

# BEEN THERE, DONE THAT #23

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SO LONG, AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH-HEADS AND ENTRAILS!

Been There, Done That was a zine for discussion of sundry issues and the lacksadiasical play of Diplomacy and its variants, and Railway Rivals, among other games. It was published by Tom Nash, 202 Settler's Road, St. Simon's Island GA, 31522, CompuServe ID # 74676,3310, (912) 634-1753.

Folderama time, boys and girls. I'm outta here, history, dust. Refunds will be included with this if you're owed one, trades are cut, and I will cooperate fully with the Orphan Games people in re-housing the games. I have orders on hand for all games, and will send an updated adjudication to the new pubbers as they are named. The RR games may be harder to place, as nobody really is doing that, so who knows, but if anyone's willing to help place them, let me know.

I'll eventually send out a final adjudication of RP Bourse, and may even keep the Poesiemeister going by flyer. No promises, however.

I was seriously considering this all summer. The hobby has become much less fun for me, in all aspects, in the last year. I've changed, and the hobby's changed, and we're not in synch anymore. I've been feeling that my free time, in such limited supply as it's become, had a lot of outlets that were becoming far more enjoyable than licking stamps, stuffing envelopes, and adjudicating games. One plan I was seriously mulling was re-housing some of the games, running out the rest quickly in a warehouse format, and re-emerging as a chat and lettercol only zine. To me, the games have always been secondary to the people, the exchange of ideas, and the personalities of Dip. Although those values are CLEARLY out of vogue at this point in time, that was the only way I could see continuing to be interested in pubbing.

In early July, I returned from a vacation, the first vacation in a few years wherein I did NOTHING related to the PBM hobby, and loved it. I clearly saw that my priorities had changed significantly in relation to utilization of free time. As Eric Brosius said somewhere and sometime, the hobby is actually a good way to spend free time when you have very small children, contrary to popular belief. The reason being that small kids tie you to the house. Especially at night. AS long as you're house bound, and, in my case, too tired most of the time to do something really demanding intellectually, the hobby keeps you busy, involved, and challenged. But my kids were getting older, more able on a daily basis to do things outside the house, active things, and I was finding that given the choice, bike rides, the beach, golf, horseback riding, etc, were all far more rewarding than anything the hobby had to offer me. In addition, I was becoming re-addicted to reading. Since age 7, I'd read several books a week. Until I got in the hobby. For 4 or 5 years I read about 6 a year. Suddenly I had the bug again.

On vacation I did attend a couple of days of Origins and felt a palpable sense that hell, Bruce Geryk was right after all about us, gamers as a group are a pretty sad and pathetic lot, and I was, horrors of horrors, one of them! It reminded me of being 15 and being on LSD on the New York City subway, when I had a vision, clear as anything, that human beings were nothing but giant slugs, dressed in clothes, and I was one of them! Gamers were freaks, and of course this is a gross generalization, but I hadn't seen such a mass of poorly developed social skills and utter self-referential narcissism in one place since, well, I don't know if I've ever seen one. And what was worse, I was one of them! AUGH!!!!!! Please, Lord, let me have a life!

Still, my plan was, get the games out of the way, and publish a non-game chaztine, something like a cross between the old *House of Lords* and the British zine *Greatest Hits*.

A few things made that impossible. First, 2 days after returning, we took a hit of lightning in a hell of a thunderstorm. My computer and modem were fried. Again. This time it was a total loss. The data on my hard disk survived intact, but the box was finished. Oh well, it provided me with the impetus to pop for a state of the art machine.... I now have a 386 33Mhz box with a 64K cache, 4 megs of ram, a 130 meg hard disk, superVGA graphic card driving a multisynch monitor, and the whole thing is breathtaking. But it took awhile to get, set up, and work the kinks out of. I'm up and running now, and am, in fact, typing this in WordPerfect loaded as a window in Windows while TAPCIS is downloading messages off CIS in the background. Wow!

More to the point.... I mentioned in the last *BTDT* that I was promoted and doing the work of two people, two busy, compulsive managers at that. Within a week of my return from vacation, my assistant Program Manager, the person who made my job bearable, resigned to go back to Grad School. Since then, work has been hell. IN addition, we're now dealing with an impending visit from JCAHO, the ominous and feared Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. As Mike Gonsalves or Pete Clark can, I <sup>How</sup> assume, attest, this is a special kind of hell that people in our field must endure every 3 years that means many 10-16 days for a period of a few months. The fact is simple... I couldn't publish a zine of any kind now even if I desperately wanted to. And I don't. So I won't.

I also have some fairly strong feelings about the hobby and it's direction. I won't bore you with them. They're not what everyone assumes them to be, I am quite sure. Mainly I'm concerned over a growing tone of unnecessary nastiness, uncalled for churlishness. This is evident everywhere from lettercols, to articles (in *DW* even), game press, and personal correspondence that I receive. What's going on? In the

absence of a feud to keep our attention, must we turn our aggressiveness inward and devour each other? When civility or good natured banter will do, why are so many resorting to just plain nasty, brutal attacks? Personally, I believe it is related to the North American hobby's major shift away from fannishness towards the games are all that matters mentality, but the argument is too convoluted to bother with. If you don't inherently see it, I'll never convince you of it. All I know is that I tend to gravitate away from folks who irritate me, and despite some wonderful people in this hobby, the irritants are becoming more numerous.

It's also a hobby founded on absolutely false premises as long as the Jim Diehl scandal continues to go swept under the rug, and nobody has the courage to tackle it publicly.

I'm outta here, history dust. To most of you, I say good bye and good luck, and thanks SO VERY MUCH, for the warmth, the joy, the pleasure, and the richness you've brought to my life. To a few of you I say *FUCK YOU!!*, and if your life was so very badly damaged by a late ZR and a slow BTDT, that you needed to insult me, degrade me, or humiliate me in public or private, and cannot understand that my family and job were always higher priorities, I see you as sad and so very, very pathetic. Get a life, or at least leave me the fuck alone.

I just used my computerized version of the I'Ching and asked if I ought to drop out of the hobby entirely, go cold turkey for awhile, or keep myself involved in a very few games, mainly in zines out of the mainstream. Just for the sake of, whatever, here's the reading I got:

24 RETURN (THE  
TURNING POINT)

(no moving lines)



The Judgment

RETURN. Success.

Going out and coming in without error.

Friends come without blame.

To and fro goes the way.

On the seventh day comes return.

It furthers one to have somewhere to go.

The Question

Should I quit the Hobby entirely, or keep a few games....

After a time of decay comes the turning point. The powerful light that has been banished returns. The old is discarded and the new is introduced. Both measures accord with the time; therefore no harm results. The idea of RETURN is based on the course of nature. The movement is cyclic, and the course completes itself. Therefore it is not necessary to hasten anything artificially. Everything comes of itself at the appointed time. This is the meaning of heaven and earth.

24 RETURN (THE  
TURNING POINT)

(no moving lines)



The Image

Thunder within the earth:

The image of THE TURNING POINT.

Thus the kings of antiquity closed the passes

At the time of solstice.

Merchants and strangers did not go about,

And the ruler

Did not travel through the provinces.

The Question

Should I quit the Hobby entirely, or keep a few games....

Movement is just at its beginning; therefore it must be strengthened by rest, so that it will not be dissipated by being used prematurely. This principle, i.e., of allowing energy that is renewing itself to be reinforced by rest, applies to all similar situations. The return of health after illness, the return of understanding after an estrangement: everything must be treated tenderly and with care at the beginning, so that the return may lead to a flowering.

See ya!