

# Painful Rectal Itch - #1

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Just \$1 An Issue!

**Painful Rectal Itch** - A zine dedicated to the open discussion of any topic relating to the Diplomacy hobby. Published four to six times a year by **Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry St. #211, Rahway, NJ 07065**. Subscriptions are \$1 an issue in the US and Canada, or \$2 an issue overseas (all subject to change should this thing grow to massive size in later issues). Trades are presently not accepted except in special cases.

Greetings, and welcome to the first (but hopefully not last) issue of Painful Rectal Itch. I chose the title for two main reasons: first, it's from a very funny old "Saturday Night Live" bit; and second, it will be enough of a shock to offend those with no sense of humor (and therefore those who can't handle a discussion without having a conniption).

This issue is dedicated to Julie and Dick Martin, who successfully published the much-missed House of Lords, which Painful Rectal Itch is obviously modeled after. Dick was kind enough to offer words of encouragement when I asked him about starting this zine. He also sent me all the material he had on file for the not-published final blow-out issue of HoL, and gave me permission to use it. Some of the stuff is dated, but it does give a good representation of the type of discussions I'd like to see here.

I don't have any new letters to include in this issue, since I never asked anyone for any. Among the topics that seem to be floating around the hobby lately, and might make good material for the next issue, are: PDORA, Turbofreakism, the rash of recent folds, Zine Register, nastiness, encouraging new publishers. These are just suggestions - you can write about anything you want. In addition, many of the topics discussed in these HoL letters are still fair game today.

I plan to publish a new issue of Painful Rectal Itch every two to three months, depending on my schedule and what's going on in the hobby. In advance, let me thank my wife Mara who has agreed to do some of the typing for future issues. Don't expect her to be as vocal as Julie, though. Mara prefers not to get too involved in what goes on in this hobby, especially when it comes to arguments or disagreements. She gets enough of that elsewhere.

I'm sending a copy of this first issue to most hobby publishers that I know of, plus everyone who was on the last House of Lords subscription and trade list. This should give us a good base to build the next issue on. Jack McHugh and I are also discussing turning Your Zine of Zines, our in-depth zine review publication, into a subzine of Painful Rectal Itch. No final decision has been made on this yet, so if you have thoughts I'd like to hear them.

Finally, before we get to the last of the House of Lords letters, let me address a topic a few of you have been mentioning. It is true that I have a decent-sized workload from the various hobby projects I am involved in, including Maniac's Paradise, Your Zine of Zines, PDORA, and whatever else I get involved in. However, this zine is not going to push me over the edge, so to speak. I do not plan on taking on any new responsibilities soon, and the possible merging of this zine and YZoZ would decrease this load anyway. Anyone who's followed my participation in this hobby knows that I've built my projects up slowly (although a bit faster in the past year), and that I pride myself on doing what I say I'll do. If things get to be too much for me at some point, I'll look for ways to scale back. At this point, there should be no problems. At any rate, I really don't see this zine as being a tremendous amount of work, especially with the lovely and talented Mara's support. If you have any comments on **this** topic, feel free to mention them as well.

I'm setting the deadline for the next issue of Painful Rectal Itch as June 15, and expect to have the thing in the mail no later than the end of the month. I hope some of you will see fit to give this zine a chance for a few issues. Either way, happy reading! And now, on to the final tribute to House of Lords - the "lost letters" (including the classic comments from the old publishers themselves). Be good, or else I'll publish the unused Operable stuff Dick sent me, too!

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Quotes: (RICHARD WHEET) Tell Julie she does a better job at HoL than you...her attacks are more vicious and interesting....

Letters in this issue: Eric Brosius, Ed Wrobel, Rex Martin, Garret Schenck, Rich McKey, Richard Wheet, Don Del Grande, Kevin Brown, Iain Bowen, Paul Milewski, John Caruso, David Hood, Stephen Dorneman, Jeff McKee, John Cain

### The Concept:

(JOHN CAIN) Just a quick note to say thanks for the copy of HoL. If you weren't folding, it would be enough to make me trade or subscribe (probably the latter (I have too many trades). I found the zeen very interesting - it's a pity I didn't try it before. Anyway, I hope to see you at World Dipcon in June.

(GARRET SCHENCK) So you're going to fold HoL, eh? That's really too bad! I don't know if I've mentioned this, but I always really enjoyed that zeen and looked forward to getting it every so often. I guess now we'll have to settle for Tom Nash's BTDT as a sort of semi-replacement. Sigh. I guess I really should get you a promised letter, since if you get enough final ones you might actually put out a last blow-out issue. I guess for now I'll assume HoL is still in business and keep sending you the zeen in trade (besides I still have a whopper of a karmic debt to repay you). I think I received 25 or 30 issues of Retal for a measly 5 dollars. Maybe when my sub expires to Retal (in say, 1992 at your molasses-like pace!) we can think about all-for-all.

(RICH MCKEY) I sure am sorry to hear about your folding HoL. In the brief time I've been receiving it, it has become one of my favorite zeens. Here's another copy of MM, although I realize that our trade is officially cut. I also understand that you won't be subbing to a whole lot of zeens, as you spell it, but you should know that, should you care to get involved in a game, or just drop a note to the hobby in general, there's always a place for you in Megalomaniac.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Here's \$1 for the final issue of House of Lords. Sorry to hear that it's folding. Maybe somebody else can carry the torch - this zeen is certainly hot enough.

(KEVIN BROWN) I'm really going to miss HoL. It was my favorite non-game zeen.

(JOHN CARUSO) Losing HoL is going to be like losing the Bible. Where else will we be able to read the true words of God?

(IAIN BOWEN) HoL is folding, well that's a shame. I've been flipping through ZR to find out what I'd like to see: but if I see anymore of this incestuous Brat Pack shit, I'll die. Why doesn't Geryk pub anymore - he was literate and interesting and y'know a lot of what he said was true. Hell, send it to Sacks: he can also be amusing.

(DAVID HOOD) Am sorry to hear you are calling it quits as that will leave a major void in terms of a lettercol discussing only Hobby-related issues. Perhaps you could look for a new person to run it rather than a fold per se. Even if it wasn't HoL, you could mention a new zeen like that in your last issue. I can't think of anyone to do it right now but I wonder what Marc Hanna would say if you asked him. Or Don Del Grande, perhaps?

(ERIC BROSIOUS) Just ran across HoL #21 again. Far

as I can tell, #22 hasn't come out, so I still have time to send in a new topic: A custodianship for every hobby member. We could invent enough new custodial offices for everyone and distribute them appropriately. (If the supply runs low we can make liberal use of the /UC modifier.) For instance, who should be the new Hobby Letterhead Custodian? That's easy - Larry Peery. Once everyone is a custodian we'll find it much easier to start our new hobby organization, the Custodial Service. We'll hold meetings in broom closets. I'll be in charge of mops, someone else can do buckets...how'd you like to be Squeegee Officer? The nice thing is that there are already so many custodians around that the job is half finished even as I write! Looks like I sent my postcard a little too late for HoL! And next issue's too late to start a discussion. Oh, well. I had another idea, too - cartoon characters as hobby members. I like old cartoons, and I use quotes from them in my press. Who best personifies Bugs Bunny? Wile E Coyote? Elmer Fudd? No big loss - it's probably been done before.

(JEFF MCKEE) Well, I have to agree with you, four zeens is enough! <grin> I'm sorry to see HoL go. I thought about offering to take it over, but then I thought a) it wouldn't be the same without Dick Martin, and b) two zeens is enough! I guess I'd better get my last shots in for the final issue! By the way, thanks for saying there will be one last issue. That's pretty classy publishing behavior as far as I'm concerned. By the way, who is Jimmy Smits? Is Debra Winger schizophrenic?

(ED WROBEL) I was digging through my desk and came upon HoL 21 containing Ken Peel's lesson on computerized hyphenation of Warthog. I'm very glad that he pointed out this ideologically incorrect algorithm to unwary users; however, I must note that ideologically incorrect is not hyphenated. Neither is nonwargaming (unless, of course, the end of the line dictates). I don't mean to nit-pick but let's get these things right.

**Bad Boys:**

(JEFF MCKEE) I guess I missed the Bad Boys...tsk tsk

tsk.

**Burnout:**

(JOHN CARUSO) BURNOUT: I couldn't help it. I think I'm going to go back into pubbing. With all of the good zeens gone or about to go -Bushwacker, EE, VOD - someone has to fill the void. And since DW can't, I will try. I'm really going to miss HoL. Maybe, in a small way, the zeen I plan to start can run the gauntlet and pick up (to some degree) where HoL left off.

(DON DEL GRANDE) BURNOUT: I drastically reduced my game playing years ago (I think I've been in one PBM Dip game in the last five years), but my publishing hasn't been affected - any drop in quality has been mainly because I can't seem to come up with the material I could in the early issues. What do we have against subscribing to publishers like Elmer (One Dollar Per Turn Professional), Uncle Connie (although this would be for his own good - he wouldn't be tempted to throw away any more of the money he doesn't have), and Uncle Bernie (and Uncle Bernard and Uncle Ian)?

**Census:**

(DAVID HOOD) CENSUS: Anyway, I have enclosed a few new addresses for the Census, and have instructed Mike Lowrey to send you an updated CCC sub list. I can't wait to get the new Census - I will be using it for direct mail Dipcon solicitations.

(DON DEL GRANDE) CENSUS: How about sending the Census in an ASCII file on disk? (Mac disks can be converted to most other formats. I understand the newer Macs can write MS-DOS files directly.) That way, those of us with computers can make changes directly.

(MICHAEL LOWREY) You know, there's too little thanks in doing something like the census. So thanks, Julie.

**Computers:**

(DON DEL GRANDE) COMPUTERS: I just got a Mac emulator for my ST (along with MacWrite II, which is supposed to work just fine - until you try to

print something in best mode), but the only Epson FX printer drivers are either (a) hardware (and therefore incompatible) (b) out of business, or (c) impossible to find. Refresh my memory - your pages are obviously laser printed, yet didn't you say that you don't have a laser printer? Do you just go down to the local Mac usage \$6/hr plus 25"/page shop or what?

(ERIC BROSIUS) COMPUTERS: Here is an answer to your question of how my e-mail system works. University and many companies have free access to Usenet where they simply have to send e-mail to eric\_s\_klien@cup.portal.com to get started in a game. Or they can just look for me in a the rec.games.pbm conference. Another option is to use a network called Portal to hook up to Usenet. Portal's voice number is (408) 973-9111 and they cost \$10.00/month plus \$2.50/hour non-prime time if you wish to call them from out of the state. (This is the charge from the long distance data carrier Tymnet.) One additional option is to use PC Pursuit from Telenet which costs \$30.00/month for 30 hours non-prime time. This is only for the really big users! Anyone with a computer or terminal with a modem can join my games. And since the post office will become even slower starting this February, it would be a good idea to join some e-mail games. (Post office has decided airplanes are too high tech, it is going back to trucks.)

(JEFF MCKEE) COMPUTERS: I can't believe John Caruso has to drive to the mailbox. Get that man a Mac! Oh Goody! I'm so glad Tim Moore wrote in to complain about PBEM players being less than PBM players. You took care of his misconceptions about the PBEM hobby pretty well, thank you, so I'll just lay my opinion on top of his opinion about PBEM players. Tim, please don't ask me to defend the play of John Galt in Italy. Our "PBEM Team" placed fourth out of seventh, right in the middle. I was the team captain, and I assigned the countries to the players. So I asked John Galt to play Italy. Now, should I tell you that we had exactly seven PBEM players show up at Dipcon, and that John Galt lives in Palo Alto? John has played exactly one dip game on Compuserve. He did get a two-way in his variant game. So he didn't take Tunis?

So what? I saw what he was doing and he lived an awful damn long time for being an idiot! Also remember, Dipcon was a major social event for all of us. We don't even have the benefit of being able to analyze each other's handwriting. Everyone's writing looks remarkably like the characters on each player's monitor at home (CGA, in my case). I roamed around to see how the others were doing, and I talked to them about it, because I enjoyed talking with these people, and I enjoy talking about Dip games! So Susan Welter was in a pinch as Austria? Big deal.... Haven't you ever asked someone "I want to stab so-n-so but can't make up my mind?" There's nothing wrong with asking friends for advice, is there? Four of our team members could hold their own with anyone - the other three, well, I doubt it. Do you think that's an unreasonable percentage? If not, remind me to get into a game with you, and then we'll discuss it further. Heheh, I get the last word!

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) COMPUTERS: Talking about PBEM as compared to PBM. I am GMing a Dip game on PRODIGY that's beginning to wind down and will probably be over before the end of March, 1990 (there's a 15-center England facing little or no organized opposition). This game only started December 16, 1989. That's the appeal of PBEM Diplomacy, in a nutshell. However, I personally happen to enjoy the leisured pace of four, five, even six-week and longer deadlines (gee, Dick, put out a Retal lately?), so I don't expect that I'll be changing my own habits. In my limited PBEM exposure, I, too, have found the PBEMers to be less experienced Dipsters, unsure on finer rules points and more likely to make tactical errors than the typical PBM novice. I'm sure this will change over time, though.

#### Custodians:

(PAUL MILEWSKI) CUSTODIANS: Let's try another tack. The US never signed the Geneva Convention. It abides by it nonetheless. You and I might agree to play a game of Dip under the 76 rulebook without so stipulating in writing and certainly without signing the rulebook. You and I might buy a set of golf clubs and play what you and I choose to call golf even if it only

remotely resembles what most people consider golf to be. Nobody has the right to stop us. It is nobody's business but our own. If you and I join the PGA, we agree to be bound by an elaborate set of rules that defines what is and what is not golf. It is a contractual relationship into which we entered freely. I don't understand your remark that you think the covenant should be binding. I do not understand it because you do not specify whom you think should be bound by it. What I am saying is that a covenant cannot be binding upon anybody who does not consent to be bound by it. Perhaps instead of duly elected representatives I might have bored everyone to tears with a rambling discourse on the way in which voluntary associations are formed, but you chose to use the analogy of the US Constitution instead of, say, the rules of chess as followed by FIDE. The possibility has occurred to me that you have understood everything I have ever written to you, but that you put together painstakingly off-the-mark commentary to create the erroneous impression that you do not understand. What your reason might be I do not know. I'm glad you took a fancy to my Old Testament Prophet bit. I was inspired by one of Don Pardo's introductions of David Letterman and an old Twilight Zone (or some other series) episode about space travellers marooned on a planet for years being finally rescued, the person who had evolved into a position of leadership being totally shattered by his role suddenly becoming irrelevant. I think it is fine people appoint themselves custodians of this and that. I do take exception to the ridiculous assertions of authority. This covenant business takes the cake.

(ERIC BROSIUS) custodians: The funny thing is, I like the "Old Testament prophet" system! Paul Milewski's metaphor describes the situation perfectly. Consider this quote from Deuteronomy 18:20-22: "But the prophet, that shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, that I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?', when a prophet speaks in the Lord's name, if the thing follows not, nor comes to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken: the prophet has spoken it

presumptuously - you shall not be afraid of him." That's how I feel about hobby custodians. If they do the job, I'll respect them. If they don't, I won't. The argument about the MNC succession means nothing to me - I don't care who's the official office holder under the line going back to William the Conqueror! Ordinarily, "passing the mantle" from a custodian to a successor prevents confusion and assures continuity. But it's more important to support the one(s) doing the job. "Those who say it can't be done shouldn't interfere with those who are doing it." If Randy and Julie are both doing the job, great! (It would be nice to avoid duplication of services, but it's not a compelling reason.) It's like the Pope. He does many good things, I'm glad for that. It's nice that there's a Pope for people who want one; that doesn't bother me at all. But I cannot take seriously any claim he makes to have authority over me because he's descended in a direct line from the apostle Peter. This is why I see no need for a covenant binding the MNC to a specific course of action - if a custodian acts unethically I'll stop supporting him or her. Do I need a covenant to do that? Maybe I'm an anarchist. If Kevin Brown is the UNCLE (great acronym!) then I'm the United Number Custodian, Lawfully Entitled to Stamp And Misfile (UNCLE/SAM). The charter of my office requires me, upon receiving a request for a number, to write said number on a postcard, stamp it, and drop it in the wastebasket. This saves the GM the trouble of recording the number and including it in his game reports. (Please send a stamp with each number request. Canadian and foreign stamps are cheerfully accepted since I won't be mailing the postcards.) I'm especially qualified for this office because I've never played United (or any other PBM sports game). It will help me stay impartial. I am standing by for Kevin's league, but I promise to pass on the mantle if I get in. If that happens I'll mail Kevin his number (UNCLE/SAM #21-1110-3677-30); in fact I'll write it prominently on each set of orders I submit! By the way, that number's from an old gas bill. Why do they need twelve-digits? That's over 100 numbers for each person in the world. They expect me to write it on all my checks. Fat chance!

(IAIN BOWEN) CUSTODIANS: Oh, the Covenant, the holy and sacred Covenant - a source of never-ending amongst us over here. We have an independent MNC that seceded in 1988 under the plague on both your houses rule. So, I await the Sacks camp to set up over here as our MNC is very close to the variant bank ones. I wish we could have a MNCuC/UK just for a little variant feuding and general mayhem: it's awfully quiet over here. I've tried stirring about Gunboat and about what is a variant, but I just get a Nelson giving me a circular argument about ARDA numbers; moronic statist parrot prattle. RR numbers have a use - in part, they allow David Watts to keep track of games in the various maps (especially the experimentals) so that he can modify them if imbalance shows.

(MICHAEL LOWREY) Since we aren't going to settle the MNC-MNC/UC debate, why don't we just let them compete and reward whoever does the best job with the use of their numbers and our donations and praise? The hobby should give the most money and support to those that do the best job - getting numbers assigned quickest, putting out the best custodian zeen, etc. And yes, Julie wins (or won) hands down.

(DON DEL GRANDE) CUSTODIANS: As for the Miller Number incident mentioned by Robert Sacks (I assume he means the time I asked him for a MN for a game I had started under the assumption that he was, or knew who was, MNCuC): I remember being told by Sacks that nobody (on the MNCuC side) was ready to assign MNs at the time, so it must have been when Karel was first announced as MNCuC. As the game never got started (for reasons best left unmentioned), nothing further was done about it on my end. Clarification on my BN statement from last issue: when I say some wise guy assign it a leftover number, I am not referring to the BNC assigning it a number, but a ratings manager or openings compiler can still use the information whether the number was assigned by the BNC or himself. (And if one person calls a game 1989QZ and another calls it 1989RA, but neither of these are considered official numbers, does it really matter?)

(KEVIN BROWN) CUSTODIANS: All this MNC stuff makes my head hurt. If Costikyan never shipped documents to Leeder, then Costikyan is still MNC, right? Does it really matter who the MNC is? This whole topic is fascinating, even if you don't play variants. I find the whole concept of having an MNC pretty ridiculous, much less having people fight over who really is MNC. Why would anybody volunteer to keep track of variant games? I wouldn't do it on a bet. The whole job of MNC sounds like a tremendous waste of time and energy to me. Somebody tell me what useful purpose the MNC (or MNCUC) serves. The numbers are qualitative?!? The BNC's number aren't used to rate Dip players?!? Why the hell do we need the BNC?!?!?!?!? If the numbers are just quantitative (ie, just to see how many games there are), then the BNC has no purpose. The BNC is just numbering for the sake of numbering, and feeling like a true dude as the king of the Dip world. If the numbers aren't used to rate players, then who cares is a game is called irregular? If the numbers aren't used to rate players, why have numbers at all? Just to make things easier for the orphan service? Let the orphan director give out numbers then and spare us all this high and mighty BNC crap. Of course the numbers are qualitative. So are polls. If you're not offended by players seeking BNC numbers and having the BNC report those numbers, why are you offended by subbers voting in a poll and the pollster reporting those votes? Just because you don't get along with a particular pollster is no reason to say all polls are bad. If Linsey were BNC, you'd be saying that those numbers are subject to manipulation and misinterpretation. But he's not. He was running a poll, so you attacked polls. Anyway, I'm happy that anyone thought enough of my zeen to vote for it, no matter what the vote. (An aside to Caruso: I got nine votes out of the seven subbers on the voters list, and could only find one other person on the list that had even seen a sample by closing of the balloting. That one person: Bruce Linsey, who didn't give me a vote!) Why don't you start a zeen called A Letter to My Friends and see it gets rated?

{Thank you, Kevin, for giving us a perfect example of why we are folding this zeen. It is clear that you

formed your own opinion long before you came here and haven't heard a word to the contrary since. What's the point of running a discussion when everybody's talking and nobody's listening? Once more, for the record - we were attacking polls long before Linsey was running one. We have back issues if you would like to review this discussion.

{Funny, that when I made the same point as you (if Linsey had been BNC, we'd have been talking about that instead of polls), the point was completely lost as Bruce attacked me instead (on and on and on) for lying when I said he had applied to be BNC.

{Funny too, that if Dick had pulled a stunt like you did with Pilot Light - putting a pre-printed notice saying, Eric, change my vote for PL to a 10 on the back of the ballots - Bruce would have raked Dick over the coals to Hell and back for trying to destroy his poll.

{The numbers the BNC gives out are not qualitative. Do you know what qualitative means? Do you know what the BNC does? The BNC gives a game a number as it begins; the numbers are ordinal only; they tell when the game started. Period. They say nothing about wins, draws, losses, or even irregularity. The BNC may later determine a game is irregular, but that is a separate task from his numbering function. The ratings masters use the BNC's numbers only to keep track of games, and then they give out qualitative numbers based on the results of those games. The BNC is no more than a glorified clerk - that's why Dick is not offended.}

**Dipcon:**

(KEVIN BROWN) DIPCON: There looks to be a pretty significant number of United dudes coming to Dipcon. There's even some talk of an f-t-f United tournament, although I doubt it'll actually happen. I'm going because it's Dipcon, not because it's World Dipcon.

(DAVID HOOD) DIPCON: Latest Dipcon info enclosed for your convenience. Hey, with all the people I've got signed on, at least no one can accuse me of being a one-man show, a la Larry Peery.

(JOHN CARUSO) DIPCON: I recently saw a copy of the World Dipcon Newsletter #3 in Rebel (for some

reason Hood has decided we don't warrant a flyer). Anyway, it seems that he is doing a great job organizing everything. There should be plenty of activities to keep everyone busy. And at \$20 a person to register, this is truly the bargain of the decade. At least until 1991.

(MICHAEL LOWREY) The silliest thing I've heard in a while is that the bidding for next year's Dipcon is already being rigged. Suppose David Hood were to try and rig the bids, who exactly would he be favoring? One assumes the Canadian bid as Canadians and CADs are closely tied. Another option is always the Madlads, who are even better friends - Mark Peters and James Wall have both been to Dixiecon before, while Morgan Gurley, Dan Sellers, and one or two others drive to Wisconsin every summer for Madcon. Then there's always Atlanticon, where CAD's David Hood and Chris Kremer have both placed on the top board in recent years. We could also get there a lot easier. Wait, I have an idea, I'll get Dave to rig it so there will be three Dipcons.

(DON DEL GRANDE) DIPCON: I saw that list of publicity directors for World Dipcon. What, he couldn't get someone for "continental Europe"? Maybe they're mad because nobody is giving them serious mention for WDC IV in 1994. But how do we agree on a WDC Charter? The only remotely valid method is to have an open mail yes/no vote. It can't be limited to PBM, since there is an FTF hobby out there as well, but this means that there's no real way of validating the ballots or preventing ballot box stuffing. New York bunkers exist for the same reason as San Francisco bunkers - to play Paintball, or whatever you call that game where you shoot paint bullets. Actually, both were well within Axis submarine range. Had Iceland (which had a British naval base) fallen, Germany would have had a base from which their ships could bombard the East Coast. As for San Francisco, there are no islands within 2000 miles, but the Japanese had developed a mini-plane that could fit into a submarine and drop fire bombs.

(IAIN BOWEN) DIPCON: John Caruso is off his head:

ManorCon (which I am next year's chair of) does plan to bid for WDC IV. Nelson (who has no say in this) is exaggerating: we intend to win it fairly. But our main selling point is the fact that we have a regular attendance of 300 at a Diplomacy convention, we don't have to subsume ourselves into a larger event. Also he has an odd view of Britain: we cured most of our WWII damage in the 50's and our crime rate only resembles the US rate in a couple of cities. He wants friendly people, good food & beer, and "sites" (sic) galore - he can visit me in York which has 1900+ years of history, two national parks within spitting distance, a terribly low crime rate, and unfortunately zillions of tourists in the summer.

{All of them spitting in the national park? Yucko, count me out.}

#### **Finding new subbers:**

(REX MARTIN) FINDING NEW: I noted in the most recent House of Lords (#22) that there seems to be some confusion among your readers as to my policy regarding the "Opponents Wanted" ads (Don Del Grande's comment, page 13). In point of fact, anyone who wants to can send us an advert for their zeen, or pbm game - regardless of whether they subscribe - so long as they cough up the \$0.50 for each appearance. I'm certainly not going to sort through 10,000+ names to see if the person is a subscriber. We're really fairly loose about these ads, viewing them as a service to the readership. Hell, you don't even have to submit them on one of our forms. A reasonable facsimile will do, so long as you hold to our restrictions and format. Many a game club and or amateur zeen publisher has availed themselves of the opportunity, and most seem pleased with the results (if my letters are any indication).

(DON DEL GRANDE) FINDING NEW: I have the latest issue of The General - there's no mention of a subscription requirement for an Opponent's Wanted ad. At least they got my address right this time.

#### **GMing Procedure:**

(ERIC BROSIUS) gming procedure: Tom Nash tried the "send whatever you think it's worth" approach when

he first brought BTDT out of The Wrapper. Here's how you as a potential subscriber can counter that obnoxious ploy: Send the pubber a check for \$3.00, together with a note saying, "Please send me three dollars worth of your zeen. Let me know when I need to renew." You risk your \$3.00 if the pubber is unscrupulous, but I guarantee you won't hear any more of that "whatever you think it's worth" nonsense.

(DON DEL GRANDE) GMING: Jack Masters' original sub price was something like "\$10 for a year's worth of issues, however many that may be." It ended up being about 35 issues in my first twelve months. And the NMR programs were supposedly written with defense in mind. There's nothing wrong with waiting a few days for late orders; I do it occasionally for some of my games. The problem was that you wanted deadlines set on Friday/Saturday, leaving seven/six days for you to get the report done and for it to get across the country, as my printing schedule is fixed (Saturday is the only day I have to print the issues). If I wanted to, I could move my dip deadline from the day before printing to three days before, and then allow two "grace days."

(JOHN CARUSO) GMING: Have any of you received a flyer on a game called "Sovereignty"? Game fee is \$27.40 and all you have to do is mail your turn actions to the other fourteen players each turn. Now that's a game that could get expensive. And think of it - there's no GM, either.

#### **In Dipdom:**

(KEVIN BROWN) IN DIPDOM: Most memorable moment: Being called a "Diplomacy veteran" by Scott Hanson because I stabbed Bernie Oaklyn in my third postal game. (Ended up sharing a two-way draw!) Also my only postal win, as Turkey in 1985U, is a highlight. I also remember my first postal game, it lasted 21 game years, the longest Mensa game in SIG history. The end game was basically one-on-one between my France and Ron Brown's Russia. I managed to survive with three centers.

(ERIC BROSIUS) in dipdom: Most memorable moment? I already wrote that up for Moire. But my

"biggest disappointment in dipdom" was being in a game with Bob Olsen and not getting a letter from him. Maybe Jimmy Williams will write to me.

### **Organizations:**

(IAIN BOWEN) ORGANIZATION: You'd never organize the British hobby again: anarchy works too well over here.

(JOHN CARUSO) ORGANIZATIONS: Maybe Dipdom needs clarifications on the rulebook, but the last thing Dipdom needs is a concrete set of rules for running PBM games. Allowing GMs flexibility (such as with standbys, deadlines, combined/separated seasons, European/American turn sequence, how to handle NMRs, how to handle draw proposals and votes on proposals, hell, even the game fees. That's what makes Dipdom unique. I'm sorry, Don, Dipdom doesn't need that kind of regulating.

### **Polls & Awards:**

(DON DEL GRANDE) POLLS: I tend to agree with George Mann's comments about your idea of a "perfect poll." What good is a zeen poll is some zeens are left out, especially if the persons that want to be left out turn around and claim that the poll is no good since their zeen wasn't in it? (That's pretty much what happened in the "first Linsey Poll.") If you want to ignore the ratings, that's fine.

(ERIC BROSIUS) POLLS: Jay Leno interviewed a popular recording artist on the Tonight Show last night. It seems she was a nominee for some award. Jay asked her "do you think you'll win?" "I don't believe in awards", she replied. "But do you think you'll win?" "All right, all right! I hope all the other contestants die in a fiery plane crash before the ceremony!" I thought you might like the story. You asked for it, here it is (in response to John Caruso's letter): The 1990 Runestone Poll Survival Guide - This year I won't phone anyone to solicit a vote. If you call me, I guess it's okay, but I'd rather you mailed me your votes. There will be no mass mailings this year. The last week in February I'll mail a ballot to every publisher or GM I know of. I'll ask them to distribute ballots to their readers/players. I'll try not

to skip anyone, but I'm not perfect; if you start a new zeen, let me know. I'll also mail ballots to people who request them. I won't mail any other ballots. If you need a ballot, write to Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St., Milford MA, 01757. If you can, please include a stamp. The instructions for the Zeen Poll will include this sentence: "You may rate any amateur Diplomacy-related zeen that you've read enough of to rate fairly - that is, you've seen (or would have seen if not for delays) at least two issues since August 1, 1989." You do not have to subscribe; if your spouse or a friend subscribes you may read their copy. But I want to make it clear: don't rate a zeen unless you can do so fairly. I won't harass anyone for ballots. I have no talent for that sort of thing. I find it hard enough to beg for standbys for ark. Since non-subbers can vote, a publisher won't get a list of the voters for his or her zeen; that could lead to unfair accusations. A publisher who gets a zero might scan his "voter list" to see what hapless moron could have been so stupid! But if I get a ballot from someone I've never heard of, I'll try to check the name out to make sure it's for real. This will probably involve asking publishers of zeens the person voted for whether they've heard of the name. I won't attack those who don't participate. I wish everyone would participate, but I respect those who don't. For people who don't want to be involved in the Poll, here are some suggestions: Please don't take the Poll too seriously. I'm mailing a note with this year's ballot reminding people that it's just for fun. I'll try to count the votes accurately, and so forth, because I want to do the job right, but the world won't end if your zeen or GMing ability gets a low vote. Remember; voters can make mistakes - "I'm from Massachusetts - don't blame me!" If you're a pubber or GM, a ballot should arrive around the beginning of March. I'll want everyone to have the opportunity to take part. If you'd rather not participate, just throw the ballot away. If you're a reader, you'll probably see ballots in zeens. If you don't want to vote, just ignore them. I won't bug you about it. You may even start seeing articles about the Poll. Don't read them. If you as a publisher/GM don't want to be rated in the Poll, ask your readers/players not to vote for you. If you feel strongly about this, offer a free issue to everyone who doesn't vote for your zeen. The

best way to stay out of it is to stay out of it. If you don't want to hear about the Poll, don't read about the results when they start appearing in zeens. If you as a publisher don't feel the lists are worthwhile, then don't reprint them and don't write articles about them. Note that the ballot is just a convenience for voters; you can vote without one. But since there is a ballot, I don't want to leave anyone off - that would be unfair. I want to include every zeen or subzeen which might be eligible for this year's Poll. Unless a zeen folds without publishing two issues, it will go on the ballot. Even if I haven't seen two issues yet, I'll include a still-active zeen just in case it publishes some more issues by June 30. Unless you as a voter have seen two issues of a zeen (or would have seen two issues if not for delays), don't vote for it. It's probably not for me to say, but Julie may be taking the Runestone Poll results for Lord of Hosts too seriously. No "numbers" zeen has scored well in the Poll since the Stone Ages. Let's face it--people just don't give zeens like LoH, Alpha & Omega, or Everything... high votes in the Poll these days.

{I don't expect to finish high. I do expect to finish higher than the zeen that rips me off. And I feel I'm justified in being angry with people who vote for a zeen they clearly haven't read. For instance, Fred Davis commented in the March 1990 Bushwacker: "The last issue of Lord of Hosts contains reports on the endings of many variant games, including several bearing the regular Millers Nos. (My own Vacation Dip II, 1985Rrm39, final report, for example). Since I was not regularly trading zeens with the Martins, I was surprised to see the Bush report therein." He wouldn't have been surprised if he had read any of the other issues of LoH I sent him - I have always listed endgames for both numbering systems.

{Now what do you suppose Fred gave LoH in the last poll? Even if he didn't give it a grudge "0," I'm sure that, based on hobby politics, he voted it lower than all other zeens and killed me in the preference matrix.

{And I believe that other people have done the same thing - looked no farther than the name "Robert Sacks" on the cover (he was my publisher), shitcanned the

zeen, and voted it low in the polls. Wallace Nicoll's comments on LoH in Prisoner's of War! The most recent issue is probably been the best I've seen over the last three years or so, as it actually contains a few articles on different variant designs indicates that he too has either not read the zeen or confused it with something else, since every issue had articles on different variant designs, and he goes on to say, "Most of the others have headed straight into the bin." I'm told that Francois Cuerrier had it listed as a Canadian zeen, evidently confusing the name with Lord of the Boards. Cathy Ozog wrote an editorial in Cathy's Ramblings on how she supported Randy Grigsby as opposed to Robert Sacks' MNC she apparently had no idea it was me even after she had been sent several issues of LoH.

{I can't prove that anyone voted LoH low based solely on hobby politics, but I certainly have reason to be suspicious when my zeen, which when left off the ballot the year before received only three votes, when put on the ballot suddenly receives over two dozen votes, most of them low. It's as if they only remembered it because it was on the ballot, not because they had read it. "Oh yeah, Lord of Hosts, doesn't Sacks put that out or something? Well, I'll just give it a 1, then."

{Thanks, Eric, but I think I've had all the "fun" with this poll that I can stand. I think you will make an excellent successor in the line of John Leeder-Randolph Smyth-Bruce Linsey. You are already concerned about doing the job "right" and being "fair." You have already properly nailed Ken Hill for listing Buckeye Rail Gazette as a subzeen when it is really a zeen. Let's all remember, we're having fun now!}

(JOHN CARUSO) POLLS: I received excerpts of Eric Brosius' letter on how he intends to handle the poll this year. I applaud his approach! He is striving in the right direction. At least he's willing to listen to reasoned advice, unlike his predecessor who called it feuding.

### Ratings & Scoring Systems:

(JOHN CARUSO) SCORING: I don't feel supply center count is important, except maybe as a tie-breaker. Whether you are part of a win is more important than whether you own sixteen centers, at

least in my opinion.

(DON DEL GRANDE) RATINGS: Here's something that nobody has brought up concerning ratings: should a 19 SC win be worth more than an 18 SC win? As I recall, the first three places in Marycon 1984 were decided by how many SCs the players had in the only three wins of the tournament. Larry Cronin must have a subconscious ability to understand my Peeriblah. Change his 34/17/11/8/7/6/5 to 32/16/11/8/6/5/4 and count all wins as 18 SC wins regardless of actual number, and you have the system that was actually used at Dipcon.

(JEFF MCKEE) Scoring Systems:

To Mark Nelson: If I came across as saying, "The number of players in a draw is irrelevant," that's not what I meant to say. What I did mean to say, and you got, was "The number of centers in a draw is irrelevant." What difference does it make if a player is closer to winning? The bottom line is the player either a) didn't play to win, or b) failed to win. Part of the reason for my attitude is that I'm primarily an alliance player. I like to make deals with small powers that they will live if they will concede to my alliance as soon as possible. So, I usually get in on the low end of the draw because I actively solicit concessions from the smaller powers. Suppose the powers in a two-way are 16 and 9. Does the larger power really rate 7 more points than the smaller power for being closer to the win? If so, why didn't the larger power go ahead and get the win? It should be within the player's capability.

Either the player wants to draw, or the 9-center power has a good enough position and lots of friends on the other side of the board that an attempt at a win would be futile! I guess HoL will go down with neither of us satisfied on this issue!

To Don Del Grande: I agree with your premise that a 16-16-1-1 DIAS draw should count more for the 16s than the 1s, if there is a forced time limit. I might point out that in DIAS, a two-way draw has to be an exact tie. Both of the games I did well in at Dipcon had the other players in the draw trying to get "just a few more centers" to get more tournament points, even though the scoring system was kept secret. In my two-way, the

other player asked three times for me to let him finish the game with one more center than I, just in case he got some sort of a bonus. As such, I insisted on an even finish. That stuff bothers me. The fact is, the only reason we even got the two-way was because Dave McCrumb had had enough Dip and wanted to play Bridge. He rolled over for me (I made sure that Nick got his share) and that gave us our edge to take the game. I don't agree with forced time limits anyway. I can accept DIAS, as long as I know about it in advance, because DIAS games require a completely different style of play from me (no negotiating for survival with smaller powers in order to get the draw passed). I can play that way. But in a tournament (or in postal games) where the players who are losing can always find something better to do than stick out their bad positions, I don't think it's a good way to go. It just distorts the game when players who are losing give up to play Bridge, or Gunboat, or whatever. Here's an idea: Take the top seven players from the preliminary rounds, and put them on a top board even. The countries should all be about equal in the hands of good players. Then give the title to the winner, or to all the players involved in the final draw. There's a radical thought, multiple winners! But isn't a draw a multiple win? I like John Caruso's system in HoL 22. I like Larry Cronin's system except for the supply centers being added in. I like the Calhamer Point Count. If people could just get over the "intuitiveness" of getting more points for more supply centers, and the urge to break ties, I'll be much happier with scoring systems.

(MICHAEL LOWREY) One thing I can say as scoring guru for Dipcon XXIII is that the hobby just doesn't agree on what they want in a scoring system. I got about ten ideas for Dipcon scoring and all were different. So, at best, I think any con can keep only some of the people happy - it's a lose/lose situation. No matter what you do, someone will get mad.

### The Old Guard:

(DON DEL GRANDE) How did Life of Monty get an exclamation point? Is it that incredible that it's been around for 10 years?

(JOHN CARUSO) I don't know if it means anything, but did you notice that only four out of twenty-two pubbers of the Old Guard have last names that begin with a letter in the second half of the alphabet. And that three of those begin with the letter W. And the other letter, O, was previously a C before she wed the Orc! Now that's a statistic that Don Del Grande can be proud of.

### **The Future:**

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) The Future of Dipdom: well, I agree with you that PBEM will continue to grow, but slowly; and instead of posing a threat to PBM, I think PBEM will be a major source of new postal players through the 1990s, thanks to the efforts of people like Tom Nash and Eric Klien. However, I think that a new hybrid of PBM/PBEM will rear its ugly head in the very near future and become a major player in Dipdom - the Faxzeen! Shorter deadlines combined with the permanence of hard copy with room for articles, letters, artwork, etc, will make the Faxzeen the Next Wave in PBM Diplomacy. Already must cheaper than a personal computer, the home fax still isn't very common today at \$500 and up, but the prices keep plummeting every year. And well before combined phone/answering machine/faxes reach the \$100 mark, I'm certain there will be at least one fax-based dipzeen being published. I might even publish it myself. If you call after 11:00 PM, long distance phone rates for high-speed fax transmissions are already comparable to current postage and printing rates. And with fax/modem software coming as standard issue on the PCs of the future, it'll be even easier to hook the PBEMers in to the Dipdom mainstream. Also in the near future: Zeen appearances will continue to improve, as desktop publishing software and hardware continue to proliferate. International contacts will be on the upswing, thanks in part to World Dipcon, in part due to improved international mail service (I know, I'm an incurable optimist), and in part due to the appearance of the Faxzeen. And an attempt at organizing the Diplomacy hobby will be made that will have some limited success, perhaps something along the lines of the International Diplomacy Gamers Association I outlined

last issue, because a cabal of the New Secret Masters of Dipdom has made it a top priority in their bid for ultimate power. Remember, you read it here first!

(DON DEL GRANDE) I'll finish with one prediction of my own for the 1990s: Robert Sacks and John Boardman will start another feud over the proper way to GM Avalon Hill's new game Republic of Rome.