

Foolhardy - #11

Just \$1 An Issue!

Foolhardy - A zine dedicated to the open discussion of any topic relating to the Diplomacy hobby. Published six times a year by **Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry St. #211, Rahway, NJ 07065**. Also available on CompuServe [73567,1414]. Subscriptions are \$1 an issue in the US and Canada, or \$2 an issue overseas. Trades are not always accepted, but if you're interested ask away - if I don't already get your zine I'll consider it. Letters can also be sent in ASCII or Word Perfect 5.0-6.0 format, on 3 1/2" or 5 1/4" disks.

Letters in this issue: Pete Sullivan, Paul Kenny, Fred C. Davis Jr., W. Andrew York, Conrad von Metzke, Roger Cox, Robert Acheson, Jason Wilke, John Caruso, Stephen Glasgow, David Hood, Chris Carrier, Mark Nelson.

The Concept:

(PETE SULLIVAN) As a Brit, can I say I think all you Americans are being a bit harsh on poor ol' Brad Wilson? All he said was he didn't like some British hobbyists. I don't like some American TV shows, but I'm entitled to my opinion...

The Census:

(MARK NELSON) I intend producing a new issue of The Fat Lady Sings for ManorCon. Any chance that you can supply an article for me? It looks like you will be releasing the next Census before TFLS appears. If you are interested I could write an article for the Census based on the last TFLS.

{I'm still not fully set on my Census timeline. Things are increasingly busy at the office, so everything is still up in the air.}

DipCon:

(JOHN CARUSO) The biggest problems I see facing the DipCon society relate to the fact that DipCon doesn't always end up where hordes of people may attend. I think the society should look into ways to either place DipCons at the most accessible locations, or possibly even amending the charter to cover alternatives.

(DAVID HOOD) In response to Don Del Grande, when 36 people show up you convince someone to drop out. It's just that simple. All the locals at DixieCon know that I freely commandeer them and/or kick them out in any given round to make the numbers work out.

Too bad to hear Andy can't get anything going with local FTF. Perhaps game stores would be the next place to try to find local players.

The highest reason DipCon attendance has been relatively low lately is that there are just fewer people in the hobby right now. There's no two ways about it. Perhaps this is changing (I have received a lot of novice inquiries lately).

Lack of New Zines:

(PAUL KENNY) Looking back at it, it was established zines like Vertigo that encouraged me to continue publishing. Vertigo was an established member of the Dip hobby, yet had its reputation for its ugliness. Well, when I started pubbing, I had neither the money nor time, but I wanted to continue Standard Deviation. Not worrying about my look gave me the opportunity to publish while in that novice state.

I'm not picking on any poll in particular, but I know I have felt the

pressure to clean up Absolute. I am now paying for photocopying. It is driving up my costs. I would hate to end trades and start making the players pay for the zine (i.e. end free subs for players). But I would have to, take longer to get the zine out, slow the games down, buy a desktop publishing software just to make the zine prettier and get higher ratings on the zine polls.

After all, its really just the games that matter.

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) If zines are the lifeblood of our hobby, then subzines are perhaps the pulse. It seems to be common for subzines to grow until they live on their own. It's an easy way for a prospective publisher to test the waters, it makes filling all those empty pages easier for the host pubber, and it offers diversity of material and perspectives to the readers. If every zine had a new subzine to replace the one that took off independently, there would be a fresh supply of new zines to replenish those lost to inevitable attrition. And since each new pubber knows gamers that no one else does, he can entice/drag/coerce more people to play postal Dip, thus solving the twin problem of declining participation. Are there any stats on the average duration of subzines that go it alone versus those zines that started from scratch? I suspect it's longer, since the pubber is more likely to know what he's getting into, and thus pace himself. Or is that brace himself...

Burnout:

(JOHN CARUSO) There isn't much that Dipdom as a whole can do about individuals burning out. Advising against overextending one's self might help, but I think not. Everyone (me included) thinks they can handle all they undertake. Sometimes, its just not the case. Then there is the longevity burnout. Over time, everyone (except John Boardman) burns out. Some make comebacks, but most fall to the wayside.

Runestone Poll:

(ROGER COX) Don't worry, Brad, your last place position is assured. I voted 46 times under 46 names and gave you and Vertigo 0's all the way!

{Oh, goody! I can stop losing sleep over that now!}

E-Mail Dip:

(W. ANDREW YORK) A bit of clarification about Jim Burgess' comment re Email & Dip. I said I'd write to Vince about the possibility of coordinating Boardman numbers via my CIS account - and that the final word would be up to Vince. Assuming I do end up taking the BNC job in

the future (currently I'm the Asst. BNC), I told him I'd certainly look at setting something up. It isn't quite as far advanced as Jim indicated in his comments.

(JOHN CARUSO) This is only my opinion now - but I think Email has/is causing burnout. Players can play twice as many games 10 times faster. The result - walk offs when a position goes bad. And I don't think its coincidental that the PBM hobby has been stagnant since the start of the electronic mail era.

The Future:

(JOHN CARUSO) Hmm - Brad's people sound interesting. But I'd put Stan Johnson in Turkey, Jim Diehl in Germany, use Bob Acheson in England, and let Robert Sacks GM. Now that would play to TV audiences.

{We'd have to put one of those violence warnings before the show, though.}

(DAVID HOOD) Me? A "Dangerous Stabber"? Gosh, Brad, you've said lots of libelous things about me in print in the past, but this one takes the cake! OK, anyone out there who I've ever stabbed, raise your hand. See, Brad, no one...uh, Peters, that one really didn't count because I didn't have anywhere else to go and you practically begged for it. Oh, the '86 DipCon? Well, I was too young then to know what I was doing...Eric Ozog, you know better than that. You clearly stabbed me first in that '87 DipCon game. Newhouse? Birsan? Franceschini? Sellers? Holley? Y'all stop pickin' on me! No, Jack, MagaDip stabs don't count...

Scoring Systems:

(DAVID HOOD) I don't agree that we wouldn't need scoring systems if everyone played to win. What do we do with the finishing positions of the other six players? How can they be evaluated against others? More importantly, what incentives would there be to stick it out in loser positions, try to set up a stalemate line, and other less-than-winning goals?

Nope, people legitimately look at differing goals in Diplomacy, and therein lies the source of scoring system controversies.

Attracting New Blood:

(PETE SULLIVAN) I would agree with Brad that you need to be very large indeed for "too large" to become a real problem, and even then it's soluble by prior organization. For Manorcon 1992, I ended up on the Registration Desk for some 6 hours, because there were always new people waiting in line to be registered, so I never had the time to turn around and say "Isn't it supposed to be someone else's shift now?" Thankfully (from the registration point of view, anyway) numbers were down a bit for 1993, whilst for 1994, we will have registration spread over several days, since although we start Thursday lunchtime, we'll still have people turning up until lunchtime Saturday, or even later!

(JASON WILKE) I'm fairly new to the Dip sig. I think the sig is a good idea, because until now, I've had no real chance to play. Everyone will agree that it is hard to get seven people together, and find a time when all seven are available. This has to be one of the easiest ways to play the game. That's why I was surprised about the time it takes for a game to fill.

I am personally signed up or playing in 9 games. Of those games, three are Mensa games (39, 42, 44), one of which I entered as a stand-by.

Two others are standard Dip games. The rest are variants. Out of all these games, four are active. Two are in progress, but have not yet hit Spring 01. I've watched the other games sit at four or five players signed up for a few months, and it really gets irritating.

You want new blood in the game? Here I sit. I'm just waiting to play. Even for the games underway, there's a sense of apathy. I very rarely get a long and involved letter. Usually the response is a postcard, or something minimal. Sometimes, I get no response at all. The Russian players in two of my four active games have not written once. That wouldn't be so bad if I was France, but I'm Italy in one and Austria in the other. My first game with Dip sig (Mensa 42) had two NMR's last season.

I recently started my own zine (a subzine in War Fair for now) called "Won if By Land." I am only running two games (due to spatial limits), but the problem is that I have no players. Mensa 45 has only two signed up. There may have been some that signed up with Fred Davis, but I'm also in 44, and that hasn't filled, so... I'm also running a game called Machiavelli. For now, I've been printing the rules. I have 3/8 signed up.

I know a few more will add on when I'm done with the rules, but I also know that Machiavelli isn't completely new to the Dip sig. No one has written me about my zine specifically. It's been an "Oh, by the way" thing to date.

Where are all the players? Where is all the interest? Where is all the enjoyment of the game? If there was no interest before, we wouldn't be in the sig. So where is all the interest now?

{I should point out to those who don't understand that Jason is referring to the Mensa Diplomacy sig. However, what he talks about is true for the whole hobby right now - gamestarts are slow to fill these days.}

(JOHN CARUSO) I've come to the conclusion that there is no "good" or "correct" way to attract new blood in an anarchy. The only way I could see new blood increasing Dipdoms size is through a concerted, organized effort. There's that word again - organize!

Zine Register:

(PAUL KENNY) Is not liking foreign zines "Xenophobia" or could it be called "Zineophobia"? Does that mean a perfect zine environment is a "Zinetopia"? Could a pleasant zine be called "Conzineial"? Is one that is contentious a "Zineliggerent"?

Diplomacy Federation:

(JOHN CARUSO) Here's a new concept for a Federation. Someone should put together a group of 20 or so volunteers who want to try to organize Dipdom. Solicit ideas for a charter or constitution and then vote on them. Acceptance of each idea must be by **unanimous** vote. Anything failing to get a **unanimous** vote fails. Then there's be no reason for anyone to feud over the proposals in the constitution. No majorities or 2/3 or 3/4 votes until after the constitution is written. And allow anyone who wishes to be a part of the constitution founding group to do so.

{In this hobby, John, passing something by a unanimous vote would be a miracle, at least!}

(DAVID HOOD) Brad asks what I think now. My mind has not changed on this - real growth will require a real organization. Some don't care about growth, others fear the feuding a Federation would bring. I agree

the latter is a concern, but I just don't believe the right people have tried this yet. But, since I appear to be in a minority here among Foolhardy letter writers, and since I am currently suffering a bout of brown out, nothing will happen on this any time soon.

{...unless I win the lottery.}

International Dip Participants:

(PETE SULLIVAN) Before anyone gets the wrong idea, I should point out that the "Naked Chat Show" was a one-off special for Valentine's Day (*shome mistake shurely*), and _not_ a regular feature of British TV programming. Especially after all the complaints they got...

(PAUL KENNY) I think it is nice that foreigners get into international stuff, but I can't get excited about any of it. I could never afford to go to another country. I don't have a passport. Hell, I can't even afford to go to other parts of this country.

If I ever do get a passport, the first foreign country I would like to visit is California. I write to alot of people there...

{Remember Sal in Dog Day Afternoon? He wanted to go to Wyoming, so Sonny had to explain to him "Sal, you can't go to Wyoming. It's not a country."}

New Diplomacy Flyer/Gamer's Guide:

(PAUL KENNY) I think I could publish the game for a lot less than \$55, with wooden blocks. I don't see why it costs so much. Of course, it would not create huge profits, just enough to pay for itself.

TAHGC needs its old games to finance its new games it's producing. They also have big overhead on salaries and storage. A people's group could do it as a labor of love (which is what all hobbies are). A person could be appointed to head the project the same was as they head the orphan project or PDORA. Anyhow, the previous comments aside, the Dip hobby does owe Avalon Hill for keeping the game Diplomacy alive, even if they are bureaucratic about it.

{Again, \$55 is the resale price, not the cost of production. TAHGC publishes the game for less than \$55, so why shouldn't you? Plus, \$55 is not the price the stores pay AH - it is the price they charge you!}

(JOHN CARUSO) With all due respect to David, it was Rex Martin who initiated the idea at the 35 person DipCon, with a six month time frame in mind. The only place any of this could have been discussed is either through zines or via mail/phone/Email. It's not like the idea was born in 1991 with 2 years to discuss.

(DAVID HOOD) Nope, Brad, sorry. If you like anarchy so much you're going to have to put up with lots of things being done without "hobby input." There's no established procedure for getting a consensus on a subject, and getting things thrashed out in letter columns and Foolhardy would take **way** too long.

Apologies:

{What, no apologies this issue?}

Jack McHugh:

(DAVID HOOD) Now that Jack has taken over editorship of Diplomacy World, I'm sure there will be plenty of material to keep this topic alive...

Brad Wilson:

(MARK NELSON) Bad Wilson is one of my *favourite* American fanwriters and I eagerly scan through the pages of Maniac's Paradise, Foolhardy and sometimes Vertigo to read his latest rantings. Not because I often agree with him, no. But at least bad articulates his opinions in public (sounds vaguely obsence, and it usually is) and you know where he stands on an issue. Additionally I admire his sneering disdain for the use of facts.

Bad writes "Can we agree that if everybody played every game to win that scoring systems would never be a problem". Unfortunately the answer is no. One of the main scoring systems arguements is how to rate draws, that's what happens when people can't win. Should I maximize my sc count to maximize my rating, or should I maximize the number of eliminatees? I don't think it's unreasonable that tournament players should know how to maximize their score. Bad suggests that in an individual game people should play to win that game, let's apply that argument to the tournament.

I suppose it's entirely possible that I may have put down the US in certain of my locs, but since Uncle Joe can't be bothered to provide any citations to specific locs then I won't trot out a defence. One of the things I like about Bad is his sense of fair play and honour, you would be hard pressed to find in Vertigo any writing by Bad putting down any aspect of American culture.

It is surely a crime against not only against the American Hobby but the American nation for letter writers to criticize any aspect of American culture. I believe a man of Bad Wilson's integrity is required to weed out of the American hobby people who do not slavishly follow his own view in any matter. Perhaps the NYGB can put some money aside to fund a 'Committee for un-American Hobby Activity' which can be chaired by Bad Wilson? I think we are all agreed that this would be a valuable addition to the list of NYGB services.

Clearly the printing of letters by people who are on Bad Wilsons' enemies list is undermining the morality of the American Hobby, in particular anyone who has an inferiority complex, like Bad Wilson for instance, when it comes to American culture.

I think it's an excellent idea that bad writes a letter to novices advising them to stay clear of Chris Carrier. Perhaps at the same time he'll send them a letter recommending that they stay clear of himself? That'll save on postage. I never had much contact with Carrier last time he was active and I only have a few issue of his zine in my collection so I won't comment on Brad's comments. Unlike Bad Wilson I don't believe in trying to drive people out of the hobby because I don't agree with their fanac.

I think it's a great shame that Bad isn't DW editor since he would make a very entertaining editor --- And you thought Larry Peery misued his position as DW editor to attack his enemies?

Finally, a question for next time. When did Bad Wilson become Public Morality Custodian?

Orphan Games:

(PETE SULLIVAN) I used to offer both games using stand-bys and games without in my British zeen, but the stand-by games never used to fill, so I dropped them. British players seem to vote with their feet against

stand-bys. Of course, y'all would reply that they just don't know what they're missing.

(MARK NELSON) I prefer playing in games that use standby players to games that use civil disorder. Not because I feel that the game is necessarily any higher quality, but because there is not much satisfaction in winning a game, or securing a draw, because other players have dropped out. It is very unlikely that I will play another game in a no-standby zine.

Novice Zines:

(PAUL KENNY) Guess one has to tailor their zine to the people who read it. If one has a lot of veteran players than they can get away with abbreviations and cut-throat games. With a lot of new players one should try to start the new players together and try to filter out the wolves. After all, these zines really have a small audience. One can do for their zine whatever they like.

You Control PDORA's Extra Money:

(PETE SULLIVAN) If you're going to start raising money for charity, then you want it to be something appropriate to the Hobby. I know some of the British Science Fiction fandom hobby raise money for Talking Books for the Blind, which is a nice tie-up. I'm not sure what the equivalent link for the Dip hobby would be.

(FRED C. DAVIS, JR.) There is obviously a need for some monetary support for our various hobby services, as is shown in the PDORA annual reports on monies requested and disbursed. However, I do feel that some of the surplus funds could be used for advertising, or other ways of making the game of Diplomacy known to others.

On a couple of occasions, I had suggested to Rex Martin of Avalon Hill that A-H ought to advertise in the pages of the Mensa Bulletin, American Mensa's monthly magazine, which goes to over 55,000 readers. Based on the success of my own Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG, I felt there was a good potential market for both Dip and other A-H type games. To the best of my knowledge, A-H has not yet done so.

Games Magazine is another source for such advertising. I believe there is a short blurb for DipCon in their "Coming Events" pages each year, but an ad for the Postal hobby might gain us some new participants. I haven't seen an issue of Games in a couple of years, but I remember when Diplomacy was selected as one of the top seven "Games of the Century" in that magazine some time back. I'm sure that each such mention of the game results in an increase in sales for a short period.

I knew that Garret Schenck placed an ad in a science fiction magazine some time back, but I never heard whether this brought in any "new blood." The game could certainly be plugged, by flyers and posters, at each major SF Con. I always display copies of my Postal Diplomacy SIG newsletter at Mensa conventions, and from time to time have picked up a new member that way.

Can anyone tell us how many responses there have been to the new Postal flyer placed in the A-H gamebox? There was hope a year ago that this flyer would bring in lots of new blood, but I haven't heard a peep about this lately. Could Cal White or someone else on the 5-man committee give us a count on how many responses they've handled to date?

(W. ANDREW YORK) As I'm not (yet) the BNC, or involved directly with the MNC or USOS, I don't know the direct costs involved.

However, from my little corner of Hobby Service (Pontevedria), I know that I lose money. If there isn't the possibility of some type of funding to cover the costs, then we run the risk of limiting the available custodians to those who's pockets are deep enough to cover all the costs - an elitist attitude. I erred in not asking for funding this year for Pontevedria, and I will have to pay the difference out of my own income. Fortunately it will not be a big burden on me (I anticipate around \$60 for the year). For the BNC, MNC, and USOS I'm sure their costs are much higher. If there was a cost attached to the service, such as a SASE and 50 cents for a Boardman Number or a GM pays the USOS to rehouse games, then there would be a valid concern about the use of the hobbywide funds. But until Hobby Services "pay for themselves", a subsidy is not out of the question.

As for what we could spend the money on, how about ads in convention booklets? Most major conventions have them, and sell advertising. Or, we could make that Cable Network a reality <grin>.

(CONRAD VON METZKE) Whether hobby services need as much as they currently get is arguable, but they do need some. Keeping records, rehousing orphans, etc., costs bucks. I should know. It is understood that custodians and service people will donate their time and energy (nobody has ever seriously suggested we pay them salaries), but it is the least we can do to reimburse them out-of-pocket expenses - they're doing the jobs for our benefit, after all. I think if such funding ceases or becomes a nightmare to obtain through imposition of bookkeeping and "justification" requirements, the services will drop by the wayside fairly quickly - certainly I wouldn't go to such trouble **and** shell out my own cash too! (Yeah, I know, I am in fact doing so right now. But my "service" work is in areas not covered by any existing cash source: International Dip games and Railway Rivals games. If the funding were there, I'd be on it in a flash.)

But if more funding exists than is genuinely needed, then hell, why **not** discuss possible small "salaries" for our custodians? Some of this stuff is a whale of a lot of work - keeping and compiling game statistics, rehousing orphans (you can spend HOURS just sorting out a mess some burned-out GM has left behind). Now I understand this is just a labor of love, and nobody should be offering to do it on the basis of anticipated payments, but if the cash is there, what better use? I'd suggest an after-service payment, e.g. in 1994 we send Paul Kenny \$X for his work in '93, etc. Fund it in advance, then if the functionary doesn't come through, don't pay out.

Thoughts?

(ROBERT ACHESON) I don't have a problem with how the money is being spent - but there is a surplus - so, why not give the PDO auction a year off and live off the surplus?

(JOHN CARUSO) Recruiting is a good place to put some money. Unfortunately, it can also be a cesspool, or a bottomless pit. There must be fiscal responsibility in recruiting. To spend blindly to recruit a handful is a waste of money.

World DipCon Charter:

(PETE SULLIVAN) Robert's points are very helpful, and I think demonstrate that he has not been "excluded" - he's participating along with all the rest of the Foolhardy readership. Since he wrote, there's been a second draft issued which deals with most of the "drafting" issues he raises, so I'll concentrate on the more substantive points. Doug - can you republish the new draft in Foolhardy again? FlapJack should have a copy

if you haven't.

I have no problems per se with Robert's proposed clause on WDC not imposing things on other groups or individuals, but as far as I can see, it's already covered by the clause "The WDC Society exists solely for the purpose of selecting a site for each successive WDC." If anything, this is stronger than

Robert's clause, since it implies the WDC cannot even discuss things which fall outside its remit, whereas Robert's implies that they can, but it's up to the recipients of any advice to decide whether to follow it.

I don't feel that you can treat the European Community as one country for WDC purposes. Firstly, the UK has much closer hobby links with the USA than any European hobby. Secondly, WDC has sprung from the postal hobby, and the European Community is not a postal union - it costs me an arm and a leg to post zeens to Germany. Thirdly, Robert's proposal doesn't deal with non-EC

European states. It would be anomalous to treat Norway and Sweden as separate countries, but not Britain and Greece. If there is to be a change, I would prefer Robert's "Qualified Continent Voting" to any of the other options.

Everything else Robert says, I personally agree with, but then a lot of it has already been dealt with in the new draft.

Brad's logic on Dipcon voting is a non-sequitur. If he comes to the WDC Society Meeting, he will probably get a full vote, as I doubt there will be more than 10 US people there (remember, Canucks count separately). It's the British hobbyists who get clobbered by QNV. If Brad wants to propose a change to the

Dipcon charter to prevent non-US nationals voting, that's a separate issue. The level of trans-atlantic con-going is increasing, and a Brit might well want to go to the next year's Dipcon. If everyone votes on the basis that "If I can't go next year, I won't vote on the site," then most of the Brits at the Dipcon society meeting (all hard-core international attendees) should vote, and most of the Americans (certainly the in-state crowd) should not!

(W. ANDREW YORK) "The York Pledge" for DipCon/WDC as coined by Brad Wilson. That certainly brought a chuckle!!

(DAVID HOOD) Robert, take a pill. The national voting is perfectly fair because there are a lot more active Dippers in all of Europe than in North America. You're being included in the discussions now, so stop urging foul. To my knowledge, Iain's charter is his own creation - let's just do some constructive criticism. Frankly, I have little to no problem with the current draft. I like the "floating year" concept and I hope it stays in the final draft.

Brad, one of the chief reasons to have DipCon site voting the year before rather than by canvassing the area with mail ballots is to allow voting to be based on merit rather than where any individual voter could get to most easily. In other words, it's an **advantage** for the voters to be people who, for the most part, can't attend the next DipCon. At least, that's the way I always saw it.

(MARK NELSON) Robert Sacks was heavily involved in the IDA and has a very good knowledge of the Constitution of the SF World Con. It's a shame that his wealth of experience was ignored when the Chairman of the ManorCon committee wrote his proposed committee. Still at least the Chairman of the ManorCon committee widely circulated copies of his constitution, which is more than can be said for drafts 0.0 and 0.1.

I agree with Robert that Qualified Continental Voting (or Qualified Zonal Voting) makes more sense than QNV. However the advantage of QNV over QCV/QZV is that it maximizes the influence that British hobby

members can exert over future amendments to the Charter, which can only be in the best interests of the hobby.

It is very generous of Robert to volunteer to appoint himself as Custodian of World DipCon in North America. Very public spirited of him.

Hobby Custodians:

(PAUL KENNY) I can now report that both James Burgess and Eric Ozog have been very helpful transitioning the Orphan Office over to me. Also, both have made it clear that if I needed advice, either would do their best.

You know, one of the things about BNCs and Miller numbers/Miller numbers under the covers is that (to me at least) they operate in a vacuum. At least I've seen a couple of issues of Alpha & Omega. I didn't even know that Everything existed until hearing rumors of its existence in Foolhardy and ZR. Maybe there is some way for the publishers to help the BNC and Miller people. If so, please speak up.

Dip Players versus Role Players:

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) I don't know what kind of role players John Caruso has been stumbling into, but very few of the ones I know wear any costume except blue jeans torn at the knee and convention T-shirts. If they wear a hat, it says something like Skoal or Cubs. I'm ranked as a Grandmaster player and Master judge in the RPGA, and all my convention energy is spent playing, judging, and running role-playing games. Our Network club is the largest in Ohio, and many of these hardcore roleplayers play Diplomacy. I've even dragged several into my zine as regular players or at least stand-bys. It seems that those who like games of strategy and tactics can find something to enjoy in a Dungeons & Dragons or Call of Cthulhu tournament as much as a Dip tournament. The majority of them prefer the interaction of face-to-face games, though.

John does have a point about dice, though. Who can resist all those neat little polyhedrons, clear ones and marbled ones and wooden ones ad opaque...

Fondly Remembered Zines:

(MARK NELSON) I don't think that the Diplomacy Hobby lends itself to 'memorable issues' in the same way that SF fandom does. Having said that there are 3 particular issues that I would like to own: (1) Terminus, (2) Zine of Lists and (3) VoD 100 (all American!). My three favourite fanzine 'issues' are all SF zines: (1) Warhoon 28 (the complete fan writing of Walter Willis, 640 mimeo pages ---if nothing else it's a long read!), (2) Fancylopedia II (a 1958 glossary of fannish terminology) and (3) The Enchanted Duplicator (which is included in 1). Diplomacy fandom leads itself more to the owning of complete runs than single issues.

Chris Carrier:

(FRED C. DAVIS, JR.) I see where Brad Wilson wishes to bring dead or quiescent feuds back to life with his attack on "the nefarious, vicious Chris Carrier." I was hoping that Foolhardy would be able to stay out of the feuding business. However, if Brad wishes to start a round-robin letter discussing "Carrier's attitude and offenses in the past," I think equal time ought to be given to a similar letter discussing the attitudes and offenses of one Robert Sacks, the person against whom most of Carrier's attacks have been directed in the past four years.

This is not a defense of Carrier, but I believe that if anyone in the

Postal hobby has been guilty of severe offenses against other members in the past decade, that person is Robert Sacks. I have kept a file on Sacks for about the past 18 years, but rather than write a book here I'll just mention two of his offenses.

Sacks' most severe offense was his campaign against **Michael Hopcroft** of Portland, Oregon, former publisher of NUTMEGS. When Sacks found out that Michael, through no fault of his own, was drawing Social Security Disability benefits for a medical condition, he called Michael a "parasite," and suggested that he commit suicide. Given Michael's mental condition at the time, it seems that Sacks nearly succeeded in persuading Michael to kill himself. Michael wrote letters to both Chris Carrier and myself in which he quoted some of Sacks' remarks, and seriously contemplated doing away with himself, since he considered himself worthless. Both Carrier and I sent letters of encouragement to Michael, urging him to see the brighter side of things. Fortunately, Michael did not commit suicide, and, hopefully, is now on the road to medical recovery.

Sacks, in what was apparently a "social Darwinistic" approach, declared that Michael Hopcroft was a parasite for accepting Social Security Disability benefits, and that all such parasites ought to kill themselves. Ironically, Mr. Sacks lives in a 6-room rent controlled apartment in New York City, which he inherited from his parents, on which he pays a very much lower monthly rental than on other similar units. People who have continually occupied the same apartment since Dec. 1941, and their descendants, still benefit from this W.W. II "emergency" legislation. A question could be raised as to who is the greater "parasite", Robert Sacks or Michael Hopcroft.

The second offense I'll mention was Sacks' action, when he was Miller No. Custodian, to block the reclassification of the jumbled up list of Variant Diplomacy games back in the 1970's. Everyone else who was a Big Name in the Variant subhobby in those years was in favor of a new system for reclassifying the hundreds of Variant games into some logical categories. This included the Custodians of the then-existing variant banks around the world, in North America, Britain, Ireland, and Switzerland, and several Old Timers such as Lew Pulsipher, Conrad von Metzke and myself. Von Metzke had gone so far as to compile, with the advice of others, a completely new Variant classification system, in a publication called TALABWO. However, Sacks, in his pettiness as **the** MNC (this was before each major hobby had its own MNC) blocked this development by refusing to accept it. His major objection seemed to be that it was not **his** system. He was working on his own "racategorization" system. I've seen that system, and it stinks.

In frustration, some of the Variant subhobby leaders decided to call for a referendum to replace Robert Sacks as MNC. We wished to replace him with Conrad von Metzke, in order to adopt the new classification system. Walter Buchanan, the founder of the hobby flagship zine Diplomacy World, and a man of unimpeachable integrity, offered to count the ballots. Accordingly, ballots were sent out to all of the known Dipzine publishers in North America, the U.K., Ireland, Australia, and Europe. (Sacks, by the way, announced in advance that he expected there would be a fraudulent vote count against him). A strange outcome resulted. The vote between Sacks and von Metzke came out a tie! (In retrospect, it seems that many Overseas publishers were unaware of how much trouble Sacks was causing in the Variant subhobby, and decided not to upset the applecart with this "recall" election).

In any event, this was the only time in the history of the Postal hobby that a sitting Custodian ever was subjected to a recall on his position. Following the election, von Metzke withdrew his proposals, and Sacks continued to serve as MNC until he later passed the post on to one

of his followers under the infamous "Covenant."

Eventually, Rod Walker, who had taken over the Custodianship of the North American Variant Bank, took the work of von Metzke and others, made a few changes of his own, and produced the ARDA or North American Variant Bank Category system, using about 22 different categories of Dip Variants. This system was then adopted by every other Variant Bank Custodian and Assistant MNC around the world, and is the one currently in use in most areas. The only person who refused to accept this was Robert Sacks, who denounced them as "Walker Numbers," and set up his own alternative MNC system, using his own classification system.

For the past decade, in North America, the hobby has had to deal with two competing MNC's. Every time the real MNC passes his position on to another, the new MNC has received letters from Sacks urging him to accept the Covenant, join the New York Games Board, and start using the "Sacks" system instead of the "Walker Numbers" for Postal Variant games. Each MNC has refused to accept this Covenant, and has continued to operate as an independent party, per hobby tradition. Meanwhile, Sacks got Julie Martin to serve as "MNC Under the Covenant" and issue the Sacks set of numbers to anyone who chose to apply for one. Julie did produce a nice publication for this program. When she retired in January 1990, she produced her last issue of Lord of Hosts at that time. Sacks then appointed Brad Wilson as the new "MNC Under the Covenant." However, in the past four years Brad has not produced a single issue of Lord of Hosts, and his position has been largely ignored and forgotten by most of the hobby.

In summary, between about 1976 and 1991, Robert Sacks succeeded in causing a breach in the operation of the Variant subhobby, which is only now healing. He also delayed the much-needed reclassification of the variants into proper categories for at least six years during that period.

These are only two of the problems which Sacks has brought to the Postal hobby. Any time he has had any chance to participate in any Postal hobby action, he has caused endless trouble. This has nothing to do with the operation of certain Diplomacy FTF tournaments in the Middle Atlantic region. I'm told he has done an excellent job in running those tournaments. My concern is only for the Postal hobby. If there is a need to warn our hobbyists, and especially novices, about the actions of anyone, I think it would be far more important to do so regarding Robert Sacks than about Chris Carrier. Sacks is still very much in the hobby, whereas Carrier has virtually retired from it.

(CONRAD VON METZKE) I have no use whatsoever for either Mr. Carrier or Mr. Sacks, and will have nothing to do with either. For many years this has been quite easy, as neither has made any effort to get in touch with me. Should either ever do so, he would be ignored. And I suspect that's really the answer here: Ignore those two losers. In both cases, their hobby careers have shown quite clearly that they feed on attention, never mind that most of it is negative. In that connection, my attempt to overthrow Sacks as MNC many years ago was a clear mistake; what I should have done was rally those who felt as I did and gone on as if the man didn't exist. Indeed, I provided him with an aura of importance which for a good long while colored the fact that he had no importance whatsoever. Contrastingly, when Mr. Carrier wrote several vicious letters attacking me for my affiliation with Alcoholics Anonymous, and for sharing some of my recovery experiences with Costaguana readers, I ignored him utterly, and the matter died away immediately.

Sending a circular letter would serve merely to feed the psychiatric disorders from which these two men suffer; this, in current parlance, is called "enabling," and we certainly have better things to do with our time,

I would hope. The case of Tretick/Oaklyn, which Fred cites, is categorically distinguished from those of Carrier and Sacks: Tretick/Oaklyn wasn't a pathological minefield, he was a simple crook. Letters concerning him were on the order of "buyer beware" notices, just as many consumer groups publish warnings about unscrupulous aluminum-siding outlets, etc.

I would strongly suggest avoiding any publicity gimmicks, and for that matter it would be best if we simply dropped this discussion forthwith. We are simply not going to drive these characters away by proceeding aggressively, you know. They will stay as long as they get what they want, which is attention. But if we merely put them out of our minds and, as needed, work around them, they can waste all the time and money they want to and it won't make any difference.

Consider also that circular letters of antagonism and similar devices are all but guaranteed to start up another divisive feud, and that is precisely what we do **not** need in our hobby, n'e c'est pas? I can think of several people who have left the hobby in disgust over previous specious feuds, and I can think of several more who will pack their bags the instant another one starts, on the logic that they are in postal gaming to play games and have fun, not run a nursery school. Elsewhere in this zine people are trying to figure out how to expand the hobby. Why are we simultaneously discussing the quickest way I know to contract it?

(ROBERT ACHESON) I disagree. If Carrier wants back in the hobby that's his choice as it would be mine to edit any material that he may decide to send my way.

(JOHN CARUSO) Brad - what do you propose to do to those people that do accept Chris Carrier into their zines, games, homes, with open arms? I remember the black listing of the late 70s and early 80s against those who allowed Tretick/Oaklyn into their zines. I oppose blacklisting.

(DAVID HOOD) Your letter will just feed him the attention he wants. The best way to deal with offensive letters or opinions from anyone in the hobby is to ignore them first, counter them in print if necessary, and urge the writer to do something more constructive.

(CHRIS CARRIER) Gee, Bwad, when you were talking about someone "feeding off the misery and agony of his victims" I thought you were talking about Robert Sacks. I have a better idea: an Oaklyn/Tretick type round robin letter concerning Robert Sacks, concerning his attempt to drive Michael Hopcroft over the edge into suicide, his sexual harassment of the lovely Rhiannon to the point where she had to gaffiate from SF fandom, and Sacks' MNC schism. As to my "attitude and offenses", yeah, I have a real problem with being nice to cretins who try to push mentally disturbed people over the edge into suicide. Strange of me, don't you think?

{Does anyone else find this whole topic as boring and pointless as I do?}

Quality of Dip Play:

(FRED C. DAVIS, JR.) In my personal opinion, more Postal games are ending earlier, in multiple draws, than there were some 20 years ago. I also note that there seem to be more NMR's, and, in most zines, a lot **less** press than we had in the "Golden Age." I believe that many people no longer have the patience to play in a game which will take from 1 1/2 to 2 years to end. We're getting spoiled by the "instant" transmissions of info by fax and e-mail. This may be one reason why people are more willing

to call it quits with a 3 or 4-way draw after, say, 1908, instead of pushing ahead to win the game or get a 2-way draw.

I don't play in enough games to say for certain, but I think that the actual quality of play by those who stick to their guns is probably better. After all, we have the experience of many years of play, and of many discussions on stalemate lines and on "How to Play" the various countries.

In Chess, they say the best Chess players of the past would have difficulty playing against today's leaders, because of all of the new moves which have developed. The same may be happening in Diplomacy. Except for raw novices, you don't see many really bad moves any more.

(ROBERT ACHESON) The bigger the hobby the better the play.

For Next Time:

1) (from W. Andrew York) Pontevedria has been reformatted and a games opening cross-reference created. What do you think of it? How should it be improved? Is the cross-reference of value? What should be done to increase the circulation and availability of the publication?

2) (from Mark Nelson) In a few years time it will be possible to run `email' games of diplomacy in real time using virtual technology. In theory there could be games run at conventions which include people who are not physically at the convention.

Hypothetical question. Should virtual diplomacy games ran at DipCon in 2020 be included in the DipCon Diplomacy Tournament?

Next Foolhardy Deadline - March 20, 1994