

Larry - Please see page 4. I am just fed up with your practice of dumping all over people without setting out the specifics. I have written you about this umpteenth times before, but nothing seems to have changed

Mark

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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## DIPCON CHAMP: HOHN CHO

That's right, I said Hohn Cho. Oh, I know what the final standings say: Edi Birsan, first....Hohn Cho, seventh. But by far the most impressive performance of DipCon (aside from Larry Peery's tremendous amount of work to make it a success) was done by Hohn Cho. In his 3 games of regular Dip, he had: 2-way, 2-way, win. That not only blew everyone else away, it was arguably the greatest performance at any Dipcon in History. I don't know of any person who has ever played three games and done no poorer than a two-way draw. Birsan, by contrast had a 4-way, 4-way and 2-way. Excellent, but not even in Cho's league.

Larry Peery said he wanted people to compete in more than one event, but Cho was no Johnny-one-note. In the beat-the-computer competition, he came in second, a bare 30 seconds behind the winner. In the variant, he was a tie for second (Birsan didn't bother with either of those events). No other player showed such multi-event domination.

Larry calls Birsan "the Outstanding Diplomacy player of all time." I'd have to agree. Taken as a whole, Birsan is the most successful Diplomacy player North America has ever produced. But Cho was the Champ at DipCon XXII. For a discussion of the controversy over how the scoring system produced such a dreadful result, see page 4. For a most thorough writeup of DipCon see DIPLOMACY WORLD #55.

This issue is an experiment --- its all essays written by me. Next month, we go back to reprints, which will still be the mainstay of DIPLOMACY DIGEST. But I may be doing more such issues like this in the future, so let me know what you think of such issues on an occasional basis. With DD's so-so performance in the Runestone poll, I'm more open to changes than I might have been.

174 people voted in the 1989 Runestone Poll, and the top 10 zines were Fiat Bellum, Perelandria, Carolina Command and Commentary, (turn to page 12)

# MILLER NUMBERS 1981

The Miller Numbers were established by the late Don Miller, etc, all the way down to the current office holder, Randy Grigsby. Two important principles were involved here. The first is that the office of the MNC is an independent hobby institution, not under the jurisdiction of anyone else. The second, is that each MNC appointed his own successor. That system, sometime called the "laying on of hands" had previously been used with the Boardman Number Custodian, and has also been used for the Runestone Poll and elsewhere. That procedure has provided a great deal of stability to the North American hobby, where it is not unusual for a custodian to take a job for only, say, two years.

The only person to challenge that procedure in any North American Hobby Post is Robert Sacks, who decided to set up a second line of MNCs. This was done long after he had given up the job of MNC. His reasons for thinking he was entitled to do this have, so far as I know, never been spelled out specifically. In TYG V, #6, Sacks says, "It is on my word that the line Walker-Leeder-Hyatt-Grigsby ((sic)) is a usurping line." However, this is just a conclusion, and doesn't say why.

Attention has been primarily focused by Sacks on how Leeder came to be the MNC. In that regard, Sacks says, "Leeder claimed the office of Walker to block being removed for cause under the original covenant: consistent failure to assign any number." Unfortunately, it is impossible to understand what Sacks is talking about --- who, for example, was failing to assign numbers? So lets have a look at those events.

In 1979, Greg Costikyan became the Miller Number custodian. This went along fine for a while, but then problems set in. In the April 1981 issue of Lord of Hosts (the MNC zine), Greg said "No new Miller Numbers have been assigned since Jan 1, 1981". He referred to a "hiatus of 4 months", and said he was looking for a successor. So far as I know, that was the last thing he published; the next issue was put out by the new MNC, John Leeder.

But in the meantime, what should be done? In Brutus Bulletin #92, Sacks said that under the Covenant, "Leeder as Vice MNC would have to advise me" --- this even tho it was perfectly clear what the problem was. Then there would be a "removal hearing". The covenant also provides for the Diplomacy Variant Commission being able to elect a new Custodian, altho it is not clear that the DVC even existed at that time. The Covenant refers to the DVC "(when it is reconstituted)". This is just the sort of hyper-political footdragging that allowed the Orphan Games Project to go for three years without functioning.

Meanwhile, Rod walker had put out Zimiamvia #1 on April 6, 1981 pressing Greg to get on with the job. Greg did put out that one last issue. But then in ARDA #6, Rod noted that nothing was happening, and that his letters of 26 April and 19 May had gone unanswered. He then wrote, "As of today, 21 June 1981, I intend to operate as MNC Pro Tempore." He emphasized that he wanted Greg to resume the job, said repeated that he did not want the post on a "permanent basis", that his goals were to clean up the backlog and to get a replacement before the end of 1981. He made it clear that Greg has "priority in this matter" --- but that Greg, for all MNC-purposes, had dropped out of sight.

But not for long. Arda #8 has Rod saying, "In early July Greg Costikyan designated John Leeder ((who had been Greg's Vice-MNC)) as his successor. I have a letter from Greg on that..." Note Rod's wording --- it is clear that he considered Greg as having the right to name his successor, and I don't know anyone at the time who said Greg didn't have the right to do this. Then, once the Canadian Postal strike was over, John got the records from Greg.

In HoL #17, Leeder says, "I do not see Rod's actions as a "usurpation" (as it has been described in some quarters) but rather as a legitimate emergency measure, justified under the circumstances and implicitly approved after the fact by Greg." John made a point of saying, "I am going to confirm the Miller Numbers which Rod assigned." These had appeared in ARDA #6.

This is consistent with Rod's description of himself as just acting "Pro Tempore". Rod's pragmatic actions, focused on the actual problem, had made life a little easier for all concerned

In that issue, Leeder says, "I flatter myself that both Robert Sacks' good relations with the PNC did not last too long. In Dec 1982, the MNCship was transferred to Lee Kendter, Sr. Sacks asked Kendter to accept his "covenant", and said that if he did not, Kendter could not use the "Lord of Hosts" name, which Sacks had coined. Kendter, however had very strong feelings about the MNC needing to stay completely independent, so he refused. Instead he started up the new MNC zine, Alpha and Omega. Trying to pressure Kendter into doing something he doesn't feel is right is a complete waste of time, I might add. Kendter then appointed Fred Hyatt, who again refused to have anything to do with the Covenant. During the term of either Hyatt or Kendter (I don't know which), Sacks appointed "Karl Alaric" c/o Sacks' own address, as the new MNC. When "Karl" stepped down, Julie Martin was appointed, although whether by "Karl" or Sacks is unclear. That is, I don't know whether in this new line, Sacks makes all the appointments, or the current office-holder does. He has used the passive in this regard: "Julie Martin ... was appointed".

In order for the Alaric-Martin line to be legitimate, then of course the Leeder, etc line must be illegitimate. This is exactly what Sacks has claimed. He has called the Alpha and Omega zine a "pretend service zine" (Rebel #43), and called the Leeder, etc crew "a line of usurpers". But to do that, he has to show that Leeder wasn't the legit MNC.

But he has two problems in that regard. The first is that Greg Costikyan sent John the MNC files and appointed him successor. Sacks has never explained why Greg didn't have the right to do that. Second, Sacks himself treated Leeder as the MNC because, as stated in LoH #17, he sent Leeder the MNC treasury of \$105US, in the form of a cheque from Sacks. Thus, while Sacks now says (TYG V, #6) "I never recognized the title or legitimacy of the Variant Banks' pretender to the MNCship...", when Leeder actually took over, Sacks cooperated --- he did not, for example, forbid him the use of "LoH". At any rate, I have not seen any explanation from Sacks as to why Costikyan couldn't appoint Leeder, or why, if Leeder was a usurper, Sacks sent him the \$\$\$.

Of course, if Sacks can set up a fresh line of MNCs on his own, then of course any former MNC could set up a new line of MNCs, etc. There is a side issue also relevant here: the "Covenant." I don't want to get into the contents of this (which I discussed briefly in DD #119). Sacks calls it a "constitution" for the MNC, which is a fair description. Sacks, the 5th MNC, created this document. Sacks has said that "The present Covenant is unsigned". However, Brutus Bulletin #92 has Costikyan's signature, dated June 15, 1979, and I have no idea of how many versions of "the Covenant" there are. He also says, "I have never required anyone to sign the covenant, just to agree that it governs the office...." (TYG V, #6). That seems a rather fine distinction

At any rate, Leeder was later to say that he couldn't consider himself bound by a document he never agreed to, and that Greg never even brought it up with him. I think, but I'm not certain, that the problem Leeder had with it was its compromising his independence. The document has an impeachment procedure, and the person who decides whether or not to hold a "judicial hearing" is the Registrar of Projects, a position to which Sacks appointed himself.

The reason I mention the covenant here is that Sacks may in some way be tying this "usurper" business to the covenant, I don't know.

You might wonder why I'm covering this topic at all. First off, its hobby history, one of my favorite topics. As an @rchivist, I love to pull this stuff together, and try to make a coherent story.

Second, and more important, it sticks in my craw when people try to re-write hobby history, and base allegation on events which never actually occurred. I have in past issues of DD repeatedly discussed Sacks' penchant for describing non-existent events, and he's not the only one. He has done this particularly with regard to the variant hobby. Thus, when he writes, "... the NAVB pulled repeated coups..." (HoL #15), I'm going to point out that this is a complete figment of his imagination. Even if there were a coup (just exactly what he considers a coup is impossible to say), it would be done by people, not a collection of variant games. There are always new people entering the hobby, and if they see Sacks writing "Hyatt ... doesn't assign Miller Numbers" (again from HoL #15, when Hyatt was the MNC), then if no one contradicts him, the falsehood will set in with a new generation of hobby players.

But most important of all is the people. They don't deserve this kind of treatment, and I don't care whether they are still in the hobby or not. Kendter and Leeder and Walker and all the rest worked hard to straighten out the mess caused by Costikyan's absquatulation. They don't deserve to be relabeled as usurpers and all the rest, just because they wouldn't go along with Sacks' "covenant". I don't really care how spiffy the Lord of Hosts is that Sacks publishes and Julie Martin edits. If the legitimacy of that operation is based on rewriting hobby history, and besmirching the legitimate work that Leeder and the rest of them did, its not worth it.

Its time Sacks and his supporters faced the historical facts of the matter. Costikyan appointed Leeder his successor and had every right to do so. Sacks treated him as legitimate by sending Leeder the MNC treasury. Julie Martin has no business calling herself the Miller Number Custodian, and Sacks has no business appointing a new line of MNCs based on discrediting the old.

## THE ZINE COLUMN # 115



The absolute worst editorial I have seen in 1989, and indeed, one of the worst I've ever seen in this hobby, appears in Diplomacy World #55, page 4. It is such a classical compendium of unfairness that it deserves special comment, for Larry Peery's techniques here are unfortunately not unique to him. almost

The editorial, which runs <sup>^</sup> a full page, criticizes the DipCon XXII review which appeared in Passchendaele. Altho Larry couldn't be bothered telling us the issue, SEE P #93, page 42, if you want to check it out.

The most egregious fault with this editorial by Larry is that its impossible to tell what specifically was wrong with the contents of the DipCon XXII review. He does say it was "drivel", and he does admonish Guerrier to "get your facts right" --- altho even here, its impossible to be sure whether this refers to the specific review, or P in general, since there is a great deal of criticism of the zine itself. But even if it does refer to the DipCon XXII, its hopelessly vague. What facts did Francois actually get wrong? Its impossible to tell. If Larry, or anyone else, thinks that we're going to agree with him telling us something is awful, without any specifics, he's wrong.

So what does Larry do to fill up the page? A great deal of it is that old standby technique by people in the hobby who can't buttress their argument with quotes and facts: Larry appoints himself an expert on the subject of Francois Guerrier, puts on his Magical Mindreading Helmet, assigns various base motives to Guerrier, and leads us on a tour of Francois mental processes. I've been a target of that sort of thing on more than one occasion and it stinks. In this case, it leads Larry to say things about Francois that are completely preposterous and grossly unfair.

Larry's central thesis is that Guerrier "has been after me, and DW, and now DipCon" because when Guerrier returned to the hobby after a messy fold, he asked Larry for a favorable review, and Larry told him he'd only consider reviewing it after past debts were cleared up, and "he kept his nose clean for a year". Larry presents not a shred of evidence that this is what has motivated Guerrier. We're just supposed to take the word of this self-appointed expert. "He expected the hobby to welcome him back with open arms no doubt!" Well, I saw the issues of P that he put out when he returned, and I saw no such expectation. I saw the usual collection of apologies, offers to pay past debts, discussions of the fold itself and of a publisher's responsibilities, etc. He made direct references to the fact that some of the people whom he really pissed off (e.g. Ron Brown and Bandolf Smyth) were still around. It was perfectly clear that he knew he'd have problems in returning. He said he wanted another shot at it, and laid ambitious plans for the future. This expectation that Larry is talking about is a figment of his imagination.

Or take this gem: "I've been ignoring him, and his zine, for just as long as he's been harassing me --- a fact that must really gall him, since if there's anything he can't stand, it's being ignored." This is rather troubling. Pass's probationary period was supposed to last for "a year" --- but that ran out in Nov 1988. So why did it last longer? Because he was "harassing" Larry. It seems to me that a flagship zine ought to be above that sort of petty retaliation. And what did the harassing specifically consist of? Its just a sweeping accusation of misconduct. And how would you, dear reader, like to have Larry Peery tell the hobby what really galls you? And instruct the hobby as to what you really can't stand? In this case, it doesn't even make sense. Pass is a big zine with a relatively low circulation --- in the 30s, and that doesn't bother Guerrier. Indeed, his occasional threats to prune the deadwood, and his recent hike in sub rates seem to indicate he doesn't really mind being ignored by, say, 97% of the hobby.

Or take this: "P came in 6th in this year's Runestone Poll (a fact he took great delight in telling me, I'm sure); while DW came in 36th (which I'm sure delighted him even more)." Who appointed Larry Peery to inform us what delights Guerrier? Couldn't we just wait to hear this from Guerrier? In fact, Guerrier's writup of the Poll results in P #93 discusses about a dozen zines --- but not DW.

Peery mentions over and over that Guerrier relied on an "informer", as Guerrier didn't actually attend. But what's the big deal? People in this hobby routinely discuss events that they didn't see with their own eyes, and, while its risky, its not exactly a crime. It seems to have bothered Larry that the informant wasn't named ("So, of course, there is no way to prove who actually said what, or what they really meant") But strangely enough, Larry doesn't name him either, even tho he says it took him very little trouble to figure out who it was, and to confirm. So this criticism would seem to apply equally well to Larry. Indeed, more so. While Francois didn't criticize the unnamed source, Larry most certainly

did, and I think that places a greater burden on him to be specific. I have complained repeatedly about the widespread hobby practice of criticizing specific people without naming them. (P#94 says it was Ron Cameron, a member of the DipCon Committee) And finally, there is an imperious obliviousness to the editorial. For example, "Francois ... had to go out and stir up as many members of the Canadian hobby as he could against me and DW. The amazing thing is that some, not all, people fell for it..." The amazing thing is that Larry seems to be oblivious to the fact that much of his troubles in the Canadian hobby are of his own making. Here I refer specifically to his somewhat disdainful attitude toward Cal White. I'm sure this had far more effect than anything Guerrier has said.

Or this: "So all I have to say to Francois is get off my case, get off DW's case." This is a free hobby, and we criticize whoever we please. Larry has no grounds to insist that anyone not be permitted to criticize DW. Or this: "As for his informant, it's a pity he didn't have the guts to send his comments for this issue, where they belong, and save me some work." Who gives Peery the first publication rights to any comments about DipCon? People send stuff where they want. Curiously enough in the same issue Larry touts a number of zines, (e.g. benzene) which have DipCon commentary already printed, and they don't get criticized for not putting that stuff into DW instead.

And there's one final shot in the foot for Larry. He says he doesn't "intend to give him the right of reply in DW." Wonderful, Larry says P has "lies" and "drivel" and that Francois is "in the mud" and has been "harassing" him and all the rest, but no, Francois can't reply. Doesn't Larry --- and others who have taken this stance --- understand that this makes him look worse than the person he is criticizing? If you are being unfair clearly to the person you're criticizing, who is going to believe your criticisms are valid? And if someone wants to hear Francois' side of it, I guess they's have to write off to Francois to get a sample of P. Is that what you want, Larry? (See P#94 for this)

Lastly, lets have a look at Guerrier's actual review. I'll interleaf my own comments about the scoring system, since this is a topic of great interest to me. At least three major tournaments have used my scoring systems, and I've written many times on the topic.

First, he credits Larry with having found a good convention site. He notes that a players score is 20% from a minor events, at 40% from each of two major events. The minor event discussed is Peery's "Board Exam", which was 35 written questions. Guerrier notes that most pertained to the postal hobby: "there's nothing like making local or electronic mail players feel right at home." This is a legitimate point. By my count, 18 of the 35 questions are going to be pretty much out of reach of non-postal people. And some were ridiculously inconsequential. For example, in what issue did Caruso drop the "Whitestonia" from the zine's title. I mean, who cares? There was also a question calling for knowledge of Kathy Caruso's birthday, another for John Caruso's birthday, and yet another for -- you guessed it -- John and Kathy's anniversary. For those of us who are not exactly Caruso groupies, this was a little much. The

idea of a written quiz is quite imaginative. But asking people whether AH's dippy mapboard is 23 inches or 24 inches long??? Really!!

One of the major events was "Computer Diplomacy" -- a person plays one country, the computer program plays the other 6. Even Larry has noted that the program has "substantial defects", and Guerrier runs thru some of them: Its so inept as to order "Edi-Cly" in S01, to have Italy not go for any SCs in 1901, and one player got to 22\* centers in 13 minutes. Its just not a suitable vehicle for a competitive tournament. Moreover, speed counted in the scoring, and you only had 2 hours

, so a significant edge could go to a person just because he was a fast typist. There was also a gunboat event, but really, the computer dippy is a very similar experience to playing gunboat (no diplomacy Diplomacy). And if you don't like gunboat .... there it is .... twice. (DW#55 says:20)

Cuerrier then noted that the #3 player was eliminated from both of his regular games. This was John Galt, and Cuerrier should have said from his two independent games. He was eliminated in 1904 as England, and in 1906 as Italy, never having gained a SC, but in his team game he survived with 2 centers. Cuerrier sarcastically remarks on the "pivotal impact" of regular diplomacy that would allow a third place finish with such a miserable record, and I would have to agree. A player with such an awful record at 3 games of regular diplomacy simply doesn't qualify to finish third.

Part of the reason that this and MANY other anomalies occurred is that the system of scoring, to its great discredit, gave enormous amounts of points for absolutely wretched performances. Take, for example, Nick Marks. In his team game, he was eliminated in 1903, which is about as bad a performance as Diplomacy gets. But he was richly rewarded. He got 30 points --- almost half of his 64 total points. Steve Cooley was eliminated in 1904 --- and he also got 30 of his 84.5 points for that terrible result. Those were crucial points for Steve --- he finished 6th because of them --- without them, he would have finished 21. By contrast, consider the unfortunate Tim Moore. He had a very good showing in his team game --- 8 centers, tied for most, in a four way draw. And what did he get --- zero points! Eric Hyman was also in a 4-way draw and got a miserable 2.1 points. What kind of scoring system gives people eliminated in 1903 and 1904 30 points and someone with a 4-way draw and tied for most centers nothing? The reason was that Moore and Hyman happened to be on teams which did poorly and Marks and Cooley happened to be on teams which did well. The most extreme case of this was Don Williams. He survived with one center. For this he got 37 points --- and that's even better than some people had with 2 way draw! That was over half the 70 points he total with, which gave him 16th. But poor Bob Aube got a two way draw which netted him only 16 points. If he had gotten, say the 37 points that Williams "earned" for surviving with 1 center, and the windfalls that Marks, Cooley and McKee received had been scaled back, Bob Aube wouldn't have finished 20th. He would have finished about 5th or so.

This wasn't the only gross inequity to arise from Peery's scoring system. Lets look at the top two performers in the regular (individuals) competition; it took two games:

Hohn Cho:	2-way draw	Win	40 points
Nick Reliaeff:	2-way draw	3-way draw	39 points

Imagine, the difference between a win and a three way draw comes to one measly point! He was the only person to win a game of regular dippy in the entire tournament, and it was treated virtually the same as a three way draw. That should give you some idea why Cho didn't win the tournament. And keep in mind that while Cho got 40 for win plus 2-way, Marks got 30 for a 1903 elimination.

The gunboat tournament could also have used some work in its scoring. Reynolds got 3 points for 6 centers in a 7-way draw, but Woodruff had only 5 centers in the same draw and got zilch. A single center was worth three points, yet, as above, win vs 3-way draw was worth just one extra point.

But the most preposterous result came from the computer tournament. The guy who came in dead last, the only one who couldn't beat the computer even in two hours --- wasn't even close --- got 33 points! This is no trivial matter. This guy finished 8th, with over 40% of his points coming from finishing dead last. He should have finished 26th

Cuerrier then wrapped up the criticism of the scoring system with "the source was well-informed and clearly frustrated by the lack of consultation amongst organizers. Larry ran the show, heeding little of the advice dispensed by his colleagues on the committee. He did it his way."

I don't know what kind of advice Larry did get on the scoring system, but the result was a travesty. It gave huge piles of points for miserable performances and thereby buried the better performers. Larry's bitter attack on Cuerrier's commentary won't change that at all. Larry needs to come to terms with the fact that the scoring system was a failure, and that in this hobby, failures get criticized. And the rest of us can get some pointers on how not to write an editorial by having a look at DW #55.

## AND IN THIS CORNER...

Ever since the hobby had more than one zine, topics for discussion have popped up wherever the editor wanted to discuss the topic. Frequently these came from readers, who sent in letters the editor chose to run. The system has worked well. But in these days with enormous numbers of zines, there are some drawbacks.

If a topic becomes hot, it could easily be discussed in a half dozen, or even more than a dozen zines at once. If you want to contribute to the discussion, that causes a real problem. You land up writing a similar letter over and over and over again. What fun is that? Moreover, the issue might be discussed in some zines you aren't even aware of. The same problem occurs for the reader. Furthermore, if, say, Berch is sending out the same line of arguments to several zines, and a given reader is getting several of those, the whole thing gets pretty repetitive repetitive repetitive. I have run into this problem both as a writer and as a reader.

There is also an unrelated problem: these discussions can be stretched out over long periods of time, as the rebuttals and rejoinders come in. This is especially true if the zine for some reason doesn't run the letter column every issue, or if the letter column sometimes gets overloaded and material has to be bumped, or if the zine doesn't come out monthly. The reader can easily lose his train of thought.

I want to propose a partial solution to those problems. I say partial because all the zines which do the above can and will continue to do so, and in the same way. But I think the hobby could also use a "debatezine"

Here's how it could work. The editor selects the topic and the two protagonists. One writer will be pro, and <sup>the</sup> writer, con. Having checked with the two writers, he then sets a deadline date. On that exact day, each of them mails two copies of his initial statement: one to the editor, one to the other writer. In this way, each prepares his statement without seeing the other's work. Once the editor gets these, he sets a second deadline date for the rebuttals. Again, these are mailed on the same day --- like Diplomacy, this is done with simultaneous movement. The editor then packages all 4 statements into a single issue of the debate zine, and mails it. The reader then gets the whole package, all at once. Now, lets have a closer look at the pieces.



Idea/ly, the editor would be someone reasonably well known and knowledgeable about the hobby and its personalities. Most important, the person should be considered reasonably non-partisan about things, and able to use good judgement (clearly, this person isn't going to be Berch!).

The topics and the writers are a related issue. I suspect that in some cases, the editor will get a letter saying, "Joe X and I agreed to debate the following topic" Of course, the editor will still have to decide whether this is a good choice of topic, and whether these are suitable people to discuss it. In other cases, the editor would throw out topics, which either he/she came up with, or suggested by readers, and list them either in the zine, or in various zines in the hobby, and see who comes forward. I think, by the way, that a fair number of writers are not going to be interested in such a format. Debating is a fairly competitive format, and some writers will avoid it for just that reason. Some are just not going to want to put their egos on the line in such an explicit manner. And some aren't going to want to take the time to organize all their ideas, etc. Many writers will prefer just to write for zines where they are already playing, or for letter-col zines where they are good friends with the editor. But I think there are enough writers to keep this going.

The editor will have to set a maximum length, and that will require some judgement; I suspect the best way would be to suggest a maximum to the two writers, and see if it seems reasonable to them. For the initial statements, I think most of the time 1-2½ pages will be selected, as a maximum length. Of course, the editor would have the option of simply not setting one, and letting the writers take whatever space they need to make their points, but this is a riskier approach. The rebuttals would perhaps run ½ - 1½ pages but again, the editor would need to check and see what the writers want. I think in most cases a single round of rebuttal would suffice, but a second round could appear if needed, and all were agreed to have it. Hopefully, the material would be supplied in camera ready form.

Would there be readers for such a zine? I should think so! I think they could expect a sharper discussion of the issues, with a refreshing absence of namecalling, etc. Being able to take in the whole thing in one sitting would be a plus too.

I don't see such a debatezine as in any way harming the other zines in the hobby; things are still going to be discussed that don't and that do, appear in the debatezine. The zine could have a lettercol to provide a followup discussion, but I don't think that would be a good idea, necessarily. There's plenty of other lettercol zines, and indeed, if this zine were really successful, it could provide a common frame of reference. You could have a vote afterwards of the readers, either in terms of whether they agree or disagree with the proposition, or who did the better "job", but even that's an optional feature. And who knows, maybe the hobby itself would benefit by having the issues clarified in the way that sometimes a formal debate can do.

Topics? I should think that both classical and topical ones can be used. Here are some that I'd suggest, but as time goes on, new topics would always come up.

1. Should the players at a diplomacy tournament be told the scoring system or should it be kept secret?
2. Should Grigsby or Martin be considered the MNC (I'd love to debate that one with Robert Sacks!)
3. Would the game have been better designed with Italy beginning with Fleet Rome?
4. Is there a distinctly "Canadian" style in the hobby?
5. Would the British style of prophetic builds and retreat produce a better game?
6. Does the Runestone Poll fairly reflect the views of "the hobby"?
7. Should the entire hobby have a say in the location for DipCon
8. (The subject of the next item in this issue -- see below)

I'm sure other people will come up with other topics which hadn't even occurred to me.

Is anyone interested in either getting such a zine, or putting it out? If so, contact me. I'll try to act as a facilitator. Lets see if this idea will fly.

# LETTERS

In the last issue of DD, I described the rather startling switch of the zine KGO-ZD from Hopcraft to Carrier, along with the latter's publication of the Summer 1989 issue of KGO-ZD. A remark by Brad Wilson to the effect that Hopcraft couldn't actually do that caused me to write Sacks, asking him, for example, if he ever told Hopcraft that Hopcraft couldn't transfer the position to someone else. His letter to me included the following:

"My position is clear: Hopcraft and Wilson both applied for the position of Editor of the 1989 KGO'ZD, a position of limited duration and authority on my staff solely in my gift. I appointed them co-editors, organized the project, and delineated authority. I also advanced Hopcraft expense money he requested in May. Hopcraft was not a custodian - he was a co-editor without any power to hand the project over to anybody. As co- and managing editor he had extensive power over the content of the publication, far exceeding anything I had to say, and slightly surpassing Wilson since Hopcraft was also managing editor...

Incidentally, Bruce Geryk was not co-editor. He was Editor of the 1988 KGO'ZD, a position he resigned in November, which necessitated me to make alternative arrangements: I had to appoint Karel Alaric, and serve myself as managing editor. I also enclose a Project Registry roster as of 4 Feb 89, which Hopcraft received, which should further demonstrate the explicit organizational arrangements.

Fundamentally, Carrier is lying. He had no authority from the Publisher of KGO'ZD to do anything. Hopcraft applied for the position and gave certain assurances, which were violated by Carrier's "effort"; Hopcraft had certain explicit instructions (which his co-editor certainly did not consent to changing) which Carrier's "effort" did not comply with. Since these assurances and instructions were not met, Hopcraft's original appointment could be deemed to be fraudulently obtained - certainly the expense money was.

Consider, for a moment, a parallel situation: the recent resignation of the DW Variants Editor. Not only did McCrumb have no right to name a successor, his arrangements for his column in future issues, already submitted but not yet published, were nullified by the publisher. The publisher of a publication is in charge, unless there are explicit arrangements to the contrary.

The next to the last paragraph there is a typical piece of Sacks deception. He says that Carrier is "lying" because "he had no authority from the Publisher." But Carrier never said he had authority from the publisher (Sacks). Carrier's position was that Hopcraft turned the position over to him. Sacks then goes on to talk about "certain assurances" that Hopcraft gave. Whenever Sacks talks about something without spelling out exact what he refers to, that's a real red flag. Sacks did send me a pile of material, including a letter which quoted a Hopcraft letter of Nov 14, but I can't find any "assurances" there at all which would be relevant to the matter at hand --- and if there were, I think Sacks would have quoted them back to me. Its likewise not clear which "explicit instructions" Hopcraft is to have violated. There were some instructions (e.g. "Michael will edit out redundant reviews"... ) but I can't see what, specifically, Sacks says he didn't comply with.

What still leaves the basic question: Was Hopcraft the

custodian, with the right to transfer, or was Sacks? The problem is that this particular topic was never discussed. Thus, in Sacks' letter to Hopcroft, 6 July 1989, he says, "I do not believe that you have permitted Carrier to do exactly what you ruled out in your letters of 14 Nov and 11 January." But I look at those letters, and I don't see any mention of the entire topic.

So did Sacks, as publisher, retain this power? Sacks obviously believes that he did, and Hopcroft believes that he didn't, but the fact is, they never discussed the topic.

Sacks raises the analogy to the subeditor at Diplomacy World, and yes, of course Peery has the right to name the new editor, not McCrumb. But I'm not sure this is a good analogy. A zine directory of some sort is clearly a hobby service per se. I can't possibly see the variant column in DW (which prints a variant or two, and gives news of the variant hobby) as itself qualifying as a hobby service. Moreover, at DW, the variant material is just one part of a much larger whole. Here, the reviews are basically the whole thing.

A better analogy to me is how Everything and the BNC operate. For about the last 10 years, the BNC himself hasn't published many issues. Going all the way back to John Veswig, most of the issues have been put out by a separate publisher. But the publisher has ZERO authority. The real responsibility lies elsewhere, with the BNC in that case ---- and with managing editor Hopcroft here.

But unfortunately, while Hopcroft legitimately felt he had the right to do this (otherwise, he wouldn't have done it), Sacks also legitimately feels that he himself retained that right, and, alas, neither position is implausible. While I lean toward feeling that Hopcroft's actions were entirely legitimate, Sacks' argument that he never intended to transfer this power to Hopcroft is a reasonable one. The best approach would be to submit the matter to binding arbitration, with the loser agreeing to drop the use of the name. Alas, past attempts to use such a mechanism have been fruitless, and both of these can be very stubborn people. If both persist, then the rest of the hobby will probably have to attach "/Sacks" and "/Cuerrier" to the two names, and let it go at that.

My comments in #120 on WorldCon drew this response:

Francois Cuerrier: The focal point of my criticism re World Con has always been that the Postal hobby should have more say. This has been expressed many ((previous)) times in Passchendaele. You may disagree with this, but don't say I've neglected to mention what was wrong about the current setup.

(( I was talking specifically just about your Pass #88 remarks. But beyond that, simply saying that it could and ought to be done differently isn't the same thing as saying there's something actually wrong with the current set-up. OK, "the Postal Hobby should have more say" you urge. But what is actually wrong with the current system of not giving the postal hobby more say? I for one don't see anything wrong with the current system, so I don't see adding postal input as solving any actual problem, and you haven't set forth what that problem is. It's not just you, incidentally. I have the same problem with similar views expressed by Brad Wilson and Cal White. There seems to be an implicit notion that the lack of postal people being a to vote is some shortcoming --- but why? This

is tournament, not postal diplomacy.))

The precedent you mention applies to DipCon, not World Con. The popular imagery of Precedent ruling supreme under our system of jurisprudence is vastly overstated.. It is the concept of parliamentary supremacy that rules supreme - the will of the people. In the hobby this is even truer...

((Agreed. My point wasn't that we have to do it this way because of precedent, only that Larry does have precedent backing him up. It is reasonable for Larry to do it this way because such a procedure has been used successfully in the past. This is contrary to the notion expressed (tho not by Guerrier) that this is some sort of uncalled for method. I think it is entirely reasonable to use methods that have worked in the past in new circumstances, tho we should not feel obligated to do so.))

If only the people who seize the reins may whip the horse, then presumably the Can Con organizers would be entirely within their rights to hold a rival World Con of their own if they should choose. ((In recent years, the question of duplicative services has been much discussed. But at some point, the first person to use the name is entitled to have it used without the confusion of someone coming along with a similar operation with a different name.))

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FROM PAGE 1  
benzene Penguin Dip, Passchendaele, Comrads in Arms, House of Lords, Northern Flame and Dark Mirror. Top Subzines were High Inertia and Been There, Done That (the latter now a zine). TopGMs were Rusnak, Guerrier and Liscett. DIPLOMACY DIGEST fell to 32, its lowest showing I think, and not much above the median, and only garnered 42 ballots, also low.

Perhaps the most remarkable result was that the zine with the most "zeros" was Passchendaele --- and yet the zine finished 6th! How could a zine with so many grudge votes (and thats the only thing a zero for a zine like that could be) still manage to finish so high? Those who actually get the zine know the answer --- it deserved, and got, a lot of 10s. In terms of sheer volume of really high quality writing, P is the best zine I get. Indeed, no other zine is even close. Particularly when it comes to in-depth discussions, P simply has no peer. While Guerrier now has a better balance of criticism/praise in his writing, he is no respecter of hobby sacred cows or of the common practice of not disagreeing too sharply with one's friends and supporters. Printing problems have forced the zine to restructure from the thrice-monthly schedule of 20-pagers. He now puts out monthlies at 40+ pages each, charging \$7.50 per quarter, with very generous payment for published materials. (Francois guerrier #305 2303 Eglinton Ave East, Scarborough, Ont M1K 2N6. See if you can order back issues #91 and #93 --- they are marvelous reads)

Bruce Linsey, aka "Atilla the Pollster" (I gotta credit Terry Tallman for that moniker) has turned over the Poll to Eric Prosius, who helped quite a bit with the 1989 Poll. Bruce brought the Poll to a point where more people directly participated in this than in any other single hobby activity, largely by dint of a great deal of hard work.

At present, Bruce is putting out Mouse of Lords, a "zine" distributed on Mac diskette, a forum for discussing the use of Macintosh computers in gaming and publishing. The "sub fee" is one 800K Diskette per issue, and readers are encouraged to include any questions or ideas or shareware on this diskette (P.O. Box 1334 Albany NY 12204)

Room for one last plug... Susan Welter 740 River Dr. #16F St. Paul MN 55116 is selling "Diplomat's Excuse" t-shirts for \$10. Against a red background are all sorts of excuses. I don't know if individual sizes are available; you could ask.