

Foolhardy - #8

Just \$1 An Issue!

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

Letters in this issue: David Hood, Stven Carlberg, Stephen Glasgow, W. Andrew York, Shaun Derrick, Nicholas Fitzpatrick, Randy Cox, Iain Bowen, Danny Collman, Brad Wilson, Hal Dace, James Nelson, John Caruso, Bruce Reiff, Paul Kenny, Per Westling. Next Foolhardy deadline: September 19, 1993.

The Concept:

(STVEN CARLBERG) Randy Cox's comment that "the GAMING hobby and the Diplomacy hobby are one and the same" is nothing short of bizarre. Millions of people who have never heard of Diplomacy play games as a hobby. Thousands of people who *have* heard of Diplomacy but never play it play games as a hobby. Thousands of people play games in clubs or other organized settings, but do not play Diplomacy. Diplomacy simply is not the center of the universe - not even of the games-playing universe.

(SHAUN DERRICK) I like the idea of a chat zine from the USA, though some of the material is not relevant to the UK hobby. These days I am far more interested in FTF and tournament play, rather than postal, though I do play by post.

(BRAD WILSON) Quite frankly I find Foolhardy of limited value because I'm not interested (too much) in the international hobby. I'm not interested in Mark Nelson's views on much of anything, and I find most of the comments by other British hobbyists to be of extremely limited interest. I'm not sure why I feel this way; culturally, I'm a raving Anglophile (I get several British publications such as the Spectator and Gramophone) and have read extensively about British history and politics.

I enjoyed meeting John Cain and others in Chapel Hill and usually enjoy British zines when I see them (not frequently). If there is one foreign country I wish to visit it is hands down the UK. But I'm not interested in most British writing in Foolhardy (or in most US zines). Why? Does anyone else feel this way? I'm kind of ashamed I feel this way but that's the way it is. Are UK hobbyists interested in our comments on their hobby?

(PAUL KENNY) Although I don't want to get too deeply bogged down in this, I would say that the Diplomacy hobby is definitely a sub-group of postal gaming as a whole. There are a lot of Dip players who will have nothing to do with other "war games" which they view as the infamous "hex game". And while hex games, role playing games, money games, and rail gales (etc.) may all be similar, they each have a little book of rules to learn. Diplomacy, once the rules are initially learned, is basically the same. From there, one needs to put very little energy learning new and changing rules. The can "play" the game for a bit, write a letter and moves, send those off, and continue to live an otherwise normal life.

Personally, having to learn new rules to any game is a chore for me, and with my schedule, I'd rather not.

(DAVID HOOD) Randy Cox's submission here raises an interesting point - the "Diplomacy hobby" and the "gaming hobby" are seen by some as the same thing. I'm not so sure that's true. There is a postal Diplomacy hobby from which a lot of other postal games have sprung, in terms of the people who participate. The most dominant of these sub-hobbies are the choo choo games and United. Then there are many people, Randy included, who are doing postal games for various other titles. However, I do believe that the glue that holds much of this together always has been, and likely always will be, Diplomacy. This is because it is such a great game, and is easily adaptable to PBM.

Let's not be exclusionary, of course, but let's also remember that the popularity of Diplomacy got us this far, and is the primary vehicle for expansion of the PBM and PBEM hobbies. I believe.

(PAUL KENNY) Sorry Mara for being so sloppy.

*{Paul, Mara does **not** type any of this zine, or any of MP. All she did was help me with my first Census. Get it together, man!}*

The Name:

(RANDY COX) Did Foolhardy begin life as Painful Rectal Itch? Or was that some other zine? If it was, indeed, PRI, consider this a strong vote in favor of that name. You can see its legacy as Cogniscenti has a subzine called Vaginal Discharge.

{Yes, Foolhardy did in fact begin life as Painful Rectal Itch. While I had no problem with the name, some people did, and I chose to switch the title to something a bit more inclusionary, in order to facilitate participation from a wider array of hobby members.}

Census:

(IAIN BOWEN) I note Per Westling commenting on the York hobbymeet - what he says is not strictly true. Mark & Pete got to see my zines, but that's pretty much the way that it goes. Ergo, McHugh thinks I see MP when I don't and therefore feels he can rail on about WDC without writing to me. Jack has just faxed me his comments on WDC.

{I would supply courtesy copies of MP as readily as I do with Foolhardy.

except that it is just too big and too expensive, especially to send overseas copies. Postage alone on MP to England is usually \$3.01. Bug Markie - if you buy him a pint he'll show you his copies!}

(BRAD WILSON) I simply forgot to send my list into the Census. No "pettiness" here! I think it's a useful project - when's the next one coming out?

{If I do another one, I'll probably start compiling it in December or January.}

(JOHN CARUSO) Aha - but alas Doug - you are you. You are not other publishers. Garret is Garret. Garret specializes his pettiness. Others generalize it. And then there's just the lazy publishers.

*{I think all right-thinking people in this country are sick and tired of being told that ordinary decent people are fed up in this country with being sick and tired! I'm **certainly** not, and I'm sick and tired of being told that I am!}*

(PAUL KENNY) I wouldn't be so quick to say it was a slight not to get a sublist. There may have been many reasons. The one I would assume before any other was the person never got around to it. Another reason is they just didn't get the word. Or perhaps they didn't think the census applied to them nor were they sure they were supposed to respond. Sometimes I forget stuff. Sometimes I let something go so long that its deadline passes before I get around to doing something about it. Which reminds me, isn't there a poll due soon? Now, if I could only fund that voting sheet...

DipCon:

(DAVID HOOD) I was wrong. After looking at the charter I published back in the 1990 DipCon booklet, looks like the East and South are eligible for 1994, with the East/Midwest for 1995. I was first not excited about putting DipCon with DixieCon again in 1994, but now I'm convinced it's the right thing to ask for since the South would be skipped otherwise. That's not a very good precedent to set. I was hoping to get another Southern tournament going by now, but the two best potential organizers, Phil Reynolds and Tom Nash, have either dropped from the hobby or have way too much to do already.

(JOHN CARUSO) I'm not complaining that "everyone seems to have adopted" my idea, Markie. I'm irritated that it took all of you so long to see the logic and practicality in my years-old idea.

I stand corrected by Pete Gaughan. 1994 sees zones I and IV eligible - South and East. Though for some reason, I recall 1994 as South and West (III and IV).

(DAVID HOOD) Pete is right - East and South in 1994, East and Midwest for 1995. I agree 200% with Jim's comments on publicizing DipCon and WDC over Email - as that is a major growth area for the hobby, it is crucial we get those people involved in the Con scene.

Lack of New Zines:

(DAVID HOOD) It may be that the drop in players means there's not much of a market for new zines. I do see lots of game openings in established zines stay open for a long time before filling.

{AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!! It's over! The hobby is dying!}

(BRAD WILSON) Paul Kenny's point about feeling pressured to have a zine filled with chat and looking professional is extremely well-taken and is the doing of the Schenck/Hood TurboFreak Patrol, another example of their negative effects on the hobby. For every potential pubber like Paul who overcame that pressure there are five who didn't. A great loss to the hobby.

As for Burgess, hey, Jimbo, the East Coast Clique can't be "led" anywhere - most certainly not by Jack, either! Really! And the senior ECC pubber is of course myself - Doug's just a Johnny-come-lately satellite of Vertigo! The ECC - love it or leave it!

{I guess you refer to me as a satellite because I dance rings around you when it comes to publishing?}

(HAL DACE) Hello - the missing man is back - somewhat shopsoiled but here nonetheless. As those who have received the SAPC broadsheet will know, I have suspended it largely because of the lack of writing - basically what Jim Burgess was saying. I did have a couple of offers from Mark to write articles for me, and there were people here experienced enough to do a certain amount of writing - particularly on the topic of the Email hobby. The problem for me was not that there was a lack of support from other editors - you were great - but that the zines 'target market' was not responding. Perhaps experienced editors can give newer ones advice on how to 'stimulate and challenge' your readership
;-)

On Mark's comments - I don't know how usual it is, but I was quite committed to coming to terms with the international Diplomacy hobby that I tried to tackle zines like his head-on. I'm sure he'll remember the flood of Email during my formative months in Dipdom 8-) I really didn't find jargon that offputting but I think that some people might. TMOS may have been a poor example, but have a read of the introduction to the Diplomacy A.Z again and think about how jargon-filled hobby writing tends to be. It's not a bad thing, but jargophobia is something I've experienced as a novice editor in a novice hobby. I know this section isn't titled 'what happened to SAPC' but I figure a recent testimony from a new editor might mean something.

{Well, I hope you find the money and energy to keep SAPC going. I enjoyed what you've done so far.}

(JAMES NELSON) The concept of having a booklet for novice editors is a very laudable one but unfortunately reality does not conform with the concept. Both the North American and British hobby have existing packages available. I don't know how well publicized and/or utilized Mark Berch's package but certainly in Britain our novice package has no profile. I cannot remember the last time I saw it mentioned or an editor advocate that it be used.

Not only is this a problem, but also I'm not sure how many takers there would be even if it was well publicized. One of the joys of being an editor is learning by experience. From my experience the vast majority of publishers (and I can only think of one exception to this off hand) are aware of what sort of standard or form they should maintain in contents, presentation, etc, as they can see what other zines are like.

As I mentioned above, a very laudable concept but is it really worth the time and effort to update the present package or produce a new package? The fact remains that prospective publishers may (and do) seek

the advice or view of existing publishers and the personal touch which results is perhaps more beneficial than a "general" package would ever create.

Going off on a tangent for a moment, the best preparation for someone who wants to publish a zine, and this would be my advice if someone ever asked me, is to edit a subzine. What better way can there be of experiencing the joys (and pitfalls) of deadlines, presentation and contents but without committing yourself too deeply to something which you may quickly decide you are not hacked out to do.

{But, as has been said before, many publishers (with some notable exceptions) don't want subzines, because they take up space and increase printing and mailing costs. Hell, if I made Jack pay for what "..Horse.." takes out of my wallet every month, you can be sure that would be the end of his subzine.}

Polls & Awards:

(BRAD WILSON) I think Jack's comment is exactly right. Obviously Eric's point is accurate, but generally I think Jack's "don't get a zine you don't like" is almost a truism. If you sub to a zine that is going in a direction you don't like, simply ask for a refund. If you're orphaned into the zine, you have to decide if the game is worth getting a zine you dislike.

Nobody's forcing anyone to get any zine.

Carlberg's vindictive, nasty voting philosophy is exactly why the Runestone Farce hurts the hobby. Amateur hobby? Not to Stven. Fun?

No place in Stven's hobby!

{Now, now, boys...}

(JAMES NELSON) As regards Poll Places, one has to consider more than just the actual finishing place, and again I think we should credit the voters with some intelligence in being able to interpret the results. A Poll such as the Runestone or Zine Poll is a popularity contest. It simply ranks the zines in order of current popularity. It does not try and compare results with past years (nor should it try) so making comparisons with previous years is pointless. I happen to think that currently the standard of zines in the UK is at an all time high but someone has to come bottom. The bottom five zines have received very few (in some cases none) poor reviews, indeed most have been favourable, so any damage to a zine's reputation by finishing towards the bottom could well be repaired in this fashion.

The most important thing to consider is a zine's average vote. When I vote I consider an "average" zine deserves a vote from 4.0 to 7.0 (a fairly large band but then I consider that there are very few truly outstandingly good or bad zines). As I recall most of my votes in this year's Zine Poll were in this band. Now whilst the Preference Matrix is a much preferred voting system than a simple average vote this latter method is a preferred option considering whether a zine is crap as opposed to being not as good as everything else. Any zine getting below an average vote of four must be doing something wrong, surely, whilst coming in the bottom five of a Poll is not necessarily an indication that your zine is crap, especially if you have a reasonable circulation (and perhaps more importantly, a loyal one) and an average vote of about five.

(JOHN CARUSO) Pete, can you imagine a game where the GM makes 1 royal screw-up error and ruins the entire game? I'll take an error a turn corrected properly over one error, uncorrected and screwing up the whole game.

Novice Zines:

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) One of my friends recommends to the novices that they play a variant game first, so that they have a better chance of success. His reasoning is that a particular variant is less likely to have been "mastered" by an experienced player, so the novice is safer than in a regular game. I agree that using a different map lessens any advantage an experienced player might have from knowing the terrain, such as knowing which provinces are crucial for defense, where stalemate lines develop, etc. But let's not forget that the most important skill is negotiation; this experience carries across all maps and rule changes. You can only learn so much by watching and reading, since most of the game goes on behind the scenes in private communications. The best way to learn the art of diplomacy is to be involved in tricky negotiations. Sure, you might get burned, but that's a learning experience. So I tell novices, don't be afraid to play with fire.

{Ugh. I think novices should stick with Dip to start. It's pretty balanced, and has been thoroughly playtested. Hell, everyone knows which country has slight advantages or disadvantages, so they adjust accordingly. In a new variant, by the time you realize some power or other has an advantageous position in the game, it might be too late!}

(W. ANDREW YORK) Arrgh, my clarification of my comment (from what, four issues back) was poorly worded. And, of course, someone catches it. The sentence should have read "Novices should be able to play each other first." I don't necessarily want them to be segregated; however, I don't necessarily want them to lose interest as their first game is with a bunch of sharks.

That's why I put forward the idea of a novice clearing house (specifically NOT a novice zine). Then, when seven are gathered (of course, the novice has to ask to be added to the list), they are farmed out to a zine willing to run the novice game. I also set the arbitrary limit of three (at least I think it was three) uses of the novice service to keep it for novices.

This procedure allows the new player to learn the ropes under experienced GMs; while giving him the exposure to (potentially) three different zines. Of course, this exposure is intended to lead into joining additional games; and as standbys inevitably are called, a slower introduction to more experienced players.

I don't mean for this idea to in any way limit novices, or to force them into service. It is entirely voluntary and is designed to give those folks who want a slow introduction into the hobby to have it - those who want to sink or swim can jump into any zine they wish without ever accessing the novice service.

As Stven says, I'd be more than happy to host a novice game in RW. In fact I'd enjoy it - all those questions <grin>.

{I've been getting a few PBM Dip newcomers in MP lately. The question I have is, just because someone is new to the hobby, does that make them by definition a novice? They may have more experience playing than some 2-year hobby vets!}

(DANNY COLLMAN) I am editor of Springboard, the UK Novice Zine, and would like the opportunity to respond to James Nelson as quoted in issue 6 of Foolhardy. I have not written to James direct: I feel that your continental readers should have the opportunity to follow any dialogue, since it started there.

I would very much like to ask James for his specific accusations. In general he accuses that "(My) attitude is all wrong, and what is worse is that (I am) dogmatically inflexible and (am) not prepared to compromise on any issue." What I would like explained in detail is what "attitude" I have that is "all wrong". In addition, he could perhaps explain what specifically I have been "dogmatically inflexible" about. And finally, what issues he would wish me to compromise on, and how.

I would make one important point myself: although I am no longer able to recall most of the ideas that a small number of British editors asked me to take up, I do recall that they were impossible, because contradictory, mutually exclusive. Different people wanted me to do differing and opposing things to "improve" the novice intake in Britain.

One of the major problems appears to be that too many Novices drop out. Richard Sharp, one of our major Hobby Statisticians, has calculated a Springboard dropout rate of 47%, which he compares with a pre-Springboard rate (possibly in the early 80's) of 28%.

I am loath to accept quite so high a figure, but the principle is certainly correct: other editors discourage dropouts as much as possible; I don't. Those novices who like what they see and have the available time, will stay. Others won't. But I do encourage people who find they don't like Dip, to find another game they may enjoy. Many members of the British Hobby seem to feel that people should be held on to whatever the cost. This may be an aspect of "failure to compromise." I'm not actually aware of some British Hobby members expressing their acceptance of a viewpoint different from their own.

Change of subject to James' brother, Mark Nelson. Reading his comments in your zine, I find myself wondering whether the name in your zine is actually the Mark Nelson of the British Hobby: the comments you have published seem to come from a normal, ordinary person. The person of the same name in the British Hobby, calls himself "Crazy Markie" in print, and does his best to do justice to such a name by the extreme nature of many of his published opinions. "Crazy Markie" is seen as a person who will vilify and abuse fellow editors and Hobby members simply to see what kind of response they will make.

I would add, finally, that James is seen as a hard-working and responsible editor, though his recent output has been severely reduced because of personal health and study problems.

(HAL DACE) I've come to thinking that novice things may not be a good thing - if novices are exposed to a single editor & GM and not so much to 'peer review' then there is the danger of the 'Springboard syndrome' and tensions within the hobby. Perhaps novice games in mainstream zines are a good thing, but exposure to the play, advice, press, letters and feuding of more experienced people are a Good Thing(tm). This is being said by the editor of a zine designed for novices? Well, ideally I would like to see a good novice package being produced, containing Diplomacy articles, something like the A..Z, perhaps a compressed 'Zine Register' and variant information. Anyone want to be a Novice Custodian?

{How much does it pay? Do I get extra credit points in my bid to take over the hobby?}

(JAMES NELSON) Michael Lowrey asks what should be done about standbys in novice games. My view is that all "reasonable" (three centers upwards?) positions should be taken over in novice games, preferably by novices themselves. Why? We are trying to encourage these people to stay in the Diplomacy hobby. Anyone who has ever played in a game effected by dropouts know how disheartening this is, particularly if you

lose the game as a result. Someone who has been part of the hobby for some time is less likely to dropout - they know that dropouts are part and parcel of our hobby and are more likely to have other interests within the hobby (be it other games or the personal side of the hobby) - than the raw novice who feels badly cheated that he put in his time and effort (and not forgetting money) only for it to be ruined by, in his view, an inconsiderate dropout.

Such a policy should not be a problem within the US Hobby as standbys are, as far as I can see, fairly widespread. It is more of a problem in the UK where aside from Springboard (the UK novice zine) only a couple of zines use standbys. Is it all right to create an expectation that standbys will be used when in reality the practice of appointing standbys is not practiced?

Burnout:

(JAMES NELSON) Apologies for failing to contribute to the last issue. I think I'm suffering from temporary "semi-burnout." My enthusiasm for running games and publishing remain but in the last six months or so I have noticed a sudden drop in my diplomatic efforts in the games I am playing in and my contributions to other zines.

It is difficult to explain the reason behind this. I've just lost the enthusiasm to contribute to other people's zines but not to my own. My own deadlines have been strictly adhered to (the last issue of ITN [which is in the post] saw my deadline on the Friday and the game reports and originals for the zine were posted on Monday morning) whilst I have missed, or nearly missed, other people's deadlines. It therefore seems inappropriate to describe it as "burnout" but there seems no other way of describing it. A question in the next issue perhaps...?

But I'm at a loss to explain it. I am no busier at the moment than I have been anytime in the last three years. I go out as after as I did before, certainly no more. I just seem to spend more time being lethargic.

{Hey, if someday I get my head screwed on straight, I'll drop this hobby and make 5-hour naps a regular pastime!}

E-Mail Dip:

(NICHOLAS FITZPATRICK) Of course the subject that interests me the most (as keeper of the Hall of Fame) is the application of BNC and MNC numbers to Hall of Fame games. I am presently in contact with the North American MNC). Mark Nelson has repeatedly claimed that the E-mail world should have separate BNC and MNC custodians, though at this point in time, I think we should simply be working on applying BNC and MNC numbers to past games. I have summaries for almost all E-mail games ever played, and, starting with the next issue of the Hall of Fame, will be listing the BNC/MNC numbers that have already been assigned to E-mail games. (for the non-E-mail folks, the Hall of Fame, contains results from all E-mail games ever played, well at-least all those completed in 1991 and later. The records from 1988-1991 are a bit confusing, and I am adding them slowly.

{I can understand the argument for Email (or at least Internet) having their own BNC and MNC. Of course, they'd need to be allocated a particular string of numbers, but it seems to me I agree with Mark on this one.}

Old Dirty Laundry:

(IAIN BOWEN) The following is probably for your Old Dirty Laundry section, but it was from a letter sent to Garret after his diatribe in an earlier Foolhardy where he saw fit to blacken my name. I've heard no comment on it from him but I did put on the bottom of it that I was copying it to you and like an idiot I never did. Sorry. But, in case Garret has been referring to it - here is the text.

"Now I used to have a double trade with gNash of YDdG for BT.DT and Mission from God (the UK Zine Directory) for The Zine Register. However, by the time that gNash disappeared, I had published my last MfG and transferred the trade to the next editors. Therefore, I didn't expect to get a freebie ZR so I asked the US end of the ISE to get me a ZR (I'm the UK custodian). When Garret's first ZR came out, I didn't get a copy. Now there was some trouble with the ISE at the time and this order was never fulfilled. Anyway, I think I asked Pete Gaughan to get me an issue (this was before Pete was the US end of the ISE) and he said he would try. Anyway, after not receiving one for a couple of months after that (and the ISE was in the process of transferring to Pete at this time), Mark asked me if I would take a sub for the Zine Register and I said that I wasn't taking subs for the ZR. Now there was a double reason for this - my ISE order had not been fulfilled and my attempts to get a third party copy had not succeeded plus the ISE was in some disarray and I was still trying with Pete, who had just taken it over, to sort out the finances and most importantly, what orders had been fulfilled and what orders hadn't been fulfilled. At that time, I was unwilling to take any ISE orders save for urgent ones and particularly unwilling to take an order for a product that I had not received myself. I must admit that my feelings on the second part were colored by Garret's comments on international zines in his international section in his first ZR. At a later point when I had seen Garret's second ZR with its '\$4 for overseas' tag and all the ISE problems of the time were cleared up, then I said to Mark that I was accepting ISE orders for ZR again and in fact I plugged the ZR in both MfG and YDdG.

"I've since spoken to Mark and it seems that he has misunderstood some of the comments I made at the time and taken some personal speculations to be fact. I accept that these misunderstandings may have been due to my phrasing or even my tone of voice. I, however, have made no misunderstandings of the situation; my decision not to accept orders for the ZR was based on the fact that I did not want to discredit the ISE any further by ordering zines that there appeared to be a difficulty in ordering until I had found where that difficulty lay (ISE or editor or post office) and not on some malice aforethought."

And if anyone says any different, then they are a damned liar.

The Future:

(STVEN CARLBERG) Andy Bate's idea of showing a Diplomacy game on cable access TV is an interesting one! Of course, you'd need a minimum of three cameras to do a good job of showing the various secret conversations, which makes it pretty labor-intensive by cable access standards. When I was living in another city, I took the course offered by the local cable access channel to be able to run their cameras and produce shows, and I was in four or five productions before I left town. One idea I had (but never did anything about) was to televise a Scrabble game. This would only require one live camera-person and a second, stationary camera on the board. The slow pace of the game, I thought, would make an interesting change from the "no dead air" approach typical of commercial broadcasting. A 6-hour Diplomacy game would also make an interesting change!

{How about televised coverage of DipCon? You could show Jack and Brad whining about whatever their latest mistakes were!}

PDORA/Zine Register:

(STVEN CARLBERG) Pete Gaughan's contention that the Zine Register is "a service, not a zine" gives me an opportunity to split a hair. Pete asks "Would you call the phone book a magazine just because it comes out periodically?" That portion of ZR which lists information is indeed a service. But the part that does reviews is an expression of editorial opinion, and that's "zine" stuff, not "service" stuff. I'll ask Pete: If the Yellow Pages included the editors' opinions on the merits of the businesses listed, would it still be merely a "service"? Or wouldn't it have crossed the line into the "consumer reports magazine" field?

(JOHN CARUSO) Pete - I didn't say the ZR wasn't a service. Garret said that. I only quoted Garret.

Attracting New Blood:

(DAVID HOOD) Apparently PBEM is growing exponentially. Great! But are we getting important to these people, particularly Con dates? If not, how do we do it?

(NICHOLAS FITZPATRICK) I am surprised, and a little saddened at the estimate of the size of the NA hobby as only 800 hobbyists, at 800, I just played with the Hall of Fame a bit, and it lists 883 people, now if I account the number of duplicates, about 15, and the number of players from pre-1991 games, about 20 (yeah, I'm adding them very slowly!!), then I'm left with about 850 players. I would guess that 20-30 percent are inactive, which would still give about 600 players! There is your new blood! I took a look at the New Blood column in the last Diplomacy World, at least 3 of the names listed are from the E-mail world, and they are quite active too! Here is your new blood. Its no wonder there seems to be a decline in postal players. If you want to recruit them, come and get them. I am yet to see a hard-sell for postal 'zines. There isn't even a readily available reference to Diplomacy World. A whole string of Aussies 'zines is now listed in the rec.games.diplomacy FAQ, but not NA 'zines. If someone posted a subscription form for Diplomacy World to the net, once every month or two, I'm sure that you would have new blood pouring in (well, trickling . . .). The only reason I finally got around to subscribing to Diplomacy World, is that Mark Nelson kept saying I should . . ., not through much mention on the net.

There is presently a few people working on closing the chasms between E-mail and postal mail (or snail-mail, is we like to refer to it). Jim Burgess is going a long way, by making Abyssinian Prince available by E-mail (in LaTeX form though . . .), Mark Nelson . . ., David Kovar, one of the judge custodians, is now getting heavily into postal play. Perhaps this would be the time to announce the impending resurrection of Electronic Protocol Chapter 2, which has been in semi-retirement since Christmas. We have a new editor, Rich Shipley, and we will be making copies available postally. I will be providing sample copies, probably a couple, to anyone who asks. After a couple or so issues, we will be taking subscriptions, (at cost of course, I'm not quite sure about this postal tradition of losing money on 'zines, but I certainly don't plan to continue it! This concern will break even, after the sample issues (I hope). I will be the North American Distributor, apparently Mark Nelson will be the

European, (I guess this leaves Asia, South Africa and Australasia to share between us). If the project is a success, we will probably add a couple more distributors. If anyone wants sample copies, contact me at: Nicholas Fitzpatrick, 10 Dunbar Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 2C7, Canada - and feel free to mention this in your 'zines! I'm sure that everyone know's Mark's address!

{While I agree that Email is a great source of new PBM hobby members, I do feel that it takes a certain type of person to enjoy PBM Dip. I see a lot of people dropping out of games all the time on Internet...those players are better left unrecruited.}

(BRAD WILSON) I'm with Randy Cox. We can never have enough hobbyists!

(HAL DACE) Paul Kenny is right. Imagine if every hobby member persuaded two people to start playing PBM Dip.

(DAVID HOOD) Randy is right here, and Stven wrong, I think. We should do all we can to spread the word about the great game Diplomacy is, and not just sit back and let people stay ignorant. Many, many more people out there would love the game if given the facts and an opportunity to play. Benefits from new hobbyists: more games with different opportunities, great variety and quantity of zines, more Cons and more people at those Cons, greater visibility for Diplomacy as a game, more letter writers to Foolhardy, etc. While I don't think the hobby is unfun at its present size, growth is almost always good, in any context.

Way to go, Paul Kenny. I'm turning some of my co-workers on the Dip as well. Let's everybody do that!

Diplomacy Federation:

(DAVID HOOD) Seems like the Nelson/McHugh connection persists in claiming that I could do all this stuff myself rather than put together a Federation. Who said I wanted this job? Not me. I don't have time for what I'm already doing. That's why I'm looking for DW editor prospects.

My point here is that hobbies that show some level of cooperation/organization to the outside world are the ones that flourish. Look at Chess/Bridge. If we are going to ever mature as a hobby, a Federation must be done.

(BRAD WILSON) Now here I agree with Stven. Team Dip has always annoyed me. (I slept through the Team Dip tourney at Chapel Hill DipCon because I didn't want to play BUT had been assigned a country anyway!) I don't like the Federation concept because, like Stven, I find it unnecessary (especially if David Hood's running it).

(DAVID HOOD) Yes, randy, I was only saying that we ought to try to have a Dip tournament at every event, not because they won't be fun without one, but because I think the Con would be better with one, as would our hobby.

Mark, you just refuse to see the point here. Obviously an individual hobbyist can do all these things, but no one on the outside is going to pay attention to some guy using his own name to support the hobby. The point here is marketing - and we need an organizational label to do that effectively. We will have a Dip Federation eventually, because I'm sure I'm not the only one who sees its potential. Every other sport or hobby of importance has such a group, and they have one for a reason.

Zine Register:

(BRUCE REIFF) If no one else does (and I'm sure they will), let me congratulate Pete on a fine ZR. I think what this hobby needed was a nice, friendly, comfortable ZR and that's what Pete delivered. He kept the excellent graphic presentation that Garret had, but without the bite. Well done Pete!

(PER WESTLING) Pete's ZR was great. Nice to receive it since after the break after issue 18. Alas, I was a *bit* irritated by Brad's xenophobia that appeared in some of his reviews, enough to keep quiet for the rest of this issue.

(PAUL KENNY) Now that the torch of the ZR has passed from Garret to Pete, here are my comments on the new ZR 22. I don't know if they are appropriate or not, but here they are anyway.

I think Pete did a very good job for his first issue. Garret put out a very good looking Zine Register, which was a lot of work and probably didn't get the credit that he deserved. Aside from what some personal arguments that was brought into how ZR's are brought out, one has to admit that it is a good introductory book.

I still think the name of the thing should be changed from Zine Register to Zine Review. John Caruso does a thing which is more like a Zine Register.

Also, I think Pete's introduction of a page to explain the reviewers' opinions or outlook was a great idea. He tagged me pretty good - I do like zines that are cheap- I really don't worry about graphics (though they do make a zine look nice), and I don't necessarily worry about speed of the zine as long as it is reasonable.

After reading in ZR #22 what I wrote some time ago, I only wish I remembered writing it. I didn't keep a copy of what I wrote, and I wrote the reviews right when I received them. But, as I read them in ZR #22, I wish I had worded some of the things differently. I was probably too critical about price.

I probably was a little too critical. I should save criticisms for Foolhardy or Maniac's Paradise (even though I don't get the latter). I feel I should have been more positive about other people's work. Oh well, I don't even remember writing some of the stuff. But there's always next time, right?

Oh, and one more note. Thanks to everyone who gave Absolute! such great comments. Ken Walker promises to keep the articles coming.

North American Team Tournament:

(DAVID HOOD) Jim Yerkey and I finally got our heads together on this thing, and will do it on a trial basis for the 1993 Con season. The basic idea is to pit teams of Diplomacy players against each other over a year's time to determine a team champion. Of course, the real purpose of this thing is to encourage attendance at all Diplomacy events in North America.

Here's how it works, from the write-up in the DixieCon booklet: "Every Diplomacy even with 21 or more participants will be included. A team of up to three players per tournament can represent a zine or club or region, with all points earned by team players to be added to the overall team's total for the year. The team with the most points at the end of the year wins the championship. The system is two points per center, plus

the following bonus points for finishes: win-63, 2 way-31, 3 way-15, 4 way-7, 5 way-3, 6 way-1. Team member's names and team affiliations should be sent to the tournament organizer before the event, or to David Hood. No person may play for more than one team in the same year."

I'm counting on the cooperation of tournament organizers on this, to save game results and send them to me. Players should also save the info and send it to me just in case.

Comments, anyone? (Yes, Jack, that includes you.)

New Diplomacy Flyer/Gamer's Guide:

(BRAD WILSON) What?!? AH doesn't intend to put the flyer in regular Dip sets? Why the hell not? What's the point then? This is small-minded, short-sighted and cheap (typical of Avalon Hill). I hope you're wrong, Doug - the new flyer's worth will be much less if it's just in the Deluxe sets. If you are wrong, I retract my comment about TAHGC (except cheap, they are cheap).

As far as Behnen and Jack and John Caruso: I define four hobbyists acting at a poorly-attended DipCon as, if not "sneaky and backroom", as less open than it could have been, but its not relevant at this point.

*{Brad, go back and read what I said. I did **not** say Avalon Hill won't put the flyer in the regular Dip sets. I just said I **didn't know** whether they were going to or not. Now, to find out the facts, I just got off the phone with the Maven of Monarch Avalon, the Bombardier of Baltimore, the Doctor of Diplomacy, the Sage of Stabbing, the one and only Rex Martin. Rex tells me that no official decision has been made about producing more regular Dip sets. Why? Because there is a sufficient supply of those sets in the warehouse to last probably for the next two years! At **that** time, a decision will be made, and Rex said he will most likely urge AH to continue to produce a bookshelf version, using plastic pieces, the new mapboard, the new rulebook (except for the strategy section), and whatever flyer is in use at **that** time! Happy now? PS - Thanks to Rex for taking the time out of his workday to field my inane questions. Why doesn't AH produce a game about fighting your way through the Dip hobby, to become a Hobby Ghod and Grand Hobby Poobah?*

Oh, and don't forget, Brad, AH is out to make a profit first and foremost. Us shareholders would have it no other way! You shouldn't confuse that with being cheap.}

(PAUL KENNY) Is the Deluxe version of Dip selling? What a marketing sham. \$55 for a game that one can buy for \$25, that is worth \$18. What a bargain. If I was in a store, and I saw games going for \$15 and this one going for \$55, do you think I would buy it? Maybe Avalon Hill is getting out of touch with the new market. But \$10 for the Gamers Guide and \$55 for the set is too much, in my opinion. Maybe Avalon Hill is tired of publishing Diplomacy. Perhaps, we (the Diplomacy Hobby) should buy the rights to Diplomacy and put it out ourselves. We could charge \$15 for it (I paid \$13.50 for my copy in 1985). We could manufacture it (with wooden blocks!) and distribute it ourselves.

Jack McHugh:

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) How thrilling to witness this exciting moment in the history of Dip feuds!

(BRAD WILSON) I don't know what to say about Cal's bit on Jack. All I know is that it doesn't sound like the fun-loving, friendly Cal I have

known for many years. I think Jack's original comment was out of line, a bit, but I do not think it merits the massive retaliation by Cal that it got in Foolhardy #8. I will say that: a) Jack wasn't the only hobbyist who thought the decision-making process in this whole affair was a closed circle, and b) that it was unfair of Jack to criticize Cal for not doing any work at this stage of the project. That said, I find Cal's response massively inappropriate, his language appalling (this is the guy who premiered the "Feud-Free" concept) and his venom sadly untypical of the Cal White the hobby has come to know.

But most of all, I'm sad. Sad because Cal and Jack were once very good friends. I am friends with both and find this situation truly unfortunate. Friendships are not so common that we can afford to lose them, and for that, in this case, I am sad. As Edward Woodward once said (as McCall on the Equalizer), "When friendship dies, where do you go to say goodbye?" To Foolhardy, I guess.

(JOHN CARUSO) First off, I wish to take this time to apologize to Cal for upsetting him. Its not my intent to do so.

Now, on to the matter at hand. Cal - you're a fine example to the newcomers in DipDom. Shit this and fuck that and assholes all. Come back to us Cal. Whose fault is it that Jack (and the rest of DipDom for that matter) was not informed. Like I said in Foolhardy #6, it was all of ours - yours, mine, Gary's, David's, and Don's. However - in your own zine in the editorial you wrote - you took full blame for it yourself. Gary is upset with me for hinting that this was a back room deal. In actuality - it was a 1 man show as far as the decisions went. Even when Gary and David disagreed with you, you did it your way anyway. You said it yourself - you made the choice to do things this way. I voiced my disapproval to you in Oct. 1992. I said then and will restate now - if you do things lone ranger style, you risk the wrath and pettiness of others.

At the 1st signs of criticisms, you launch attacks at the critics. The language you used is not becoming of a person put into the influential position you are in. There's no East Coast Clique blind lockstep here, nor any sour grapes from my end (as it turns out, I couldn't have done it alone.

My own life was turned upside down in January, so your 5 names idea ended up a Godsend to me). Sure Jack spews inaccuracies. Correct him.

Clue him in. Given the influential position you're in, your acceptance of guilt for the way things were handled, and the lack of information disclosed prior to this winter, your response to Jack was out of line. And if you won't apologize to him, I'll do it for you. Jack, accept my apologies on Cal's behalf. He's going through a tough time at home and those pressures plus your lack of knowledge just set him off.

About your 1978 exit Cal - I was around back then. Know something - I was only aware of a few month delay in forwarding BNC records. There was never any mention of a dirty fold (your mention is the 1st I ever heard of a dirty fold). And there was never any raking over the coals over the BNC transfer. Methinks you are defending yourself against imaginary attacks. No one has ever attacked you for your 1978 fold - as far as I know. You may feel you left sloppily - but no one bad-mouthed you.

As for Jack's comments about Cal disappearing - Jack was dead wrong. Cal created the game box flyer. Cal made the phone calls and stayed in touch. These days I'm cheap. I just write. Cal (with Gary's and David's help) redid the Gamers Guide.

Cal, I don't want to be at odds with you. I'm sorry if I offended you. It was not my intent. If you find it that difficult to stay in contact with me, you have my permission to remove my name from the Game

Box Flyer when the next run of flyers is made. I will not do anything to jeopardize this worthwhile project. And if working with me might cause static, I'll bow out before it hurts the project. Its that simple.

*{John, is there **anyone** you haven't apologized to? How about to me? I had to type your letter in, after all!}*

Orphan Games:

(STVEN CARLBERG) The information from Peter Sullivan that "virtually no one uses standbys" in British zines was an eye opener! I really *like* the idea of a position simply going into Civil Disorder and staying there when a player decamps! It would relieve a ton of administrative headaches not only in the area of orphan games but in games played out in their original zines as well! And furthermore, it's exactly what the Rules of Diplomacy *say* you're supposed to do when a player leaves! Yet, simply because using standbys is the standard operating procedure in American zines, it never occurred to me that I might want to do it a different way!

I think if a player resigns a position and *requests* that a new player be named to continue in his stead, *that's* when a standby should be sought.

Otherwise, treat it like a face-to-face game: if you make your opponent so fed up with the game that he leaves, then you *deserve* to pick up the dots he's leaving behind.

Jim Burgess takes me to task at some length about my suggestions for changing the way orphan games are dealt with. First let me point out that I did not criticize Eric Ozog (who seems to be doing a very conscientious job, and is certainly to be commended) - only the current policy and presumptions about orphan games. Jim complains bitterly that "the last thing he needs is abuse of the type Stven attempts to give him." Read what I wrote, Jim, not what you're imagining! I'm not abusing anybody. I'm talking about how we, the Dip hobby in general, treat orphan games.

Jim argues that restarting an orphan game with only two of the original players is, contrary to what I said last time, a good idea. He says, "The players who want to play get to play, the standbys (like me) who enjoy coming into a game with a bunch of fresh players and a unique starting configuration get just that," etc. Jim seems to miss the point that the people who *don't* get what they want are the players who want to continue the game they started - and it seems to me that these are precisely the people who deserve (more than anyone else in this mess) to *get* what they want. A different game with five new players and all the past history of the game worthless, with the likely chance that your tactical position is a bad one now that the diplomatic justification for it has disappeared along with the now-absent player - well, this is a poor substitute for the original game. If Jim wants to make the point that this poor substitute is better than no game at all, then I'll admit his point is arguable: true in some cases, but false in others. And since he agrees with me that the revived orphan is "actually a different game entirely," I think we both understand the situation, and I'll belabor the point no further.

I think I'd be much happier with the "no standbys" system described by Peter Sullivan, though, where those two players from the original game continue against the balance of the board being in Civil Disorder. The *would* actually be a continuation of the original game rather than "actually a different game entirely."

Since Jim seems to have missed my point about asking players in an orphan game their opinions about how it ought to be rehoused, let me make it again. I'm suggesting that players be given an opportunity to be

heard on the question of which zine they'll be playing in rather than simply being dumped into a zine and being left with that one "meager choice: to play or not to play." What's your worst nightmare of a zine to play in, Jim? How about Touche, which comes out every five to eight months, charges \$15 a year on the supposition that it'll be bi-monthly, but still costs \$15 a year even though it's not, and has a GM who refuses orders if he's mad at a player, may or may not get an adjudication right, and is happy to declare a game over even with two votes out of six dissenting? (I am not making this up; I was there!) Suppose you got a notice from the Orphan Administrator that an old game of yours was being restarted there? Would it make you glad? Obviously, it would not. And while few zines are as bad as Touche, there are still some pretty bad choices out there - several where I *know* I don't want to play - and I'll bet there are many more where I'd be less than pleased once I got the lie of the land.

Jim asks, "Would the GM under which the games were housed really have made a difference?" The answer is yes - obviously. Does the GM make a difference in your enjoyment of any game, whether it's an orphan or not? The answer is yes - obviously.

Excuse me, Jim, but where do you get off that I am perpetuating the idea that a GM should start running a game, delay publishing results, and delay letting another GM take over? I did no such thing. You are letting your argument run away with you.

(W. ANDREW YORK) I must add my accolades to the job that Eric Ozog is doing as the OGC. I have no fault what-so-ever with his efforts.

As for whether games that are orphaned should be rehoused or not is another matter. I can empathize with him on the difficulty with an apparent abandoned game suddenly being resurrected; however, the fault doesn't lay in the lap of the OGC, but, in the lap of the former GM.

If he'd taken steps to move the games quickly to the OGC, or into another zine, there would be a smooth transition and the game could be played to conclusion. It's, as Jim Burgess states, the difficulty in determining when to rehouse a game - especially from a non-communicating GM.

Trying to set up a specific time schedule (if no reports are received in "X" amount of time, then rehouse) is darn near impossible. Look at my zine or Perelandra, if you didn't receive something for three months, it probably would be time to look at rehousing the games (after checking with the GM, of course) due to our regularity. However, putting that limit on The Canadian Diplomat would be ludicrous.

In a perfect world, a GM would take enough responsibility to transfer their own games (death, and the ilk, as exceptions); while players would take the responsibility if they felt the games were unduly delayed, to inquire upon them. If the players had no response, or an unfulfilled promise to continue, they should take the steps to contact the OGC for rehousing.

However, this doesn't happen and games are revived after a long hiatus. If you're a player in a situation like this, you always have the opportunity to decline to continue - without any hard feelings on any side.

And, like Jim, I do enjoy standby play, even in orphans (though I'm rarely that good at it).

(BRAD WILSON) I'm on Jim's side. Quite a volley here by Jim-bob, though! Wow!

(DAVID HOOD) I sure hope Randy's attitude about "letting aborted

babies die" is not prevalent. If a Diplomacy game is played correctly, you invest a lot of time and effort into the game just to let it die when the zine folds. Ditto for something like a United league. Now, stuff like postal 1830 or postal Monopoly, I wouldn't care all that much to end the game prematurely. Randy's anti-Dip bias is showing here, I think.

Jim Burgess responds to this letter better than I could.

Deluxe Diplomacy:

(BRAD WILSON) I think TAHGC is charging what it feels the market will bear and what it will make money on. (TAHGC is not a charity!) If the \$55 is too high sales will slump and (perhaps) the price will come down. I, meanwhile, will hope to grab a copy at a convention auction (yes, I'm cheap, too).

(DAVID HOOD) To Mark Nelson: get a life! Like Avalon Hill is going to buy by opinions off! Can you discuss the relative merits of Deluxe Dip, or just engage in ad hominem? This is the type of ridiculousness that got Cal White all riled up. (Lucky for me, and likely the hobby, little jabs like this are less likely to get to me, or I would have exploded at the Brad Wilsons of the world long ago). Let's all try not to speculate on motives, at least in print, and try to stay on the merits of the argument. Fair enough?

{Yeah, yeah, let's not do that in print. I much prefer to say nasty things about people behind their backs! Come on, David, why do you think they call him Crazy Markie?}

Improving the BNC:

(BRAD WILSON) Ah, an old topic of mine. I wrote in Vertigo #95 "Who Needs the BNC" and I still generally feel that way.

Certainly I feel that way if we're going to have a BNC like Gary Behnen. I like Gary personally and enjoyed his company at MadCon a few years back but every "suggestion" or "improvement" Gary has put in place or offered since he's been BNC seems to have as its end result less work for the BNC, less value for Everything subbers, and less involvement. Every BNC before Gary managed to get numbers out quickly cheaply - I can't see how it takes six weeks - if not longer - to issue numbers. I remember Lee Kendter Sr. getting me a number in less than a week (and Lee was a publisher at the time too!) I think Everything should be a quarterly or at least have 3 issues a year IF we're going to bother with a BNC and a results zine at all. Let's either do the job right or not at all - especially with the absurd amounts of cash being shoveled to the BNC by PDORA and the like. I'd rather see every dollar of the BNC subsidy go to building up hobby recruitment. But as long as we have a BNC and such I think more energy should be out into it than Gary or Don Williams showed.

I really think the BNC should be a reasonably experienced hobbyist who is NOT a pubber otherwise and is familiar with most of the hobby. But Vince Lutterbie seems energetic and dedicated (especially to getting Everything out) so I bet he'll do just fine.

Fannishness:

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) I define fannish as thinking so highly of your own opinions that you not only publish them in your own zine, you send them out to be published in others, just like I'm doing now! This goes by

other names as well, like "contributing" and "participating", all deemed to be Good Things.

Variants:

(HAL DACE) Heaven help us from the Gunboat Gang - why do people want to play Diplomacy without the diplomacy? Give me a nice Tolkien variant any day.

(JAMES NELSON) Variants are a subject close to my heart. I've been interested in them ever since I joined the hobby, in fact (as documented in a previous Foolhardy) I only joined the hobby as I wanted to play Lew Pulsipher's Song of the Night (with hindsight, a terrible variant but as I was still role-playing at the time a most appealing one) in Mouse Police, a zine I still have fond memories of.

A favorite variant? I don't think I have one but I do like various ones (Timelords, Dipsomashy, Hardbop Downfall, Napoleonic Wars), preferably those with some novel feature which is used continuous through the game or something with an interesting concept (such as 1492).

The worst variants are one-theme variants such as Winter 1900 where the concept is used but a single time and then discarded. This is the most extreme example but there are many other variants where this problem is not so obvious.

The most interesting aspects of variants is the difference between the UK and US hobbies. More specifically how similar concepts have sprung up separately on different sides of the pond. Sometimes the ideas have crossed, other times the two hobbies are still as far apart as originally. The most interesting concept in this respect is the "large global game." Over here we play Mercator, over yonder you play Colonia. To my knowledge neither variant has crossed the Atlantic other than as an action by the Variant Banks. We have (generally) no knowledge of Colonia, you don't know what you are missing by not playing Mercator. Whilst the two are set in different periods and have different game mechanics (Mercator is a swifter more suited game, technically the better although I regard Colonia as more "charming") they are both similar in many respects.

A more interesting question for your readership is: Are Gunboat and two-player "variants" variants? What about a game where movement is determined not by the Diplomacy game mechanics but by philosophical arguments? If the answer to one of these is NO, what determines whether something is a variant or not?

{A variant is a game derived from Diplomacy, or derived from another variant. The movement system and combat systems are the defining factor, I think.}

Costliness of Publishing:

(STVEN CARLBERG) "The costliness of publishing. Is there anybody who isn't losing money?" If there is, it isn't me. I try to keep from losing a lot of money, and do manage to keep things at a tolerable level. At \$1 an issue and \$5 a game, though, I know I lose a lot of players to zines that offer free gamestarts and cheap subscriptions - and then usually fold before they publish a dozen issues. The continuing recurrence of these "toadstool" zines (badly nourished and quick to die) makes it tough to try to price a zine at a break-even point. Once PDORA has enough money to subsidize GMs, maybe this trend can be bucked.

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) I am happy to say that I am not losing money on my zine. The sub fee covers two-ounce postage with a few cents left over for samples. The copying is done free at work, and the labels are remnants from the computer room that would otherwise be thrown out. Phone calls to cajole orders from delinquent players are deducted from the NMR fee. So I'm only paying for electricity for the computer and some ink in the printer; these are a small fraction of my business use of the equipment, and are absorbed into my consulting work. I suppose one could argue that the hours I spend on War Fair could otherwise be spent with a client at \$25 per hour, assuming I had that many clients. Buy hey, it's how I relax! Who ever said hobbies were profitable?

(W. ANDREW YORK) I don't make a single cent on RW, and however, counting just issue postage and reproduction, I just break even for paying subscribers. Add in paper, ribbons, 'tween issue mailings, I actually lose a fair chunk of change.

For the record, my reproduction cost per issue is \$0.42, postage (US) is \$0.52, labels are about one penny. Thus, based on my subscription cost of \$1.00, I make a nickel/issue. I routinely have direct monthly costs of artwork reproduction (@\$1.25 - I don't get my special rate for this), printer ribbon (\$4.00 - half of the costs as I use the ribbon the rest of the month) and paper (\$1.50 - I use a lot when I do my drafts!). So, to cover the direct incidentals, I would need 135 paying subscribers.

When you add in indirect incidentals, such as my new subscriber letter (about \$0.50 cost), free copies of variant rules (SASE expected) which at a nickel a copy can be costly for a Youngstown or Colonia game, monthly "free" issue prize and GM screw-up postcards/letters things add up. I also, usually, mail at least four-five letters for people who forgot SASEs and print 15-20 extra copies of RW for samples (free for the asking).

I usually "lose" in the neighborhood of \$50.00/issue. However, I feel this is a worthwhile investment. I get an excellent return from my readers by their participation, the "pat on the back" letters and - most especially - their continued interest in receiving the zine (through renewals and new gamestarts).

If I was having a continual turnover of people, I'd have to reconsider my investment in RW. Obviously, I'd be doing something wrong if I was continually losing readership and having to swim against the current to fill games and find standbys. Fortunately, I'm not - though I keep my eyes out for danger signs.

(RANDY COX) About costliness of publishing: I thought out major reasoning for publishing WAS to lose money. At least on paper (when you include power, office space, etc). That way you get your money back manyfold at the end of the tax year - and you get to feed your gaming desires to boot.

But, in answering Levin's question, I'd say the only way I could break even (at my \$1 price) would be to use bulk mailing, which requires a subscriber base approaching 175. Otherwise, I'm going to lose \$150 per month. However, there are those who use the office copier to create the zine. If I did that (supplying my own paper) and bulk mailed the issues, my cost would drop dramatically (to about 45 cents per 32-page issue) and I could come out ahead. I guess game fees could be used to offset the cost, but that isn't my idea of how to treat subscribers.

So, in sum, I can't imagine anyone wanting to get into publishing with aims of making money unless they're going to charge \$4 per issue. And that's even more than Diplomacy World.

{Uh, Randy, I hate to tell you this, but you can't deduct losses from publishing unless you are specifically trying to make a profit. If you want to lose money, its no longer a business; its a hobby, and not deductible.}

(BRAD WILSON) Not losing money? Surely you jest. I have long kept the price of Vertigo very low (now at 45 cents an issue) with no game fees, NMR fees and the like so as to not seem intimidating to someone just entering the hobby - I like to keep Vertigo novice-friendly. Now this results in losing money. Throw in the trades and my "complimentary" subbers (those who got V when it was free - when I started to charge I assured the old subbers they'd not have to pay, as long as they were interested in getting the zine. There are - 7 years later - 7 of them) and there's more \$\$ down the tubes. But I wouldn't do it if I didn't want to, so there it is. That said, I do try to contain costs. Of late I have decided that 24 pages is maximum as it keeps postage to 52 cents (already more than the sub fee). Copying is a problem, too - of late I have used stealth copying (ie, at my work or someone else's), which is nice but not always possible. Computing how much I lose each issue would be truly appalling so I choose not to (but it is roughly \$65-70). I would find it difficult to reduce that by much - even when I pay for copying it's 3 1/2 - 4 cents a page. Postage is the real killer. As someone smarter than I has pointed out, the USPS's system of charging more every ounce makes no sense in this day and age; it costs as much to handle a reasonably-sized 10 ounce envelope as a 1-ouncer. Plus the USPS gives junk mailers huge discounts while hitting up individuals. That should be reversed.

I suppose, tough, that as long as people want to publish Dip zines that they will lose money - expect for those who charge what it costs them, which makes sense but hardly anyone seems to do it. Cal White did, for a while; ditto Phil Reynolds; Larry Peery's stuff seems to be at a "cost" rate; but few do this. Boardman has that \$30 game fee but that can buy you 25 (or more) issues with his sub-for-life-of-game policy. Not a bargain perhaps but not outlandish either.

I wonder how often zines are late because while the writing is done, games adjudicated and pages laid out here's no money for it to be copied and mailed. I know that's frequently my problem with Vertigo.

I also wonder whether any pubber loses more than you Doug!
{Hey, I lose in life! All other losses pale by comparison.}

(JAMES NELSON) Am I losing money publishing? Yes, but I ensure that my subscribers pay slightly more (3p-5p) over the cost of copying so that I break even on subscribing copies (total profit an issue on subscribers issues is about £1.20...). Trades are not essential in a strict sense, I don't need to trade with people but if I didn't I wouldn't stay in the hobby. I am interested in people and fanzines and not really playing games (I play games but they would not retain my interest if I didn't publish). I probably lose £15-20 every two months (i.e. per issue on trades, "material" costs [paper, ribbon, etc.] ignored), a small price to pay for a very enjoyable hobby.

(BRUCE REIFF) Yes, pubbing is very expensive. Most of the hobby pubbers treat this as their hobby and expect to take a loss. At one point, at my peak, I was losing \$150+ an issue. No big deal, I was enjoying it. The only people I know who make money are Bruce Linsey, who admits up front to trying to turn a profit, and Fred Davis who charges \$1.50 a Supernova for ones he got for free! I'd think anyone who received a couple hundred **free** Supernovas wouldn't have to charge 50 cents more for non-Mensans. Hey Fred, make it a buck for everyone, don't be a

snob!

(PAUL KENNY) Publishing Absolute! is a real killer. Not including things like cost of electricity, wear on the computer, cost of the Ben Franklin Bridge to get it printed, cost of ink for my printer, I lose a ton of money on the following - paper (500 pages for \$3.50), stamps (50 X .52 = \$26.00), photocopying is either free at my friend's in Philly (\$2 for bridge and approx. \$2 for gas) or another \$20 to photocopy at Office Max (used to be Office Warehouse). That's like 4 cases of Budwesier or 2 cases of Guinness Stout. Do you realize the beer I am not getting to drink? That's sacrifice. Hmm...now that I think about it, I should raise the price of Absolute!.

You Control PDORA's Extra Money:

(STVEN CARLBERG) PDORA has a \$500 surplus for the year. What do I do with it? I hold it over until next year, because once people know there was a \$500 surplus, funding requests are sure to multiply. If the surplus should for some unlikely reason continue to grow from year to year, then I'd propose subsidizing GMs. Maybe award \$10 or so to a GM each time he runs a Diplomacy game from start to completion. (How many games do you suppose *are* run to completion in an average year?)
{As you predicted, funding requests are up this year. On the other side of the coin, donations for the auction were down, and bidding is a bit slower than last year...but not too bad.}

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) I'd buy gold futures and leverage the \$500 into \$50,000 to pay for a TV ad to be run during daytime soaps to attract housewives into the postal Dip hobby. What better use than to recruit more women?
{Offer a free subscription to Cosmo for every Dip win?}

(W. ANDREW YORK) Simple, keep it until next year in a savings account. I would also open up emergency allocations (which should be done in any year where there is extra funds). A person can apply out of cycle for PDORA funds based on documented need. It would take 4 out of 5 members to ok the emergency funding.

This could conceivably happen in a number of ways. One example would be an existing custodian suddenly is incapable of continuing (due to financial disaster, debilitating illness, etc). Somehow the new custodian would have to find a way to transfer the material (possibly with unhelpful relatives of the former custodian) in a timely manner. Funds could be allocated to assist the new custodian in setting himself up.

Another situation, in the case of the Orphan Games Coordinator, there could be a flood of folds swamping the system. Of course, with a situation like this, the available funding could quickly be exhausted. Thus, the need for an emergency allocation.
{An Emergency Fund proposal was voted down right after I took over PDORA. If memory serves, that fund was to be used at the Chairman's discretion. If one of the Financial Committee members wants to propose a fund under the guidelines you describe, I'd be happy to include it for voting this time.}

(RANDY COX) If there's money left over, roll half of it into next year and pocket the rest. Seriously. Write it into any pseudo-official by-laws or covenants or inscribed stones found in Mt. Sinai, but let it be stated that the money should, in part, go to the person doing all the work.

{Hear, hear. I've taken it upon myself to use all of last year's surplus to buy a fur-lined sink.}

(BRAD WILSON) Well, my idea ties into my point above. I made this suggestion to eric Ozog, too, when he was discussing the disposition of Orphan money from the New York Game Board (over \$400 worth; take that, Sacks-haters!) My idea is for a Dip Bank.

I have thought it out a little - it'd go like this. Take the excess money and put it in an interest-bearing checking account. The PDORA committee (or chairman) would then act as a "loan committee" for requests from hobbyists to use that cash on a loan basis. For what, you ask? A) to cover the costs of publishers needing to get their games out (like me, say); B) to use as a deposit for a room/building/hotel for a regional Con; C) for temporary help of any "new" hobby service or function that has come up; D) help an already-funded custodian/service with unexpected and/or rising costs; E) other hobby-related projects that may come up and need "seed" money or publicity.

Some of the "loans" could, I suppose, be outright grants if the committee/chairman wants. Those receiving such grants would be encouraged to return the money if at all possible. "Loans" could be at 5%-7% interest or interest-free. Naturally there's no way to "demand" repayment except by the (surprisingly effective) tool of publicizing the welsher's default (after giving him/her all reasonable chances to pay it back in installments or whatever). \$100 would be the maximum loan.

Perhaps this is impractical; perhaps it's too open to fraud; perhaps I trust the good judgement of the PDORA board and chairman too much. But it's an idea that intrigued me.
{I just want to point out, as I have before, that the idea of an "interest-bearing" account is meaningless. I have to pay taxes on the 2.25% the money is earning, and there isn't enough to open a separate account for PDORA - I just commingle it with my stamp business, and have Mara keep books to show how much PDORA has.}

(JAMES NELSON) As regards to this hypothetical \$500, there would be a case in seeing if there was anything important for which part of the money could be used for. At the moment there is a need to encourage new blood into the hobby, a need which I suspect will always be with us. How, or rather where the money should be spent is an entirely different question: Garret received flak for advertising the Zeen Register in a role-playing magazine whilst I have seen people state that wargaming magazines are a bad place to advertise. The two most effective adverts I have read about were placed in two UK magazines - firstly one in a wargaming magazine (by Andrew Moss who publishes Age of reason) and another in the satirical magazine, Private Eye (by Stephen Agar), both of which I believe attracted over fifty people into the UK Diplomacy hobby.

What the money should not be spent on would be additional services. Who needs an Acquire Boardman Number Custodian or a Custodian of Racing Aardvarks Rating System? The "essential" hobby services should receive what they have asked for, subject to vetting to ensure that they are appropriate amounts and that cash constraints are observed, but no more as otherwise this would encourage waste and inefficiency. Any money not spent should simply be banked and the original sum plus interest made available for future years.

As a matter of interest, as UKVB Custodian I receive no regular "income" from any source, there being to UK equivalent of PDORA. However I can seek a discretionary payment from the Hobby Development Fund (held by Richard Walkerdine). I received £25 from

the HDF to pay for the UKVB catalogue I prepared on the understanding that subsequent packages were paid for out of the proceeds. This lack of an annual income is one of the reasons why the UKVB makes a profit copying variants (albeit only a small one) but due to three large orders the UKVB currently has a surplus of £75 (but a new catalogue and a new variant package are planned...) which I suspect is the most it has ever held (No money was received from past Custodians so I guess he ran at a loss).

(BRUCE REIFF) I'd send the money to me and send me to the track to make more....or not.

{Go for it!}

(PAUL KENNY) If I had a \$500 carryover I would run off to Rio or someplace where my money would carry me very far, like Toronto.

World DipCon Charter:

(STVEN CARLBERG) "Do you even care about WDC?" Sure. A rotating World Diplomacy Convention is a good idea and should be perpetuated. I wish it were being kept a lot simpler, though. Have a vote at each con on where the next one will be held, and that's that. The people who want the convention to be a success will ultimately be more interested than those who want the convention for other reasons, and that will be enough to keep the con out of bad situations - in general. (Bad situations - in particular - cannot be avoided no matter *how* many rules are thrown at them in advance. A couple of recent World Science Fictions Conventions, an outfit with more checks and balances that you can shake a stick at, serve well as horrible examples.)

(STEPHEN GLASGOW) For those who don't have lives outside of Dipdom, it sounds fine. I'm busy that weekend, so count the Qualified National Votes without me.

(W. ANDREW YORK) I have no comment. Just as during last summer's DipCon, I didn't vote on the location for the following year as I knew I could not attend. Thus, I kept my personal choice to myself - I knew I didn't want to impose my desires on others when I couldn't attend.

The same situations exists with World DipCon. Unless something surprising happens (I do buy my single lottery ticket for every drawing), I can't see myself ever attending World DipCon. So, I'm keeping my views to myself.

{But what about those times that WDC is held in the US, in conjunction with DipCon? Isn't it possible that you might attend then?}

(SHAUN DERRICK) Iain's Charter is, on the face of it, a comprehensive answer to the problem of selecting sites and administering WDC. Apart from the rotation and a few other minor points I believe the draft proposal provides a firm basis on which to work, though I somehow doubt that it has been accepted by the French hobby or some US hobby members. Iain is now resisting attempts to discuss WDC further until WDC IV, but that does not mean to say the discussion should end, far from it, in fact we have to establish what changes are to be made or if the Charter is to be accepted at all! Through the pages of Globetrotter I have voiced several opinions, some weak, some very good, on various aspects of WDC, and it is through this medium that I have received many communications from players around the world with an interest in the same. I don't deny that I have no "official" status in WDC, but this hobby is for all of us, and

"official" status counts for very little when dealing in our "anarchic principles". Iain has tried to play down my involvement because I have expressed opinions more strongly than most other people - a kind of threat to his "power" over WDC, being the ManorCon Chairman. I do want to play a part in the future of WDC, and I will do so, because I care about the preservation of the event, and stand for the principles of the event. I want a fair rotation system, a fair scoring system and to encourage players to attend WDC. I want to encourage the playing of Diplomacy so that the hobby continues to recruit new blood, to encourage competitiveness in Diplomacy tournaments worldwide. I have been influenced to a certain degree by the European hobby, but not blindly as Iain seems to suggest. Few English-speaking hobbies had any idea how big the French or Swedish hobbies were. Their opinions matter if we are to consider WDC as meaning the whole world. I know that the French hobby in particular is very structured, it is government funded, probably has more tournaments in a year than the rest of the world put together. The anomaly is that their structured system is an anathema to the anglophile Diplomacy population and this has distanced their hobby from the mainstream world hobby. For the moment we have to live with this difference, I don't want that kind of structure to determine the future of WDC, so this kind of opinion must be resisted, but we can still work together within the parameters of a charter of some kind.

I am not sure if you are aware of my 3-zone proposal for WDC, if not, here it is...Zone I Europe (including UK), Zone II N. America, Zone III Australasia. This rotation would be five-yearly: I, II, III, I, II, I, II, III, I, II... Transferring that to specific dates: 1995 Europe (France), 1996 N. America, 1997 Australia, 1998 Europe, 1999 N. America, 2000 Europe, 2001 N. America, 2002 Australia, 2003 Europe, etc...

Quite simple! There are only five or six countries that could successfully hold WDC, so let's keep it simple.

(RANDY COX) OK, I actually read the charter and most of it wasn't bad. The worst thing is Iain's slanted statement about absentee voting. After saying he included ideas with which he doesn't agree, he deftly makes it known that any mention of absentee/proxy voting will immediately have your solicited comments tossed in the trash. He'd rather take his marbles and go home than allow absolute majority rule.

So, the first and foremost change to the charter should be: 1.3 an absentee member who pays a \$10 processing fee (for updates from the WD Society) is also eligible to vote via absentee ballot with full voting rights granted those present [yes, this requires bids to be written and submitted to the aforementioned WD Society Newsletter - or alternately, delay absentee voting and tallying until well after the WD Convention]. Of course, this most necessary change requires a rewrite of 1.5 with omission of "absentee or".

Should the notion of absentee voting fail to be adopted, then a change in "qualified national vote" is essential to ensure that certain countries (US, UK, and any other country with population at least equal to UK) will always receive a full compliment of at least 10 Qualified Votes, even when only 1 representative is present. This ensures that, while still a world event, the nit-shit little countries aren't given disproportionate power due to a poor choice of location.

And the regions are all fucked up. Here's a more reasonable alternative: I - British Isles; II - Europe; III - Any country not in I, II, IV, or V; IV - North America I; V - North America II (any region of DipCon which was not the region utilized in site IV of the current rotation).

We're talking numbers here. If the US (let alone all of North

America) Diplomacy hobby doesn't make up 40% of the World hobby, I'm a Republican.

Oh, and scratch 2.8v - who gives a rats ass if WDC is "the" major event of the host tournament? If the National Association of Pig Farmers visits Des Moines, they're their own top dog. It doesn't matter whether the locals consider them to be "the" weekend event or not.

And one more thing...what's this thing with equating WDC to the World SF Convention? Apples and Oranges. One is a tiny subset of a larger hobby while the other is one super-collection of many smaller factions. We don't have a World Listopia SF convention or a World Extraterrestrial Contact Novels SF convention. If we did, its patrons certainly wouldn't take it so seriously, as WDC shouldn't.

(IAIN BOWEN) I won't comment on any comment that people have made on WDC, as it is my job to be neutral in these matters. But people can rest assured that everything they say is taken into account. However, I did notice the following typographical errors in the retyping of my copy: 1.5 "giving nation" should read "given nation", and 2.5 the rotation order is: 1995 Region II; 1996 Region III; 1997 Region IV; 1998 Region V; 1999 Region I; 2000 Region II; 2001 Region III; 2002 Region IV.

The original was written in real English, and Americanizations are down to the copytypist. I dunno over 200 years as a nation and they still can't spell. And if anyone has any comments, I'd be more than pleased to hear from them by the start of October by which time I'll be working on the version for adoption.

(BRAD WILSON) I only care about WDC to the extent that the North American DipCon not be interfered with or affected by WDC's selection process or charter. I am 100% against any shifting/region skipping/modification of our DipCon merely to satisfy as few hobby globetrotters or certain hobbyists' egos.

In that spirit - and in the recognition that the damned idea of WDC isn't going to go away, so I might as well get my two cents in on the topic - my comments on the charter:

1) "Imran's Protocol" - What a crock. Substitute "the British" for this phrase, plus either Larry Peery or Fred Davis. Now here's an example of Caruso's "back room" (albeit of a curry house).

2) The voting system makes sense, although there could be a problem when/if we ever get a proxy voting amendment passed in the DipCon charter. But not really - the DipCon proxy voting would apply just to DipCon, not to the World DipCon vote.

3) I notice that the '94 WDC - conveniently in the UK - will decide the '95 and '96. More British bias. (And I thought WDC was to be every other year? The rotation under 2.5 doesn't make much sense, either).

4) Why does the UK get a separate region? For that matter why does Australia? If numbers matter Canada should get its own WDC if Australia does. I think there should be 3 regions: Europe, (including UK), North America and everywhere else. Or, going the other way, 7: Canada, eastern US, western US, Australasia, UK, "Germanic" Europe, "Latin" Europe.

5) There is no #5.

(JOHN CARUSO) One thing I'd change in the charter is how to approve amendments. I'd suggest 3 WDC's in 3 years be required to pass amendments. I'd suggest the same system for approving the entire WDC.

(JIM BURGESS) (In a letter to Mark Nelson) Mark, This may be too late

for your meeting with Iain, but here is a first pass:

1) The basic idea of this section is fine and I actually like the idea of the "ten vote" maximum. One suggestion here is that you allow "national caucuses" for countries that have more than ten voters at World DipCon. Since their votes will be diluted, they may want to do some politicking based on who is really interested in World DipCon. People could be encouraged to abstain if there is no chance that they will be attending World DipCon in another country. The idea behind putting this explicitly in the charter (since it would occur in smoky back rooms anyway) is that it would be legitimized and thus would cause less dissension (perhaps).

2.1 to 2.3) The "language" thing would be another reason to officially have "country caucuses" at the beginning of the World DipCon Society meeting. At least one spokesperson who spoke the language of debate could be decided upon (although I might not put that in the charter -- too much organization). You desperately (this is my biggest comment) need to define what constitutes "a bid" since the Americans will always be tempted to bid: North American DipCon in year + 2. Must a bid include a specific site? Must it include a committee? A Chair? A scoring system? I suspect that will be a big bone of contention otherwise and you will always have "pass the selection to the next World DipCon". To me, you must have very loose guidelines based on people (i.e. three people on a committee and a process for selecting a site constitutes a bid) if you want to choose sites two years in advance. Otherwise, a one year ahead standard is necessary. By the way, having the Brits choose two sites this year (you know what I mean....) will raise unnecessary hassles unless you resolve the "what constitutes a bid" question clearly.

2.4 to 2.5) What happened to Region I in the rotation? Is the intent to pass on one round since you are planning to choose two sites this year (i.e. balancing the above criticism)? Don't engage in self-flagellation. This is what I mean by "Is Iain Bowen insane?" Why make the document so political? Make it straightforward and don't write all sorts of tradeoffs into it that will cause confusion later. If you do mean for the Brits to be kept out of one rotation, say so explicitly!!! I don't recommend it.

2.6 to 2.8) What does "Each member may vote for one bid to abstain." Is an "or" missing?? The 1/2 vote provision for "out of region" bids is awkward. Essentially that will limit an out-of-region bid to a bid for the current host country to get World DipCon back in two years. That may happen very, very frequently. I prefer the idea that the host region is NOT eligible PERIOD, and that bids from other regions be considered only in a second round if there are NO bids from the rotation region. The guidelines need two parts: what is essential to a bid and secondly what are "nice things to have in a bid" clearly delineated. To me, people make conventions and so people are the essential -- mandate a three person committee be presented to World Dipcon with a supporting letter from each member that can be publicized so that it is clear what these three people would contribute (e.g. organization, publicity [incl. e-mail], scoring system, local convention liaison).

3) This section is pretty unclear to me -- addressing my concerns above will make rewriting it more clear. I don't like the "organization" focus of 3.4.

4 to 5) No problem here.

Well, there you go. Boob

PS: I will begin extracting this for Foolhardy -- I agree, let's pass it around and make it an interactive document -- get Iain in here too.

(PAUL KENNY) Just because I don't care about World DipCon doesn't

mean it isn't a good idea. It just means it doesn't do anything for me right now.

For Next Time:

- 1) David Hood is looking for a new editor and publisher for Diplomacy World. You now control Diplomacy World. What changes do you make? Anything in particular you'd definitely want to keep?
- 2) Come up with one original idea to promote the postal hobby and/or the game of Diplomacy. It can be anything, but should have a low or reasonable cost.
- 3) Jim Burgess has commented on this before, but I'd like to hear what others have to say (not to exclude Jim, of course). Exactly what should a hobby custodian expect from the hobby when he or she takes over a service, and what does he or she deserve?

Next Foolhardy Deadline - September 19, 1993