A Shuffle Puzzle Variant by Alex Randolph

Article and photos by Fred Horn

Alex Randolph, the master game inventor, was always looking for something new, something special. And so he tried his hand on a ‘double-sided solution.’

One of the few games or puzzles with this principle ‘playing on both sides at the same time’ is his variant for Fax, a 4 by 4 shuffle puzzle.

The problem is to solve the puzzle on both sides—one side displaying the letter H, the other side showing the letter U. (Or is it a C? Read Cardellicchio’s note below.)

This puzzle is not mentioned in the book ALEX RANDOLPH — DREI MAGIER VERLAG 2002 or in the ALEX RANDOLPH LUDOGRAFI 2012 by Cosimo Cardellicchio and Giuseppe Baggio.

The puzzle is from the Fred Horn Collection: Vlaams Spellenarchief in Brugge, Belgium.

A note from Cosimo Cardellicchio to Fred Horn

In my trip around Veneto, I went to the other friend of mine, Giuseppe Baggio, and we discussed about your mail of July 19th (the Fax game). It should be nice if you have more information about that puzzle, that can be inferred from the box, or from an instruction sheet (for example, who was the Editor, the year of publication, the place of publication, and so on).

You are right when you wrote that this puzzle was not published either in Hans Ruttinger repertoire of the games of Alex Randolph, and in our booklet. I am quite sure that both repertoires are incomplete, and should be upgraded with new findings, as for example, the puzzle that you found. I can imagine other games or puzzles that were published, and that are not included, but of which we have not found since now an evidence of publication (a photo, a document...). However, I can add something about that game.

When we were browsing in the file of the unpublished games of Alex, we found an old photocopy of a crumpled piece of paper reproducing a scheme. No instruction was present. It was collected in the files of games like RANDA and VENICE CONNECTION, but now we know that it was misplaced. In a first instance, we believed that it was a bad idea that was discarded and put into the trash (it was crumpled!).

It is likely to be a prototype of the puzzle that you found! The only text on the sheet was “Swiss sliding puzzle,” probably because the two letters that must be reproduced were C and H (CH, the symbol of Switzerland, a typical humour of Alex). Now, we are trying to find something more in our files about this puzzle, and I will inform you, if we would succeed. Please, let us know other information, if you can.