

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #103  
Jan 1987  
Publishing/GB

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Subs: 10/\$4.50  
Europe: 5/£2  
Circulation: 90

A fair amount of reaction has come in to the previous issue, none of which appears in this issue. At this point, I'm a little uncertain how to handle it. The two possibilities at this point are: 1. Next issue be devoted largely to these letters (and my response), with an edition of The Zine Column (and possibly a reprint if needed) to round out the issue. If that happens, subbers will not be charged for the issue --- you've paid enuf. One issue will be tacked onto everyone's sub. 2. Next issue will be an ordinary theme issue, with a very swollen letter column. Such an issue of necessity would have 4-7 extra pages to deal with the material. At this point, I'm not sure which way I'll go. However, if you have any comments at all, positive or negative, please do send them in, preferably in camera ready form, but this is not required. This is especially true if you've got kids --- the most interesting material so far is coming from people with no kids!

I'm sure nobody cares, but for the record, circulation listed lastish was about half a dozen too high, as I had entered some COAs without crossing out the old address at the time I counted it.

John Caruso (29-10 164th Street Flushing NY 11358) and Simon Billeness have organized a "PDO Relief Auction" to benefit hobby services. A catalogue is available from John which lists dozens of items for sale, some serious, some joke items. You send in your bids --- not the money --- to John. He notifies the winning bidders, who then send in their \$\$\$ to him, and they receive their prize from the donors. This is an efficient system which has worked in this past. The deadline is given as Feb 28. On the other hand, the deadline for submission of lots was given in the official flyer as 11/29. My submission arrived on 11/29, but John wrote me to say that it was too late --- the flyer was wrong, and the real deadline was actually 11/28. Don't let this happen to you ---- get those bids in early!!!!

DDs sent to Gordon Argyle (Robinwood Drive) and C.P.R. Greaves (Winston Ave) have recently returned, marked as moved, no forwarding address. Does anyone have new addresses for them? I'm especially concerned, as both are paid up about 4 years in advance.

## NEW ZINES

A few impressive new zines have appeared recently. One is Over There (Hugh Christie, 43 East Houston Ave, Montgomery, PA 17752 Subs are 10/\$6, game fee is \$5 per game, and Hugh plans to set aside \$10 from each game's fees to support hobby services). Perhaps the most distinctive feature here is the "Educational Forum", where "any aspect of education is open to debate", and issue #2 has some lively comments on drug testing, for teachers.

Blunt Instruments is an impossibly handsome zine from Bruce Geryk (5748 South Blackstone Ave #310 Chicago, Ill 60637). Subs are 10/\$10 (welcome to 1987, folks!). The first issue has Bruce discussing national politics, Slavic Studies, Macintosh computer, other wargames, a film review and more. The games in BI will be run using my GMing innovation, War by Automatic Pilot. This system, described in OUAD, is designed to prevent the first NMR. It provides that a player who submits orders for one season is considered to be tentatively submitting those same orders for the following season. Thus, instead of being NMRed, the GM uses the same orders again, and of course calls a standby for the position. Geryk will be playtesting the system and I hope others will too.

Jim Burgess started with a subzine, "the Boob Report" in the ill-fated NSWG, then later began Yes Virginia There Is a Santa Claus as a house organ for the US Orphan Project, which included some right interesting discussions. He has now started a regular dipzine, The Abyssinian Prince (100 Holden St Providence RI 02908. Subs 25¢/issue provided you contribute occasionally), which will be "published irregularly". It is billed as a "discussion and letter" zine, and the first issue has a very heavy emphasis on music.

Simon Billness (630 Victory Blvd #6F Staten Island NY 10301) has resumed publication of Rod Walker's ZIAMVIA, a list of people who have written Peery (about DW) or Simon (about the Zine Register) and thus are either novices or are thinking about joining the hobby. If you'd like to try and suck in new blood (or lost an address!) this will be very handy. Simon also publishes the Zine register and runs the NA Zine Bank.

A new zine which I haven't seen is PBM, by Roy Fleming 9 E. Eager St Baltimore MD 21202. He'll be running postal Dip and other games too. Likewise is The Adventurer Jason Russ, Stonehouse Road, Somers NY 10589.

## THE ZINE COLUMN #96

Jim Burgess will be resigning as "Janitor" of the US Orphan Service, and is seeking a replacement for a job which he describes as requiring "the patience of a saint, the instincts of a bulldog, and infinite tact." In terms of the social skills involved in doing it right, this is one of the most, if not the most, demanding in the hobby. You must deal with GMs, and even players, who may be "at their worst". There are few clearcut rules, and you must use a lot of judgement in deciding how quickly to act, what minimum standards should be insisted upon, and the like. There are two other people (Hanson and Langley) to help. If you like a challenging, essential job that operates largely behind the scenes, contact Jim.

Taking over the British Zine Bank is George North, 24 Wigton Road, Romford RM3 9HD England. You write to him, send him some postage, and he sends you a passel of zines to view as samples. American publishers seeking British subbers might do well to send him some samples; I see at present, DD is the only NA zine he's got

The 1986 award for Hypocrit of the Year has easily been won by Ed Wrobel. In the Nov, and again in the Dec issues of Politesse, Bruce Linsey was taken to task for reprinting an article by Louis Newman on the game "Empire Builder" in Bruce's EB zine, TRAX. Wrobel didn't mention that Bruce had written both Newman and Wrobel (the editor of P, where the article first appeared); had heard from neither one, and silence-means-consent, then reprinted it. Instead, there was the usual personal

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((Lets start with a starting, and specifically, something light. This is Richard Hucknall writing in Fall of Eagles #23, Sept 1978))

What else has been happening? The VNVS saga has dragged on and seems to take a new twist every few days. Following my accusation that Paul Ferkin was in fact Mike Jervis, both Mike and his side-kick Chris Farmer 'phoned me. Evidently they were at Brunts Grammar School together some 15 years ago, and the names of the 'variants' listed in the flyer related to people and in-jokes there at the time. However, they both emphatically denied any connection with the hoax. Then what should arrive but issue 1 of VNVS - a smart photocopied cover, but when opened up the 'zine' contained 40 blank pages! It was this issue that finally convinced me that Jervis was in fact the culprit because by the same post arrived a letter from him containing game-orders and both letters bore identical post-marks including a franking advert that was in dire need of re-inking. Some days later Mike rang again and this time he admitted all.

Apparently this whole episode was just a publicity stunt for the launching of a real zine - Ferkin - and issue 1 is now out. Mike will run standard Dip. at £1 and Intimate Dip. at 50p and the zine is photocopied and costs only 10p inclusive of postage! Mike seems to have a great sense of humour and I get the feeling that Ferkin could become a good read. Mike writes "Ferkin is not going to suffer a proper launch because I don't want it to grow too fast. If it turns out to be a half-way decent effort and people want to play and subscribe then fine but I'm not going to tout for custom. Similarly I'm not interested in trades because I don't want my house filling with piles of the tasteless pap churned out by a majority of editors at the moment. If I like a zine I'll sub to it and send its editor a free copy of Ferkin each time it's produced." Great Mike - keep subbing to FOE and I'll gladly accept F free of charge. Mike's address is 19 Portree Drive, Rise Park, Nottingham.

And you may think that that was the end of VNVS. But no! What should arrive a couple of days later - yet another version of issue 1 of VNVS. This time posted in London by an editor who wishes to remain anonymous, but provides an accommodation address of 17 Raleigh Cres, Stevenage, Herts. This anon. individual claims that he originated the hoax flyer and deliberately tried to throw the 'blame' on Messrs Jervis & Farmer, and claims he also went to school with them! Everything about VNVS is free - except that SAE's must be sent to receive it. I doubt if this zine will become a going concern but the novelty value is amusing. Now for the sting! I know who is behind this scheme. It's not a guess - not a case of putting two & two together - but a clear give-away. Mr Anonymous will find enclosed with this issue of FOE a suitable blackmail letter which I insist he complies with if he wants to keep his identity secret. Heh, heh, heh.

The final development - at least for this issue - was a 'phone call I had from Malcolm Brown. Evidently one or two people think he is the anonymous editor of VNVS Mk 2. He has asked me to mention that he is not connected with the affair in anyway. So I've mentioned it.

((A similar sort of stunt occured around the start of Europe Express, and I'll reprint that some day too. Note that Richard can't resist saying that he knows the whole story and you uninformed saps, don't))

((When a zine is in trouble, it is often a straightforward matter to evaluate what is going on. But sometimes (as I mention elsewhere in TZC) it requires some judgement. The following episode shows how there can be two very different views of essentially the same set of facts. Its should also give you some feel for how some publishers get into trouble, how they try to get out, and what it looks like to others. We begin with Richard Hucknall in Fall of Eagles #44, June 1980))

And now, number one subject for an editorial - Agar the incredible!

Once upon a time, not so long ago, there was a zine called Pigmy published by one Steve Agar. It was a good zine too, and was run fairly efficiently until Steve decided he had had enough and folded after issue 32. The decision to fold came after he had offered the zine in its entirety (anonymously) but received no takers, and then said he was folding (but didn't) - presumably as a practice run for the real thing, shortly afterwards. Not a very decisive person is our Steve!

Shortly after the real fold - incidentally the games went to NMR except for some variants which were quietly dropped - Steve decided he couldn't exist without the ego-boost of publishing and so began Here we go again. This zine was intended to be bi-monthly, devoid of games, and to be a genzine with articles about Diplomacy, Dip. variants, other aspects of the hobby and general chit-chat. Issue one of HWGA was pretty good but was treated cautiously by the hobby at large, mainly because the project was rather ambitious and that material for publication could be a big stumbling block. Nevertheless, response was favourable in general.

Now issue 2 of HWGA has arrived with the news that the zine is to change from a bi-monthly genzine to a monthly Diplomacy Variant zine running - surprise, surprise, games. Furthermore, Steve is making the magnimonious gesture of rescuing two orphan games which he dropped when Pigmy folded!

The overall effect of these events is that Steve has started games, dropped some of them and unloaded the others onto NMR, changed the name of the zine and now intends starting new games. This is not a very responsible attitude and I most certainly wouldn't recommend HWGA as a zine to play in until such time that Agar demonstrates that he really knows just what he wants to do. My impression of Steve is that he gets terribly enthusiastic and serious over his projects but with the impetuosity of youth this enthusiasm is shortlived and replaced by different ideas. Play in HWGA if you wish, but I'll eat my copy of issue 2 if Agar runs a Diplomacy Variant from start to satisfactory conclusion within HWGA.

What is perhaps more amazing is that Steve is refusing to let Pete Birks and John Marsden subscribe to the zine! Because these two will not trade their own zines with HWGA, Steve has returned their subscriptions and they will not be allowed to pay for the zine. Whilst I accept the principle that this hobby or ours is held together by publishers trading their zines with each other, I believe it is the prerogative of each publisher to decide for himself whether he wishes to trade or pay for a zine. Agar apparently thinks he has some right to trade because he is (sorry - was) producing a genzine. Although I had no objection to trading FOE with HWGA on the basis of it being a Diplomacy genzine (even though I would have sent two issues for every one received), I have no real interest in trading for a Dip. Variant gameszine. If Steve will still let me I'll continue our trade for the time being but may well cancel in the future. Dip. Variants are not really my scene, and as player, GM, and observer, my experience is that very few games are run successfully.

((Our tale concludes in the letter column of FOE #45))

STEVE AGAR : As you are the first (of no doubt many) editors to attack everything I have done since issue 29 of Pigmy. Admittedly, perhaps I am partially to blame as I have never gone out of my way to explain everything to anyone about the Pigmy fold. Here goes.

From the beginning of 79 onwards I was at a loss as to what I was going to do about Pigmy and University (believing as I did that I would start further education in Sept. 79). I thought that the responsible thing to do was to follow Iain Forsyth's example and fold the zine. Throughout the summer of 79 I searched, in vain, for someone to adopt the zine - so when the autumn came round I had to fold without having a standby editor ready. (Does this sound responsible so far?)

Then things changed. My teachers insisted that I should do 7th term and take the Oxford entrance exam - so the necessity to fold the zine disappeared. Rather than pass the zine onto Willy Haughan (whose zine looked shaky even then) I, responsibly, decided to continue publishing. So far so good?

Then TFPO folded and Malo asked me to complete the games - as far as I could see I had a fairly easy year ahead of me, so I didn't expect any problems. Issue 31 of Pigmy took some 65+ hours to produce - herein lay the problem.

Around the beginning of the year several things were against me. Firstly my costs rose dramatically. Then I got a job, was made redundant, got a job, got the sack, and am now doing shift work. Then there was the small matter of my engagement, and the total resentment of my girlfriend that she couldn't see me for nearly 2 weeks out of four. To crown it all, the sheer volume of games got the better of me. I quit. However, true to my responsible self, I ensured that all games were transferred, and that the outstanding credit was sent to Brian Creese in full (even though I had not and have still not, received the £47 TFPO credits. I may have to take legal action, but that's another story). The fold was done smoothly and there was only a hiccup of one week involved (while some zines are often over a week late anyway). Incidentally, over its 32 issues, Pigmy was never more than 4 days late.

Then we have HWGA. This was an honest attempt to fill what I saw as a vacuum in our hobby - I thought that it would be simple to type non-games material well in advance, hence spread out the workload, rather than concentrate it over one week. Unfortunately I did not expect a) opposition from the Marsdens and Birks of the world, b) lack of subscribers but not material, c) competition. The zine never came to fruition - it did not involve me enough to satisfy me, while, if others are to be believed, it wasn't very good anyway. Better to admit defeat now.

However, I still want to stay active in the hobby, and to develop the VB. A small variant newsletter seems the best way, for reasons given in issue 1. Now I find that the adverse criticism that marred HWGA before issue 1, is going to be turned on VAU before issue 1. And you say that I'm not responsible!

Re Birks and Marsden. I think I'm entitled to supply my zine to whom I please, don't you? After all, I'm saving them money! I have never said that I had a right to trade with everyone, merely that I have a right not to send my zine to those I do not wish to see it. Seems fair enough to me.

Bob Howes once said that he'd never live to see a schoolboy publisher produce his 25th issue before his 19th birthday. I proved him wrong! You say that you will eat HWGA 2 if I run to completion a variant game - I think it would be worth the trainfare to Nottingham just to witness it! Give me a chance, huh? I'm not an immature little schoolkid - I've been in this hobby as long as many of my elders, I have considerable (relatively) publishing experience, I can CM games accurately, and I have never been irresponsible, as you claim. There's room enough for us all. You've found your niche, let me find mine.

HUCK NALL:

((I've printed Steve's letter in full and without interruption as it's only fair to allow him the right of reply to my criticism in last issue.

Before I go through the letter point by point I would just like to say that I have no complaints about Pigmy. It was a good zine; it did run games well; it was scarcely late; it was usually interesting to read; and when the fold came the games that went to NMR did appear to do so without a hitch. My criticism was that Steve folded a very good zine, then started another in a different format, and in issue

2 of that announced yet another change of direction and his intention to run games once more. In effect unloading one lot of games and then asking players to sign up for more. Right, the letter :-

I don't think it was a particularly good idea to offer the zine to someone else anonymously - that was enough to put any prospective new publisher off. OK, so all this was of no consequence as you didn't need to fold after all. However I think it was very irresponsible to take the TEPO games when it seems clear from your letter that it was the volume of games that was the final reason for the fall of Pigmy. The other reasons you give for the fold are - let's be honest - just excuses. The cost should be passed on to the subscriber, and if the cost is high because you are publishing in litho then your subscribers should appreciate they must pay for the 'privilege' of a zine in this format. I'm a firm believer that a publisher shouldn't finance his zine from his own pocket to any large extent. As for the girlfriend, it seems that she's got you under the thumb already! How do you think we married publishers manage? I think I can safely say that I don't neglect my wife or my children even during the weekend of zine preparation.

HWGA was a good, if ambitious, idea. You never really gave it a chance did you? I still believe that you rush into projects whilst fired with enthusiasm without viewing the project in the long term. And just what is this 'competition' you refer to? What happened to this glossy variant book that you told me was going to sell by the thousand in book shops over the U.K.? I recall you being very enthusiastic about it during one 'phone call - and then.....nothing!

I won't go into what I think of VAU here as I've already covered it in the editorial.

Your attitude towards Birks and Marsden is childish. Of course you <sup>are</sup> entitled to supply your zine to whom you please, but it's blatantly obvious that Birks and Marsden received your silly treatment just because they wouldn't trade. Grow up a bit please Steve.

I'll stand by what I said last issue. I'll eat my copy of HWGA 2 before your very eyes at a Red Lion hobby meet if you run a Dip. variant from start to satisfactory conclusion within the pages of VAU as you intend to produce it. In that I know I'm very safe!

Steve, you found your niche in Pigmy - but I think you are still searching for something which you are very unlikely to find within this hobby of ours. Drop this current idea, go back to producing a Diplomacy zine which we all know you can do well, use your obvious writing talents and keep a strict limit on the number of games you run. In addition, keep in mind that the world doesn't end in three months time so plan for the future. That's my advice - take it or leave it!)))



((Our next set comes from Der Krieg. We begin with issue #34 (July 1974) in which the editor, Graham Jeffery gives some reasons why the issue is late. He then continues with the following:))

However, my primary excuse is simply that I'm getting more than a little pissed off with the idea of producing a zine. The only reader participation in Der Krieg is the sending in of orders; I get no press, no letter, no nothing, and this to my mind is not the sort of zine I enjoy producing. The sooner I can wind up production, the better. ((Next is from Der Krieg #35)) First, Graham reprinted an editorial by Andrew Herd from Hannibal, and then he responded))

The first event was the arrival in the middle of last week, of the many weeks overdue Der Krieg. It contained perhaps the most hypocritical editorial ever to appear in a British Diplomacy maga-

zine. Graham Jeffery, had the audacity to explain away his lateness by saying that he was "more than pissed off with the idea of running a dippyzine". Well, well what have we here but Graham going on to complain about the lack of reader participation in his zine - "I get no press, no letters, no nothing,". Perhaps so Graham, but I wonder why it is that other zines get reactions? Even the most mediocre of zines (even Hannibal!) get some form of reaction, and reaction is self perpetuating. But no, of course the fact that you get no reaction from your readership couldn't have anything to do with the fact that in my complete (except issue 15, but that isn't likely to make a vital difference) run of DK's you have not written anything (of interest or otherwise) in DK apart from games, the occasional (every tenth issue or so) half page book or film review and your very right-wing political views which produced a very large response and filled a very large number of pages of Der Krieg. Perhaps if you spent an extra hour each issue doing two or three sides of miscellaneous bumph that would produce the response that you look for. After all, your zine is the smallest in the country, and you cer-

tainly aren't game heavy, that ought to leave you with plenty of time to chat. So if you put some effort into your zine, then perhaps we, your readers may find it worthwhile putting some effort into writing article for your zine.

Jeffery: I should perhaps point out that the spelling, grammar and punctuation of the above is as it appeared in Hannibal.

If you are faced with a task that you find particularly unpleasant, do you complete it with ultra-fast efficiency? No, unless the task is of absolute necessity, you find something more enjoyable to do. Is it any wonder, then, that the last issues of DK took so long to produce? If all your readers produced were orders, Andrew, I'm sure you would soon start to lose interest.

I have repeatedly made attempts in the past to get press and other stuff to print. A year ago I printed a condemning piece about the Arabs, and also during the first election this year I was moved to comment. True, these both aroused some sort of comment, but it all died out fairly rapidly. I have also made several appeals for press recently. I perhaps get a couple of pieces for the next issue, but nothing for the issue after that. This surely cannot be any fault of mine, so don't start blaming me quite so readily.

I'll admit that my personal literary contribution to DK has been rather small, but if you look back at the early issues of Ethel, The Frog, War Bulletin after the start of variants, and other pioneers, you will not find articles and other irrelevant trash ((Well, with an attitude like that....)). What made the zine enjoyable to read in those days (and I include the early DK) was press and letters. And it was only later that articles appeared. Another reason I haven't written so much is simply because I haven't got the talent for pouring out inane drivel that seems to be present so much today, and anyway, as shown, such drivel shouldn't be needed to produce a good zine. ((He seems to be living in the past. I should add that, from what I have seen in DK, Jeffery didn't have much in the way of writing talent))

You complain of my political bias, and yet go on to produce a political commentary that would cover two or more sides in DK, and does little more than show you inability to grasp certain obvious facts. You complain about the policies of all the major parties, but come to no

no practical conclusion. That, to my mind, is the height of hypocrisy! Incidentally, if I am "very right wing", then Adolf and Benito must be off the scale.....

Richard Scott: You complain of not getting any feedback. I am also a publisher ((Fifth Column))... and I know what it is like. In about a year I have realized that one gets very little response from the players, but when you do, you realize that its worth that little bit extra. You won't get a great deal of response from me, and no doubt others, who write little press, and don't have time to write letters of a serious nature to GMs and the like. There are on top of that several reasons why I am not too pleased with the service you are giving:

1. Regular Game 74BV has had 4 moves in 6 months
2. "Flashpoint" ((DK's subzine)) "Downfall" game has had about two moves in the same time.
3. A little while back you announced that you would be folding.

If I had known those facts before I joined the waiting lists I never would have put my name down for them in the first place. If

you are looking for players, standby players, press and feedback surely the worst thing you could have done is to announce that you were thinking of folding. I accept the fact that you have at least kept us in the picture but then you can't really expect people to be pleased at the prospect of games being transferred to other zines with the resulting chaos and likely slow progress the game will make while this is taking place. I would wonder at anyone wishing to start a game in a zine which is due to fold in a few months.

If you want to maintain the readers and players interest one has got to provide a good service, ie a prompt and accurate zine. I lose interest in games that take ages to move and then when they do the reports are full of errors. I would not consider resigning from such games (though I did in a Bellicus game) simply because of the fact that I have paid a game fee and have been involved with it for several months and chucking it in seems rather defeatist. Don't get me wrong, I'm not criticizing your accuracy, or should I be, I don't really know, 74/6 has been error free but I don't know about the other games. <sup>74BV</sup>

Oh yes, you complain about people not writing to find out what has happened, well if you ask me it is you that ought to inform us of what's going on. Anyway, judging from other incidents publishers who have failed to produce a zine over a couple of months seldom have the inclination to reply to queries regarding the zines future. I just assumed you had folded sooner than expected.

In conclusion, I would say that you have caused the present situation to arise due to the points raised earlier. If you require players to remain enthusiastic and interested you have got to produce a prompt and efficient zine which the players enjoy receiving and reading. A disinterested player does not care two ----- about zine, editor or game.

((Until about two months ago, Der Krieg was published every three or four weeks, an issue arriving on the doormat about seven days after the deadline. There have been exceptions, due to outside circumstances, but then I am not, nor do I profess to be, producing a clockwork zine. Therefore, if one disregards the lassitude of last issue, your comments about slowness of progress of your games and about promptness of publication are rendered invalid.



Until that time I had been producing a zine with virtually nil press, etc, for about a year, if not more, so the situation is not a recent phenomenon. I would agree that telling the players that I am going to fold does not help things, but their apathy has deeper roots than that. You need not, by the way, have too many fears about the transfer of games to come in the summer. By then I will have found someone willing to take them on, and transfer should be immediate. The only reason the Ethil transfer was a little chaotic was that the last issue of Ethil, with the last game reports, took so long to be published. I hope that statement has the same effect as that on the FT Index when Labour announces it has dropped its nationalization plans.

You claim that reader apathy springs from lack of interest on my part. Rather, my disinterest derives from the apathy for a long time of my readership.)))

-((The discussion concluded on more upbeat terms in #36. As before, Jeffery is in triple Parens. Patterson was the publisher of War Bulletin))

ANDREW WALDIE      Congratulations on the last DK! The improvement was remarkable; in both printing and content. In fact DK's case is remarkably similar to that of Bolshevik Star. Star was also beginning to run down and John ((Lettice)) attributed this to reader apathy. Then I wrote him a letter suggesting that the fault was his and not his readers, and lo and behold the next issue of Star to come out was the best that John had ever produced. So it seems that a few complaints on the readers' part does a world of good in prompting publishers into a bit of activity!

However, once the publisher has made that extra effort to produce a really interesting and first class zine, the onus is squarely on the readership to respond. In Bolshevik Star's case they never did and now it seems likely that BS may fold. I would hope that the same didn't happen to Der Krieg, and that is why I'm putting these few worthless thoughts onto paper.

However can one really blame the readers of being apathetic, and indeed is apathy the correct term to use to describe the general reluctance of readers to contribute to Diplomacy zines they read? Personally I find that after a hard day's work at school and with all the many commitments I have outside Diplomacy, I just don't have the energy, willpower, call it what you will, to sit down and compose press, write articles and pen letters. I find it an irksome enough task just keeping up with my diploming and deadlines. Also the wide number of zines I receive makes it very difficult for me actually to enjoy them, because I have no time to read every word printed in them carefully. (Mind you, looking at some of the so called press that is written these days I don't think I'm missing much.) So both lack of energy and an inability to read zines in detail makes it very difficult for me to sit down and write material for editors to publish.

Perhaps I shouldn't subscribe to so many zines or play in so many games, but if I didn't I would feel that I was out of the mainstream of events, out of touch if you like. It's a vicious circle; you subscribe to everything you can, then you feel you are losing touch with the Dippy world because you can't digest everything that falls on your doormat, and then you subscribe to more zines to get back 'in touch', and so on.

Those are the problems that I face, and I feel that perhaps they are shared by other people as well. After all I'm not the only person to have many interests and Dippy surely is a demanding hobby for any player, so how do other people feel about their involvement in this hobby?

((I too find that dippy is consuming too much of my energy and time, though the new electric duper should greatly improve things. I've noticed that particularly over recent weeks my school work has started to slip, and with 'A' Levels this coming summer, that's one thing I cannot allow. We shall see...)))

HARTLEY PATTERSON This seems to be the season for apathy among players and GMs. Despite our gaps in publication we both have move missing.

I'm inclined to think nowadays that unless the GM can write most of the zine himself then it won't survive. Most of WB is written by me, including the press: the games that don't have press are those where I was the only one left contributing!

I don't really understand how Dippyazines with just games keep going. Most don't of course (in America anyway), it seems to be those with some other interest that survive. British players don't seem to have realised this yet...but then even the most atrocious US Dippyazines (like La Guerre) could always find players for new games!

Certainly if you don't enjoy producing DK then you should fold it. I'd be sorry to see it go, there are a lot of others I'd miss less.

((I really am cheered by the response my apathy gripe has drawn. Perhaps things are not as bad as they seemed. You only need to prod people in the right places, and behold, life!

((My previous disillusionment has been largely dispelled, and, assuming things don't revert to their former state, I certainly have no intention of ceasing publication entirely. The games will have to go, since I will not be able to keep up a regular schedule... but DK (or rather its substitute - I intend to change the name) will continue to haunt you for ever. Ain't that nice?))

((Alas, it was not to be. #40 proved to be the last issue of DK, and that was that. It is very, very rare for a pubber to vent his disappointment and resentment about a lack of feedback. I cannot believe, however, that the problem is all that rare. I suspect that the topic is somewhat taboo. This is the only extended discussion of the topic I can ever recall seeing. As we saw in the earlier exchange from FOE, the view depends on where you sit. Which is cause and which is effect?))



((For the last item, we turn to Greatest Hits #79, May 1981, and part of Peter Birks' review of Mike Alloway's zine, Pyrrhic Victory

The letters column is the closest to a 'Sharp' letter column I have ever seen. That isn't to say Mike does it as well as Sharp - he doesn't. But he has the courage to try. Its essence is that the editor appears to be writing to his readers, throwing in comments from people who have written letters in the previous month. Easy? Don't you believe it. I've tried occasionally, but it requires three abilities, two of which appear mutually exclusive. (a) a 'theme' or, if a long lettercol, a series of 'themes', set in the editors mind before he starts. (b) the ability to remember what each of your correspondents has actually said, and the ability to find it, all the time writing as if it were a 'conversation'. (c) the ability to write as if it were a conversation, with points occurring as you write, with an ordered theme at the back of your mind, keeping you on the right lines.

To achieve this is virtually impossible, and Mike doesn't; but he does come close. He starts off about himself, and readers' comments, then moves to comments on reviews and articles, and then onto other matters. He achieves (a), and comes close on (b) (but does he receive as many letters as I do?)(certainly not as many as Tricky did) but on (c) the gap between common mortals such as we and professional

writers such as Sharp becomes clear. The whole letter column does not flow. Mike actually intersperses the column with 'moving onto....'. This is certainly no criticism of Mike; hell, we all do it, and we all make it obvious. Mike at least tries to provide the 'flow' which makes a great letter column. It is no criticism that he fails, but a compliment that he nearly succeeds.

((The "Sharp" referred to here is Richard Sharp, who had a truly unique lettercol in Dolchstoss. It would not be unheardof for him to have over 30 contributors. Rather than running letters whole, he grouped the material by topic, taking excerpts for relevant letters --- which ran anywhere from whole pages to fractions of a sentence. He was an artist at weaving this disparate material into an organic whole. It didn't always work, but when it did, you had the uncanny feeling that people were all sitting around Richard's kitchen table, not only giving their views, but interacting with each other. It must have been a stupifying amount of work (tho with a word processor, it would be easier), but the result had a remarkable vitality. The success of that approach is the major reason why I prefer the grouped-by-topic letter column to the don't-chop-up-the-letter approach espoused by Linsey and others. Richard was of course darting in and out of the discussion, and generally getting the last word, but he was so good at it that he didn't come across as intrusive. Something similar is being attempted by Dick Martin in House of Lords. ))



(from page 2)

abuse, not only of Bruce, but of me too, even tho I was unaware of any of this till I saw it in P. The irony here is that not too long ago, the very same Ed Wrobel reprinted highly selected excerpts from my personal correspondence. He did this despite the fact that a) the letters weren't written to him. b) he never asked me or the recipients for permission. c) I told him explicitly in advance that he didn't have my permission, and d) the material was never intended for publication in the first place. Ed not only never apologized, but vigorously defended his right to run the material against the expressed wishes of the author. So this is a lot more flagrant than what Bruce is accused of. And when I wrote Ed to point out the inconsistency, the letter was refused (which is why you are reading about it here rather than in Politesse). Ed (who has just resigned as Editor for unrelated reasons) apparently feels that one point of view is enough; readers need not be troubled by hearing the views of those he criticizes.

Time for another plug for Once Upon A Deadline. This 200+ page handbook covers virtually every aspect of GMing and publishing and even if you'll never do either, you'll get a much better understanding of how GM/pubbers operate and why (Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St Apt #3, Dalton MA 10226. \$3) This has gotten near-universal praise. So far as I can recall, this is the most widely praised publication since the Lexicon of Diplomacy and Supernova. I say "near universal" because Dick Martin has said, "I don't like OOAD". If you'll recall, Martin originally blasted it before he had ever seen it as "it's a one man show, by Bruce Linsey..." Now that he's read it, he says: "There are more articles by more authors than I can count in the two minutes allocated to counting authors. Seemingly, every imaginable idea is covered from every conceivable angle. And that is my major beef right there." See? First he gripes that it's just Linsey, and now he complains that there are too many authors to even count. He goes on to say, "If future generations of

pubbers naively try to publish "by the book" rather than just winging it, that will be all of our loss." But there is no "by the book" here. When you cover something "from every conceivable angle" that's just the opposite of laying out the One True Path. The richness of OOAD is the wide variety of doors, windows, transoms, peepholes, shortcuts, and the like that are flung open.

## THE ZINE COLUMN # 97

And as this is a publishing theme issue, I'd like to comment on the Politesse reprint policy as set forth by Ken Peel, the Publisher and current managing editor: "No article or major portion of an article published in Politesse other than a brief citation may be reprinted elsewhere without the express permission of the author....It is simply intended to protect the rights of our authors. Many of the articles printed in Politesse are of sufficient quality that they could easily be reprinted or reworked for professional gaming publications (which, ehem, pay real money, as opposed to our token provision of one or two free issues..." Ken is of course entitled to his opinion. And I've seen other pubbers occasionally enunciate such policies. e.g. putting on a copyright notice or some such policy --- but I disagree, and I think such pubbers misunderstand what amateur publishing is all about. I think that, with rare exceptions, in amateur publishing, IT IS THE AUTHOR AND NOT THE PUBLISHER who has the right to erect barriers to reprinting. I think it is high-handed of a pubber to assert that right, and I think he has NO justification for setting reprint requirements, unless of course the author asks him to do so. There is nothing unique about Politesse; there are plenty of zines which publish articles on, say, Diplomacy, which, in principle, could be reworked for The General, which publishes Diplomacy material. The overwhelming majority of writers have no objections with their work being reprinted, and thus have no interest in erecting barriers. I know whereof I speak. In the 9+ years of DD, I have reprinted hundreds of articles. NOT ONCE has someone told me that he or she objected to his or her article being reprinted. Ken's policy is a bothersome solution to a non-existent problem. You have to take the time and expense to write to the author --- and you may have to make a separate inquiry to get his address. You then have to wait, possibly missing your publication deadline. Then the author has to take time and expense to write you back.

And for what? All of these unnecessary acts just because a publisher decided that he would erect barriers to reprinting that the author never sought. In the rare case where an author did want to erect such a barrier, he could just jot down "No reprints without my consent" --- which would take about 7 seconds of his time. Or "Copyright" or some similar message. My assumption is, if an author submits an article to an amateur zine, and he doesn't take the 7 seconds to jot the side note, then he doesn't care.

For the record, I have a vested interest in the issue. If all pubbers were to adopt Ken's stance, and I went along with it, DD would be out of business. Most of what I have reprinted has been from people no longer in the hobby, and for most of those people, I wouldn't even be able to get their address. And even if I did, it's unlikely they'd respond. The idea that people out of the hobby --- or dead --- might not be able to sell their article to a professional gaming zine because of an unauthorized reprint is absurd. And come to think of it, has anybody ever heard of such a thing happening anywhere at any time in the 25+ year history of the postal gaming hobby?

It doesn't head off any real problems. All it does is give the Ed Wrobel and the Terry Tallmans of this hobby a stick to clobber reprinters with. And I land up writing a grouchy editorial.