

Foolhardy - #2

Just \$1 An Issue!

Painful Rectal Itch 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**. 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. I'm a bit more open to trading than I was when I published Issue #1 (especially with foreign zines), but I can't afford to have the open trade policy that Dick and Julie Martin used to have with House of Lords.

Well, as you probably noticed, we've changed the name! Due to numerous requests (many of them listed below in the letters section), the wife and I decided we should bow to public opinion and go with something more acceptable. Mara is the one who came up with Foolhardy, and like a good toady I deferred to her decision. Foolhardy fits both me and the zine pretty well, I think. Either way, I'm sure most of you will like the name better than PRI.

Response to the first issue was very positive (except for the name!), especially given how dated the letters from PRI #1 were. Really, the letters were included to give unfamiliar readers an idea of what went on in HoL, so they'd have a grasp on what I hope to accomplish with Foolhardy. If I hadn't included the letters, issue 1 would have been nothing more than a one-page announcement - pretty boring stuff at that. Overall, I probably sent out over 100 samples of issue 1, and I'll be sending some samples of the next few issues to other hobby members. The more readers this zine has, the more diverse the discussions will be.

As some of you may have anticipated, this issue has a lot of space devoted to the PDORA/Zine Register controversy of the past few months. Letters from people on both "sides" of the issue are printed here, unedited. This includes those involved in the controversy, and outside neutral parties. All in all, a good mix of opinions. Obviously, this is **not** the only topic covered in this issue, and we've got a good range of letters and ideas.

This is probably a good spot to address the editorial policy I'll be following in this zine. I will **not** print any comments listed "Not For Print" under **any** circumstances. Although I am breaking up your letters by topic, I do not edit the content of your letters. If you want to make sure I break up your letters in an agreeable fashion, feel free to separate your thoughts beforehand by topic (for example, list your comments under "Custodians:", "PDORA/ZR", etc.). I should also point out that I will **not** be responding to all the letters, just to those that "grab" me. I prefer that you, the reader, respond with **your** thoughts. After all, this isn't meant to be a zine filled with letters directed to me, but rather an open forum for discussion among **all** of **you**!

Deadline for Foolhardy #3 Will Be August 17, 1992

Letters in this issue: Kevin Brown, Larry Peery, Fred Davis, John Caruso, Jim Meinel, Bruce Linsey, Rex Martin, W. Andrew York, John Schultz, Andy Lischett, Peter Sullivan, Stephen Dorneman, Robert Acheson, David Hood, Wallace Nicoll, Phil Reynolds, James Nelson, Eric Brosius, Jack McHugh, Per Westling.

The Concept:

(LARRY PEERY) I do think the hobby needs a HoL type of zine, but if this is supposed to be it I don't think you should have filled it with left over dish water from that zine. I do wish it well, but I hope you don't fill it with pages of material devoted to your hobby feuds. If it is going to work you've got to make it an impartial forum for the whole hobby, otherwise it just becomes another cliquish rag.

{I'm going to try to do just that. Obviously, I have opinions on a lot of the topics to be discussed here, especially those that you refer to as my "hobby feuds", but I'm going to do my best not to club people over the head with them. It won't be easy at times, but I'll let you and the readers be the judge of whether I succeed or fail.}

(KEVIN BROWN) Am I gonna be in trouble if I call this House of Itch? All these dated letters leave me at a loss for things to say. Well, almost... (Would it be better to call it Painful Rectal Lords?)

(PHIL REYNOLDS) Glad to see you're doing PRI. You might recall that I had wanted to do Ishkibibble in the same vein, but undertook other commitments (i.e., school and **finally** getting a degree!). I miss House of Lords, as do many hobbyists, and think we can use a central forum for hobby discussion. Also, HoL was highly entertaining, as was, to some degree, a lot of the feuding which fizzled out in the late 80's. Ah, those were the days...I don't like a lot of negativism and strife to arise in our hobby, but let's face it - as with times of war in real life, sometimes the best and most imaginative work is done under intense and difficult (and hostile) circumstances. However, I certainly don't want to see people hurt by feuding. I hope PRI will spice up the hobby without causing a bleeding ulcer or massive head trauma! Yuk!

(REX MARTIN) Although I do tend to think the title lacking in propriety (and God knows, our hobby already catches enough flak from the uninitiated masses without further muddying their minds - no matter the "humor" involved), I am pleased to see a successor to HoL. I thought that zine quite informative, and it

served nicely to keep me in touch with the doings and concerns of the Dip fans. Although I did not take a very active part in much of the conversation, I did read virtually every page of every issue. I would hope that you can maintain the tone, and utility, that Dick Martin established. Any mature hobby needs a vehicle where its scattered members can trade comments and quips on common concerns. Best of luck on your PRI.

(PHIL REYNOLDS) Glad to see PRI in the works. As you might recall, I had wanted to do a House of Lords-like zine, but with going back to school, I knew I'd be dumb to try and manage it. However, I think it funny that you call PRI a "supposedly neutral forum" when stating you will restrict your side of the PDORA/ZR debate to be aired there only. As one of the two antagonists in this saga, your new zine will not have the appearance of neutrality, as hard as you might try. Even if you refrained from commentary after each letter as most pubbers do, there'd be a question of what letters you did/didn't print, etc. Not a big deal, mind you, but obvious nonetheless.

{See my comments on the front page. This was my planned editorial policy, but you correctly point out that I didn't talk about this in issue #1.}

(JOHN CARUSO) I think this discussion zine should be a place where we can all kick dirt on Jack McHugh. After all, according to Stan Johnson, "Jack" is a Dipdom issue.

The Name:

(JIM MEINEL) What a horrible name for a self-proclaimed successor to HoL.

(LARRY PEERY) I do have a sense of humor, but no I don't like the title.

(W. ANDREW YORK) I'm not all that thrilled with the title.

(ANDY LISCHETT) I think Painful Rectal Itch is an awful title, and I do have a sense of humor.

(DAVID HOOD) I love the idea of having a HoL-type zine, but PLEASE change the name. I want to publicize the thing out the wazoo, but I hesitate to print that in DW. It's not the most inclusionary name for a zine - sounds more like a gameflyer between 7 old friends/enemies than a discussion zine. It's your business, but I think you would have more success under a different banner.

(JAMES NELSON) Many thanks for sending me a copy of Painful Rectal Itch #1, even if it is the worst zine name I have ever seen!

My first input is please change the name! Not that I find it offensive or obnoxious, it's just that I don't find it particularly appealing. But it is your decision.

{Are you readers seeing a trend here?}

(JOHN CARUSO) Actually - your choice of zine name sucks. You should have called it either Hemorrhoids or Pain in the Ass (PITA for short).

Burnout:

(LARRY PEERY) You are doing too much, no doubt about it, but who am I to talk? I suggest you create one new zine, call it The Umbrellas of Rahway, set a maximum number of pages you think you can handle, cut that number by half, and put all your zines, games, projects, etc. into that new zine.

(JOHN SCHULTZ) I don't see how you do so much and still have a "real" life. Would you lease me some of your adrenalin?

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) I definitely agree that combining YZOZ with PRI would be an excellent idea. It would help cut down on your hobby (over)load without depriving us of your (and Jack's) reviews.

{I've discussed this with Jack, and at this point we don't see a union of Your Zine of Zines and Foolhardy to be possible. YZOZ's schedule rests pretty much on Jack - when he gets busy the thing doesn't come out. I prefer to keep Foolhardy on my own tighter schedule. We'll keep the subject open, but right for now it won't be

happening.}

(ROBERT ACHESON) I'm one of those who believe that you are overextending yourself.

(WALLACE NICOLL) I am in the process of reducing my hobby commitments - folding Prisoners of War following co/sub editor Doug Rowling's emigration to Australia, and running the remaining games to conclusion in a small circulation effort called Under the Wire.

Cutting back on the editorship means I may play another game or two, or even get back into writing to the editors of zines I do see. As an editor I found I had little enthusiasm, or time, to write in response to comments in other zines. That may be coming back. Be warned!

Computers:

(JIM MEINEL) If Mara wants my future submissions on disk, let me know. I use Wordperfect 5.1 on either sized disk.

{Sure. You, or anyone else, can feel free to submit letters on 5 1/4" disk in WP 5.0 or 5.1 format. You can also send me letters on CompuServe - my ID # is 73567,1414. Just make sure any letters you send me through CompuServe make clear that the letter is intended for Foolhardy. However you want to do it is fine.}

(PETER SULLIVAN) As far as I'm aware, PBEM is only really active in Britain amongst the student community - but I suspect that this is mainly because only colleges tend to have e-mail links, whereas in the U.S. most employers will have e-mail links to the outside world too. Now, if you're talking fax machines, every business seems to have one.

(ROBERT ACHESON) Boring.

Custodians:

(KEVIN BROWN) I guess I should feel bad now. I try to play a little devil's advocate and suddenly I'm

responsible for HoL folding. Geez, I know that the BNC and MNC are useful. I don't even have a problem with ratings masters. After all, this is a competitive hobby. Also, I agree that Bruce would have raked poor Dick over the coals if he had tried a silly joke like my Runestone ballots from two years ago. He might even have done the same to me if he'd been the pollster when I did it, which is why I waited until he was gone to do it. I'd actually had the idea the year before. Oh, and you'll be pleased to know that in two years as the United Number Custodian, Lawfully Entitled (UNCLE) and Miller Number Custodian Without Benefit of Covenant I have yet to issue a single number or get a request for one. How's that for service?

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) Is Gary Behnen still the BNC? I've got a gamestart from last year that's still waiting for a Boardman number. I hope the delay isn't due to the fact that I sent in my request for a number without the "suggested" donation of cash. I also thought I still had a few issues of Everything left to go on my subscription (back from the Don Williams days), but I've only received one issue from Gary. Is it just me, or is this a common problem? I'm just curious, as I really don't care whether my zine's games go down in Dip history or not, as long as the players enjoy them.

{Yes, Gary is till BNC. He's announced a new policy of only issuing numbers every two months or so. As for your sub to Everything, Gary has so far produced three issues, #83 (January - December 1990), #84 (January 1991 - May 1991), and #85 (June - December 1991). That last issue was sent out in mid-May of this year, so if you didn't get a copy contact Gary right away.}

(JOHN CARUSO) I'd like to reprimand Jack [McHugh] for claiming the BNC only sends out "100 postcards" for new game numbers. Everyone knows its at least 110 postcards plus a couple of overseas letters.

(ROBERT ACHESON) I do want to talk about one of the rules that can get a postal game declared irregular. I think that the `rule' about no more than two players from the same telephone locale is outdated and it's time to change it. Gary, you're the BNC and will probably read this. What about it?

{I concur. I never quite understood the logic behind the rule, anyway. With my long-distance plan, it's cheaper for me to call a player out of my area code than one in the same area code as myself, so I'm less likely to conduct phone diplomacy with someone in my area code. In addition, using area codes as a criteria is completely arbitrary. I am within 5 minutes drive of people not in my area code, but for some people they'd have to drive 3 hours to get out of their area code. It all depends on where you live. Either the rule should be completely dropped, or it should be amended to allow more players in the same area code.}

(PER WESTLING) Could you drop the MNC/MNC(uc) stuff from your zeen? Who needs an MNC/MNC(uc) anyway?

{Actually, I think the MNC serves a useful purpose. Even if you don't think distributing the numbers is especially important, the MNC is the only person (besides the GM) who knows the players in a Gunboat game. When a zine folds, we all know sometimes the GM is less than forthcoming with Orphan information, so without the MNC it's next to impossible to get the game rehoused.}

Dipcon:

(PETER SULLIVAN) On World Dip Con, I understand that there is to be a big "summit conference" at World Dip Con IV to draw up some kind of charter. By then, everyone should have enough idea of what a WDC charter should be. How this charter is then ratified I don't know - I think I'd prefer it being `adopted' by hobby meetings at various cons to a mail ballot, which (as Don Del Grande points out) is even more open to abuse.

Personally, I do not think the U.S. Dipcon charter is necessarily the ideal model, at least when it comes to site selection. Hopefully, the host region's hobby will normally be able to agree on a single candidate to run WDC. But if there has to be a vote, voting at the previous WDC is pointless, as virtually none of them will be attending the next one wherever it's held. My head says a Board of Trustees (one from each zone) to pick 'em, but my heart says this is

disgustingly elitist.

Lack of New Zines:

(DAVID HOOD) One topic I want to discuss is the folds/dearth of new zines. I don't know if this is really that different from 2-3 years ago, but it sure feels worse. I think the problem is lack of new blood. This has led, eventually, to a lack of new publishers. And if there are no new publishers, then there are fewer people to be moving towards editorship of a big chat zine, the small number of which everyone seems to be talking about nowadays.

How do we fix the new blood problem? I think we need to focus on FTF events; particularly two thoughts come to mind. (1) We need more Diplomacy tournaments around the country. Not just house cons, but actually tournaments. Correctly publicized, this can bring in new folks by advertising at game stores, etc. Also, it's a good way to bring your friends into the Dip scene.

(2) We need to do a better job of promoting the postal hobby at big events from Origins to Atlanticon to all those StrategiCons and so forth in CA. I mean, let's have a one-page info flyer to give out to everyone at the tournament. Samples of zines will not bring in people because much of a Dipzine is gibberish to the newcomer without some guidance. Contrary to what Brad Wilson says, I am a big believer in Dip events such as this - just not for DipCon.

*{A part of the problem, in my opinion, is the attitude a lot of "powerful" hobby members have towards smaller, warehouse zines. If I was going to start publishing now, I'd be **scared** if my plan was to run two or three games of Dip and nothing else. Too many people pan those type of zines these days, without realizing that most of today's larger and more popular zines started that way!}*

*Actually, it isn't so much that this attitude is held by a lot of people, but more that people who agree with it like to **say** that everyone agrees with them.*

I would bet that more than a few Dipsters have thought about starting a zine, but decided against it because they wouldn't be able to "compete" with zines like Northern Flame, Perelandra, Maniac's Paradise,

*or Upstart. Maybe they worry that they'd be two weeks late once out of every four issues, and that people would then drive them out of the hobby. Maybe they can't handle publishing a large 30+ page zine, but have been programmed to believe that all smaller zines are insignificant and meaningless. Maybe they don't have a laser printer, and feel that a typewritten or dot-matrix zine is below hobby standards. Do these potential publishers **agree** with these ideas, or have they been led to believe that they are the opinions of the hobby at large, and that to go against the public opinion would result in certain failure? To be fair, some publishers aren't intimidated - Richard Weiss' new zine Zero Sum looks like a winner, but there's nothing graphically fancy about it. Maybe I'm just over-reacting?*

*Another thought that just crossed my mind: would it be fair to correlate the lack of new zines with the greatly reduced number of popular **subzines** around the hobby? A good number of today's popular zines started as subzines, didn't they? Boob Report/Abb. Prince and Upstart, are two good examples. Plus, a number of today's zine publishers got their start doing subzines, then later went on to do a separate zine by themselves. That was the advice pubbers used to give to people who asked about doing a zine - "try running a game or two in a subzine first, to see if you can handle it or not". I seldom hear that advice anymore. What is so different now? Is the "**Turbofreak**" mentality somehow against subzines, or is this a passing phase? By the way, when I say subzine I mean a subzine that actually runs a game or two. A lot of zines still have one (or more) **columns** from outside writers. Or, am I wrong in even distinguishing between the two in this discussion?}*

Old Dirty Laundry:

(JAMES NELSON) Whilst it was interesting (to say the least) to read comments which are several years old the topics of conversation have gone cold, if not stale in the past few years. Unless people are careful they will be sliding back down the board to square one, requiring us all to go over the same ground again. Going down snakes on a Snakes and Ladders board never was a good tactic.

PDORA:

(KEVIN BROWN) I have a suggestion for the PDORA (although I'd be surprised if I'm the first to have suggested it). Why not take the carry-over money and put it in a 12-month CD or something to earn a little interest for the hobby? It wouldn't earn a whole lot, but every little bit counts, right? Since the money is only allocated once per year, it would only make sense to get some use from it during the dormant times in between auctions.

*{While this idea has some merit, I'm just not sure if it's more trouble than it's worth. Right now we've got a PDORA balance of like \$170. I don't **think** you can buy a CD for such a small amount, but let's just say for the sake of argument that we can put it in a money market account instead. At around 6% interest, we could earn maybe \$10 interest a year. However, that \$10 would have to be tied to a Social Security number (in this case, mine). I'd have to declare that interest on my 1040 return, and pay taxes on it. Plus, right now I have the funds co-mingled with my checking account. If I put it into a money market account I'll have to co-mingle that, too, so then we'd have to compute how much of the interest earned is due PDORA, based on how much money is in the account, when I add or subtract PDORA funds from the account, and when I add or subtract personal funds. All that work **can't** be worth the \$10 before taxes that the interest would bring in, can it?}*

Polls & Awards:

(FRED DAVIS) There is one point I want to cover in the material you've printed here. I realize that most of these letters, and Julie's comments, are over one year old, so it's mostly academic, but there's one point where Mistress Julie has questioned my integrity, so I feel I need to reply.

On page 12, Julie comments about me at the end of an excellent letter by Eric Brosius: "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 zines and killed me in the preference matrix."

Well, I've just looked it up, and see that I gave

LoH a "5" on the 1991 Runestone Poll. Indeed, with two exceptions, I've never given any zine a rating lower than "2" in the past ten years, and I've never given any zine a "0". I also thought that I'd given Julie's farewell issue of LoH a fairly good review in Bush. Certainly, it was far superior to the earlier LoH's written by Sacks. My rating of "5" was based on her writing and typographical efforts, and totally disregarded the ridiculous concept of there being an MNC "Under the Covenant." As I've said so many times before, "I have no knowledge of the appearance of any burning bush on Upper Manhattan Island."

(KEVIN BROWN) Just to give you an idea how dated some of these letters are, I read that Jay Leno story that Eric Brosius submitted to Reader's Digest a couple of days ago.

(ROBERT ACHESON) Boring (Go Garret go, win and be happy!)

(WALLACE NICOLL) Can't remember if I responded to Dick/Julie's comments. Don't think I did. These were their comments in response to my finding a LoH more interesting than previous ones.

Doug [Rowling] and I seemed to get regular mailings from Sacks, and since I wasn't interested in playing Dip in the US, found his Known Game Openings (he published that didn't he?) and immediately pitched them.

Possibly they were pitched before opening, and maybe these were LoH instead. As I don't have any examples left, I can't be sure.

I don't think I pitched stuff because of Sack's stance on hobby issues, or whatever. It was more that what I'd seen with his name on, proved to be uninteresting for me.

Of course, if a zine doesn't have sufficient character or style of it's own, or looks very similar to another, and you don't actively subscribe or it comes as part of an "all for all" trade deal, it could easily be overlooked, or forgotten about.

I traded PoW! with Dick for HoL. If he decides to include me on other mailing lists I'll treat what I receive in the mail, unsolicited/unexpected, just like all

the other junk mail I get. If something jumps out at me when I rip open the envelope then I'll read it. If it doesn't it will hit the trash can.

(JOHN CARUSO) I think all polls are a joke and rigged. Take the Marco Poll. My two zines didn't even make the list, and one zine in particular, Suicide Squeeze - my baseball league zine, is by far the most outstanding zine in America and should have finished #1. Yet it wasn't even on the list. I wonder if someone who received no PDORA money went on a negative writing campaign to keep SS down. Some unnamed person told me he received negative comments from another unnamed Brooklynite person, and he changed his ballot and deleted SS from the #1 spot and from the entire ballot. Rigged! Fix! Farce! I am a bit TIC!

(JACK MCHUGH) I was bitching to Brad Wilson, man about the hobby and a new member of the Hobby Awards nominating committee, about what's wrong with the Hobby Awards the other day. He whined back at me that I should write about it instead of bitching to him. So here it is.

First of all, people on the committee should not be allowed to nominate themselves nor should they be eligible to be nominated. (Which is not to say they shouldn't be able to nominate others; they should but they just shouldn't be able to nominate themselves.) I can't take any award seriously when two people on the ballot (Gary Behnen and Garret Schenck) are also on the nominating committee. Do they deserve to be there? Certainly. I wouldn't fault anyone for voting for Gary's play or Garret's writing, both do what they where nominated for quite well. (Yes, an open compliment to Garret, I can't quite believe it either.) But that's not the point. It just doesn't look quite kosher to me. If you want to win an award, fine, but stay off the committee.

Second, could we not allow anyone to win two years in a row (or make it more difficult, count their votes at half value or something)? I think we're getting a "Gold Glove" effect here. As with baseball's Gold Glove, people are winning based simply on their reputation and the fact that they won last year.

There are some people who deserve to win year after year but what's the point? We all know Melinda

Holley will win the "Quantity Participation Award" every year. She certainly deserves the award every year but can't we give her some kind of "lifetime achievement award" and move on? Either eliminate the award or rephrase it so someone else can win. What's the point of giving it to the same person year after year?

I would also eliminate awards for doing things outside the hobby. I don't want to see anymore articles from Avalon Hill's The General on the ballot again. It's just not fair. The General is not a hobby publication but a professional publication. Only articles in amateur publications--e.g. not for profit, done from the home, etc., etc.--should be allowed to be nominated.

Third, as Ron Cameron did this year when he stepped down after three years, can't we have some sort of term limitations on who is on the nominating committee? Do we have to have the same old people nominating the same old people year after year? I am not advocating mass changes **every** year but how about turning over the whole staff every 3 or 4 years, with perhaps staggered terms. For example, have nine people on for three year terms with three being replaced--through appointment by the chair, a committee vote or an open hobby vote--every year. I'd prefer the last or an open hobby vote for the chair and then the chair appointing people, but any of these would be fine with me.

It would guarantee a certain amount of new blood in the nominating process every year. I would also allow people to serve multiple terms, just not consecutively. Thus a person must be off the committee for at least one year before being re-elected.

Finally, I would eliminate all the plaques, save the one for hobby achievement/service. This would save some money and elevate the service award higher than the rest, which is as it should be. The other three are all for doing ego boosting things for yourself--writing, playing and participating--the hobby achievement award is for serving the greater hobby good and I believe that is the only thing worth more than a certificate. Note also that only the hobby achievement award addresses the toughest hobby activity and the one activity without which there would be no hobby: publishing.

I doubt this will get any response since it is not

a "feudish" type thing. Despite all the mass moaning about feuding when you write something constructive like this it tends to generate a vast hobby-wide yawn and that's about it. Meanwhile you write a feud letter slamming somebody and everyone has to put their two cents in. If I am wrong--and I hope I am--prove it. Either write about the issues I've raised somewhere, in your own zine, or to Doug for this zine and prove me wrong.

Ratings & Scoring Systems:

(KEVIN BROWN) I really liked Larry Cronin's "Armistice" idea that was in Diplomacy World #65. The only problem is that it leaves open the question of how to divide up a time-limit game at a con.

(PETER SULLIVAN) As tournament director of Manorcon, I am in favor of a "semi-secret" scoring system, with the actual details of the system not revealed, but the general principles behind it made clear. Thus, at Manorcon, the actual scoring system is not given, but players are told "Your best single result counts. A win is best, followed by a draw, followed by any other result. Draws are tie-broken by 'closeness to a win,' so try to maximize your own supply center count whilst keeping everyone else as low as possible ('Divide and Rule')." This allows players to know what they're meant to do (e.g. no playing for 2nd place), without having them worry about every last dang decimal point, when they're supposed to be playing Diplomacy.

(PER WESTLING) To Don Del Grande: If one believes a 10 center survival to be better than a 9 then a 19 center win is better than an 18. This should only matter if you have to tie-break two players with a win, as a win should be better than any number of draws.

To Jeff McKee: I agree with you that supply center count doesn't matter - in games with no forced time limits; but as this isn't the case in most tournaments the "grab em" system of counting supply centers works better. Or how would you decide the winner in games ending in 1906/1907 like in tournaments held in some places in Europe?

Turbofreakism:

(KEVIN BROWN) Shouldn't that be Turbophreakiness? Somehow I never thought we'd get to this point, with people stripping down zines as much as possible and publishers that would rather fold than be a couple of days late. I think the hobby as a whole could stand to relax a bit, everyone seems so uptight.

The Future:

(KEVIN BROWN) A Faxzine is a very real possibility. I was looking seriously at something like that during the last Canadian Postal Strike. Luckily the strike ended before it became necessary.

(PETER SULLIVAN) No fax zeens yet, but I believe some games have been run via fax on flyer.

(PER WESTLING) PBEM is nice if you want to play games but not so to run a hobby. I miss the hardcopy zeens with their illustrations, maps and personal feel when I read electronic zeens like EP. So that part of the hobby needs some kind of standardization to send pictures (like maps or art) before I'll regard it as a hobby suitable for zeens.

Haven't seen any faxzeens yet, only a completed game of Regular Diplomacy with weekly deadlines. I wouldn't mind a faxzeen but I think it would be too expensive. No, faxes are better suited for running a game with one or two pages of results each season.

{A Faxzine sounds like an interesting idea. How would the players negotiate, by fax as well? I suppose it would be similar to playing on CompuServe, except that the faxzine would be able to have maps, graphics, and other stuff that an ASCII file can't have. I, too, miss the personal feel and graphics when I read PBEM "zines", which is why I remain active in both parts of the hobby.}

PDORA/Zine Register:

(BRUCE LINSEY) Since I don't receive ZR, I was unaware of what was going on. I'm not taking sides (I'm too far out of the hobby for that these days), but I do think you did well to quote Garret directly and respond to what he said. Try not to let this develop into a feud, though. It isn't worth it - trust me.

(ERIC BROSIUS) I publish Roar of the Crowd each year. It costs me \$3 for duplicating and \$2 for mailing (approximately. Maybe a bit less for the mailing.) There are also some expenses related to sending out the ballots. RotC is 50 sheets of paper printed on both sides. Garret could copy the Zine Register for 96 cents at my local Staples store. Of course, the paper might be too white.

I think the real issue is this: the Zine Register/NAZB custodian should be someone who considers it a real treat to receive (almost) every issue of every zine that is published in the hobby. This **has** to be considered as an offset to the cost of mailing ZRs to publishers.

Let's consider my zine, Ark. I send Garret 17 issues a year; cover price \$8.50. He sends me two ZR's; cover price \$5.00. So he comes out ahead **if** he is actually interested in getting my zine. But why would he be? My zine is a small specialty zine that has little to offer if you aren't interested in the games I'm running. So the key issue if the ZR custodian is going to be happy is that he find something of value in most if not all of the zines he gets.

I have a suggestion re funding of the Zine Register. If the PDORA would offer to make up any loss the ZR publisher suffers **on zines mailed to brand-new players**, I think it would be the proper level of support.

{The problem with that idea is that the PDORA has a finite amount of money to distribute. An open-ended request like that could take up more money than PDORA has available. The committee makes its decision on each request based on what is available and on how much money in total has been requested. I imagine that committee members balance each request against the others, so that they don't approve more money than the PDORA has that year. It's a nice thought, but unworkable.}

(KEVIN BROWN) While I appreciate the attempt to bring back the "golden years" of the big mid-80's feuds (ah, those were the good old days), I truly believe that the "hobby at large" doesn't give a red rat's ass whether the PDORA gave money to the Zine Register. I am also relatively sure that very few hobbyists are interested in what the head of the PDORA thinks of the ZR or vice versa. I've been in the hobby for a long while, and I've seen personal attacks that were much more vicious made over much smaller issues. I thought that the hobby had put all of that behind us. That said, I will now engage in an old fart conceit and divide into two responses (one for each of you).

Garret: You should already know this, but it's not your place to decide what "the sort of thing that PDORA was established to provide for" is. They have a committee for that, and they made the decision they thought best. You may disagree with it, but in the end it's their decision, not yours. On the other hand, your talk of building a "more viable hobby" is undermined by your attack on the PDORA. In-fighting amongst the hobby "services" can only serve to divide and diminish the hobby. If you don't want to support the PDORA that's fine, but that's no excuse for tearing into a group that does in fact do a lot of good for the hobby.

Doug: Your "Open Response", if it is indeed the position of the PDORA, pretty well validates Garret's assertion that his funding was denied for hobby-political reasons. Instead of saying "The committee decided to fund those projects it deemed worthy. Mr. Schenck's whining should be dismissed as sour grapes", you elected to make thinly veiled attacks on Garret and the ZR. That paints the PDORA being as bad (possibly even worse) than you're making the ZR out to be. You decry the ZR for having "snotty remarks", yet you call Garret "piggish". You say the ZR contains "inaccurate data", yet you provide purely speculative "theories" as to why Garret's funding was refused. I won't even go into the "Decidedly negative tone." Like I told Garret, feuding between hobby "services" accomplishes nothing. If the PDORA doesn't fund the ZR that's fine, but that's no excuse for tearing into something that does in fact do a lot of good for the hobby.

Both of you: I don't expect the ZR and the PDORA to "kiss and make up". I do hope, however, that you will quit attacking each other before this dispute boils over into a big, hobby rending feud. It's far more likely that you'll both ignore me and keep sniping away at each other until you really do start scaring off the novices.

(JOHN SCHULTZ) Received the ZR flyer and your response within a few days of each other. I see Garret's point but I think he was a "little" hysterical in it's presentation. I see your point but your response, I thought, was over-reactive with a retaliatory feel. I'm not in a position to do much but I'll continue to support both PDORA and ZR in my own small way. My point? I hope you guys bury this spat thing quick.

(JIM MEINEL) I received in the mail both Garret's comments in the latest Zine Register flyer about his lack of funding from the PDORA, and your response. It appears to me that both sides of the issue have merits; I'd like to throw in my two cents worth.

Looking at the PDORA's allocation of funds for this year, it is hard for me to miss some sort of bias working here. Nine services applied for funding. Using strictly my own opinion, these can be broken into a couple categories; the one's I see as pretty essential and other's that aren't so vital. Vital: BNC, Orphan Service, Pontevedria, Zine Register, MNC. Other: NAVB, Hobby Awards, MNC(uc), Emergency Account. Now let's look at what the Committee gave my self-proclaimed "vital" services: BNC 100%, Orphan Service 100%, Pontevedria 88%, Zine Register 0%, MNC 100%.

It's pretty clear to me that the zero funding of ZR had some punitive aspects to it. Admittedly, I do not know the criteria the committee used in awarding these amounts. I do know, however, that ZR was the only existing hobby service that received no funding.

I will speculate on a reason, however. I feel that the tone of the narratives of the zines in the latest issue of ZR were highly opinionated, and that this was held against its editor in the belief that a service Custodian should attempt to maintain an evenhanded treatment of its charges. Is this a reasonable standard

for a body such as the PDORA to hold other services up to? I suppose so, since the PDORA is a private body that has not been set up through due process which makes it answerable to the hobby at large, and as such it can hand out its money any way it pleases. Was it "morally right" to act in this manner? In other words, was it justified to completely deny funding because of their disagreement with the editorial content of the issue? Judged in this context, I think not.

At issue here is the credibility of the PDORA Finance Committee, for I believe they shot themselves in the foot public relations-wise. Yes, ZR had a decidedly slanted view of many of the zines rated. I did not feel it was appropriate for Garret to cross that grey line separating advocacy from neutralism. And perhaps he spent a lot more on the effort than many people would have; hey, that is entirely his choice. But the PDORA should have separated the two issues at work here: their support of the office of Zine Register Custodian, and it's editor's handling of that stewardship. If I had been on the committee, and the feeling amongst its members (based on its private criteria for determining funding) was that Garret had to be taught a lesson for handling the stewardship poorly, my approach would have been different. First, (as always), the committee should have immediately responded in writing to Garret's proposal and informed him that their perception of a custodian's role was to be impartial, and that write-ups such as the ones he drafted could jeopardize his funding. At least Garret could have had an opportunity to address their concerns and at least be spared the Committee's decision coming as a complete surprise (and perhaps they did write him, I have no knowledge of *any* actions or discussions of the Committee).

Big whoop you say. Such a path could be seen as intimidation, coercion or worse. Well, okay, skip the letter. But I still would have allocated **something** to the service. If the committee had a problem with the requested funding level, then they should have figured out what they thought it should have cost. Just pulling numbers out of the air, say \$1.25 times 100 copies equals \$125, and fund that. If they didn't like his reviews, then knock off something from that (\$25 or \$50) for having the impertinence of offending the

sensibilities of the PDORA. But always retain a gesture of support for a hobby service that I think is one of the most important we have.

I do think it's a shame that we have to get bogged down in this sort of pettiness. The PDORA auction is a wonderful mechanism for raising funds for hobby services. I have no problem with them unilaterally making funding decisions. That luxury (responsibility) though, of not answering to anyone carries a price, for while they can make whatever decisions they like, they cannot control how the rest of us will react to their actions. Our perception of its handling of its affairs has to have an effect on its fund-raising abilities. My personal thought is that the allocation made was spiteful at best and punitive at worst. It can still be corrected, however. The Committee has \$170 (or over 30% of this year's allocation) left over as a reserve for next year. Surely a hundred bucks to the ZR is merited, if nothing else to fund basic (non-lavish) costs.

And the fact of the matter is that for the most part Garret has done a great job with ZR. There will always be inaccurate data on a project of that size. The most valuable commodity a custodian can bring a job is *enthusiasm*. He's trying new things, trying to get the word out, and putting out a sharp product. Why do we sometimes inadvertently (or purposefully) drag down that kind of enthusiasm?

On the other hand, ZR's editor is not entirely blameless. This is not some private editor's rag to give their opinions as to their particular likes and dislikes of the hobby's zines. It is an institution that I believe has some sort of due process with regards to succession and the expectations of the hobby at large as to what it is trying to accomplish. Possessing such status as a publication devoted to providing an overview of the zines in the hobby, I think it's constituents (publishers like myself) have a right to expect that we won't be maligned or otherwise disparaged in its reports. The taking of pot shots at zines and negative writing, again, is okay if the vehicle used to project your literary missiles is your own zine, but I do not feel it is okay with something like ZR. So I think Garret needs to tone down the slant and attempt to present the hobby's zines in a less opinionated light.

Am I then to be accused of wanting the ZR to be nothing more than a whitewash of the products available? No, I'm not. If XYZ zine is late all the time that can be stated. If ABC zine has ink-splotted messy layout that can be stated also. But there are different ways that these characteristics can be conveyed. It can be either, "it's the ugliest zine I've ever had the pleasure of flushing down my toilet," (and risk getting hammered for trashing zines) or it can be "the ink is very faint and the editor crams four columns of type per page on yellow paper" (and, at worst, its editor can say "but I like yellow paper...") One is an attack, one is an objective observation.

The crappy thing about all of this is that I could have typed five letters to various hobbyists relating to constructive projects in the time it took me to type this one lousy letter. I call upon both the PDORA and Garret to **both** become more aware of the consequences of their actions in their respective positions, to resolve this "area of compromise" with regards to the 1992 PDORA funding and the tone of ZR, and to get back to doing what we all want to do and that's to have fun.

{Let me briefly address a few points you made here. First, the PDORA Committee doesn't "reach a decision" per se. Each of the five members come up with their own decision, and the Chairman then tabulates the votes. There isn't really any communication between the committee members, as far as I can tell. Maybe there should be? I don't really know - I haven't thought about it too much.

*As for the idea of giving Garret some of the 1991 overage, I'm 100% against that idea. To overturn the committee decision would completely undermine the integrity of the entire PDORA setup. It would set the precedent that if any service didn't receive full funding it could complain and then if there was an overage I'd pay up the difference out of that. If we're going to do that, we might as well dissolve the entire committee process, and I'll distribute the money on a percentage basis - if your request equals 30% of the total money requested, I'll send you 30% of the available funds. Silly, isn't it? I don't think even **Garret** is asking for an overturn of the decision. To be honest, I'm not sure **what** he's asking for.*

Finally, as to the "area of compromise" you refer to, I don't see one. The decision can't be overturned, so this year's distribution is a dead issue. Garret says he's never going to ask for money again, so funding ZR won't even come up in 1992, unless he changes his mind. What else is there to say or do?}

(JOHN CARUSO) [to Garret Schenck] It is unfortunate that you did not receive any funding. It is even more unfortunate that you are using that as an excuse to blast the PDORA. There was nothing political about the committee not granting you funding. It was a strictly independent decision, from five people spread out across America and Canada. How do I know it wasn't political? Let me give you one good reason.

A few years ago, Bruce Linsey requested funding from the auction for his novice publication. Anyone who knows Dipdom history knows that he and I do not see eye to eye. I could very easily have "lost" his request, or the committee could have just as easily said "no" to his request. Yet he did receive funding. If ever there was a chance to use ulterior motives to deny someone funding, that was one case where it could have happened. Yet it did not!

Around Christmas, Lisa called and asked if I still had Upstart #1. She wanted to make it a Christmas gift to you. I could easily have said "no", or said I'd look for it, and then done nothing for weeks. Instead, I dug it out, went to the copier and sent a copy to her the next afternoon. I didn't have to, but for a friend, sure. I inconvenienced myself. So there should have been no doubt that I considered you a friend.

The point I'm trying to make is that there IS NO POLITICAL OR PERSONAL REASON why you were denied funding. It was a fiscal decision.

Doug makes a lot of good points in his letter, but he wasn't around when your request for going about funding came in, and subsequently, the request for funding. Regarding the amount you requested, and its itemization, I take full responsibility for the info you sent to me. I know "the other" made it sound mandatory to send an itemization, but I did advise you that itemization was unnecessary. Be that as it may, you sent an itemization. Let me go into some data, that I probably should have communicated to you prior to

your request.

You requested \$400. I know I said to give an upper amount that would probably be reduced, but I never thought anyone would ever ask for that kind of money. In the past, the BNC has been the largest requester, and they have only asked for \$200 top amount, up to this year. Your \$400 request was double any previous BNC request, and more than any other two services ever asked for in any given year. Also, the \$400 request was almost as much as the last few years' total requests. 1990's requests, as an example, totalled only \$470. Only little over \$300 was given out, so you can see, the committee generally chops 25% off the requests. Why? I don't know! But they came up with this decision independently on their own.

Maybe I'm to blame for not advising you to "lower" your request. But I didn't want you to feel I was trying to influence you. After all, I did say to ask for what you needed, and that you did.

Regarding your expenses - me thinks you complain too much about not getting funding, and too little about the real problem, RUNAWAY SPENDING. I never would have guessed that you were like Uncle Sam - no cost too great, we'll get the money somewhere. I remember a custodian (whose name I'll leave anonymous to protect the simple-minded antelope) who said to me "I need PDO funding. If I don't get it, I doubt I can continue doing the service." Do you see the problem here Garret? What if there wasn't a PDORA? This unnamed person should not have been doing the service to begin with if he couldn't afford the costs out of his/her own pocket. The purpose of PDORA is to help offset the costs, not pay for the service completely, nor to pay for all of the red ink. Can you imagine funding a service because it provides the highest cost?

I applaud your desire to save a tree, and using recycled paper. If I could afford it, I'd use recycled computer paper. But I can't, so I do the next best thing. I save all my scrap paper. Ones with blank backs, I use for personal notes, some I use for letters, the rest I put out with the rest of my recyclable materials on pick-up day - plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass jars/bottles.

The point here is if you made a master for ZR

on your laser printer, and then get 100 or so copies made at a commercial printer, you could save at least 33% and as much as 50% of your costs. By your own estimation, your trades with 50 zines twice a year is the reason you have a \$250 deficit. What if you didn't have the ZR? Wouldn't you have to sub to those zines to get them? You wouldn't get them! Then why trade for them? I mean, there is a better way to work out the deal. Maybe send them a yearly ZR, or give those who send you their zines a \$1 - \$1.50 discount. Trade with 25 at each 6 month interval. Or better yet, raise the price to \$3. What's another 50 cents? The point is, you have options available to you to keep your costs down. If you choose to take them.

Over the years, Dipdom has found that the best three avenues for advertising Dipdom is thru The General, at FTF cons and word of mouth. Thru the fantasy hobby is probably one of the least effective ways. Most people go the other way, from gaming to fantasy, rather than fantasy to gaming. After you've played role-playing and enjoyed it, board games are just not the same, especially ones who use the snail express and may take as long as two years to complete. So save your \$34.50. By the way, if ten people responded and purchased the ZR, it still wouldn't be cost-effective. I'd rather see you give out 50 of the ZR suckers on a street corner to strangers. You'd get more responses from doing that, and you'd save 75 cents postage, each ZR.

You want to know something, it isn't easy finding people to be on the financial committee. I've tried to keep the people geographically dispersed, I tried to avoid people who appear to be John Caruso yes-men, and I tried to find people who had either custodial background, or Dipdom financial background. Some people are hesitant to serve on the committee for just the kind of stuff you pulled. If in the future, Doug has a hard time finding people to serve on a publically known committee, your comments will have been a part of that problem. Lighten up Garret. These committee people are just like you and me and Doug. They have lives and family and better things to do than get taken to task for making a decision they probably wished they didn't have to make. True, maybe they should have given the ZR something, and I'm not one to try to guess what goes on inside their heads. Maybe

they saw the \$400 request as too exhorbinant. Maybe they thought ZR should function in the black - after all, you do charge for ZR, and you don't give any away for free (trades not withstanding). Maybe they saw the \$1000 in requests and the \$700 available, and saw ZR as the least needy of the requests. Or maybe they thought the other four would give ZR money. The bottom line is - it's done. I'm sorry, but I can't and Doug can't overturn this year's allocation.

What I will do is ask Doug to put in a passionate comment on behalf of the ZR for funding. Hopefully, you will request funding in 1992 and you will continue to support the PDORA. If not, that's your choice. But I do wish that you hadn't tried to drag the PDORA down into the quagmire. The whole purpose of it is to help subsidize services on one end, and provide a fun bidding atmosphere for those who participate.

I am going to ask Doug to please restrain from any further comments regarding this whole episode. I do not think he needs to get involved.

If you want to put blame on someone, and refuse to accept the fact that your \$400 request was unusually high, and probably part of the cause of the problem, then put the blame on me for not conveying that to you earlier. I should have warned you that a very wild, high request might be looked upon negatively. Common sense told me, leave the choice up to the custodian.

Thank you for supporting the auction in the past, and hopefully, we'll all get over this rough spot without any further engagements, and you will joyfully support the PDORA again. Soon! Take care.....

(ROBERT ACHESON) I'm one of the nameless, faceless committee members. I also am one of the ones who gave Garret's request the buzzer.

It wasn't a hard decision, or one I spent a lot of time on. I was not contacted by any other committee member nor did I contact anyone else.

I gave the thumbs-down because 1) I didn't like much of the Zine Register's content.

2) If winning the Runestone Poll is that important to Garret - send out mass mailings. Don't use the Zine Register as a tool to make disparaging comments about other zines, while telling us how great

Upstart is. Actually, I don't have a problem with it - just don't expect me to vote for funding.

3) If Garret submits a request for funding this year my thumbs-down would be even quicker. While I thought that most of the content was better (mainly due to additional reviewers, even Buz Eddy's orgasm!) using a zine that's acclaimed to promote the hobby to bash Cal White (who questioned heavy emphasis on timeliness and "coined" the term Turbo-freak [or recoined it]) repeatedly and then take runs as Brad Wilson. If you want to print that, then save it for Upstart or even Vertigo - Brad reprints letters.

4) My negative vote was one. I guess that the majority of the committee thought the same way.

5) I understand that Garret is looking for a replacement to take over Zine Register. I'm of the opinion that it's time to wind it down.

6) As a final comment, I did like Garret's idea of advertising in The General. (Unfortunately, I don't like advertising for the Zine Register!) If selective ads were placed in The General listing the top five finishers in the Runestone Poll that could be funded by PDORA - something to discuss at DipCon perhaps.

*{A quick correction - I am the one who suggested advertising in The General. Garret paid \$34.50 for an ad in Fantasy & Science Fiction Magazine - an ad in The General costs (if memory serves) 50 cents, and goes out to over 10,000 **wargamers**. Which is more cost effective? As I understand it (in fact, Rex Martin said as much in his letter in PRI #1), any publisher can advertise their zine or game opening for the standard 50 cent fee. I know that Phil Reynolds advertises Pontevedria there, and it seems only natural to put a few in for the Zine Register.}*

FOR NEXT TIME:

- 1) Many hobby members and publishers bemoan the lack of new blood in the Diplomacy hobby. What is the best way to attract more hobby members? Are such efforts likely to be more successful if they are undertaken by individuals or by some organized hobby group?
- 2) This hobby has more than its share of Polls and Awards. Do they do more bad than good? How do they affect the attitudes of publishers and potential publishers? How about potential subscribers?
- 3) I forget where I read it, but there is a new generation of Dip playing and GMing aides for the computer. Of course we have Judge, the flawless (so I've heard) GMing program. Now there is apparently some people trying to create an Artificial Intelligence Diplomacy program that will actually learn to play the damn game. How will this affect the hobby and the game, if at all?
- 4) How has the proliferation of personal computers and laser printers affected this hobby? Has it been a net plus or minus?
- 5) Garret Schenck has announced he's looking for a successor as publisher of the Zine Register. If **you** were the new publisher of ZR, what would you do differently than previous publishers? Has the hobby outgrown a ZR in its present form? If the hobby is currently as "surly" as some people believe, is it possible to have a ZR that functions as a novice service **without** being tainted by hobby infighting?