

Foolhardy - #12

Just \$1 An Issue!

Foolhardy - 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**. 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: Paul Kenny, W. Andrew York, John Caruso, Andy Lischett, Brad Wilson, Michael Lowrey, Don Del Grande, David Hood.

Two items of note. First, because both this issue and last were kind of thin, I'm only charging 1/2 an issue for each if your sub is paid up currently, which means I've added an issue onto all subs with a credit balance. Second, we'll try to generate a few more letters by making the next deadline 3 months away instead of two.

The Concept:

(JOHN CARUSO) I've never met a Brit I didn't like. Brad Wilson is a liberal maggot if he dislikes even one Brit.

(BRAD WILSON) I don't like almost all American TV shows. 'Homicide', 'NYPD Blue', and the Star Trek series(es) are about it for new stuff. I do like more British TV shows, though. So maybe Pete and I are barking up the same tree, eh?

DipCon:

(W. ANDREW YORK) Dave, I've tried the local stores; however, the only gaming that is going strong around here in RPG's. I agree that the fewer people in the hobby is effecting DipCon attendance. Also, the decrease in disposable income effects the distance people can travel to incredibly more expensive conventions. The next DipCon in Chapel Hill is certainly priced right, as far as the admission fee and the rooms. For me, though, I would have to pay about \$400 for air fare - more than four times the cost of the convention itself. Unfortunately, it is too far to drive from San Antonio (and probably would cost just about as much).

(BRAD WILSON) John Caruso is, as usual, right on in his critique of DipCon. The best way to 'place DipCons at the most accessible locations' is to consider the available options before voting and make accessibility and central locations the key factors in a decision, not personal spite, anti-big or anti-small con philosophy, or sheer personal convenience. In short, do what's best for the hobby, not what's best for you personally. If you have no intention of attending and still insist on voting, then definitely consider accessibility #1 on your list of priorities. (All this assumes that all bids possess the basic necessities of good GMs, etc.)

The biggest problem of late is that there have often not been any alternatives to middle-of-nowhere DipCons. Thankfully the 1992 DipCon meeting rejected Peery's fantasy of Salt Lake City, but 1991's voters had no choice but to vote for Kansas City. Had there been an more centrally located alternative (Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee), its accessibility may have won out although 1990's pick of Toronto over Baltimore doesn't set an encouraging precedent. I think it's always better to give the DipCon meeting a choice of sites, and would encourage large numbers of bids. This summer both bids that I know of (AtlantiCon (Baltimore) and Avaloncon (Hunt Valley, MD)) are pretty easy to get to, although AtlantiCon, because in it's in the heart of Baltimore as opposed to suburban Baltimore, will be easier to reach for those not driving (an

important consideration especially for people coming from a distance and younger (18-under) people). For '96, my Chicago bid will be easy to reach as well.

David's solution to the numbers crunch may work with his DixieCon cronies, but try it on someone who's driven 500 or more miles and paid \$200 or more to come to DipCon and play Dip and it might not work as well. Also some of us may not have the iron grip on their locals that Herr Hood has on his toadies. (I could just imagine me trying to 'commandeer' Chuck Kaplan, Matt Fleming, or James Wall into a game they didn't want to play or out of one they did!) In the 36-case, I'd try to round up six more players rather than ruining someone's fun (assuming, again, no one volunteers to sit out). Between GMs, tourney hangers-on and spectators a number divisible by 7 can, usually, be found.

(MICHAEL LOWREY) John Caruso makes a true observation that DipCon may not always be ideally located to attract masses of people. But what I'm interested in knowing is exactly what "to either place DipCons at the most accessible locations or possibly even amending the charter to cover alternates" means. Yes John?

Lack of New Zines:

(JOHN CARUSO) ..as well as DipCon attendance and new game starts are all tied to the same problem: a dwindling number of hoobyists in Dipdom.

The truth of the matter is, computers have made games by mail obsolete. Even I have opted for computer play, even if it is solitaire, 1 on 1 or running my baseball league.

(BRAD WILSON) Thank you, Paul, for a) the nice words and b) proof my longtime point that TurboFreaks and their vicious Farce Poll voting contribute greatly to the dearth of new publications. Maybe someone will listen when the point isn't coming from me.

I agree with Stephen Glasgow about subzines, and he is correct that subzines-turned-zines tend to be healthier and better-prepared for the grind for month-to-month production. When **VERTIGO** returns from hiatus, it will have a brand-new subzine from Alan Levin, and for many years I had Dave Perlmutter's **Extremism in the Defense of Liberty** (which still appears every now and then) plus a few issues of Keith Sesler's **ISL**. I like and enjoy having subzines.

But there are a couple of catches that, I think, explain why subzines will never be all that plentiful. First, they drive up a pubber's costs for both copying and (especially) postage. If the subzine is of any size at all, it will

be expensive, and not every pubber a) is willing to eat the loss (like Doug Kent does with Jack McHugh's ...Horse...) or b) has a subzine editor who will subsidize their own product (as Perlmutter did occasionally or Steve and Linda Courtemanche did all the time for High Inertia in Rebel.) That last partnership was the perfect one: Melinda (pubber) ran games, Steve and Linda (subzine) provided the chat. Vice versa would work too. Another catch is the time factor. Getting the subzine (especially if it runs games) to the pubber in time can be difficult if the pubber wants a tight turnaround. This can be avoided if the subzine editor is willing to send his games out on flyer but that's precisely what he's trying to avoid by having a subzine, right?

What I think would benefit the hobby is the return of the guest GM. In the early 80's many zines had games guest GMed. Said GM did not have a subzine or anything like that; he merely adjudicated his game(s) and sent them on to the publisher. It was a good way for GMs to learn their trade or for veteran GMs who wished to continue without pubbing to keep a hand in. But who does this nowadays? Most of the zines that had guest GMs recently have folded: Comrades in Arms, for example. The Home Office may, still; and I see The Canadian Diplomat has guest GM-ed openings. I'd urge potential GMs to approach pubbers and offer this service to see whether GMing is for them.

Burnout:

(BRAD WILSON) Caruso has another excellent point here and I think he's right. NMR-ing out in E-Mail seems to be commonplace (of course in E-Mail one player can often NMR out as France and return later as a standby for Russia or Germany, say, so...) and I concur that because it's so easy it results in walkouts. Some people can't keep up with the pace, either.

The Future:

(ANDY LISCHETT) I was offended at Brad Wilson's description of me in Foolhardy as a suburbanite. Yes, technically I live in a suburb, but I don't own either a Honda Accord or a camcorder.

(BRAD WILSON) Don't forget, David, your underhanded, vicious attack stab of me at Origins/AtlantiCon in 1990 in collusion with Frank Jones. Don't think I've forgotten! One of these days we'll meet again...and you'll probably sucker me in again!

Attracting New Blood:

(PAUL KENNY) I feel that anywhere one runs into a large number of people, there is a fertile ground to recruit people. For me, it is here at work. For others, it may be school, or in the military, or in prison, or in a hospital, or the fire hall, or whatever.

Perhaps we should all try to recruit 2 people each. No more, no less.

Let everyone try to do this modest goal in 1994. I think we would then have a problem with not enough zines.

Also, I have been giving my old zines away to friends at work. It beats throwing them out (they have a way of collecting on you) and gives the zine a new life. So giving away your old zines to new players is both a way to initiate that new recruit and a way to make room for more copies of Foolhardy.

(BRAD WILSON) I think we're all familiar with Jason Wilke's problem, and I'd like to discuss the reasons why and what can be done, if anything.

So why do gamestarts fill slowly? First, David Hood said re DipCon that attendance is down because there are fewer people in the hobby. That applies here as well and is the simplest explanation (although DipCon's oddball sites and inaccessibility play a part, too). Fewer players=fewer game starts. Second, for many years the hobby boasted 10-20 people who played in 40-80 or more games themselves at once. Anyone who played in the early 80's will remember Ron Kelly, who was everywhere (one estimate had him in 150 (!) games). Of late, such people have become increasingly rare. Kathy Caruso's dropping out, John Crosby pretty much has too -- right there there were, at their peaks, almost 100 games combined. I'd guess that Melinda Holley is starting to limit her signups and I know Jack McHugh is, and there's two more who, of late, have accounted for a ton of game start-slots. Add to that drops/de-emphasis of games by such veterans as Jason Bergmann, Steve Courtemanche, Scott Beckett, Stan Johnson, Marc Peters, Randolph Smyth and others. I don't see a lot of replacements for all these people and they represent a ton of game start-slots. There are still a few lots-of-games dinosaurs: Bob Acheson, Fred Hyatt, Jim Diehl among them, but many fewer than before. In the past, heavy hobby involvement meant playing in a bunch of games, but increasingly that's not true, too: of the 'hobby poohbahs' now that I can think of only Doug Kent plays extensively. Burgess, Hood and Gaughan have cut back their playing; Schenck never played much; Fred Davis, John Boardman, Larry Peery, etc., have largely abstained from playing for a decade or more; and so it goes. All this adds up to a ton of game-opening slots open that, five years ago, some of these people would have filled. Third, consider the money factor. In this miserable economic climate a lot of people have to watch their pennies, and since the trend in Dipzines is toward expensive many people can't afford to play in as many games. That is certainly true of myself; I have had to cut back because I can't afford to keep up correspondence, etc. James Wall told me he plays where it's cheap: VERTIGO, Cheesecake, Absolute. I bet he's not the only one. With sub fees at \$1 or higher and game fees (a nefarious concept in themselves for Dip; for time-killers like 1830, Colonia, or Titan, they are more understandable) often at \$5 or higher it's expensive to play in 15-20-25 games. I think it's instructive that Cheesecake's openings fill the minute they appear and that despite VERTIGO's awful track record for timeliness I can still fill games. It's true that people will pay for proven GMs with solid track records (Boardman, Kent, Gaughan) or take a chance on possibly unreliable cheapies (me) but are more hesitant to sign up in new places if they are pricey. When I can, I like to sign up under new GMs to help them get started because I know it's hard. Fourth, Jason's point about the quality of play -- which I think is slipping -- discourages people from signing up. It's no fun if no one writes (this helps explain Graustark prospering despite the \$30 sub/game fee, because Boardman's players write a lot). Finally, it's a fact that variants fill even more slowly than regular games, and in the case of Machiavelli, a more complex game that requires more players (eight) and is out-of-print to boot game, filling games will be most difficult.

So what's to be done? How can aspiring GMs fill games? First, don't charge an arm and a leg. Many people are turned off by game fees; make your sub fee whatever you need to get by on instead. Charge \$2 an issue but no game fees, and many people will sign up for games because there's no added expense. At \$1 an issue and \$5 game fee, most people will sign up for a game, if that. Second, try to get one of the few lots-of-games sorts on board; that will give you a good base. Third, advertise everywhere. Beg for plugs; get your openings in Pont, DW, and anywhere else you can; ask people in games that you are in to play in your openings. Fourth, be a guest GM in an established zine where people already enjoy playing. Fifth, recruit local gamers to try PBM. This will

result in its share of drops, but a) you can get the games underway and b) locals who can call in orders with a local phone call (or, perhaps more to the point, that you call locally for orders) are more likely to stick around. But until the hobby's bigger, openings will still be hard to fill.

Diplomacy Federation:

(DAVID HOOD) OK, Doug, you can't get away with that little comment. Let's hear your opinion on this thing before we put it to rest.

{My opinion? OK. A Dip Federation of some sort, that didn't try to overextend itself, would be a welcome addition to the hobby if there were enough people out there willing to do the necessary work. There aren't, however.}

New Diplomacy Flyer/Gamer's Guide:

(JOHN CARUSO) I beg to differ with David Hood here. Anarchy doesn't mean without input. Being an anarchist hobby is no reason to avoid seeking input. To avoid seeking input is pompous, rude, and elitist ("my ideas are best, your's suck" type of attitude).

Apologies:

(MICHAEL LOWREY) I apologize for not apologizing last issue. Happy now Doug?

{No.}

Jack McHugh:

(JOHN CARUSO) You old slum dog. So you've taken over the reins at DW HQs. What will happen next? Maybe pigs will grow wings, or fish will grow feet. Or Bob Olsen will win a game of Dip.

Brad Wilson:

(PAUL KENNY) I was a bit tired of Jack McHugh, I think it is time to start on Brad Wilson. Actually, you are talking about quite a personality who will probably be a hobby institution forever. Every time I read a zine, I see his letters to the editor, and those letters are quite relevant to what is being discussed.

(JOHN CARUSO) ...is one of my favorite Dipdom characters too. Brad and I disagree on many things from music to sports to politics, but we are still friends (and clique mates).

(BRAD WILSON) Well, it's heartwarming to see that the Leeds Zoo still permits its residents mail privileges, as is evidenced by the appearance in issue 10 of Mark Nelson's elliptical and rambling commentary directed at, I suppose, me. I believe it's customary in civilized society to address correspondents by their name, so I will address Mark as 'Mark' despite not getting or expecting the same courtesy in return.

In re tournament scoring, what I meant is that what we should be doing is encouraging people to play for the ONLY result listed in the rulebook and the only result sanctioned by the game's inventor outside of a DIAS draw: a win. Non-DIAS draws are, frankly, a bastardization of the game to start with, and should not be encouraged more than necessary. As Andy Lischett says, 'Draws Include Me.' Therefore, any scoring system

should reward wins and abjure draws. Now, what I mean by 'playing to win' as opposed to 'playing the system' is the kind of cowardly play I saw at DipCon '89. There, in Round 1, four pusillanimous wimps voted themselves a 4-way draw in 1905 or so with 8-9 centers each instead of playing the game -- and it had a lot of play left -- so their score wouldn't be inflated by a win on the first day and make them targets thereafter. That kind of farce has no relation to the game Calhamer invented and is a perfect example of playing the system, not playing to win. It's this kind of play that I want to discourage in tourneys. Now, for what Dip is all about, watch the 'Baltimore Mafia' -- Jim Yerkey, Bill Thompson, Frank Jones, Dan Mathias, Mark Franceschini, Kevin Kozlowski -- play at tourneys. They play to win, period, and usually do just that. It's that kind of spirit I want to see more of at tourney Dip, and less of the micro-calculations that Mark Nelson seems to favor. Winning games usually will win the tourneys, by the way.

Anyone with even the remotest familiarity with my writings in **VERTIGO** or elsewhere knows that I never hesitate to criticize any aspect of American Dipdom, culture, or anything else, for that matter. Your strawman is showing, Mark. And most of the rest of Mark's letter is hard to answer if that strawman falls apart because without it Mark makes no sense (I'm told that's not all that unusual). Still, if part of the role Mark envisages for me allows me to persecute Mark's brand of sloppily empty rhetoric it could have some benefits.

Mark will, I'm sure, be anxiously awaiting my Diplomacy World column. Entertaining it will be, no doubt, and Mark must find my views at least that because he pays for my zine.

Finally, what Mark calls Carrier's 'fanac' is simply hatemongering and slander, which have no place in civilized society. But then perhaps we can agree that Mark's mean-spirited diatribe has more in common with Carrier's filth than civilized hobby activity? Time for the Leeds Zoo to check on the inmates...

(MICHAEL LOWREY) Now Markie, you stop making fun of Bwad, lest you get from him all that you fear. Why I heard a rumor that Flapjack was giving Bwad his own column in DW to write what he likes and mention names. The mind shudders.

And also stop writing such wickedly funny abuse of poor Bwad. You know that laughing just after you had your wisdom teeth out is not pleasant...

Rusty Bolt Awards:

*{I am now accepting nominations in the following categories for the 1994 Rusty Bolts Awards. Deadline for nominations is **June 3**.*

- 1) Bernie Oaklyn Memorial Award for worst diplomatic skills.*
- 2) Dumb Idea of the Year Award for the most moronic idea of 1993.*
- 3) Ms. Nar Award for most entertaining game press.*
- 4) Fast Trax Award for most unreasonably delayed zine.*
- 5) Black Splotch Award for the ugliest Dip zine.*
- 6) Been There, Done That Memorial Award for the most eagerly anticipated fold.*
- 7) Acquire Number Custodian Award for the most unnecessary hobby service.*
- 8) Paul Milewski Award for the most boring topic of hobby correspondence.*
- 9) Steve Sulzby/Jonas Johnson Award for the nastiest exchange of game press.*
- 10) Ego Trip Award for silliest hobby debate topic.*
- 11) Rookie of the Year Award for the best new Dip zine of 1993.*

- 12) *Newcomer of the Year Award for the best new Dip player of 1993.*
13) *Comeback of the Year Award for the best returning burnout of 1993.*

Orphan Games:

(PAUL KENNY) Poor Pete Gaughan. I am getting the idea that he can never figure out when I'm kidding. Of course, I knew that California was 3 hours behind the rest of the world. I think that Pete has done a great job in his services to the hobby. And now he is finding out what a job his Zine Review is. Pete has also been a great international diplomat. He gets and sends zines to a bunch of foreign countries and to the United States. Keep up the good work Pete!

Actually his idea on waiting zine deadline time increments is a very good idea, one which I've already adopted. So far, I've only forwarded games from one zine, and only after one of the other players brought it to my attention (I say one of the other players because I was a player in one of the games, but I was content to wait for someone else to make a move).

But as Pete and others have indicated, I tend to consider the speed of the zine. Though, in reality, would a speedy zine just stop with no word? Nah. It's always those slower zines, going on two months between the deadlines, then three months, then six...

As my policy shall be, I'll wait till someone says something to me. I should also say that I plan to step down from this post in a year and a half. 2 years is a good tenure for this post.

As far as the funds go, I thought it was nice to have a small balance forward, and I'm using the zine (Absolute!) as the money books. So far so good, hardly any orphans. But I shudder to think if Maniac's Paradise or Rebel folds!

One last thing. This standby versus CD debate has made me realize that I should take care to send orphan games to zines with similar house rules. I would not let my personal bias rule, rather the confines of supply and demand. However, I may find it difficult to find zines that would let NMR turn into CD. Personally, I don't think that was the intention of the writer of the rules. I think that rule was worded for face to face games and only to keep the game going should one of the players feel the need to leave before the game was over. If the rule book (or the writer of the rule book) had pictured an ongoing game where replacement players would be readily available, then the standby players would probably be in there as well. However, now that the current PBM hobby has corrected the problem, the new rule is (in my humble opinion) both proper and an improvement.

It is proper because in "real life" the biggest disruption of a country's government is when it changes - either through elections, revolt, revolution, breakdown, or conquest. What that Stven was talking about would just have conquest or civil breakdown and anarchy. CD = anarchy.

Conquest, when some foreign power overruns your country. Elections, when you resign and another person comes in and takes over. Revolution, one person NMR's out and a standby comes in and takes over.

Revolt, one person NMRs one turn, but comes back the next (this could be the makings for great press!).

What I think should be allowed is if a previous player of one country should be allowed resume a position they NMR'd out of the same game ONLY if they played that country. That means if person A was playing England but NMR'd in 1902, and player B came in as a standby, but then B NMR'd or resigned later say 1918, then let person A have that (England) back again if person A was available again.

After reading Stven's reasons for CD, I feel even more strongly to

have the standby rule. However, I would honor and respect Stven's house rules, and I would hope a GM would tell me when they have a house rule that is a bit different so that I may rehouse future (if any) orphan games into like zines.

You Control PDORA's Extra Money:

(BRAD WILSON) I was not calling for stripping all the money from hobby services, merely suggesting that many could, perhaps, get away with less.

Fred and Andy's advertising ideas are solid and should be pursued by someone...and here is where a 'Dip federation' could come in handy. The head of said federation could contact Mensa, Games, major cons, etc., and advertise. However, short of a federation, someone needs to step forward and take charge in the best hobby volunteering spirit! What's that you say? 'Thanks for offering yourself, Brad!' OK, I'll look into it, since I've been doing the complaining. Convention ad booklets are perhaps our best bet. John's caution re a 'bottomless pit' is well-taken, too, after Garret's spending spree with ZR.

I'm not opposed to Conrad's ideas about salaries in principle, but I'd rather see any surplus used for advertising/recruiting first and then, if some is left over, efficient, functioning custodians could be rewarded. If we were to have 'salaries' Conrad's concept is the way to go, but let's be honest and say that no one takes a custodianship without expecting to drop some cash. Also, I see nothing wrong at all with the custodians asking a totally voluntary \$1 donation for a number (many BNCs used to and I still send \$1 when I ask for a number); let those that use the service pay for it! The Orphan Service is different, as it's hardly the players' fault the game is abandoned. Asking for a stamp or SASE (voluntary, of course) for Pont isn't a bad idea, either.

(DAVID HOOD) There is no point in having an auction if we're going to have such a big surplus. On the other hand, if custodians or others need a subsidy, they can ask for one in the normal bid procedure. I don't see a real reason to change the system, just convince people to use it if needed.

World DipCon Charter:

(BRAD WILSON) I enjoy Pete Sullivan's thoughtful, reasonable commentary -- it's vastly preferable to much of his countrymen's hobby scribbles -- and much of what he says here makes sense. Two points:

1) Whatever winds up happening with the Charter and whatever winds up being possible, this much should be clear: when WDC is in North America, it MUST be with the North American DipCon to have a chance at being the globe-spanning con its founders dreamed it could be. It might not be wise to put that in the Charter in writing but it certainly would be wise to observe it in practice. I think most North American hobbyists would agree.

2) Pete's point about international voters at North American DipCons sounds nice in practice but in reality it's just not true. One of the reasons many internationals voted for Toronto over Baltimore in 1989 was that they wanted to go to Toronto. Fine -- but then all of ONE showed up. How many Brits were at DipCon '92 and '93? Not many. The fact is simply that North Americans should decide where the North American DipCon is located.

(MICHAEL LOWREY) Am I alone in finding certain mailings by the French for the WDC in 1995 presumptuous? Especially disturbing to me is the line "The Region II is the one eligible for 1995." Though they do

acknowledge the draft charter is liable to be amended, the overall impression is that WDC V will be in Europe. Is that what we're arguing about here?

World DipCon:

(DON DEL GRANDE) Actually, there is one thing I'd like to find out, and maybe Foolhardy is the best way of going about it: who is seriously planning on attending WORLD DIP CON this year from North America? (I remember what happened in 1992 - there was a list of people who said they were going, but one by one they dropped out for whatever reasons, mainly to do with the outrageous cost of a plane ticket to Australia for that period of time, and I was the only North American there.)

Deluxe Diplomacy:

(PAUL KENNY) Doug, you are a genius! John C. was also right. Monarch Avalon has stock traded on the NASDAQ. Well, when the investors of the penny stocks hit 100% profit, they will all sell, causing Monarch Avalon stock to plummet. Then when it bottoms out, (at what, 1 1/4?) **we buy its stock.** The postal hobby should pool all its PDORA money, and convention money, etc. and buy enough stock till we take over Monarch Avalon. Then we can fix the Deluxe Dip set because **we run the show!**

{I think you should go lie down...}

Dip Players versus Role Players:

(BRAD WILSON) I suggest more of us start to adapt Stephen Glasgow's intelligent approach to RPGs and Dipdom else we miss opportunities for growth. I think Stephen's experience shows us that we can cross-pollinate and achieve results IF we keep an open mind and approach RPGers in a respectful way. Of course if we assume that all RPGers are wacko, then we won't get anywhere. Remember -- every new hobby member helps fill games, subsidize zines, and increases our visibility. New members beget new members.

(MICHAEL LOWREY) One little point is that Dipdom is not alone in seeing Role Players as a major source of new blood. Over the past two years I've gotten into historical miniatures and occasionally see a publication called The Courier. A recent issue featured an article on how you could attract more role players into HM by running simple games/rules sets like DBA with human vs. Orc armies, say.

Fondly Remembered Zines:

(DAVID HOOD) Let me add in my two cents worth here. The one I remember as a great players zine was The Diplomat published up through 1987. Three-weekly, regular, and well-GMed, it was a great place to play. As far as reading zines go, Francois Cuerrier's Passchendele was probably the best. His articles were always thought-provoking, and there was good Dip-related material as well.

Other great zines? Moire had a good run, though short, as did The Scribblerist. Cathy's Ramblings was great for chat **and** games.

Chris Carrier:

(BRAD WILSON) Hmmm, Doug, 'boring' and 'pointless' this topic may

be but it was the topic that got the single biggest response in terms of space AND number of responses in #11. It's the usual case -- everyone deplores 'feuding', etc., and at the same time everyone's frothing at the mouth to contribute. 'Judge me by my actions, not by my words', or something like that, eh?

My comments will be brief:

It's regrettable that, in this case, a veteran and respected hobbyist (Fred Davis) abandons his usual thoughtful approach to Dip issues because of his personal animosity towards Robert Sacks. Fred manages to give the impression that I am the 'feuder' here, not Carrier, but let's look at the facts: I participate in all phases of the hobby and have tried for years to improve the hobby, add new members, and enjoy the play of Dip. I play, publish, GM, run games at Cons, host biweekly cons at my place here, etc., etc. All Carrier does is attack people in the most vicious and hostile manner possible. He has no interest in playing, pubbing (except his hatemongering), GMing, cons, etc., etc. He contributes nothing positive to the hobby, nothing at all except hate and lies. Yet because his attacks (for now) are concentrated on Robert Sacks Carrier's excused and those who object to Carrier's hate campaign are criticized as 'feuders'. Carrier's methods will, if successful with Sacks, will be directed then at a new target, and the hobby will continue to suffer. It's a shame Fred's personal animus towards Sacks prevents him from seeing Carrier as the hatemonger he is. I'm sure that if Carrier was accosting a friend of Fred's he'd see it differently, but I hope no one else has to undergo Carrier's harassment, even to prove me correct. Those not so blinded see Carrier for what he is -- a hater and slanderer. Even if you don't like Sacks or myself, remember Dietrich Bonhoffer's truism: 'When they (Nazis) came for the Jews, I said nothing. I was not Jewish. When they came for the Gypsies, I said nothing, I was not Gypsy. When they came for the Catholics, I said nothing, I was not Catholic....When they came for me, there was no one left to speak up for me.' Don't let Carrier's hate come to anyone else as it has, regrettably, to Conrad von Metzke. To loathe Carrier isn't necessarily to endorse Sacks, von Metzke, or any of his victims: it's to stand for decency versus hate. (By the way, Conrad, Tretick/Oaklyn wasn't a bowl of cherries, either, in my encounters with him.)

As for Michael Hopcroft, I attempted to work with him on a hobby project at the same time of the 'suicide' charges, and let's not dance around the issue: at the time he was totally mentally unstable, erratic, and ill. Taking his word at the time on any matter would have been irresponsible at best. Exploiting this sad case of mental illness as a stick to attack anyone with perhaps tells us more about the morals and ethics of those who use him than those they attack.

I sympathize with Conrad's point of ignoring people and avoiding feuds, but I think if Carrier is allowed to run unchecked then a hell of a lot of people will leave the hobby. Unfortunately it's all too clear that few people see the threat this vicious hater represents. When you do, it will be too late. Frankly I wish Doug wouldn't print his letters, but that's Doug's choice.

Quality of Dip Play:

(JOHN CARUSO) In the Stone Age (1960's), the players all knew each other. They weren't better players, only more cliquish. In the Bronze Age (1970's) play improved and so did the number of quality players. The Golden Age (1980's) saw quality of play peak. Gone were the Stone Age cliques and Bronze Age novices. This is where all the true quality players came to the surface. Now we're in the Electronic Age, where PBM play is back to cliques and the PBEM games have more drop outs than finishers.

(BRAD WILSON) Fred's points are well-taken. The `instant' problem is one I had not thought of and I'd think it's a key factor. Perhaps the time has come for the two-week and even one-week games that had a vogue in the 1980-84 period. Problem here is the USP'S's increasingly erratic delivery which would make even a two-week game problematical at best.

As for press, Fred is right, and I suspect press is a casualty of the TurboFreak `Games Only!' attitude. Many GMs don't encourage press -- some actively discourage it -- and it's hard to find really good press games. The Abyssinian Prince has some, but, then, TAP is full of old-timers. Paul Bolduc's Boris the Spider has some fine press and Bolduc himself is a superb press writer. VERTIGO has had some decent press games (because it has press `Grand Masters' like Bolduc, Steve Courtemanche, etc.) but overall it's rare. (Worth noting is the loss of Kathy's Korner, a press zine supreme) It's sad, too. Press makes a game so much more fun.

Pontevedria:

(JOHN CARUSO) Haven't seen a new one in months. I would like to see what Andrew has done.

{So send him 50 cents or an SASE and 25 cents!}

(BRAD WILSON) I think Andy's done a fine job with this publication. I think the format is excellent and I find the cross-reference (which Robert Sacks did in the old Known Game Openings) most useful.

The catch here is getting it in the hands of people who can use it. I think Phil Reynolds' idea of advertising it in the Opponents' Wanted section of Avalon Hill's The General is fantastic; it costs 50 cents an issue to do so -- \$3 a year -- and that is well worth doing! Here's something PDORA should (does?) subsidize! Similar ads in other wargaming mags would be a good idea (maybe Herb Barents could supply the addresses). Also, many game stores have bulletin boards and would post a flyer advertising Pontevedria. When we advertise (as mentioned above) in Mensa, Games, convention booklets, etc., Pont should be pitched. Any game con where Dip is played should have Ponts around to hand out (at AtlantiCon I have a PBM info table with ZRs, Ponts, sample zines, Masters of Deceits, etc., and all Dip GMs should do so. I assume Pont goes out with all novice packet requests? When and/if Doug does a new census maybe Pont could be mailed en masse to the list (with PDORA funding)?

Virtual Diplomacy:

(JOHN CARUSO) Why not? As long as all the players in each game have the same ability to communicate with each other and play under the same rules, it should be allowed.

For Next Time:

- 1) (from Paul Kenny) Can you list both (a) all the people you brought into the hobby? (b) how many people are still playing or active?
- 2) (from Paul Kenny) Should there be a Gamer's Guide to Novices for veterans who are too impatient with the new recruits' mistakes?
- 3) (from Brad Wilson) To echo Fred Davis, what's up with the game box flier? Anyone getting any response from it?
- 4) (from Brad Wilson) Why do you or don't you support the Runestone Poll?
- 5) Has 1993 been one of the deadest years in the hobby in some time, or is it just me?

Next Foolhardy Deadline - June 19, 1994

People's Diplomacy Organization Relief Auction

Douglas Kent 54 West Cherry St, #211 Rahway, NJ 07065

3-22-94

Greetings!

It's that time of year again - time for the PDORA to try and raise money to help fund hobby services. Last year we raised over \$560, which was damn good. I'd like us all to pull together and make this year's auction even **more** of a success!

It's **you** the hobbyist who makes the auction a success. So please, if you're a publisher, plug the auction. If you have something you'd like to auction off to help raise money, by all means **now** is the time to contact me. What I need at this time is the information on the items you wish to auction, **not** the items themselves - those should be sent to the successful bidders later on. You may give me a short description to include, and minimum bid and any postage costs. All items provided for auction will be listed in a booklet which will be mailed out around the end of May, so if you are able to donate something please let me know as soon as possible. If you do not receive a copy of the auction booklet by mid-June, they may be obtained from me for a SASE or simply by a request for one. No request will be refused.

The kinds of items you may offer for auction may include but are not limited to: subscriptions to zines, game openings, games, horoscopes, coins, stamps, old zines, Dipdom memorabilia, photographs, books, CD's and tapes, or any number of other items whether related to Dipdom or not.

If you have a hobby service that you'd like to submit a funding request to PDORA for, by all means do so. All you need to do is let me know what the service is, what it does, and how much money you are requesting. If I need further information about your request I'll be in touch. All funding requests will be passed on to the Financial Committee for consideration, after the auction has ended and the bids collected. If you have any questions about the auction, donating items, requesting funds, or anything else, please let me know.

Thank you for your help in making the PDORA a success.