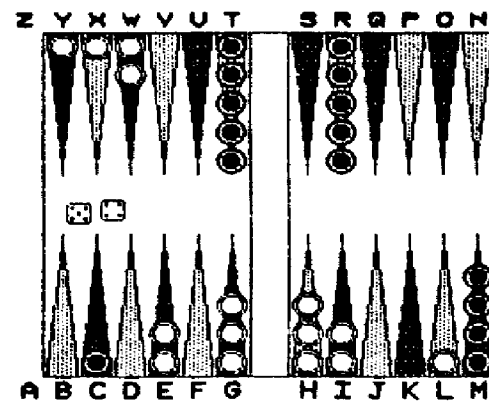
6-5 A-L'

5. 2-2 ZX NL 2GE

5-2 AC MR

This is a spot where lily padding is best--AF MO is vulnerable to lots of good shots.

6. 5-4 ???



6. 5-4 XS LH

Clearly, GC' HC is far better here. Chip is about to be doubled, and because he has no good prospects for a back game (he has four men back, but while he waits for his shot he'll have to advance his front men too far to keep enough points closed in his home board if he does hit--this is known in backgammon circles as poor timing), he should not be happy taking the cube. The hit-and-cover opens the possibility of a blitz, and may hold off the cube a few turns, until Chip's decision whether to take or drop becomes easier.

6. ...

1-1 2RS' 2TU

7. 4-2 ZV YW

EXCELSIOR

Entering at X instead would leave open far better back game possibilities, weak as they now are. The 3-4 back game is far far weaker than the 2-3.

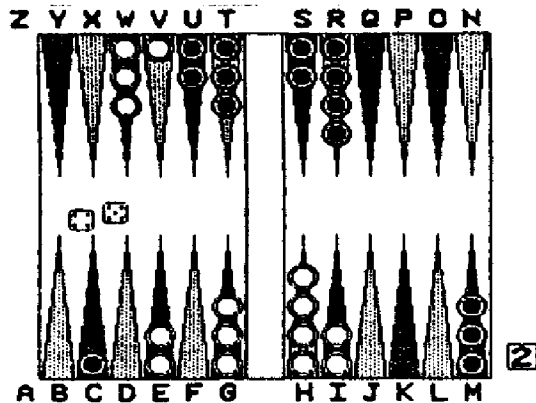
7. ... **DOUBLES TO 2**

8. **ACCEPTS FOR 2**

I wouldn't take this double unless I was playing against a child or a very drunken adult.

8. ... **3-2 M-R**

9. **5-4 ???**



9. **5-4 VQ HD**

Please write and tell me if you understand this move. Perhaps the machine feels that the conspicuous blot at C is a live mine or something...

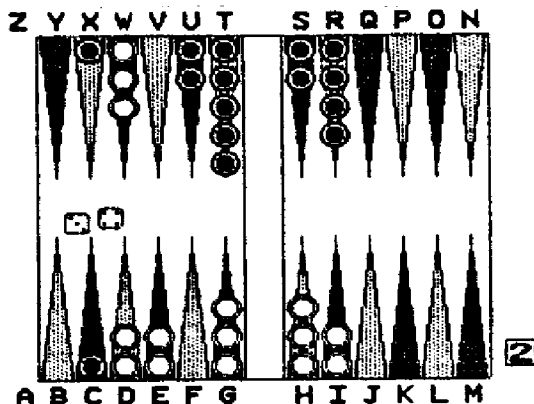
9. ... **5-2 M-T**

The move is fine, but the machine accomplished it by first telling me about RT, and then MR. No human would play the move that way, but backgammon chips have a fondness for this sort of thing--you'll see a 1-1 moved I-E, but communicated to the human as FE GF HG IH. I find that the effect is psychological--you think "my goodness, it's leaving a blot here--oh, no, I see, it's not really." There are human players who feel it's unethical to take more than five seconds to move, and a slow FE GF HG IH (maybe even mixing up the order) really annoys them!

10. **5-3 QL GD** **6-5 NS HR**

11. **4-1 L-G** **5-2 SX RT**

12. **4-3 ???**



12. **4-3 HD GD**

With the blot at X it's not risking much to attack here with GC' HE. At least, not risking much that's already lost...

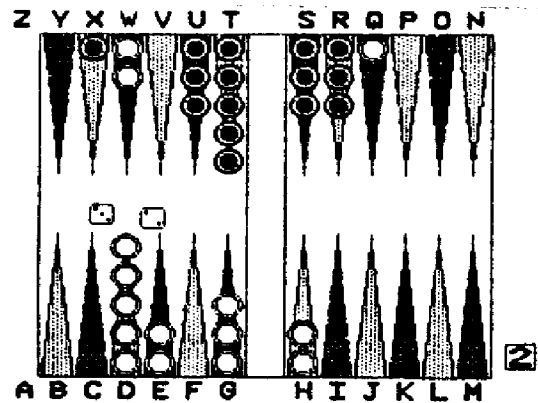
12. ... **4-3 C-J**

13. **5-2 IG ID** **4-1 J-O**

TX TU instead, doesn't leave a 17-1 shot. Chip has played so poorly that even a 17-1 shot is too much for Mike to give him to let him back into contention.

14. **5-1 W-Q** **6-1 OU RS**

15. **3-2 ???**



15. **3-2 Q-L**

Chip should forget all thoughts of hitting and concentrate on his home board distribution with QN HF. Doing this now may give him a better board when the shot comes--if there is one.

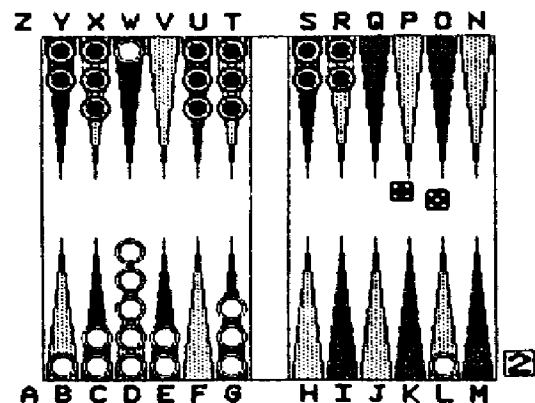
15. ... **6-4 RX TX**

16. **5-5 L-B 2HC**

The problem with this move is that a subsequent six must be used to break from W, leaving the other man there vulnerable to a gammon blitz, and turning a slim chance for a hit into practically no chance. Better is L-B GB HC.

16. ... **6-5 SY TY**

17. **6-5 W-L** **5-4 ???**



17. ... **5-4 RW SW**

I'm rooting for Mike to win a four-point gammon here, and this move is the first step in that direction--the risk is not as bad as it looks: 11-1 against hitting, and fine chances for a gammon.

18. **6-3 ----** **6-3 SY RU**

19. **4-1 ZV LK**

MOST-ONE-OF THE POST

Just one letter this time (my fault for delaying last issue), but the smaller volume does give me some time to experiment with the new font and see what I can come up with...

AAO

DAVID HOOD (Cary NC): Believe it or not, I just got through the July 1990 issue of XL. A tour de force, though difficult to follow in places due to zealous cut-and-paste tactics. Anyway, I am glad you had a good time at DipCon--sounds like the car trips may have been as busy as the Con itself. I'm just amazed that you spent hours and hours with Brad Wilson and you two didn't strangle each other to death. Good show.

BM: I admit to having had some uneasiness at the thought of riding down with Brad--but that was before meeting him. We got along fine on the unspoken acknowledgement that we disagree on a few things that don't really need to be brought up in an unventilated van with triple digit temperatures. But strangling? David, you are talking to a master Diplomat here--I proved this in 1985, during the height of the Great Feud, by talking Terry Tallman, whose views on the topic of the day were diametrically opposed to mine, into a ride from Seattle to Oregon for LepreCon '85. I survived that one too. This idea that when hobby "enemies" meet there'll be trouble is silly--never happens. If it did DipCon wouldn't be as popular, except for hockey fans in the middle of a long summer drought watching baseball fights for sustenance...

I too was appalled at the cut-and-paste tactics in the July XL, which were caused by rushing to get things ready for the printer in time. In a few places I nearly had a heart attack because I thought something had been left out where in fact it was just well-hidden away

somewhere...

DAVID HOOD (Cont.): As far as I am concerned, your article headline could have been "Soccer-Yawn." I fail to understand the excitement over a game that is so incredibly boring to watch. Fun to pay, but terrible to watch. Something like baseball, only worse. I know this is sacrilege, especially the baseball=boring argument, but it is too true. As far as soccer goes, the "action" is repetitive and almost completely non-stop. No time to digest or analyze what's going on, and almost no scoring to get excited about. This is pretty much the opposite of basketball, which has lots of breaks in the action, and lots of scoring. And I'm not just biased towards basketball because of being a Tarheel--soccer is a big deal in area high schools, and UNC has one of the 2-3 best soccer programs in the country.

BM: I agree that, with few exceptions, the World Cup tournament was a boring bloody disgrace, but I don't think that all soccer is that boring. The argument that basketball has more scoring is not really too valid to me. What's the lowest point total any NBA team has scored in a game in the last ten years? 70 or so--maybe one or two lower than that? So you're talking about a 99.99% chance that each team is going to get 70, and when the score ends up 109-97 you say that this is a lot of scoring, when in fact the only thing to "get excited about" is the two or three times a game where one team scores 12 points while the other is shutout. They could make soccer goals twice as big and call it a goal whenever a defender blocked a shot that was more than halfway to the goal--that would create more scoring, but wouldn't really create more excitement. Now, if the NBA finals ended up with each team scoring an average of 80 points each, and this was not due to bad shooting but rather due to much tighter defense, would you call this exciting? That's what happened in the World Cup.

It depends on how you spectate, I

Doesn't GF seem better than LK? It may still be a race if Chip gets some doubles, and those gaps should be filled.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 19. ??? | 4-3 UY WZ |
| 20. 5-2 VQ DB | 3-1 YZ WZ |
| 21. 6-1 QK GF | 4-1 U-Z |
| 22. 4-2 KG KI | 4-4 3TX UY |
| 23. 4-2 IG EA | 6-1 UZ YZ |
| 24. 5-2 FA CA | 5-2 2XZ |
| 25. 4-3 EA DA | 3-2 2XZ |
| 26. 5-1 G-A | 3-1 XZ YZ |
| 27. RESIGNS | WINS 2 |

That's the game of the month. I played and notated four games and chose this one as the

most instructive. I was quite surprised to find that, in most games, the "equal in skill" computer players were quite unbalanced in the actual game--one side always making far more bad errors than the other. Next issue I'll present another game of the month, perhaps featuring the computer program *Club Backgammon*. Or, I may discuss some new local backgammon discoveries like *Backgammon Misère* (both sides play to lose), or the fiendish variant of this in which the game starts with both players trying to win, but the objective of the game toggles between Normal and *Misère* each time boxcars or snake eyes (6-6 or 1-1) are rolled!!

guess. I like to watch goals, but I also like to see "smart" plays, especially on defense. I love the NBA for it's exciting finishes, but I couldn't stand up and cheer for my team every time they hit a lay-up. The beauty of soccer is not so much the goal-scoring, but the creation of the chances that lead to them. A diagonal pass through midfield onto the feet of a sprinting winger is just as exciting to me as a quarter-ending buzzer shot from behind centre.

DAVID HOOD (Cont.): Baseball is a whole nother story. The problem here is, mainly, all the balls / strikes / spits / shits / fouls / pick-off attempts / practice swings / spits / messing with cap or batting gloves / spits. The damned thing is so distracting I wander off waiting to see the occasional double-play or triple, or something else exciting. Another problem is that I never care about who wins the game--not only because there are no Southern teams to cheer for (Braves aren't a real team) but also because there are so many games in the season that the one you are watching rarely makes a hill-of-beans worth of difference. Admittedly the NBA is kind of like that too, but at least there is not all that spitting.

BM: Excellent point--just what does Magic Johnson do when he has to spit? And if he never has to spit, how come in nearly every other sport spitting seems so important? This question right up there with sports questions like *Do swimmers sweat?* and *Why can't Monica Seles hit the goddam ball without sounding like a porno flick?*

DAVID HOOD (Cont.): I have tried to get into baseball every spring for the past several years, but always to no avail. I just suffer through it to football season. Speaking of football, everybody in the Carolinas is sure we are going to get one of the NFL expansion teams here in the next couple of years. I wonder what people in the rest of the country (and Canada) think of our chances. We do have the money (talk about boom states) and the fans (see Charlotte Hornets-mania) to support such a venture, and something like the 2nd-3rd largest TV market in the country. Right now the plan would be to build a stadium on a site in downtown Charlotte, although another possibility exists right across the border near Fort Mill SC.

BM: Don't know about the Charlotte situation, but Vancouver and Seattle have had pleasant experiences with building downtown stadiums. Even if you put the thing into a run-down area, the presence of the stadium creates other improvements in the immediate neighbourhood. Nearby rapid transit is of course a great advantage. As for NFL expansion, I

haven't heard much, but if the Falcons can be in the NFC West, surely Charlotte qualifies. Seems to me that it ain't quite enough to have a rich state; you need a Mr. Deep Pockets to make the major investment. You should just hope that the NFL isn't watching the NHL try to expand. \$50 million is the price tag; end result may be no expansion.

I don't know if I qualify as "getting into" baseball every year--there are levels to fannishness, and I'm at a low level--I follow the Expos and Blue Jays, but don't know who the third reliever for Houston is, or how many times Harry gets on with the bases loaded in the ninth on Tuesday night games. I feel pretty strongly that talk like that is silly: it matters what Harry's going to do now, not what he's done before.

My apologies to David for breaking up his letter there somewhat--hopefully the format will look good enough that I won't have to continue experimenting next time.

ROOM

Three questions for next issue (deadline is late November) to repeat, and one to add:

1. A player sends you orders for his 13-unit power that include 14 orders! The first, and second-last orders are the same. Nothing in your current houserules covers this. Is the unit in question double-ordered and must stand, or can it do what it's been twice told?

2. Did you follow the new scoring system for modified mean in the Runestone Pool?

3. Should I continue the baseball rules questions well into the off-season, or resume them next spring?

4. How do you normally celebrate the holiday season in your part of the world. I'd like to get lots of responses for next time, especially from overseas readers, so we can collect them together for the Christmas issue--although of course I am not limiting this to Christmas. Please send something soon so it arrives here in time.

IT'S YOUR CALL

Here are the It's Your Call questions from XL #37 again. You didn't think I was expecting answers in three weeks, now, didja?

1. Light hitting Jack "Sour Mash" Daniels is at bat with one ball and two strikes on him. The bases are empty and there are no outs with Lynchburg trailing by one run in the bottom of the ninth. The pitcher uncorks a wild pitch which sails ten feet over Daniels's head. Daniels thinks quickly and swings at the wild pitch and reaches first base easily. Do you allow Daniels first base, or do you call the pitch a ball since he swung at the bad pitch to intentionally reach on a strikeout? It's your call.

2. Buddy Budlong is batting and he squares around to bunt but the pitch is wide. During his aborted bunt attempt, he steps on the plate. Budlong makes no contact with the ball, so should this be called just a strike or is he out for stepping on the plate while trying to make contact? It's your call.

3. Runners on first and second base with two outs. The New York Mammoths' Bruce Pearson loops a fly ball over the first baseman's head and it falls in for a Texas League hit. The runner on second comes around to score and after he crosses the plate, players on the other team tell him the ball fell foul. The runner starts walking back toward third and the coach there sends him back home. By this time the outfielder has retrieved the ball and has relayed it to the catcher who is waiting on the runner when he comes in, and the catcher easily tags him. Should the run count or did the runner give it up when he attempted to return to third base? It's your call.

4. A runner on first base gets fooled back to the bag as a pitcher delivers the ball to the plate. The lefthanded batter drills a hard grounder down the first base line and it hits the runner who hasslid back into the bag. The runner is on the bag when he gets hit. Is the runner safe or out? What do you do with the batter? It's your call.

5. Casey is at the bat and the Mudville nine need a base runner desperately in the bottom of the ninth inning. The mighty Casey does not strike out this time, but instead smacks a hard grounder towards shortstop. In the process the bat is broken in half and the top half is headed in the same direction as the ball. The shortstop cannot make a play on the grounder because he is too busy dodging the bat. Do you allow Casey the hit, or call him out because

his broken bat interfered with the play. Your decision may decide whether there will be any joy in Mudville that night. It's your call.

6. Harry "the Horse" Danning is on second base. Leaky Fausett is on first with two outs and a full count on Brains Padden. Danning and Fausett break before the pitch, but Louisville's reliever, Rubberlegs Miller, steps toward third base out of the stretch and throws the ball there to catch Danning sliding in. Should Danning be called out or is it a balk on Miller for making a pickoff move to an unoccupied base? It's your call.

7. Two runners on with two outs in the bottom of the ninth. The visitors are leading 6-4. The home team batter triples and both runners score. Time is called when the ball is thrown back to the infield. The third baseman calls for the ball, saying the second runner missed third base on his way to scoring the tying run. While the pitcher prepares to throw to third, the runner who had tripled breaks for home and is easily thrown out. Can the visiting team still appeal the runner missing the bag? Or does the inning end with the score tied because the third out was made on the play at home? It's your call.

8. Fats Berger steps to the plate and hits a grounder toward third base. the bat slips out of Berger's hands and hits the third baseman in the shins, making it impossible to make a play on Berger at first. Should Berger be allowed to stay on first because his bat had eyes on it or is he out for interfering with the play? It's your call.

9. Washington's Jesse "The Crab" Burkett is on second base with no outs and no one else on when Matches Kilroy hits a sinking line drive to right field. Burkett takes off thinking it will drop in for a hit, but has to retreat when the right fielder makes a great catch. Burkett slides safely back into second, but overslides the base. The second baseman has the ball, so Burkett decides to now take off for first base and makes it with a beautiful hook slide around the first baseman's tag. Is Burkett safe at first or out for running the bases in the wrong direction? It's your call.

10. Bob "Death To Flying Things" Ferguson is on third base when Gilly Bigelow steps to the plate. Ferguson notices the pitcher has a long motion and decides to steal home. Bigelow doesn't realize Ferguson is coming in and he swings at the pitch. The opposing catcher has stepped up on home plate to try and tag Ferguson. Has the catcher interfered with Bigelow or has Bigelow interfered with the catcher's right

SEISMIC DIPLOMACY

[The following are the rules of a new variant which I am opening, now that I have the software to draw (and, more importantly, change) the maps. For a simple \$3 gamefee, I guarantee at least a hilarious time of it!]

Seismic Diplomacy is a variant invented by Pierre Lavaurs. The gimmick is that the board changes as you play; otherwise everything is the same as normal, though with the board changing as much as it does, normality soon becomes extinct, lost in the last seismic event. I thank Luc Dodinval for sending me a copy of the rules, first published by Jean-Phillipe Hubsch in the French zine *Vortigern* 68, and later translated by John Marsden for the British zine *Ode*. These are the rules.

1) The Diplomacy rulebook applies with the following exceptions:

2) After Spring retreats, and after Winter adjustments, an additional phase takes place (on the same deadline--it is assumed that the British system of combining seasons is used, as we will in the XL game): Seismic Events.

3) Each player may order one Seismic event per season. Seismic Events are strictly anonymous. You can glue England to Africa without leaving a clue as to the identity of the lunatic.

4) There are two kinds of Seismic Event,

as follows:

a) Separation and Connection:

This involves four provinces (land, sea, or a combination of the two) forming a configuration such that A is adjacent to B, B to C, C to D, D to A, and A is adjacent to C but not B to D. The order is:

A and C separate, B and D connect.

EXAMPLE #1: War and Ber connect, Sil and Pru separate. (Germany and Russia now have some serious negotiating to do.)

B and D may be the same.

EXAMPLE #2: Por and Spa separate, MAO and MAO connect. (Portugal thus becomes an island in the MAO.)

It can occur that an order of this kind is ambiguous; such orders will be disallowed unless the player makes his intentions clear.

b) Release:

If three provinces are such that A is an island totally inside B, and B is adjacent to C, a release order would be:

A and C connect

EXAMPLE #3: (after Ex #2 has taken effect) Por and Bre connect. (Por thus becomes a peninsula attached to Bre, but not Eng.)

5. Iceland, Ireland, Cypress, Crete, Sardinia, Sicily, Corsica, the Caspian Sea (adjacent at the outset to Sev, Mos, and Arm), and Switzerland can be included in

to make a play at home? It's your call.

I know baseball season's over. If you think I should hold this over till next spring, answer the question on this very subject posed in the ROM section of the letter column. Answers next time, which gives you until the end of November or so.

DiploScrabble

HOW TO PLAY

--in each puzzle you start with these seven letters: E G R T A I F.

--play four turns of Scrabble consecutively, scoring as normal, drawing letters from the replacement letter list, from left to right, as needed.

--subtract 50 for each original letter not used in your four turns.

--send me your best score before the deadline, for prizes in subscription credit to XL.

--anyone sending two or more entries will have their best only counted.

--prizes are \$1 for the best score, 50 ¢ for any score higher than a SD above the average, and your best three scores out of every five are combined for a series score, for a prize of at least \$2.00

ROUND 1
PUZZLE 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
a															
b															
c															
d															
e															
f															
g															
h															
i															
j															
k															
l															
m															
n															
o															

REPLACEMENT LETTERS: Draw from left to right, as needed.
V I S I E I E A B A T O O Z I T P N W N G

BONUSES			Ltr			Val.			#		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Triple word	G	1	9	J	8	1	S	1	4	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Double word	B	3	2	K	5	1	T	1	6	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Triple letter	C	3	2	L	1	4	U	1	4	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Double letter	D	2	4	M	1	2	V	4	2	
		E	1	12	N	1	6	W	4	2	
		F	4	2	O	1	8	X	8	1	
		G	2	3	P	3	2	Y	4	2	
		H	4	2	Q	10	1	Z	10	1	
		I	1	9	R	1	6	[bl]	0	2	

Starting letters: EGRTAIF

THIRTY-EIGHT

17

Seismic orders. Other unnamed island provinces may not be. The zone consisting of water and islands known as Denmark cannot be broken up. The outside of the board, considered as an impassible province, also can be mentioned in Seismic events. This in particular can lead to some horrifying consequences:

EXAMPLE #4:

a) StP and Bar separate, Nwy and Out connect.

b) Nwg and Bar separate, Nwy and Out connect.

(Result so far: Bar is a pond on the NE corner of the board, connected to Nwy only. Nwy is extended to the north edge of the board, splitting into two coasts, the east coast bordering only Bar, and the west coast bordering Nwg, etc.)

c) Nwy and Bar separate, Out and Out connect.

(Now the Barents Sea has become trapped in the outside, along with any unfortunate unit that happens to be occupying it at the time! This makes possible this amazing release order:)

d) Bar and Tun connect.

(Omigod. Bar is now a pond attached to the south of Tunis!)

6. If two or more players make the same Seismic order, this has the effect of support--conflicting orders succeed if thus supported.

7. Seismic orders fail in the following cases:

a) If there is another Seismic order, equal or greater, which, if applied with the offending order, would have the effect of dividing a province into parts.

b) If there is an equal or greater Seismic order which, if applied after the offending one, would not make sense.

EXAMPLE #5:

a) Bul and Gre separate, Ser and Aeg connect.

b) Bul and Aeg separate, Gre and Con connect.

If I were to receive both of these orders, the effect would be to split the Aeg in two. If one was ordered by more players than another, then it would succeed and the other wouldn't.

EXAMPLE #6 (after Ex #2 above):

a) Por and Naf connect.

b) Por and Bre connect.

The successive application of these orders would divide the MAO in two.

8. The application of a Seismic order can cause a coastal province to be divided into two or more coasts when it previously had one or none, or to divide a previous coast into more than one. Or, the coast on which a fleet rested may disappear. In these cases, affected players must retreat any fleets in such a province to the coast they wish. This phase comes before movement. If no order is given the unit will be disbanded. Should a fleet find itself in a province which has lost all its coasts, it is trapped and may only stand (it may be supported) until a coast is opened for it.

9. Certain provinces are regarded as straights provinces. If they possess coasts on both of the following sea areas, those coasts are regarded as one:

Con with Bla and Aeg

Kie with Hel and Bal

Den with Ska and Bal

Swe with Ska and Bal

Nap with Ion and TyS

XL will be opening a game of this wild variant. \$3 gets you in for all the wild, wacky fun. (Not only that, but this game has first priority on zine space, at least--especially--for the map.) Let me go over some of the strategies I saw used in the game just completed in the Belgian zine Mach die Spuhl, just to give you an idea of the flavour of this variant. At the end (a 1908 conceded win for Germany), the board looked rather interesting, as you might expect. Italy had been taped to Tunis, cutting the effective range of all southeastern fleets drastically. At one point I recall Portugal adjacent to Moscow, but I also see that Holland sailed up to Norway, where it stuck tight. Somehow Galicia ended up as an offshoot of the Caspian Sea by the end. But that's only the beginning of the fun. There's no limit to what could be done. An English win without building a fleet or making a convoy is one interesting possibility that springs to mind. Anyone interested??

JOPLIN (Silent 7 Diplomacy--rules on page 18, monthly deadlines): 7 needed--I'll be listing the pseudonyms here, not the player names--it's first come first serve on the pseudonyms listed in the rules.

KODALY (Regular Diplomacy, 6 week deadlines): 7 needed.

LASSO (Road Trip, simple, simultaneous movement sports game--the actual sport is unspecified, but your movements along the board decide your team's success--for 6-8-10 players, monthly deadlines, no gamefee or deposit required, rules in XL #37, or available for the asking) Malcolm Smith, Brent McKee, 4, 6, or 8 needed.

If you wanted in one of these and told me before, and are not listed here, please tell me again and I'll add you to the list. If you're interested, please speak up! I think Seismic, Silent 7 and Road Trip would all be exciting to play and to read about in XL--so let's get some volunteers.

There are still no other zines publishing in Burnaby other than this one. Pity.

Silent 7 Diplomacy

There's a new trend in the hobby, and for the first time in a while, it concerns a popular new method of playing Diplomacy. I had figured that the only thing that could get this hobby excited was feuds, controversies, and CDO elections (well, two out of three ain't bad), but I'm delighted to see that the 7-Game Round-Robin Gunboat Tournaments are becoming as popular as it seems. So, I feel no hesitation in jumping on the bandwagon, although I am adding my own special wrinkles, explained in Rule 2 below.

SILENT SEVEN DIPLOMACY RULES

1. Silent Seven Diplomacy is a twice-removed variant of Diplomacy, being not a variant of the original game, but a variant of a variant (Gunboat Diplomacy). The rules are organized as follows: These rules take precedence over the XL house rules, which in turn take precedence over the current Diplomacy rulebook.

2. **OUTLINE AND DESIGNATION:** This is a game for seven players, each playing each power once in seven simultaneous Gunboat Diplomacy games. Despite the fact that there are seven games being played simultaneously, there is one winner: the player amassing the most wins, or most points, using a system explained below, if there is a tie for most wins. (When there is a tie in wins, players are still eligible to win on points even if they are behind in wins.) All seven games are subsidiary to the match as a whole; once a player clinches a victory (example: by winning four games), games still in progress are abandoned.

Aside from the usual Gunboat considerations (players remain anonymous), there are a few other rules which must be mentioned here. The winner of the match receives the pot, the amount of which is decided upon by the players. The players are identified by pseudonyms, making it possible to determine that "the guy playing France on Board 4 attacked me on Board 2". Cross-gaming is therefore allowed, even encouraged, and should come into play if one player gets or threatens to get an early lead. Deadlines are once a month. No press will be allowed, nor will any other clear attempt to negotiate (example: A Ber sure hopes that French army gives him a support to Munich next season). The British-system of retreats and adjustments is used, with little possibility of separated seasons except for Winter 1901. All games run concurrently, if a GM error forces a delay in one game, all games will be stopped. There are no stand-bys, and a player may return after numerous NMRs.

It is my hope that the Miller Number Custodian will see that this is one game and

not seven, and will assign a MN as such. Indeed, with the number of these types of games cropping up, perhaps it's time for a new designation of variants.

3. **GETTING INVOLVED.** The match will be called JOPLIN, after Scott Joplin, the early 20th century king of Ragtime music. The seven individual games will be named for seven of Joplin's piano compositions: Sugar Cane (SC), The Favorite (F), Weeping Willow (WW), Bethena (B), Gladiolus Rag (G), Euphonic Sounds (ES), and Magnetic Rag (M). The pseudonyms for unidentified players are the names of Joplin's contemporaries in the Ragtime world of the era, a number of which were aided by Joplin in getting their music printed, and one (John Stark) who took the bold step of publishing Joplin's (and later, others') music, making it possible for a later era to rediscover the master composers of the ragtime days. They are as follows: Louis Chauvin, Joseph F. Lamb, Arthur Marshall, Artie Matthews, James Scott, John Stark, and Tom Turpin.

The country assignments are as follows:

Player	Game Name						
	SC	F	WW	B	G	ES	M
Chauvin	R	E	G	A	T	I	F
Lamb	A	T	I	F	G	E	R
Marshall	E	G	T	R	I	F	A
Matthews	T	I	R	E	F	A	G
Scott	G	A	F	T	E	R	I
Stark	F	R	E	I	A	G	T
Turpin	I	F	A	G	R	T	E

If you want to enter the match, here's what you must send:

a) Name, address, telephone number, areacode, and best days to call in case a bug has to be ironed out over the phone to keep the match moving.

b) preference list for pseudonyms.

c) Maximum and minimum amounts that you are willing to contribute to the prize pool, over and above the \$10 gamefee. The \$10 covers postage for reports (I'm thinking along the lines of an eight page subzine) that will not always appear with XL, and the highest figure acceptable to all will be added to the game fee to form the prize pool. For the purposes of the prize pool (but not the \$10 gamefee: the extra fee for Americans reflects the higher postage to the U.S.), at least for the start, the American dollar will be accepted at \$1.15 CDN, and the pot will be converted at the end using the exchange rate then if necessary. There is no prize for second place.

4. **SENDING ORDERS.** You must send orders for all games still in progress or you will have NMRed. Maps will always show position following Winter adjustments or following Summer retreats. The British

system of season combinations, which allows you to do this, boils down to this: Order your units normally, then be pessimistic, and assume the worst. For any unit that can be dislodged, you then write a list of retreat options should this in fact happen. It sounds complicated, but 90% of the time (more in Gunboat, where combined attacks are chance affairs) you can figure out where the attack is going to come from, though in extremely rare cases you might submit two lists, depending upon who dislodged you. You need not include all options in your list; if no space you listed is open, you disband. Adjustments may require a complicated set of conditionals, but you should find that most of the time a list of adjustments covering all possible cases is straightforward. A few examples:

GERMANY (Fall 1901) A Den-Swe, F Kie-Hol, A Bur-Bel (retreat to: Par, Gas; unless AUSTRIA orders A Vie-Boh and A Tri-Tyr and my moves to Hol and Bel are stood off, then retreat to: Par, Mun) Adjustments: +3, F Kie, A Ber, A Mun; +2, A Ber, F Kie unless AUSTRIA orders A Vie-Boh and A Tri-Tyr, then A Mun instead; +1, as +2 without A Ber.

Here Germany wants to be sure to get an Army built in Munich if Austria comes knocking and France and England are not helpful. The adjustments are complicated but discernable, but I remind you that Winter 1901 will be separate, and you'll rarely have to worry so much.

Don't forget, if you do NMR, you will be allowed to return at any time, though I don't encourage the practice of talking a holiday from the game.

5. ENDING A GAME. All game end proposals must give supply centre counts, as well as significant countries (the winner, or those sharing a draw). The total number of supply centres must be at least 34 minus the number of neutrals in the last Winter season, and may not be higher than 34.

6. ENDING THE MATCH, DETERMINING THE WINNER. The winner is the player whose countries have won more games than the countries of any other player. If there is a tie for most wins, all players are eligible to win under the following point system:

WIN.....	100
Draws:	
2-WAY.....	60
3-WAY.....	40
4-WAY.....	30
5-WAY.....	24
6-WAY.....	20
7-WAY.....	17
SURVIVAL.....	15
PER SUPPLY CENTRE.....	1
ELIMINATION.....	-25

If the players concede or the GM determines that one player has an insurmountable lead, the match is over, and all games still in progress are abandoned.

7. GUNBOAT MECHANICS. The nature of Gunboat is that the players remain anonymous, and the element of negotiation is stifled (for Gunboat games in which press is allowed), or silenced. In this game there will be no press. There will also be a ban on deliberate misorders and joke orders which appear to negotiate with the other players. Prophetic multinational orders and joke orders, which may appear to negotiate, will be changed if they have no possibility of succeeding. Examples follow:

GERMANY A Mun S A Tyr, A Sil S A Boh, A Boh shudders at the prospect of allowing this Turk to win another board. A Boh will hold, period. Players are expected to realize the dangers of such a situation.

ENGLAND F Edi S Fre F Nth, A Lon-Nwy. This will be allowed, as the army order is not illegal, despite the fact that it seems to ask for the convoy, if not now perhaps next time. However, if the first order was instead F Edi S Freuch F Eng-Nth, the second order would be changed to A Lon H.

GERMANY (Spr. 01) F Ber-Kie, A Kie-Den, A Mun-Swe. I would change to A Mun H, even though the encrypted message to Russia (is it Russia who it's intended for?) is unclear. Germany could be saying "It's yours", or could mean "Don't bother, I'm standing you off."

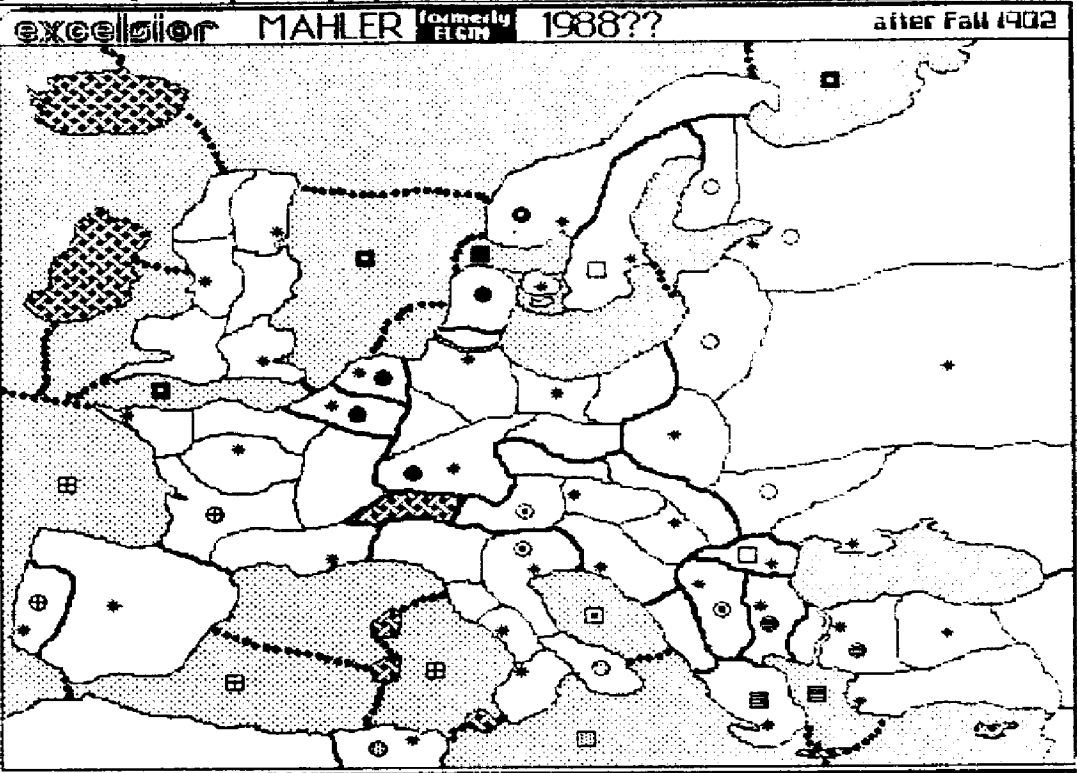
8. GM ERRORS. I will do my utmost to ensure that the match is not delayed due to an error, but I need the help of the players, and a few good rules to keep us all honest. If there is a GM error, the deadline for notification is one week before the next deadline. Errors not reported by this time stand, the printed orders taking precedence over underlining, boldfacing, and the map, in that order. If it becomes necessary to delay all the games because of a problem with one of them, I will add \$5 Canadian to the pot for the winner. Delays will happen if a) two games or more have an error, or b) an error in one game causes a player to want to change his orders in another game as well. Otherwise, players will be expected, once notified, to get revisions in, by phone if necessary, for the game in question.

Suggestions are welcome, as I realize these rules probably need some work. I don't think a month is too short a deadline when you don't have to write any of the other players. And I'm not going to think about changing the winning criterion, but some of the peripheral areas of the rules, like handling GM errors, could use a suggestion or two. Let me know what you think, and if you're interested.

GERMANY TIES RUSSIA FOR EARLY LEAD

"Don't shoot me, I'm only the piano player," says new GM.

- ENGLAND** ○○
 - Ebb Swieringa
 - 501 Chicago Rd #8
 - Thornton IL
 - USA 60476
- GERMANY** ●●
 - Jeff Bevis
 - 7074 Holton Duck Lake
 - Road/Holton MI
 - USA 49425
- RUSSIA** ○○
 - Marc Peters
 - 370 North St.
 - Sun Prairie WI
 - USA 53590
- TURKEY** ●●
 - Russell Rowe
 - 508 17th St
 - Nederland TX
 - USA 77627
- AUSTRIA** ○○
 - Frank Easton
 - 51 Gordon Way
 - Thornton ON
 - Canada L3T 5A1
- ITALY** ●●
 - Ebb Gossage Jr.
 - 9201 S. Central Pk.
 - Evergreen Pk. IL
 - USA 60642
- FRANCE** ●●
 - Doug Acheson / Unit 5,
 - Suite 330, 320 Yonge St.
 - Barrie ON
 - Canada L4N 4C8



GM: Bruce McIntyre, 6636 Bow Ave., #203, Burnaby BC, CANADA V5H 3C9 (ph 604/438-9735)
 NEXT DEADLINE: Noon P.S.T. Friday, November 15, 1990

SUPPLY CENTRE OWNERSHIP:	ENGLAND (4)	GERMANY (8) BULGONE	RUSSIA (5)
TURKEY (5) BULGONE	Edi ● ilpl ● Lon ● Bar ● Kle ● Plun ● Mas ● StP ● Sev ● War ●	AUSTRIA (5) BULGONE	ITALY (3)
FRANCE (3)	Ank ● Con ● Smy ● Bud ● Iri ● Vie ● Nap ● Rom ● Ven ● Bre ● Mar ● Par ●	NEUTRALS (0)	Bel ● S ● Hol ●
	Bul ● Den ● Cre ● Hol ● Nwy ● Por ● Rum ● Ser ● Spa ● Swe ● Tun ●		

MAHLER (FORMERLY ELGIN (PRAXIS)) 1988?? FALL 1902 RESULTS

ENGLAND F ENG H, F BAR-STP, A YOR-NWY, F NTH C A YOR-NWY
 GERMANY A DEN-SWE, A MUN H, F SKA S ENG A YOR-NWY, A BEL S A HOL, A HOL S A BEL
 RUSSIA A STP-NWY, A FIN S F SWE, F SWE S A STP-NWY, A WAR-LVA, F RUM H, A UKR S F RUM
 TURKEY F AEG-GRE, F CON-AEG, A BUL S F AEG-GRE, A SMY-CON
 AUSTRIA A TRI-VEN, A SER S TUR F RUM-BUL, A VIE-TYR, F ADR S A TRI-VEN
 ITALY A APU-TUN, A TUN H, F ION C A APU-TUN
 FRANCE F GLY-TYS, F MAO C A SPA-NAF, A SPA-NAF, A BUR-GAS, F WME S F GLY-TYS

PRESS:
 GM: I have no idea why Eric's computer requires A Bel S A Hol-Hol, and even less do I understand why the two Holland's survive to spear in the game report. The above is a retyping of the Fall 1902 season in this game, in the style that I use. Hi. I'm Bruce McIntyre; I publish Excelsior--lastest issue enclosed. CDO Co-Ordinator Cal White has co-ordinated this orphaned game clear out to the west coast. Burnaby is a suburb of Vancouver, which is the third largest Canadian city, about a two hour drive north of Seattle WA. This sometimes means an extra day or two in the mail, so be prepared for some postal frustrations if you like to leave it until the last week or so to get your first set of orders in.
 Yes, you did get something from me a little while ago, when Eric was in control of this game. At least, you did unless you changed your address. I prepared all of that initial report before finding out (to my intense displeasure), that Eric Klein had been reassigned as the new GM by the USOS. I have no problem with the USOS reassigning games when the Canadian orphan officer takes a long time to do so--but you can imagine how I felt when my work in preparing the initial notice was found to be unnecessary. In any case, while Eric had the game, I outright refused to do anything about it, despite the fact that idiotic Canadian nationalists roared at the USOS for

THIRTY-EIGHT

21

WHAT? STILL NO HEADLINES?

Search goes out for missing headline writer.

ENGLAND ●●
Paul Milewski
4360 Eastwood Dr.
#2101/ Batavia OH
USA 45103

GERMANY ●●●
Gordon Argyle
#306-330 Michigan St.
Victoria BC
CANADA V8V 1R5

RUSSIA ○□
Brent McKee
901 Avenue T North
Saskatoon SK
CANADA S7L 3E9

TURKEY ●●●
Claude Gauthron
620 rue St-Jean-Baptiste
Winnipeg MB
CANADA R2H 2Y1

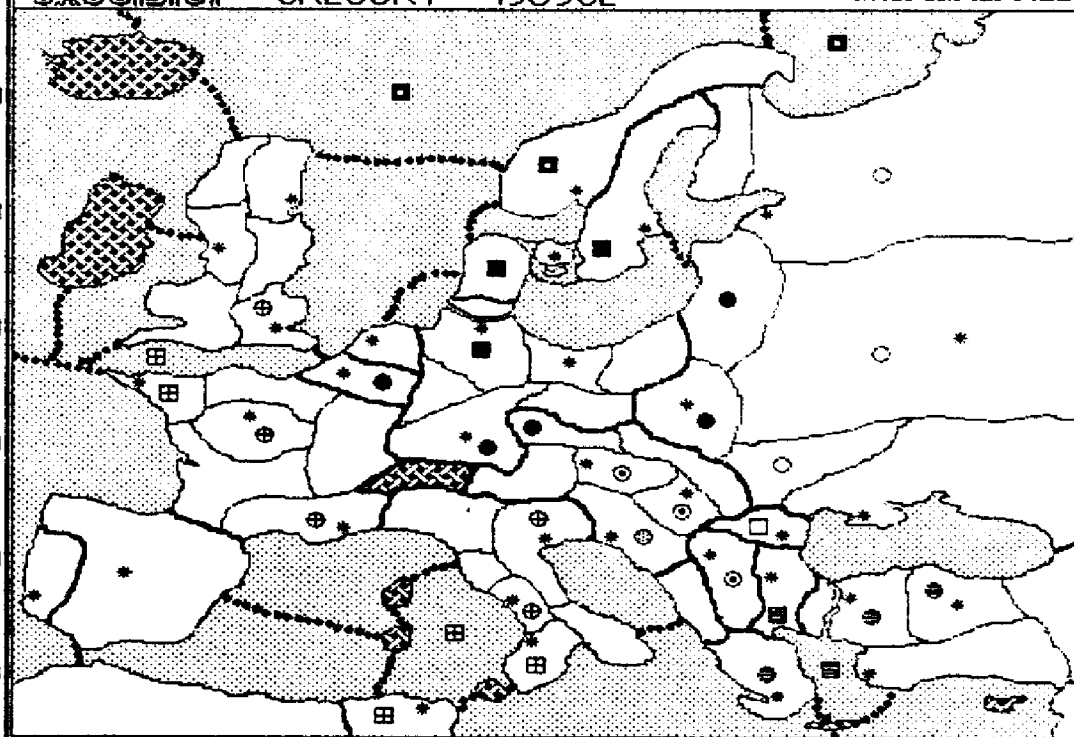
AUSTRIA ○□
Bob Acheson
Box 4622, Station SE.
Edmonton AB
CANADA T6E 2A0

ITALY ●●●
Charles Arsenault ?
12 rue Doyen Gosse
38400 St Martin d'Heres
FRANCE

FRANCE ●●●
Marvin Baker
121 Trent Dr.
Taylors SC
USA 29687

excelsior GREGORY 1989CE

after Winter 1903



GM: Bruce McIntyre, 6636 Dow Ave., #203, Burnaby BC, CANADA V5H 3C9. (ph. 604/438-9735)
NEXT DEADLINE: Noon P.S.T., Friday, November 13, 1999

SUPPLY CENTRE OWNERSHIP:	ENGLAND (3)	GERMANY (3)	RUSSIA (4)
	Edi ○ Lpl ○ Lon ⊕	Bar ● Kie ● Mun ●	Mos ○ StP ○ Sev ○ War ●
TURKEY (5)	AUSTRIA (3)	ITALY (1)	FRANCE (10)
Ank ● Con ● Smg ●	Bud ○ Tri ● Vie ○	Nap ⊕ Rom ⊕	Ven ⊕ Bre ⊕ Mar ⊕ Par ⊕
NEUTRALS (10)			
Bel ● Bul ● Den ●	Gre ● Hol ●	Nwy ● Por ⊕ Rum ○	Ser ○ Spa ⊕ Swe ● Tun ⊕

GREGORY 1988CE WINTER 1903 RESULTS/PRE-SPRING 1904 POSITION

ENGLAND [NO CHANGE] HAS F NWY, F BAR, F NRG
 GERMANY [BUILDS F KIE] HAS F KIE, F SWE, A WAR, A LVA, A BOH, A MUN, F DEN, A BEL
 RUSSIA [NRR: F NWY DISBANDED; NRR: GM REMOVES A GAL] HAS A MOS, A UKR, F RUM, A STP
 TURKEY [NO CHANGE] HAS A GRE, F BUL(SC), A ANK, F AEG, A CON
 AUSTRIA [BUILDS A VIE] HAS A VIE, A SER, A BUD
 ITALY [NRR: GM REMOVES A TYR, F ION] HAS A TRI
 FRANCE [BUILDS A PAR, F BRE, A MAR] HAS A PAR, F BRE, A MAR, A LON, A ROM, F TUN, F TYR, F NAP, A VEN, F ENG

PRESS:

GM:NRR can be an abbreviation for No Retreats Received, or No Removals Received, as I found out while typing up Brent's non-orders for Russia! Anyhow, I want to apologize for the delay, I came home from CanCon to a bunch of job uncertainties--now it appears that I'm better off than before, and to prove it, as you see, I've gone and bought a new printer!

"stealing" a game that had been abandoned for months. Now that Eric has expressed a desire to discontinue his postal games, I seem to be the logical choice: the hobby politicians are happy, I'm happy to have a new group of folks sending me stuff--but you players have a good reason to be unhappy. I want you to know that I fully understand your displeasure with the crap that has gone on with this, and I'll do my best to ensure that it stops right here.

Parameters: deadlines 6-weeks apart, houserules as enclosed in XL #37 (revised slightly from the last I sent out), you need not sub to XL to play, game reports on flyer, separate from zine deadlines anyway.

My address is 6636 Dow Ave, #203, Burnaby BC, CANADA V5H 3C9. Please call me collect at 604-438-9735 if you do not wish to continue in this game, so I can arrange a quick replacement from my stand-by list.

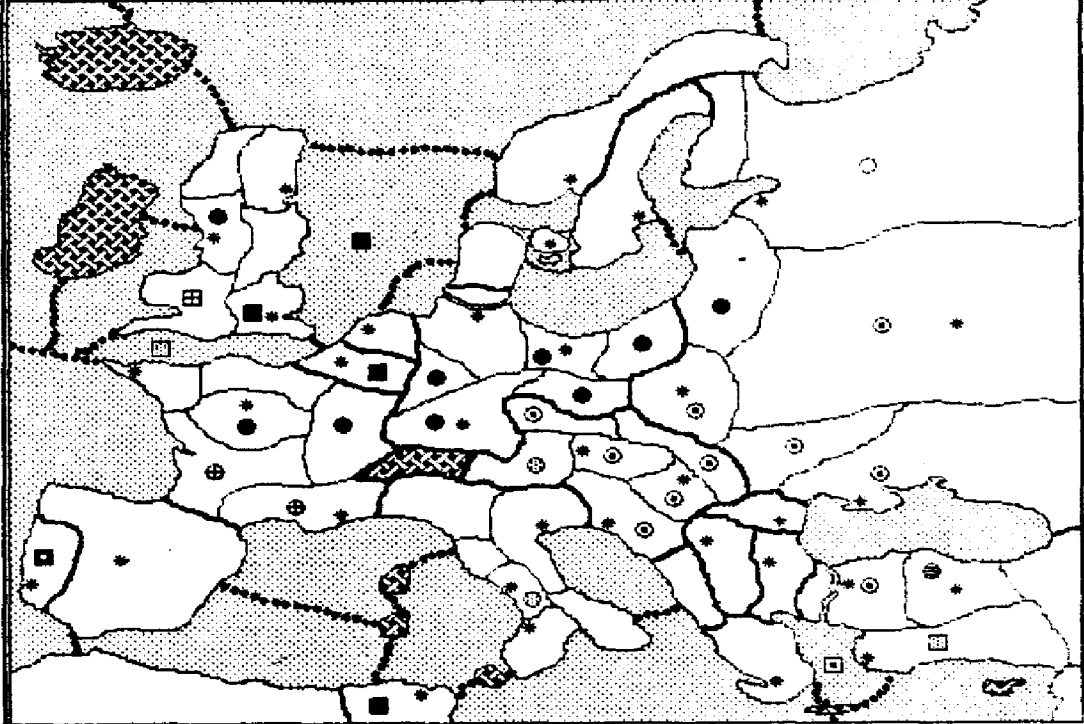
EXCELSIOR

ERROR DISCOVERED BY RED-FACED GM

Austrian army rises from dead in Warsaw miracle!

- ENGLAND** ○●
 - Gordon Argyle
 - #308-330 Michigan St.
 - Victoria BC
 - CANADA V6V 1R5
- GERMANY** ●●
 - Bob Acheson
 - Box 4622, Station SE
 - Edmonton AB
 - CANADA T6E 2A0
- RUSSIA** ○□
 - Marvin Baker
 - 121 Trent Dr.
 - Taylor's SC
 - USA 29687
- TURKEY** ●●
 - Paul Milewski
 - 4360 Eastwood Dr.
 - #2101 / Batavia OH
 - USA 45103
- AUSTRIA (10)** ○□
 - Pierre Touchette
 - 11 rue Bruyere
 - Gatineau PQ
 - CANADA J8T 2T9
- ITALY** ●●
 - Claude Gautron
 - 620 rue St. Jean-Bap-
 - tiste/ Winnipeg MB
 - CANADA R2H 0H2
- FRANCE** ●●
 - Jacques Belanger
 - 9853 Manguy
 - Ete-Foy PQ
 - CANADA G1V 3S5

excelsior FAURE 1986CC after Spring 1908



GM: Bruce McInture, 6636 Dow Ave., #283, Burnaby BC, CANADA V5H 3C9 (ph. 604/438-9735)
 NEXT DEADLINE: Noon P.S.T. Friday, November 16, 1990

SUPPLY CENTRE	ENGLAND (1)	GERMANY (13)	RUSSIA (1)
OWNERSHIP:	Edi ●	Lpl ● Lon ● Bar ● Kia ● Mun ● Mos ● StP ● Sev ● War ●	Sev ● War ●
TURKEY (1)	AUSTRIA (10)	ITALY (3)	FRANCE (3)
Ank ● Con ● Smy ● Bud ● Tri ● Uie ● Nap ● Rom ● Ven ● Bre ● Mar ● Par ●			
NEUTRALS (10)			
Bel ● Bul ● Ben ● Gre ● Hol ● Hwv ● Por ● Rum ● Ser ● Spa ● Swe ● Tun ●			

FAURE 1986CC SPRING 1908 RESULTS (READJUDICATION)

- ENGLAND** F POR-MAO
- GERMANY** [F ENG R LON; BUILDS F KIE] F KIE-HOL, A PRU S A SIL, A LVA-WAR, A RUH S A PIC-BUR, A SIL S A LVA-WAR, F JUN-ION, F LON-ENG, A LPL H, A PAR S A PIC-BUR, A PIC-BUR, F NWY-NTH, A BER S A MUN, A MUN S A SIL
- RUSSIA** A STP-MOS
- TURKEY** [A CON R ANK, REMOVES A SYR, A ANK] A ARM-ANK
- AUSTRIA** [BUILDS A VIE, A TRI] A VIE S A BOH, A TRI H, A GAL S A WAR, F AEG-ION, A BUD H, A WAR H, A BOH S A GAL, A MOS S A WAR, A SEV S A MOS, A UKR S A GAL, A CON H
- ITALY** A TYR S AUS A BOH, A TUS-ROM, F SKY H, F ENG-MAO
- FRANCE** [A PAR ANNIHILATED] F IRS-WAL, A MAR-BUR, A GAS S A MAR-BUR

PRESS:

GM: The original version had the A Lva somehow making it to War. I corrected this within a few days of mailing the flyers, sending the corrections with XL#37. Players not receiving the correction (you all should have gotten it) should note the change.

Thanks to Marvin Baker for taking over as Russia. As you might expect from the delay, I had a rather rough August-September job-wise, but am now back on track, as you see, with a brand new printer. No rough spots expected over the next little while, unless Iraq invades the rest of the Gulf nations, succeeds, and hoards all the oil for itself.

Gordon Argyle did quite well to get orders in this time, as he apparently had to tape-record them from a hospital bed, and have someone else type them. I'm not trying to arouse sympathy or anything, but I just thought you might like to know that the English orders, verbatim, this time, were "F-POR 2-MAO"! I can't wait to get to GREGORY, where Gordon's typist has written a whole paragraph!

Fred's Column No. 2 by Fred C. Davis, Jr.

GETTING THERE: THE PAINS OF COMMUTING

(from the Baltimore Sun, 7 Oct. 1990.)

By Doug Birch

Anne S. George, who drives every morning from her home in Parkville to Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, is one of a hardy band of commuting passers in this region. And like most passers, she has had to learn to rough it.

An increasing number of Baltimore-area commuters are no longer living in the suburbs and working in the city, transportation planners say. They are commuting from their suburban homes to their suburban jobs.

Ms. George, a 44-year-old marine biology teacher, would prefer to ride public transportation in Silver Spring, but that would take too many connections and too much time. She would move, but loves her neighborhood, affordable Baltimore. So she copes with frequent car repairs, steep gasoline bills, 15-mile backups on Interstate 49 — and a little pain.

"Teaching kids conservation is a part of my act," she said, "and I feel so guilty every morning, driving past all these people who, just like me, have just one person in their car."

Later, she added: "I've told my son to become a traffic engineer. In the future, we may not have a lot of things, but we'll always have traffic."

The problem is that this region, like most metropolitan areas, is hard-wired with a road and transit network designed to spread people from residential areas to the city center and back again — with Interstate highways designed for long-distance travelers. Moving from suburb to suburb requires a more circuitous route.

The result is that the average commuter is spending more time on the road and covering more ground. Interstates designed for long-distance drivers are clogged with local traffic. Bypassing country roads and bridges, built for hay wagons and combines, are being pounded by Jeep Cherokees and Lexus sedans. And fewer commuters can use mass transit.

Public and private transportation officials, planners and some civilian commuters, in comments about recent commuting trends in the region, say Baltimore-area residents do not routinely face the epic delays and monumental tie-ups that plague more densely populated regions, such as those around Los Angeles, New York or even Washington.

But Baltimore's traditional and suburb-to-suburb commuters still face their share of frustrations — such as daily rush-hour backups on the southwest and northeast sides of the Beltway, chronic overcrowding on commuter trains between Washington and Baltimore, and a bus system that is late about 20 percent of the time.

Traffic experts say at least some of these problems are linked to new living and working patterns.

Rebuilding road and transit networks to accommodate those patterns will be slow and difficult. "There's no quick fix," said Charles K. Goodman, director of transportation planning for the Baltimore Regional Council of Governments.

One solution is for local governments to use their zoning power to channel residential and commercial growth around existing transporta-

tion, Mr. Goodman said. Then the roads and mass transit links in those corridors must be improved to handle the increased volume.

The new commuting pattern has prompted the state Department of Transportation to recommend such mammoth projects as expansion of the northeast and southwest sections of the Baltimore Beltway from six to eight lanes, a task that would cost an estimated \$650 million — if the money is ever found to do it.

That pattern also has affected transportation on a smaller scale.

The Paper Mill Road bridge over Loch Raven Reservoir, the Carroll Road bridge over the Carroll Branch creek and the Sparks Road bridge over the Gunpowder Falls were all built to handle rural traffic. All now carry commuters from eastern Baltimore County and western Harford County to the Hunt Valley shopping, industrial and corporate district. All were recently closed for repairs.

One driver who called The Sun's telephone information line — Sunday — characterized the Hunt Valley area as "the perfect bottleneck."

People don't realize when they move to the country that the roads will be crowded with other people just like themselves, said Donald W. Brewer, commuter assistance officer for Baltimore County.

Businesses also move to the suburbs without giving enough weight to transportation problems, he said. He recalled meeting with employees of a firm that is moving its clerical and midlevel staff from downtown Baltimore to Owings Mills. Many of those workers now live in Harford County.

"They wanted me to give them some magical route they could take that would get them from Abingdon to Owings Mills without taking the Beltway and without taking two hours each way," Mr. Brewer said. He knows of no such route.

The executive who decided to shift operations, Mr. Brewer said, sails to work in the Inner Harbor aboard his boat — and will continue to do so, because the firm's executive offices are not moving.

Planners are jittery that the new commuting pattern will make it even harder to expand mass transit, considered far more efficient than private automobiles.

Getting area workers out of their cars and into van pools or onto buses

is already a tough job because they "live scattered all over the place," said Nancy Van Winder, executive director of the Baltimore-Washington International Airport Commuter Transportation Center.

Buses are available to BWI from Baltimore, she said, but only 10 percent of the workers live there.

Since it opened in 1983, Baltimore's Metro has expanded to Owings Mills and grown from 17,000 riders a day to 50,000 a day. The Mass Transit Administration figures the line has reduced rush-hour traffic in that corridor by about 1,400 vehicles.

But existing trains could easily accommodate more riders, and growth has been slow over the past year. Planners worry that the more people who work in the suburbs, the fewer potential riders the Metro will have.

Baltimore's state-run bus service is also trying to attract new riders by adapting to new commuting patterns — scheduling express buses or "bypass" from park-and-ride lots on the outskirts of the metropolitan area.

But it is hard to schedule buses for suburb-to-suburb routes, because such commuters travel to and from widely scattered points.

Meanwhile, some of the bus system's 200,000 to 250,000 daily riders are unhappy — judging from nearly 190 calls from commuters to Sunday — about delays that result in an on-time record state officials estimate at only 80 percent. The Mass Transit Administration considers a bus on time if it reaches a stop within two minutes of the scheduled time.

"I would really like to take a bus, but I cannot depend on the connections and the bus getting me to where I want to be on time," said one area commuter who drives.

Improving the on-time performance of buses is the MTA's top priority, and biggest headache, said MTA administrator Ronald J. Hartman. "We've got to make them run on time," he said, but the system is hobbled by potholed or overcrowded roadways — something the MTA can't control.

Among the steps the MTA is taking to improve on-time performance is the breaking up of some bus routes into shorter routes. And a new \$11 million computerized tracking system has been installed b

keep tabs on the exact location of each bus. The system also improves accuracy by permitting dispatchers to eavesdrop on what is being said on buses during an emergency.

The system, now operating with only 50 of the fleet's 900 buses, undergoing a yearlong test and will be expanded to the entire fleet.

Maryland Rail Commuter service to Washington is suffering, too — from its own success. There are not enough parking spaces, stations and seats for current riders. All rush-hour trains are standing-room only.

"Every time we purchase equipment, ridership levels have grown faster than we have anticipated," said Joseph Neasel, director of passenger services for MARC. "The demand is just phenomenal."

Ridership on one line — linking Penn Station in Baltimore to Union Station in Washington — grew by 46 percent in the past year. State transportation planners estimate that pent-up demand could be triple the 10,200 riders who now use the two MARC lines serving the Baltimore-Washington corridor each day.

The state has purchased 37 new or refurbished cars — which will increase its current 63-car fleet by almost 60 percent. But the equipment will not be delivered until April 1.

Some riders complain about equipment failures — such as the loss of air conditioning in the summer or delays due to frozen signals in the winter. Sometimes more serious incidents occur.

Kathryn Waters, a Bolton Hill resident who works in Washington, was heading home on the MARC system Aug. 30 when her train broke down in a tunnel. For 80 minutes, anxious passengers sat in the dark and the suffocating heat.

MARC officials, who are investi-

gating the Aug. 30 incident, insist problems are rare.

"We're satisfied with where the service is going," Mr. Neasel said. "Our on-time performance is in the low- to mid-90 percentile."

"But, of course, to the commuter whose train gets hit [by delays] two days in a week, that's meaningless," he said.

Some problems are beyond the

state's influence, such as the conservative nature of Baltimore-area drivers.

David Sandler, a WBAL-AM reporter who flies over the region and warns motorists of traffic snarls every rush hour, watches from above as thousands of creatures of habit calmly ignore his advice.

"Regardless of what you tell them to do to detour, they stick to [their usual] route," he said.



THE BLINDO RACER
Beltway traffic piles up on one side at I-70.

BURNABY GAME OPENINGS

This edition of *Burnaby Game Openings* is aimed primarily at the new readers I've added in the last few issues, and Phil Reynolds' for publication in *Pontevredia*, the hobby game opening service. I've been trying to open these for some time now, and because it's been so long since I announced them open I'm clearing the slate and will simply keep track of the entrants on the back page from now on. All of the openings except JOPLIN are free with your XL sub, and the only cost will be a \$3 NWR deposit (this can be temporarily levied from your sub account), and a requirement to pay for the postage for game reports if you don't choose to sub to the zine. (If you sub to the zine I pay for the flyer postage.) All games will be run on flyers but will receive exposure in the zine when convenient: the zine deadlines are different (and far less regular!) than the game deadlines, so this is necessary. (I expect JOPLIN to fill eight interesting pages in the zine for the first few turns, and after that I will report on the progress of the seven games in the zine each issue.)

IVES (*Selsic Diplomacy*—rules on page 16, 6-week deadlines, no gamefee); Pete Gaughan, Grant Fraser, 3 needed.