

An irregular publication of the US Orphan Service

Your Orphan Games Honcho is Jim Burgess, 100 Holden Street, Providence, RI 02908-5731, (401) 351-0287.

The USOS is committed to supporting the smooth operation to completion of PBM Diplomacy games and variants registered with the Boardman and Miller Number Custodians. This little game sheet is published with the intent of facilitating the transference of games that have been turned over to the US Orphan Service to be rehoused.

Current News Section

If any of you would like to receive all issues of YVSC that I publish, the cost will be \$0.25/issue. All players, GM's, and custodians who have an interest in particular issues will continue to receive those issues free. I am willing to work out trades or other agreements on request, noting that the publication schedule of the szine will not be consistent. I also publish a "quasi-szine" called *The Boob Report* that I will throw in for free on any trade deals. So that no one brings up any charges of misappropriation of funds, I personally will bear the cost of issues of YVSC that I send to people under trade agreements. Any questions?

The main purpose of this issue is to restart 1983AY, but I also have a very interesting letter from Elmer Hinton down below. Keith has not made a final decision on a successor, mainly because I threw a monkey wrench in and suggested we go to three custodians, creating a new position called something like "USOS Hobby Backwater Abandonment Search Chairman". This job would rotate among the three custodians (in six month intervals?) and the task would be to actively search out missing games from the backwater (out of the mainstream) of the hobby. The goal would be to expand the hobby's base by bringing new people into the mainstream. For example, John Walker came into the mainstream of the hobby in the following convoluted fashion: he met an old high school friend of mine in San Antonio. That friend of mine (who is now out of the hobby) asked John to standby in a small backwater szine that we were playing in. Said szine subsequently turned belly up and I called it to the attention of Dick Martin (then USOS Co-Director). My involvement in that rehousing directly led to my current custodianship, but that's another story. John Walker took over the GM job for one of those games (1979JZ) and started a small, but popular, warehouse szine (yes, Conrad, 1979JZ began in September of 1979 and I was the original Turk). John then met other people in the mainstream and began to expand his hobby involvement until his current struggle against illness. I want to thank Conrad von Metzke for taking over John's games on the condition that Conrad gives them back when John recovers, as we all pray that he will.

I understand that the current prognosis is good. Get well soon, John! Anyway, I think it is time for a little more of that kind of "outreach". I have wanted to do some searching for abandoned games since I started on this job, but haven't had the chance. What do you think of an additional custodian with that primary responsibility?

The *Zine Register* (published by Simon Billenness, 61A Park Avenue, Albany, NY 12208) costs \$1.50 per issue, which works out to \$6.00/year. The subscription price is listed on the front cover in big bold letters so that only I could miss it... Simon has taken over this project from Roy Henricks and has expanded it to a quarterly publication schedule. It looks good and I recommend everyone check it out. I'm not sure that a continuing sub is the most efficient way to see this, but send Simon a buck-fifty (be sure to tell him what that is, too) and see it at least once a year.

The Archive Publishers Poll #1 is being run by W. Elmer Hinton Jr. (20 Almont St., Nashua, NH 03060) with a deadline of: *March 19, 1986*. Here are the questions:

1) Give your name, address, age, # of szines received, # of szines played in, titles you play ((I presume he means games)), and if you are a publisher; and the # of yrs. in postal gaming.

2) If you are familiar with the MNC title problem of late, tell me: did you vote in the referendum; do you support Lee Kendter Sr.; do you accept Robert Sacks' alternate-MNC? ((who goes by the pseudonymous "Karel Alaric")).

3) If you are familiar with the Postal Locator service, tell me: Do you use it; if not, why not; did you support the BNC standby service; do you want more information about the game wanted list?

4) Are you familiar with the feuding last year; if so did you support one side or the other (you need not say which side); did the feud affect you in any way; if so, how?

5) Do you support the central Archive as a library for postal-public research and preservation of hobby history? If you are familiar with the situation, do you support the Granite Archive which has

operated as the only public-oriented successor to the Hoosier Archive; do you support the newly declared Archive of Larry Peery; will you contribute zines to the Archive?

6) If you especially like a zine, do you recommend it to others? What do you look for most in a zine? In a game? In House Rules?

Be sure to answer fully. Your contribution can be invaluable.

Thank you for doing this poll, Elmer. You ask some interesting questions. I would also request that the results of your poll be published in some widely available forum, such as *Diplomacy World*. To my mind, for example, the biggest problem with the Postal Locator service is its lack of publicity and coverage. I'll expand on that in my response to the poll and also in a discussion below. Everyone reading this should get their response off to Elmer right away!

Letter Column Section

From W. Elmer Hinton Jr.: I was a little curious about your comment in YVSC #4, about the game belonging to the players; not your fault of course as this is a commonly held myth.

In point of law and fact it is the Gamesmaster, not the Players, who 'owns' the operation of the postal game. Before I continue, I find it necessary to interject a bit of background, from which this statement comes. I am a professional Gamemaster. In fact, I am world senior Professional Gamemaster; no one has been doing so as long as I, and only one computer-moderation company is older. The field of postal gaming consists of about 60-70 companies running 160 or so titles; over 200,000 game turns per month at a cost of about \$3.00 per turn average. This field also consists of about 160 amateurs who constitute under 1% of all turns played, including most of Diplomacy turns played, and Diplomacy games and variants orphaned.

Most companies created, designed, and run postally their in-house games, which are not available for home-play. They have sole proprietary right to run such a game in any form. Other companies release their game for home-play, and their sole right to run vanishes; as is the case with board-games from non-PBM companies.

Games which may be run by anyone, may also be run by Gamesmasters, postally, for profit or not, so long as no laws are violated. When this is undertaken, the Gamesmaster is the sole owner of the operation of the game. He is responsible for all aspects of the game, its operation, and his customers; whether for profit or not.

By analogy (see the *Costaguana* forum as well) this is like an amusement park owner (the publisher) and the merry-go-round operator (the Gamemaster) who sells tickets for rides. The riders have a limited-use contract which the operator must honor, but they in no way own the ride, the merry-go-round, or the park. A new game called Photon is just open where contestants run around inside a building for six minutes for \$3.00 or so, shooting each other with light beams. They do not own that game, or the building or the accoutrements, which are all provided by the Gamemaster/Franchise owner.

Another analogy that just occurs to me--and

perhaps even better here, is that of a Union Construction crew who are building a skyscraper. They do not own the land, or the building; they are only workers; nevertheless, if we liken the Union to the GM, and the owner to the players, you still see that, in a strike it is the Union (GM) who 'owns' the operation (in this case the operation of the construction of the building). Just as the surgeon is the one who owns his operation (though he doesn't own the equipment or the bodies involved).

The Gamemaster, professional or not, is like any other service-oriented business operation in that it is the *service* which is owned by the operator, wholly and solely. In the example of the striking Union, in many states non-union workers could not be brought in because the Union contract (under which they own the service; the operation of constructing that building) cannot be breached without just cause.

Which brings us to the point really at issue--just cause.

The hobby is informal by nature; where service officers are involved, certain formalities should be observed where possible. However, litigation is impossible. Not only is the amount of money involved usually ridiculous in comparison with that which would be spent in recovery, but the problems in logistics that this would entail would be prohibitive, even if the item were not dismissed as a 'silly suit'.

This means that if just cause exists it must be decided in a fashion that seems objective. The best such way is to involve as many participants as possible. In the case of a game where all seven players (or all remaining) felt that the GM had breached their contract for whatever of a variety of reasons, and had incensed them to the point of action, there is no question that they have the right to recoup their loss.

If the merry-go-round breaks down; the surgeon leaves a glove in the patient; fair recompense must be made. In the hobby setting, this can only be limited to moving the game unless the Gamemaster co-operates. However, in that case, the question of who owns what doesn't arise.

It is the GM who appears to have defaulted in his responsible obligations, and who fails to co-operate, where the problems lie. The GM is the owner of the

service he performs, but where he has defaulted, the players have a right to take action. That action should not be said, as you have done, to stem from their ownership of the game, but from the fact of the breach of the contract under which they had operated.

Moreover, what if only three of the seven wish to move? Two of seven? Six of seven with one protesting the other way?

The point is that the players do, within their rights under breach of contract, and within the informality which must exist within the limited scope of the hobby, have the right to remove the game from a defaulting GM. However, they must not do so in the mistaken belief that they own the game; and the guidelines under which the few disgruntled players are not allowed to dictate, versus those times when there is a clearly seen breach in the eyes of all players, must be arrived at by cautious thought and discussion among interested parties.

Final point being this--if the players owned the game they could move it at any time--since the gamesmaster owns it, it can only be moved for cause.

((Thank you for a very interesting letter. I think we are in closer agreement than it might appear at first glance. I certainly am not in favor of having a "few disgruntled players" dictate for all. In addition, this is the forum for "cautious thought and discussion among interested parties." Let me then address your letter point by point. Your discussion of the professional postal gaming industry is interesting, but beside the point. Diplomacy, the game, has no necessary connection to any particular GM, not even were Allan B. Calhmer the postal GM in question. That prelude ends up distorting your analogies. Analogies should be as uncluttered with excess emotional baggage extraneous to the point as possible. Your Union strike example bothers me most for that reason. The merry-go-round example suffers because the merry-go-round cannot be moved, even were a breach of contract to be discovered. I have a better example. Consider a foursome of golfers who get together to play a competitive round of golf. To make the analogy better, we could make this a competition organized by a particular golf course owner. The biggest difference between this situation and the Diplomacy hobby is that the golf course owner is probably a "professional GM". Keep that in mind. The players pay a game fee and the golf course owner provides a course to play on (a szine). The game (golf or Dip) has rules that are agreed upon beforehand, but may vary (variants), and the golf course owner has no exclusive rights to the rules that the game is played under. Once the players get on the course, their main concern is the competition between them. The comradery and friendship may also be an integral part of the enjoyment, just like Dip. Now what would make the players feel that the contract with the golf course owner has been breached? Clearly, the "playability" of the course. Who owns the game? The players do. They can pick it up and move it at any time. Now let's

consider your points in this context. You seem to be implying that the GM has a right to provide the service (of a golf course or a szine). It really is closer to being a responsibility. It is very easy to confuse rights and responsibilities. In this case, the confusion arises because the GM is usually an amateur and is "doing this for fun". The players should try to respect that and they do, in most cases. I am always careful to point out that fact, along with the players' ownership of the game. You say that "just cause" is the issue and I quite agree. Whenever you bring up a value judgment, and justice is the biggie, the question is one of perspective: whose justice? My answer must be: the players' justice. They should decide. You are quite correct to say that achieving a consensus among players is difficult. My job is to help them do that and help them to implement their decision. It is worse to say that because the players can't reach a consensus, someone else (an ombudsman) should decide for them. I won't play that role and I won't let others play it either. Also, you must realize that players are usually ambivalent about moving a game. They start a game with a GM (just as the golfer gets in a match at a particular course) because they like something about him or his szine. The GM can destroy their trust in him or her, but it usually isn't easy. I have employed veto power on moving, though I have not always been upfront with players on that fact. So, for example, three players in favor of moving and four ambivalent players would lead me to move a game. If just one of those ambivalent players tried to veto a move I would approach that player, sound out his reasons, argue the other players' side, and let that player decide. Just as the golfers would not go to the effort of moving their game to another course without a reason, players would not move their game to another szine without a reason. I don't see it as my place to judge the reasons. Whose place would it be to judge the reasons in an informal hobby anyway? It would be different if the PGA were holding a tournament on the golf course. I would be the last one, as many of you know, to suggest that people in the Diplomacy hobby go to court. I believe in hobby anarchy. At the same time, as a service officer I do try to observe "certain formalities". If I didn't, someone who didn't like the way I was operating would set up a rival service to perform the orphan tasks in the way they thought the tasks should be performed. The issue then would be decided by competition in the marketplace. I wish to avoid such controversy as much as possible, so I am running this forum to try to reach some consensus, but my previous remarks in this vein have drawn fire from Robert Sacks.))

Here is an excerpt from a letter of Robert Sacks to me: I fail to understand how you could encourage a rival project. If the project had the same standards it would be unnecessary and an improper waste of effort, probably politically motivated, possibly performed by a less qualified custodian. (A more qualified custodian would probably refuse to go into

competition.) Imagine the consequences of different standards: games seized when there is no orphan to curry favor with some players, or a political movement that claims that players (or these players) have no rights. If our standards are wrong, let's talk about changing them.

((The way I see it, there are two types of "standards" we could be discussing. I have expressed my opinion in favor of not discussing the circumstances under which games should be moved, preferring to leave the standards up to the players of particular games. Believe me, this attitude, if anything, leads to fewer games being moved. The other type of standard that I do want to discuss is how the Orphan Service should go about helping players when they (the players) perceive a game to be in trouble. Robert does bring up an important point, the effect of feuds on services. What should the Orphan Service do if a request to move a game is precipitated by a "feud", where I define a feud to be some disagreement that has nothing to do with the actual play of the game. My answer should be obvious by now, going back to the golf match, let's say that when the players go out on the course they find anti-apartheid protesters parading around the course calling for the removal of US corporate interests in South Africa. Our golfers, of course, are top executives in multinationals with interests in South Africa. The golfers vote to leave because the owner refuses to make the protesters leave as long as they don't interfere with the game. I say, let the golfers go and don't judge their reasons. I realize that this is really difficult though (as I'm sure you could imagine a parallel occurrence in our hobby). My final word on the subject is this: who would really want to force a game to stay in a szine where the players didn't want to be? If some players could not generate a consensus to move, their options are the same ones they've always had. Shut up and play, or resign. Now I want to briefly address the rest of Robert Sacks' comments. I am sorely tempted to use Robert's comments to another purpose, but since it is not the point of this forum I will refrain. Robert and I fundamentally disagree on the nature of the hobby. I'm sure he does not agree that it is and should be an anarchy, so I don't expect him to agree with me, but I hope he will understand. I do not support rival
Personal Note to You:

services, I merely accept them as the best way to dispose of incompetent custodians. I am doing everything I can to prevent someone from desiring to start a rival service. That is making me perform this service better. And that is the point of competition. Despite my training as an economist, I do not believe competition is perfect, but just that it is better than any alternative that has been shown to me, at least in this context. I agree that political considerations and feuds can play a part in forming rival services, but see no way around it. The people in the hobby are still going to decide by employing the service that they choose. If you try to force choices on them that they disapprove of then they will leave the hobby or start a bigger feud. I don't see how that accomplishes anything positive. I would prefer to see orderly transference of hobby custodianships and avoidance of duplication of services, but don't want rules enforcing that because of the fact that no administrator or committee of administrators of those rules can be guaranteed to be unbiased and honest. Thus, anarchy.

There is one type of situation where I support having actual duplication of services. Any service that directly serves players is faced with a severe publicity problem. Larry Peery's Black and Blue Book lists over 1000 hobbyists and is still incomplete. Do you have any idea what % of that 1000 does not know of the existence of this Orphan Service and what it does? My guess would be at least half. Elmer Hinton's Postal Locator service, being newer, would have an even lower recognition level. Therefore, I disagree with Robert Sacks' contention that rival services necessarily duplicate services, they might just lead to more services for more players. I would like to expand the USOS to a point where our recognition level approaches the near 100% recognition level of the BNC. Then there would be no need for a rival Orphan Service. At the moment, such a need may very well exist.))

The views and opinions expressed in this editorial necessarily reflect the operational decisions of the staff and management of the USOS. Opposing viewpoints are welcomed and encouraged. Changing the crochety mind of the custodian may be difficult, but is necessary if one would like the USOS to operate in a different way.

Dear Larry,
Please talk to Elmer Hinton about publishing the results of ~~your~~ ^{his} poll in IN. You two aren't going to feud over having "rival" archives, are you?
Take care
Jim

Murd'ring Ministers Insert

1983AY

headlines of the day:

FRENCH FLEET VISITS BELGIUM, DO THEY HAVE PERMISSION OF RULING GERMAN?

NAPLES REMAINS BELEAGUERED BUT GARRISONED BY SLEEPING ITALIANS, WILL THEY EVER AWAKEN?

Summer 1907

RUSSIA(Brown,CAN): R f kie-HEL.

Fall 1907

FRANCE(Lucas): f eng-BEL, a BUR S GERMAN a ruh-mun, a ROM S f tyh-nap, f TUN S f wes-tyh, f TYH-nap, a TUS S a rom, a PIE S GERMAN a mun-tyo, f WES-tyh.
 GERMANY(Albrecht): a mun-TYO, a ruh-MUN, a KIE S a ruh-mun, f den-swe (d r:bal,otb), f NTH-hol.
 ITALY(CD): STANDBY CALLED, f NAP h.
 RUSSIA(Brown,CAN): f HEL-hol, a SIL S a ber, a GAL-boh, a BOH-mun, a tyo S a boh-mun (d r:vie,otb), f ska-DEN, a SWE S f ska-den, f bar-NWG, f AEG h, a BER S a boh-mun.
 TURKEY(Brown,USA): a SMY-nap, f EAS C a smy-nap, f GRE S f ion, f ION C a smy-nap, a TRI S a ven, a VEN S a apu, f ADR S a ven, a APU S a smy-nap.

Supply Center Chart

FRANCE: 9 cntrs - bre,par,mar,spa,por,bel,lon,rom,tun (has 8, bld 1)
 GERMANY: 5 cntrs - kie,mun,hol,edi,lpl (has 4 or 5, bld 1 (no room,r:otb) or even (r:bal))
 ITALY: 1 cntr - nap (has 1, even)
 RUSSIA: 11 cntrs - stp,mos,sev,war,rum,swe,bud,vie, (has 9 or 10, bld 2 (r:otb) or bld 1 (r:vie))
 ber,den,nwy
 TURKEY: 8 cntrs - ank,con,smy,bul,gre,tri,ven,ser (has 8, even)
 (total = 34 cntrs)

THE DUE DATE FOR WINTER 1907 AND SPRING 1908 IS MARCH 27TH, 1986!!

Addresses of the Participants

FRANCE: Jerry Lucas, 3902 Lakemead Way, Redwood City, CA 94062
 GERMANY: Jeff Albrecht, P.O. Box 295, Doland, SD 57436-0295
 ITALY: Standby is Paul Gardner, Rt. 1, Box 2338, Newfane, VT 05345
 RUSSIA: Ron Brown, 70 F Chesterton Drive, Nepean, Ontario, CANADA K2E 5S9
 TURKEY: Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Pl., Bakersfield, CA 93304
 GM: Jim Burgess, 100 Holden Street, Providence, RI 02908, (401) 351-0287

Game Notes:

1) A F/T draw is proposed. Please vote with your next set of orders. A NVR counts as a no.

2) There was some dispute about the deadline listed on the last season that Mike Coburn adjudicated. I thank all of you for sending me copies of the adjudication. The deadline was listed on Page 2 of the adjudication. Apparently, page 2 was missing from Jeff Albrecht's copy. I apologize, for Mike, for the confusion. There were also two minor errors in the adjudication of Spring 1907. F:a mar-PIE and R:a fin-SWE both succeeded. Thanks to those of you who pointed those errors out.

3) I hope my adjudication style is understandable. Italicized orders fail of execution. Final resting places of units are capitalized. All retreat options (GERMAN and RUSSIAN) are listed, as well as their potential effects on the Supply Center Chart. Builds may be made conditional on retreats and Spring 1908 orders may be made conditional on any combination of builds and retreats. Two requests will be sufficient for a separation of seasons.

4) Paul Gardner comes to us off Ron Brown's standby list. Rest assured that I did not consult Ron, my cat, or anyone else in making this decision. Woody did not return and I am of the general opinion that power broker one center standbys can be crucial. Paul's address is above.

5) There are no objections, so this game will be on five week deadlines, with me as GM, and the results published in *Murd'ring Ministers*. Future adjudications will not necessarily be accompanied by an issue of YVSC.

6) We'll see you in a month!

Press:

(MOSCOW): The Tsar is having problems remembering ancient treaties and invites all to re-open negotiations in an effort to jog his memory.

(RUSSIA-MUNICH): "Ichor"? Liqueur maybe. I do have a thirst for Barvarian beer! It goes well with Dutch Cheese...

