

Believe it or not, this is an early issue of....

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Publishing

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Not an hour ago I heard it on the TV: New rates are 18¢, starting 22 March. That and an increase in my printing rates forces the rate increase. Rates to Europe have gone up much more, and so I will resort to mailing issues in pairs to keep costs down.

I will be out of the country from March 22 to April 12. When I come back a mountain of mail will be here, and the following weekend is Passover and relatives from all over will be coming. Plus I have a lot of planting in my yard that I will have to do around then. So an April issue is very unlikely; next will be May or a May/June double. I really had to push things to get this issue out before the pre-departure press around here. Nextish will have a dippy trivia quiz --- I'll try to dig up as many obscure items as possible. The contest rules will resemble the Brux contest rules as little as is humanly possible.

Is there anyone out there interested in doing some typing for me? Its the only part of the job I detest, and obviously I have no talent for it. I'd pay you two issues per page, and probably throw in a ribbon for 20 pages, plus paper, postage, and the slim chance of slipping something past me.

Steve Simon writes to tell me that Future War, mentioned lastish, was slammed also in Sharp's book as "the worst variant ever created."....Larry Peery recently announced he will resume publication of Xenogogic. Publishers' reaction has generally been either to ignore it or CALL-OUT-THE-DOGS!!!! Well, I'm not so sure. There have been several cases of people leaving the hobby under dubious circumstances and then contributing things years later. Larry has asked me to announce that anyone who claims not to have gotten their money's worth from him to write him at P.O.Box 8416 San Diego CA 92102. Let me know what happens....Remember a few issues back the discussion on putting out phoney readjudications (impersonating the GM), in which I backed Guerrier's view that this is undermining the services of the GM. Two more Canadian pubbers have checked in. Smyth, agreeing with Lischett, thinks its fine. Leeder, sez this is "vicious and has no part in the hobby (or shouldn't have).".... Peek #2 arrives, with a narcissistic reprinting of what various zines did (and did not) have to say about #1, with severe chastisement of those who ignored it. Plus there were letters and nifty graphics. 150 copies of #1 and 50 of #2 were sent out, which is quite a bit of money (Occupant P.O.Box 6824 Burbank CA 91510; send 36¢ in stamps).

Publishing is at the very core of the Postal hobby, and this issue celebrates it. As GMing has been covered in other issues, its been left out here. For those further interested, I have a very few copies of the Pubbers Handbook left at \$2.50, and you might write Guerrier and ask for a copy of The National issue on that topic. This issue is not quite as balanced as I would have liked. Oh well!

((What better place to start than the start of some zine : First up is The Pouch #53 3-2-74. Which of its editors wrote this I do not know.))

In the fall of 1972 a mini-repeat of the discovery of postal Diplomacy took place. Some years back Duncan Smith had introduced Nick Ulanov to the game of Diplomacy. Most of the time the two and Duncan's brother, Miles, had to play a 3-man version because they couldn't find enough players to fill out the board.

After Duncan had been going to Peter Stuyvesant High School ((in New York City)) for a while he met some friends who knew the game. One of these friends was Paul Neumann. He organized some phone games in which 7 people could always be counted on to play. There were quite a number of people who played in these games ((he names 10)). Soon others besides Paul Neumann started game-mastering phone games in this circle. Paul stayed a guiding force, being a very talented player and active in the circle. Some time after this Duncan became acquainted with a magazine devoted entirely to Diplomacy played by mail, Graustark. He showed this to Nicholas who evinced some interest.

One day when Nicholas was over at Duncan's house he said that he had an idea. He said he wanted to form a magazine to run some games in. He owned a mimeograph so he could duplicate the magazine and there were all sorts of interesting things that could be put into it. Duncan had been thinking of the same thing and jumped at the idea. Nicholas had a name, The Pouch. Paul Neumann had been thinking along the same lines, and so the three formed their magazines as co-editors. Paul recruited those in the phone games to become charter subscribers.

A flyer was produced and mailed to an old copy of the Graustark mailing list ((yes, I can just see the mailing list trying to read the sample)). Conrad von Metzke responded and informed the editors that Graustark was not an isolated occurrence, but that there was a world wide hobby devoted to play of the game by the mail. The three young, intrepid editors decided to open mail games as well as phone games, realizing that these would grow and eventually their magazine would run only one or two phone games. But that was part of a brilliant tomorrow and they had to content ate on a brilliant today. And today, today is yesterday and tomorrow is today ((this was from their first anniversary issue.))

((Balancing that will be a why-I-quit, from Flatypus Pie #22, 3-19-73 (Brenton Ver Floeg

Quite early in my publishing venture, I determined that any attempt to increase circulation would have but two possible effects, which would occur in order: (1) I would overtax myself trying to get the magazine out, and, (2) That would result in a total collapse of the system, ala Rod Walker, Gary Jones, and hosts of others too numerous to mention. In short, the only reason that I have made it this far is that I have decided on a sub-50 circulation, and trimmed the mailing list whenever I could to achieve it. The number of new arrivals seemed to correspond nicely with the publishers who stopped publishing, and the wise wise 3 people that let their subs to Pie run out. Not even a letter of disinterest or disgust. The listing below starts, obviously, with #5, the first issue when I felt stable enough to publish a list. (The longest I could go between lists was 4 issues, because I need to update the mailing list in a formal manner to be able to have some sort of idea about the accuracy of my mailing labels. Lew Pulshipher and I, for example, have mutually missed connections more often than I can count). The number of copies sent out follows:

#5-38 copies #6-39 #7-40 #10-43 #14-43 #18-39 #21-43

This suggests to me that keeping a circulation about where you want it is relatively easy. Many of the new publishers, and a good big portion of the others, appreciate large circulations. It is true that getting the "message" to large numbers is important when it comes to spreading the word about something, but that doesn't happen very often. There is merit to large circulations, of course, implicit in the fact that large numbers of people are willing to trade or pay to receive the magazine; shoddy products can't get that kind of attention for very long. As for PP, well, who cares? I never really set out to make this a "good" magazine. More than anything else, I

wanted to offend people to the point of dispute, and I haven't even done a very good job of that --- once or ten times maybe. Then, too, I was curious to see what would turn out. The PIE has emerged slowly, I think, but from time to time I enjoyed it very much. Perhaps now, on a limited schedule, I will be able to give the magazine more attention.

The killing factor, however, was not really disinterest, it was time. Somehow, the hobby of Diplomacy has always embarrassed me a little, and I will often date a girl for some time before I try (futilely) to explain what all those little maptacks are on those bulletin boards. She never looks at me the same again, its true, but the real penalty is paid elsewhere: I never have the nerve to ask anything or anyone to help me with the issues. I type, correct, run off, assemble, staple, address, and mail out each and every issue, and I have for all the issues that have ever come out. In effect I have to shoot an entire day three times every seven weeks and I don't have time for it. The total time always runs to more than one day, too, because I have to wait for things to dry before taking other steps. So figure all afternoon/evening on either Sunday or Monday, with 2 more hours of labor on the day following, depending on whether I get the magazine out Mon or Tues. My desire to be prompt always costs too, but I have to do it that way - I'm so lazy that if I let one deadline slip by without immediate actions, I would probably delay for a month, then a year, and then out of existence.

Sometimes, in spite of my common sense, I get out PP when there were other tasks which I should have gotten out of the way. My work for the Law Review is almost finished. Had it not been for publishing a Diplomacy magazine, I would have been done for weeks. The game themselves have cost me over \$38 in phone calls that I didn't bother to make collect for any variety of reasons ranging from my good mood or generosity at the time in question to the fact that X's mother got violently upset at collect calls for a stupid game. That does NOT, mind you, include the costs for calls which I make during the course of games in which I am playing, and when I totalled it up I was a little surprised ((his expenditures during the DW demo game 72CR were legendary))

All in all, tho, I am pretty happy with things. I am going to continue the games as long as possible, and I hope to finish all three. What with the bar coming up, I can't really make any absolute promises about the last two but I shall work something out one way or another... The games seem to be going on alright. More than that, however, I have enjoyed publishing the damned thing, tho I am hesitant to admit it. It was an experience, and something that I have always wanted to do before I semi-retired from Diplomacy -- a task now in progress.

Its been an entertaining and fascinating 16 months for me, and on balance the brickbats from you were far outweighed (if 2 to 1 votes out of a total of 3 is such indication of esteem in a year and a half) by the gushing plaudits that I could hardly contain the tears of joy that veritably chafed to get running down my cheeks into the parched California soil. Ahem, I say, and almost forgotten, I issue an equally almost farewell (since there are at least 3, and possibly more, issues to go).

((The idea of multiple editors has always interested me. What follows is some detail on how this can be done, from Paroxysm #6, 5-4-75 by Harry Drews))

The Inside Story

Paroxysm has had its shakedown run and its a safe bet to say that our format will not vary greatly from here on in. Doug ((Ronson)) and Robert ((Corell)) each now own duplicate@tors and will be publishing alternate issues; it is our hope that the division of duties that has been agreed upon will enable the three of us to crank out issue after issue. Our objective is to be one of the very best dippy zines in North America and we don't think we are very far off the mark even now.

How did Paroxysm come to be? Late last fall Robert and I simultaneously had the brainstorm of asking the other to join operations, then within the space of only a few

days we hit upon the idea of asking Doug to join. The interesting angle is that the three of us did not know each other very well, but the mutual interests generated friendships and working relationships. None of us were newcomers to publishing; Doug had been plugging away for the longest and myself the shortest period of time, but each of us knew what was involved. The reasons that we decided to amalgamate may be obvious: We were duplicating efforts and each of us was having to do some activity that we didn't care for. Our individual circulation lists were as small as the zines we cranked out. Now, we are very happy with the switch to Paroxysm because we have the opportunity to specialise in the areas we like most. While Robert doesn't mind printing, collating, and addressing each issue I absolutely hate it, but on the other hand I like rattling off little articles while Robert can't be bothered. Doug comes closest to being the happy medium and has the wittiest pen; as it was, his zine was the best of the three.

Combining operations makes for a much better zine mostly because there is more talent and spirit available to draw from and there is a greater incentive to do something worthwhile. In our case, the sum is greater than the sum of the parts. My duties are to game master, write articles and keep the books. The last area is one of the more important chores contributing to the success of the venture...When paroxysm was conceived there was a whole tangle of subscribers, traders and freebies in existence and the records had to be unscrambled. Our records are enclosed in a binder which is composed of three sections. The first is composed of 3 typed lists (trades, subs and freebies for that issue) which show the name, address, type of postage, second last or last issue, and the partner who picks up that reader's cost. Photocopies of these master lists are mailed out to either Robert or Doug just before publication date. The second part of the binder is the largest and is a detailed record of each of our recipients accounts. I have drawn up a form which shows all incoming and outgoing funds for each reader; of course each reader has a page all to himself/herself. The third section contains our pooled standby list and a number of pages for cost calculations of each issue and cost transfers between the 3 partners. We split the costs according to the percentage each of us is responsible for based on the master list. Since I am the sole person receiving new funds I am picking up an increasing portion of the total costs and in due course I shall pay for 100% of the costs. Our system is detailed but extremely fair, in a few instances we go so far as to split responsibility for a readers costs between two of us. This will occur if a person is a player in a number of games, or if he trades with one of us but plays in a game GMed by another of the group. In effect, I have set up a mini-ledger which allows us to balance accounts at any time ((Much of the complexity comes from the fact that existing operations were merged)). To sum up, the record keeping phase of the operation is a tri-partite chore: there is the daily entering of new cash flows, the updating of the master lists just before a publishing deadline, and the sub and game fees deductions immediately after a new P comes out.

How do we keep in touch with each other? It takes about 45 minutes to drive to Doug's place and 75 minutes to go to Robert's, while it is 45 minutes from Doug's place to Robert's. The basic medium of communication is the mails; however, this is often supplemented by use of the telephone. Fortunately, my employer has direct lines to both Toronto and Mississauga, so we don't incur any expenses using the telephone. Finally, we have a big rally and pep talk session every 2 or 3 months.

...Our workload has been split quite evenly in terms of time spent on Paroxysm. This type of multi-editor zine can work out very well and I think it should be recommended to more people. The fires of enthusiasm will burn steadier much longer and I'll wager P will be around much longer than many zines. If you are thinking of publishing, let me offer you some advice: become involved in stages. First, guest game master to see if you can stand that drudgery. Second, see if you can write a regular column for an established zine. This will be the acid test to show you if you can churn out readable material, issue after issue. Please note that space is available in P for either one-shot submissions or a regular column. Third, start your own zine in a small way and establish a nucleus of readers by handing out free subs if necessary. While

people will not truly appreciate a free zine, you need a quick way to gather a group of readers to serve as a pool for ideas and feedback. Finally, if publishing is really your bag, find some partners and do it right. If more combined operations were around, the hobby would not be plagued by poor publications and "comet" publishers (people who start out with high aspirations and some good ideas but quickly burn out). A group effort will ensure a more reliable and quality operation. Some more advice: do NOT start a large number of games at any one time, and do not cater exclusively to the people who only want to play in games and have no other interest in the zine and will not contribute with press, letters or articles. If you want to gamesmaster, either join another publication as a guest GM or take on some orphaned games and run them on a small scale. One final advantage of a group publication exists: if any one member of the group loses interest, the zine will not collapse and in all likelihood a new partner can be found. Maybe we should end on a cheerful note after all this solemn pontification --- don't worry about Paroxysm. Each of us has made a serious commitment and there is no danger of a sudden collapse.

((A little later Harry had some interesting comments on editorial policy at P. This is from #39, Oct 3 1976:))

Its about time...to defend myself and set the story straight...The very nature of the staff organization of P means that yours truly is pretty much helpless, and in an indefensible position when it comes to control over what is published and when I can say something. My job is to look after the books, GM some games, and provide substance to this zine. My duties do not include actual publishing, and this last point is what can sometimes make me feel helpless.

To illustrate, let me refer to a disagreement of ideas a while back between Lew Pulshiper and myself involving one of the "Verhandeln" articles. My reply to his articles was shortly followed by a retort by Lew. Strange to say, no reply to the retort was ever seen in print, not because I had nothing more to say and had received my come-uppance, but because our staff of 3 have a tacit understanding to avoid feuds and long debates in a series of issues. The policy is in effect to provide the readership with more interesting reading. As may be seen by any rational person, this leaves me in a rather vulnerable position; I am set up as a straw man who must get his point in quickly in a one-shot jab, because most of the time we won't print a 4th article in a given debate. There is no complaint by me on the editorial policy, since I approved it, but I would like to caution the readership that all is not as it may seem at times, and that under other circumstances I would not be put-down and shut-off so easily. But because we want to print everything we can from our readers and only refer to our own staff material as a second choice, so the material in Paroxysm will sometimes seem slanted against myself.

Another instance of where editorial policy overrode my personal notions occurred more recently in the scrimmage with Len Lakofka and the concept of "the good ally". I was not done with the topic after one article, but again, the nemesis of potential feuding on the horizon had me swallow my rebuttal and seemingly agree to Lenard's theme. Regrettably, out of that last skirmish arose the fallacy that I try to raise the shit and then quickly turn tail. Not true, not true at all, me lads. I would never put down on paper anything which I did not agree with or believe in. The sense of fair play, however, in letting the other guy have the last word, and then hoping some other reader will carry the ball, rather than me going on and on in another issue, has meant that most times in the past I have ended up taking a bit of what may look like a pasting. Use your full judgement, kind reader; its' not easy trying to generate debate when one hand has been effectively tied behind the back (and its not any consolation to know that that hand has been bound willingly).

((That article to me is a fairly strong argument against the P editorial policy; its hard to see what advantages accrue from it. I don't think that "the nemesis of potential feuding" is a valid standard. Better would be: Are there new ideas to be added? Are readers likely to be interested in the continuing debate? Its very noble to let the readers have the last word, but not at the price of discussion interruptus))

((This next article is from St. George and the Dragon #61, mentioned elsewhere in the issue. Ordinarily I do not reprint items just published in zines with good circulations. One of the privileges of editing your own zine, tho, is that you get to decide when to break the rules. This article by Doug Beyerlein is so cogent, and so relevant to the theme of this issue that I present it here.))

HOW TO SURVIVE POSTAL DIPLOMACY

The idea of an article on how to survive postal diplomacy may at first sound rather strange. But look around you. How many of your postal opponents, allies, publishers, GMs, and friends have left the hobby? How many of the people who entered the hobby when you did have since left, or suffered postal death (Edi Birsan's term for dropping out)? If you have been around the hobby as long as I have (since 1966) you have seen a lot of friends come and go. The purpose of this article is to help keep you from becoming one of the unfortunate statistics.

I don't have actual numbers, but I estimate that the half-life of a postal diplomacy player is three years. That means that $\frac{1}{2}$ of the postal players who entered the hobby in 1980 will drop out by 1983. Of those remaining, one half will disappear by 1986, leaving only 25% of those novices who entered in 1980 left. You can see by this high turnover rate that to stick around in this hobby more than 5 years is quite an accomplishment. I can count on one hand the number of active participants from my era who are still going strong. Why is this the case?

The postal diplomacy hobby has a high turnover rate because postal Diplomacy is an intense activity. Players, Publishers, and GMs over-commit themselves and burn out. Players join three, four, or more games at one time, and many will play in 20 or more at one time (Ron Kelly at one time was playing in over 100 games simultaneously ((virtually all of them standby positions)) Publishers type, edit, run off, collate, and mail 10-20 pages of material every issue every month. And GMs start multiple games at one time and run ten or more at once. The hobby is addicting; more is better. The more one does, the greater the pleasure (to a point). But what starts off as pleasurable slowly turns into a pain. When overloaded the participant suffers postal death and drops out. Winning game positions are abandoned, games are orphaned, zines fold. This is not the exception, this is the rule. It is a rule we have all seen far too many times. But does it have to be this way?

No. If you identify the symptoms before overload occurs, you can get the problem before it gets you. The symptoms vary with the participant, but there are some general things to look for. Ask yourself: (1) Do you have the desire to spend more time with postal activities than you are already spending? (2) Do you prefer the involvement with postal Diplomacy activities over person-to-person activities? (3) Is every weekend and most evenings devoted to your Dippy activities? If you answer yes to any of these 3 questions, then you are a prime candidate for overload and postal death. It is only a matter of when.

Even if you think that you can handle a hobby involvement that borders on overload, there are side effects to consider. Man does not live by bread alone. Nor can he make interaction with the mailbox and typewriter substitute for real human contact. The dynamics of the game of diplomacy do not teach the necessary social skills for true personal interaction with others. It is true that friendships are made in the hobby that transcend game level interactions, but it is rare that these friendships continue once one has left the hobby.

Similarly, overinvolvement in the hobby can put a distancing effect on those who are close to you, but do not share your interest in Diplomacy. In more than one case an over-commitment to Diplomacy has been a contributing factor in a break-up of a marriage. This is nothing to take lightly.

What is the answer? First, assess your situation. Are you spending more time on Diplomacy than you should or would like to be spending? If you are not sure, then ask

someone close to you for his or her opinion. Listen carefully and be honest with yourself. If you decide that you are overinvolved in the hobby, then decide which activity (playing, publishing, or GMing) you enjoy most. Cut back on the things that are of lesser importance. Try to limit your involvement in the hobby to less than your capacity. Go for quality, not quantity. Does this plan work? Yes. It is the only way I have managed to survive 14 years in this hobby as a player ((one of most successful)), publisher ((both ordinary dipaines and a ratingsine)) and gamecmaster ((highly regarded, he takes only orphangames)) while going thru highschool and college, getting a job, getting married, and becoming a bicycle racer. Learn from experience. I have.

((As I learned from the above. Actually, while the game itself is probably too artificial to provide "true personal interaction", the associated discussions on hobby and non-hobby matters certainly permits and even encourages such interaction. But that minor point aside, all my readers would do well to ponder Doug's advice. Time and time again I have seen, both directly and thru reading old zines, people getting in too deep, or getting trapped in an aspect of hobby involvement they do not enjoy. Do you feel you can handle playing 8 games, fine, stick with six. If you can put out a good 16 page sine or an excellent 12 page one, go for the latter. So many people get caught in the all-or-nothing trap, and the hobby loses out on what could have been a much more creative career --- and longer one. I myself have been very heavily involved in the hobby, particularly the last 3½ years. Realistically, I know I cannot and will not keep up the same pace for the next 3½ years. Starting early in 1979 I realized that I had to get my number of original games (8) down to a more comfortable level, and so in 1979-1980 I entered only one new game and am now at the level I like (2). I could handle 3-4, probably, without strain, but I must leave a safety factor. Every time I write a novice I say the same thing: The biggest mistake you can make is getting into too many games too fast. Those who learn that lesson early are those who stick with us the longest.))

((And speaking of someone who once bit off more than he could chew, what follows is Larry Peery, writing in Lenogocic Vol V, #2.5, 10-18-72))

CONFESSIONS OF A DIPLOMACY MOGUL or HOW TO SUCCEED IN DIPLOMACY PUBLISHING WITHOUT REALLY TRYING! An Open Letter to: Steve Ball, John Boyer, Steve Cooper, Burt Labelle

This open letter may come as a shock to each of you --- and to those of my readers who read it. After the shock is past I hope you will all spend some time thinking about what I have to say. This letter comes to you if you will from 2 people : the Larry Peery Diplomacy Players (not the best, but pretty good), Diplomacy Publisher (not the best, but pretty good), Diplomacy GM (not the best, but pretty good) editor of TTT publications, Director of the Institute of Diplomatic Studies, President of the IDA, and a list of other titles as long as your arm; a real, honest to goodness Diplomacy institution, if a slightly tarnished one. But more importantly, the Larry Peery who considers each of you a friend.

My reasons for writing are several. First, because of who I am, your friend, I want the best for you in your Diplomacy Activities. Second, because of what I am, concerned about your future in Diplomacy, as it affects the hobby, I dare to presume on our friendship and offer some advice. I would be the first to admit that I have some faults, unlike most diplomacy publishers, who seem to be incapable of self criticism, but I also believe that you can learn from my experiences, both the good ones and the bad ones. So, read what I have to write, take from it what will serve your needs, and disregard the rest.

1st: **GUARD YOUR OWN INTERITY.** Honor your alliances as a player, serve your players equally and impartially as a GM. Carry out your commitments but beware lest you leave no time for thinking about what you are doing.

2nd: **GUARD THE INTEGRITY OF OTHERS.** Honor their confidences. Respect your House-rules always. Respect the institutions you serve.

3rd: **TREAT YOUR FRIENDS AS FRIENDS.** Stand by them when they have their triumphs and

when they err, tell them when they are wrong. But never sacrifice your own integrity on the altar of friendship.

4th TREAT YOUR ASSOCIATES WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT. Remember formality is a code of behavior that raises us above the animal.

5th TREAT YOUR CRITICS WITH PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING But don't hesitate to call a spade a spade when they ill-treat you.

6th TREAT YOUR ENEMIES WITH GENTLENESS AND COURAGE But do not yield on points of principle that are important.

7th TREAT THOSE WHO KNOW MORE THAN YOU WITH RESPECT They have earned it. But, never assume that anyone knows more than you unless they demonstrate it first.

8th TREAT THOSE WHO KNOW LESS THAN YOU WITH PATIENCE Maybe they can learn something from you

9th TREAT THOSE WHO KNOW AS MUCH AS YOU WITH REVERENCE They will most surely appreciate your ups and downs.

10th ABOVE ALL, MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE See the true value of the worthwhile and the worthlessness of the trivial. Don't seek out titles, honors, or high ratings. They will come to you when you have earned them.

Remember, always, that as a publisher you have a special trust to preserve the truth. Tell the truth, in defense from lies. But, sometimes, you know that telling the whole truth may cause more harm than good. Be sure of your facts before you print them. Base your opinion of facts, not fancy. Avoid personality conflicts. What you start, finish. When you need help, ask. Guard the talent you have, use it, treasure it. Live up to your promises, and beware of snowballing commitments.

And, God forgive me, practice what you preach
((I know, I know, it sounds like a lot of platitudes. But you'd be amazed at how often some of that advice is not followed by people who ought to know better. Peery himself missed some ("...beware of snowballing commitments..."), as I'm sure I have))

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((One of the more vexing questions for a major publisher is how to handle plugs and zine reviews. Here is a musing on the subject by Walter Luc Haas, appearing in BUMM 14/15 (March/April 1976) I have done some editing))

### Reviews

There was this publisher who asked me to write a review of my own zines - he was prepared to publish it in his review column. There was this publisher who wrote me that he will praise my zines as often and as well as I would praise his zine. There also was this publisher who wrote me, furiously, that his plug of "BUMM" was 100 times better than my review of his zine, and that therefore he was not prepared to trade with me. There are other publishers who will "rate" zines, and in the reproduction column they consider the color of the paper as part of the reproduction quality; and also they try to rate "Press" whether most of the press releases are really understandable and enjoyable for those who know the involved players, etc well enough to really get all the inside jokes.

There are a lot of publishers who only write nice things about most of the other zines, and others who don't dare to write their real (maybe bad) opinion of someone else's zine---some of them because they think they should not criticize another's work of love, some of them only because they fear the other's (he might say something bad about his own zine too) some of them because the other is a nice chap after all, a good friend, or just an important (read: loud) person in the hobby.

On the other side, there are the readers who get accustomed to these review/plug practices, and who react negatively on the slightest negative remark they find in a review.



...All that is, in my opinion, rather unsatisfactory, for both parts: The reader as well as the publisher.

I remember the time when I didn't yet publish a zine and where I tried to find out which zines I would like to get. Most of the reviews I read in order to find out which zines would appeal to me and would give me that content that I wanted to get, didn't inform me well enough. And a lot of them just gave wrong information, for the above mentioned reasons probably. Now, since I have seen more than half of the existing zines, and since I get a lot of them regularly, I can see how much I missed, and I can judge how often I was misled.

On the other side, as a publisher I see this problem too: Its not easy to say a zine is dull, uninteresting, bad in any manner --- if you know its publisher well, if you are in steady communication with him((especially if you are allied in a game!)) estimate him as a nice chap, appreciate other things that he says, does and thinks, but his zine. Its not easy too, to avoid some stereotype judgements which go from review to review - by time pressures or laziness. And its hard to resist some of the above-mentioned offers which kind of guarantee good reviews for your zine.

On the other hand, who asks you to judge really? There are a few things you can judge objectively (if you want to be objective that is), but this is rather limited. About the printing quality you can say whether a zine is easily readable, whether you normally get all the pages, and things like this (but even then you don't know whether you are not one of those lucky (maybe especially selected) exceptions who get the better printed copies) ((suspicious, isn't he? That one never occurred to me)) You can say whether a zine reaches you more or less regularly...you can say whether the subscription fee is low, reasonable, high, but only if you consider the amount of pages, postage, etc. Maybe you can judge the reliability of the GMing ...

Whatever you say more is your (maybe biased in one of other direction) personal judgement, which too often is of no value for your readers...But now, what shall we do? All of us want to review other zines, partly because our readers are (in fact, more or less) interested in such reviews, partly because it is a fact (and I would say a reasonable one) that your own zine gets reviewed (more than once, at least) if you review other zines too.

...One method would be to describe the zine: to mention the facts is the fairest way of a review anyhow. And the given facts allow your readers to build up their own judgement, to figure out whether the content of the described zine interests them. Such a review would give the name of the zine, the address ... fees, then other data like printing method, number of pages, cover illustrations. Then it would be important to know how many pages (in the average - lets say the last 3 issues or so) are dedicated to the main parts of a zine: game reports, press, letter column, hobby info, hobby politics/discussions, etc. And, if space permits (and time), it would be good to mention at least the topics of some current discussions/articles-series/stories, etc. By this, those interested in special features ... could find those zines giving them more or less exactly what they are looking for. And: most of the readers actually are not interested in the "best" or whatever zine, but in a zine which gives them the features mixture which appeals to them most. If then you would like to add your personal judgement - why not: probably it will be a correct and valuable one.

No zine not specializing in zine-reviews can afford to review zines regularly (or other than as space-fillers) or to review a given zine in each issue....On the other hand, experience shows that normally one review isn't enough to produce any effect: only a kind of steady repetition seems to influence the readers to subscribe to another zine - or at least ask for a sample issue.

((This engendered the following in #16, first Robert Correll, then Peter Birks))

# Agreed - this is a problem. Many publishers consider reviews simply as space fillers and compose them at the typewriter upon discovery that they've got about 6

lines to fill at the bottom of a page. This was never very damaging in the days when Diplomacy zines sold for 5/\$1, but with the substantial increases in postal rates of the last three or four years many zine prices have close to doubled. Actually I think you have the best solution, with your intention to "plug" zines by utilizing the discussion material they print. I intend to follow this policy myself in Paroxysm ... mainly thru my news column. Additionally, I feel that carefully written reviews on particularly good zines are of help and we've followed this policy in Paroxysm with the reviews by Harry Drews which discuss only one particular zine, attempting to outline all the particular details. These reviews only appear occasionally, never on request from a zine editor, and only when we feel the particular publication merits such special attention...

\* Your comment of 3 publisher's attitudes to reviews astounds me. I have never met such attitudes in British publishers. Were any of them British ((Yes-wlh)) If so, then they are a disgrace to the hobby. Any zine review that I make is subjective, with all the objective facts stuck in as well. But I reserve the right to review zines how I wish. Your statement "I suggest that we reconsider our review practices" is excellent. I have reconsidered mine, and I think that they are fine the way they are. As for anyone else, well, I wouldn't dream of writing an article telling them how to review other zines! Let them do it as they wish, it preserves the individuality of the hobby"

((I wish most pubbers would put a little more time into their zine reviews, since I have seen reviews in which I barely recognized the zine. In some cases, the writer just pulls out the latest issue, reviews it, but presents that as a zine review, oblivious to the fact that the issue involved is atypical. In general, I favor the "subjective" type review. For the bare facts about type of repro (who cares?) or whatever, they can get that from the Zine Directory. The readers are more interested in what you think of the zine. Pull out the last 6 issues at least. Leaf thru them. What do you like and don't like? What topics are taken up in the zine? What kind of writing style or quality appears? Do the games report a lot of errors? Does the zine project some kind of personality? Also, I don't buy this business that the main reason for reviews is to let the readers know what zines to get, or to ask for samples for. Only a small proportion on your readers is actively seeking additional zines. But people like to know what else is happening in zines they don't get. They want to compare what they think of another zine with what you think. Other pubbers want to hear what you are willing to say in public about their zines. The writing of zine reviews is one of those areas where our British friends are way ahead of us.))

((Before leaving Bum, here are some astonishing publishing statistics from #25. In a period 1/75 to 6/77, he published 747 pages in 25 issues, about 30 pages per issue, or 25 pages per month. If we include his other zines, Joker, Europa, and Cheeshole News, the numbers become staggering. These zines cover general wargaming, Science Fiction and Fantasy, and news of gaming clubs, etc, as well as Dippy. In 1975 alone, he published 654 pages. In just the first 6 months of 1977, he published 476 pages, an unbelievable 18.3 pages per week. All tolled, it was 1837 pages in the first three years, all mimeo. Bum only lasted to #37 for the part, and I do not know if Walter is still publishing at all))

\*\*\*\*\*  
((A 5th anniversary, or 50th issue, is often the setting for a special type of editorial, in which the pubber selects a few for thanks, compares his memories of the past with his expectations for the future, and does some general philosophizing. A good example of this comes from Richard Hucknall in Fall of Eagles #50, October 1980))

Issue 50 of FoE and as good a time as any to take a look at the state of the hobby and compare it with how it used to be some 3 1/2 years ago. Its a fast changing hobby and zines generally have a short life; indeed, only Greatest Hits, Chimera, Puppet Theater News, The Finanou, and Courier survive from that day to this. C I've never seen but I think its fair to say that the other four form the backbone of the

(turn to p 15)

## From Meglomania #17 6-11-79 (Chris Tringham)

Reading through review columns and similar things recently it struck me that very few reviewers actually attempt or achieve very much. The review becomes no more than a brisk summary of the contents and a comment or two on something "controversial" in the zine. Most are fairly superficial, probably because the reviewer is not prepared to upset other editors by being honest (though it could be that people aren't prepared to devote the time and attention a decent review column needs). In any case, I think it time to have a go at producing a zine review piece along the lines that Piggott used to print eighteen months to two years ago when Ethil the Frog was at its peak. I may fail, but better to have tried and been shot down than to be bland and non-controversial.

I suppose the first questions to ask are How and Why. As I see it, there are two distinct ways of approaching any type of publishing, whether it be The Times or Rhubovia. One can attempt to produce something that will sell well, by thorough market research into public tastes and attitudes, and produce by a formula: perhaps the best example of this is the Daily Star, which has made a conscious attempt to copy the Sun & Mirror. It takes no risks, surviving on a diet of court reports, sex, sport, TV and silliness (whenever I see a copy of the Star these days, it seems to have one famous person or other standing on one leg, for goodness sake!) 800 000 people can't be wrong.

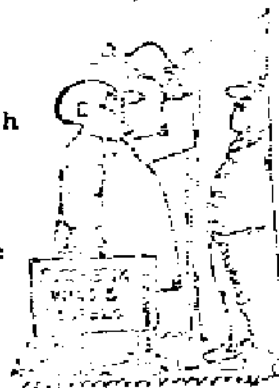
The alternative approach is to rely on the editor's judgement as to what will go in, with a fairly wide discretion open to him and his reporters. There are various examples of this genre around - perhaps the best example would be Street Life, but that folded not long after its first appearance. New Musical Express is showing signs of going in this direction, printing film and book reviews (notably Philip K. Dick three or four weeks back), and pieces on politics and football. The latter generated a deal of correspondence from people who argued that football coverage should be left to Shoot & Goal, and that NME should concentrate on music. Readers may note a certain resemblance to correspondence in this zine of late. It seems appropriate to introduce 'Piggott's Laws of Fanzines' at this point, in particular the first: 'Good fanzines are produced for the benefit of their editors.' Now a lot of people will disagree with that statement, on the grounds that the editor should take account of his subscribers - after all, if you pay 25p you expect to get your moneysworth. However, the two are not necessarily incompatible, and the best fanzines are those which are unashamedly produced for the editor's benefit. Take Filibuster, for example. The latest issue's editorial includes this comment: 'Filibuster was never intended to appeal to the vulgar and the masses. Indeed, we both took it as a compliment that for the first few issues we were producing enough copies for 25 paying subscribers. Alas, those joyous days are past. Instead of being a magazine for the discerning and well-educated, it has now become a magazine sorely injected with material to appeal to the populace.' Maybe Adrien is exaggerating slightly, but it is certainly true that large circulations can bring certain problems - the more subscribers one has, the more conscious one becomes of them, and the more anonymous they become. If a zine is produced for a small number of people (say seven, as with Knife and Fork and the old Mr Gladgrind and Pigmy) the editor should have a fair idea of what they want: after all, they're his friends! As the number of subscribers increases, the editor can't expect to know them all, and can only rely on the voiciferous minority of subbers, other editors, or a conception of what makes a good zine (the formula). Whether any of these actually produce a good zine is another matter entirely. None of the methods provides a real idea of what the readership as a whole thinks, and can totally mislead the editor, leading him a policy which neither he nor the majority of his subscribers actually want. There are countless examples of editors being pressured into dropping something out of the ordinary and conforming with the accepted concept of a "postal Diplomacy fanzine" - Paul Openshaw on politics Doubleday when Gallimaufry went litho, and so on. Then there are the zines that are

taken over by a few people - D & D in Puppet Theatre News, Pyrrhic Victory's letter column are good examples. The latter is interesting, because the editor is printing letters which he doesn't appear to understand, mostly on rather esoteric questions such as Christianity and the Closed Shop, with very little editing or direction from Mike. Good lettercols (which almost invariably appear in the best zines) quite clearly reflect the personality/style/interests of the editor: take Greatest Hits, with rambling Palfrey letters; Filibuster's peculiar correspondents or the Ethil & Dolchstoss letter columns.

Unfortunately, one can usually tell when editors aren't interested, and it is these zines that fold prematurely: the editor encounters a "minor" problem, such as going to university or being made redundant and isn't sufficiently motivated to find a way around the problem (not, I hasten to add, that all folds occur because the editor isn't interested in his zine, but many of the most senior of today's editors have survived serious illness, going to university, marriage, change of jobs and so on that could have killed off their zines because they made a particular effort). The zines that overcome temporary problems are usually the ones with strong editorial personalities: Booth, Mearns, Piggott, Sharp, Birks and Bullock come immediately to mind - most have shown commendable reluctance to conform. Clive, for example, was the pioneer of the "gameszine" - it is he who is responsible for Soccerboss, Cricketboss, Milko, and a 1001 other silly games. Whilst I'm none too keen on the games, I admire him for standing up against the Diplomacy-orientated establishment and continuing to fight for what he believes in. He has recently joined the Police, after years as a pen-pusher, which involves a deal of re-adjustment, but Chimaera hasn't folded. When he started publishing, I doubt if many people expected that he would achieve a very respectable circulation and win the zine poll twice in succession! Similarly, when Adrien first produced the new Filibuster, I don't suppose he expected it to be as popular as it has been. It is precisely the originality and freshness of the zine that makes it my favourite, and has brought the subscribers that Adrien claims not to want.

Greatest Hits is another zine which is firmly under the control of its editor, who is quite happy to try unusual things - the latest issue has a fascinating piece about the selling of Star Wars. It is unstructured without being disorganized, and covers a wide range of subjects without giving the impression that Pete is typing up whatever people send him, so that there is a recognisable GH "style". Conversely, many zines that are carefully structured with an unchanging style and format fail to create the same atmosphere of the zine being a recognisable entity (as opposed to a collection of articles on broadly the same subject - cf. Diplomacy World). Operating within guidelines or rules is all very well, but rules only exist to be broken, and an editor who is unwilling to experiment and break rules is unlikely to get very far. Many people still seem to think that a Diplomacy fanzine should be mimeo, concentrate on running Diplomacy games and have a brief editorial, a letter column, an article or two ("How to persuade Austria to let you do the Key Lepanto") half-a-dozen Diplomacy games and a page or two of "sweepings". Leviathan and Ferkin both openly flaunted these conventions, and met with stony silence/opposition from a lot of editors, who were presumably unable to reconcile their conception of what a good Diplomacy zine is like with either of the two.

The second of Piggott's laws: 'A good fanzine contains material which cannot be obtained elsewhere in the same form' is perhaps worth mentioning at this point. It is advanced by people complaining about, say, football in Snorwood Gazette: Bob Howes, who made that remark is, however printing his memoirs of the war years and other esoteric material in Lemming Express, so is singularly unqualified to criticise Keith Loveys. No, it isn't the subject matter which should be the main criterion, but rather whether the writer has anything interesting or worthwhile to say, on whatever subject. Again, the only judge of



whether an article is interesting is the editor, though obviously he will be influenced by readers' opinions. The simple fact is that Diplomacy itself is a rather boring subject: there is not a great deal one can say about the game - opening theory has been attempted by a hundred and one people, few of whom have had much to say - Germany can either open to Holland or Denmark, and I think most people know the reasons for each strategy. Richard Sharp has summarised the arguments about openings eloquently in "The Game of Diplomacy" and before that there was the Games & Puzzles series first by Don Turnbull and then Mr Calhamer himself.

Editors naturally start talking about each other, hobby activities and so forth, and then about subjects which have less to do with Diplomacy. The reason for this is fairly obvious: It is impossible to fill up a reasonable-sized zine with Diplomacy-type material, so the editor (and/or his contributors) write about the subjects that they feel able to write about. If subscribers don't like what the editor is doing they don't have to re-subscribe, but there is a problem with people who are playing games and have no option but to continue. In practice, though, it would be silly to start a game in a zine before discovering what editorial policy is in operation - I have personally never started games except in zines that I enjoy reading. There might be some cause for complaint if a zine changes considerably: Birks and Greatest Hits being a case in point. However, that is very rare, so I don't think it's really worth worrying about. I have never disguised the fact that politics would be mentioned from time to time in Megalomania, and I can't understand people objecting when occasional issues have a lot about politics: after all, we only have a General Election every five years or so. If you aren't prepared to trust the editor to decide what to include, you really ought to be editing your own zine so you can decide.

I prefer zines with strong editorial personalities - people like Pete Birks, John Piggott, Richard Sharp, Clive Booth, Adrien Baird and so on - because I think I know what to expect from, whereas there are a number of editors who don't project a very strong personality, and are therefore less predictable. They tend to print strange articles by odd people.

I voted Pigmy fairly high in the zine poll precisely because I regard Steve Agar as an interesting character, and someone who is prepared to speak his mind. If he doesn't like something he says so, whilst quite a few editors seem reluctant to be at all critical of other zines, presumably for fear that they will be treated to a reply criticising their own zine. Some editors manage to bring off the trick of being pleasant (Richard Walkerdine), but most come across as rather bland when they refuse to criticise obvious faults. I'm afraid that I regard an uncritical approach as unhelpful: if you don't really discover what people think of your zine, how can you make improvements? The only way that the general standard of zines is going to be improved is if faults are pointed out - but not in an unpleasant and negative way, of course - to give the editor a chance to make changes. Otherwise, I fear that many editors would simply muddle on, producing an unspectacular and unexciting zine that is below their potential. A healthy critical environment doesn't seem to have harmed the music industry, the theatre, films or TV, and has many advantages, as it keeps people alert and should act as an impetus to make changes. (Not that the power of Theatre critics is wholly desirable, since they have the ability to close a show.) The argument against criticism of Diplomacy zines is that people put a lot of effort into them, so who are other people to pick holes in them? Well, a lot of effort goes into producing "Crossroads", but that doesn't make it a better programme - a lot of people like it, and good luck to 'em. I don't, and say so. Don't forget that any critic has to worry about his credibility, so if he slags everything off, no-one will take any notice of him. Critics have to behave responsibly, in whatever field they are operating. Anyway, if you don't say nasty things about duff zines, it becomes impossible to really recommend a good one! (Continued next time)

## 7.45 Sale of the Century



**CLINT EASTWOOD  
CLIVE DUNN HUGHIE GREEN  
CLEMENT FREUD**

Another edition of this popular contest demanding quick reactions and general knowledge.

The jackpot prize of a policeman adds to the excitement, and Tina and Carolin display the other prizes on offer. John Benson provides the commentary, and Peter Fenn may lay an egg tonight.

FROM THE BOOK BY AUDIE MURPHY:  
DESIGNER PETER FARMAN: DIRECTOR/  
PRODUCER BILL FREED

Anglia Television Production

## Editorial By Chris Tringham

Good Morning. (Or Good Evening if you go out before the post comes.) What follows is a collection of tedious trivia, widely believed lies, pettiness, in-jokes, ego boosts and name dropping. The zine also contains reports of games of Diplomacy, in the course of which seven apparently sane people pretend they are Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, the Pope, a Russian Tsar or Turkish Sultan and move little plastic units around a map of Europe. Vast amounts of time are spent deciding whether a fleet in the Gulf of Bothnia can support an action in the North coast of St. Petersburg. Hundreds of pages are written on the subject of certain people's behaviour at Diplomacy conventions by people who don't realise that they are only making them infamous thereby. There are jokes about fellow editors, one of whose names is deliberately misspelled because the editor thinks it's funny, another of whom is being parodied because the editor disagrees with him, whilst snide references are made to several others throughout the zine. The editor employs his usual patronising style, to put down other similar publication, picking on trivial faults and blowing them up out of all proportion. He also indulges his obsession with football and politics, ramming these boring subjects down his helpless readers' throats, and ignoring helpful advice from his colleagues to write about something else. Scarcely a season goes by in the Diplomacy games without at least a dozen errors, and the editor only complains when these are pointed out. And for all this, you are expected to pay 25p per issue, plus a gamefee if you play Diplomacy.

Disgusting, isn't it

If I had my way, zine editors would keep quiet, and concentrate on producing their magazines as quickly as possible and as inexpensively as they can manage. Litho is a luxury that no-one can afford, and only encourages these appalling godheads to become even more arrogant. It is the subscriber who pays for the zine, and he doesn't want to hear about what Pete Birks was drinking last weekend or how far off the 3NT re-doubled went. He wants his Diplomacy games adjudicated as quickly and cheaply as possible. And these hardcore chaps even have the cheek to criticise zines that provide an inexpensive and efficient service, merely because they don't contain the gossip and trivia in which they specialise.

Disgusting, isn't it

And the editor of this so-called fanzine, who not only freely admits to having Politics something to the left of Sir Keith Joseph but seems to be actually proud of it, is a student, sponging off the state "studying" at the South Bank 'Polytechnic'. After three years at the taxpayers expense, he doesn't even know what he wants to do with his so-called HND Business Studies.

Disgusting, isn't it

How do you explain postal Diplomacy to the uninitiated? More importantly, how do you do it without it appearing totally absurd? How can we present the outside world with a picture of us as sensible, intelligent, people, rather than degenerate half-wits playing silly games? I'd really like to know the answer, as the only way that the hobby is going to expand is by getting publicity, and in order to do that, the "media" must understand us. This is a serious problem if Philmar's National Diplomacy Tournament comes off, as it will clearly be milked for all possible publicity by Philmar and we'd be foolish if we didn't do the same thing. Malcolm Brown is actually getting on with doing things, such as advertising in Private Eye, getting dedications played on Capital Radio for "all postal Diplomacy players" and other things that I only think about.

Disgusting, isn't it



((One of the best editorial writers in the hobby is Peter Birks. Here are two selections, the first from Greatest Hits #74, the second from #77 8-80 and 10-80))

### EDITORIAL

Zines are strange things. The last issue was generally classified as "mediocre". Part of this is probably due to the fact that GH 72 was better than average, part because GH 73 actually was poor. But at the time I didn't think it was going to turn out poor. Actually, I didn't know how it was going to turn out at all, except in approximate awareness of size. Only when the letters arrive (which, thankfully, they still do) do I think to myself "Is that what I said?" and "I'm sure it didn't come over that way." until I re-read the zine (or even read it for the first time) and think to myself that I had indeed said that and it did indeed come over in that fashion. My own mood is clearer to me in printed retrospect than it is in current feeling.

Which is all very good for psychiatric analysis of Birks, but not really to the point. It's just that people might imagine that I sit down and know how an issue will appear to the general readership, or to that rather more specialized group, the letter-writing readership. And usually, I don't. Looking back on GH 73, I see parts which have quite an impact in print but which were merely passing comments at the time. The preliminary to the letter column, meant to be an aside, sets the tone for the next few pages (and, by way of another aside which may seem to have more importance in retrospect, the conversation had a happy/unhappy result - unhappy because she tried it, happy because she's alive.) ((He had recounted a conversation with a woman on the best way to commit suicide))

At the meeting at The Lamb on Wednesday 16th ((this is a pub where some hobby members meet)) it was recommended to me that I go home and write an editorial, because my drunken editorials are more entertaining. This in itself might depress lesser mortals - to know that you can write better when in virtually no control of your higher mental processes. I'm afraid at the moment I'm boringly sober - partly because it's Sunday afternoon, and partly because I was drunk on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Getting drunk is both depressing and expensive, ~~and that isn't disagreeable~~. Getting drunk as enjoyable and expensive, being drunk is depressing and cheap, having been drunk is painful and cheap. This might do something to explain why people do it.) Anyway, a sober editorial it is at the moment....

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### EDITORIAL

### EDITORIAL

### EDITORIAL

Are you drunk and seeing treble? No.

Editorials, apparently, are either lighthearted or serious, extemporized or planned, anarchic or calculated. So, here I am, trying to think of something serious to say, without appearing po-faced and calculating, and I can't. I mean, I wanted to write something about the evils of people like Bernard Levin, but I thought, "Hell, it will appear pseudo-intellectual, and Piggott will disagree with it and it's got nothing to do with the zine anyhow."

So I decide not to do something on the evils of Bernard Levin, and I can't think of anything else to write about, so I write a rambling editorial about this and that. John Dodds ((editor of Perspiring Dreams)) calls it an editorial about nothing (which, transparently it is not) and I end up wondering whether page 2 is the right place to talk about this and that, such as the excellence of Barry Andrews' "Rossmore Road NW1" (why isn't that a hit?) or that I am sitting next to a full bottle of Jameson's which will be emptied twice over by the time I get to page twenty-x a few days from now.

But I don't want to write a rambling editorial - I want to write an editorial of serious content which doesn't appear po-faced and like a poor apology for a Bruce Page/Duncan Campbell collaboration for page 2 of the New Statesman. If I wanted to do that I could probably by the damn thing for 4/8d, merge it with Greatest Hits and have the largest circulation Fabianist democratic-marxist Diplomacy zine in history. (turn to p23)



Since this is a double issue and its on Publishing, I thought I'd allow myself the luxury of a leisurely look around.

1. Back in issue #34-36, I said that there were 2 GMs that I could give my highest personal recommendation to, one of which I would discuss whom he had openings. Alas, that is not to be. Lee Kendter, Sr is phasing out Why Me? and has no more game openings. My game with Lee (1976ID) had no GMing errors at all. Lee will finish all his present games, and the hobby will lose one of its most dependable GMs.

2. I hope this doesn't reach you too late to vote in Lone Star Diplomat's Hobby Mascot contest. I am naturally voting for the "DIRE-BERCH", Cuerrier's dreadful creature which "has the ability to discuss non-essential matters ad eternum without ever addressing the actual situation... --- the mark of a true diplomat." Get your votes on this non-essential matter to Mike Conner 3214 Beverly Road Austin TX 78703 on a postcard by 25 March 1981. This is a handsome zine, with a good collection of news, but 8 games by issue #5 worries me slightly. But so far, so good!

3. It has generally been known that Pandin's paradox (a situation which has 2 correct adjudications, both internally consistent, but giving different results) is actually just one of a larger class. Mark Larzelere has listed 9 new ones in the family, some as simple as just 8 units and 2 countries. Very clever, and a must for anyone thinking of computerizing their GMing (Apalling Greed #5 522 W Grand River Howell MI 48843, subs 10/\$3)

4. Speaking of computers, Steve McLendon has finished his program for his new Apple home computer, discovering that it took a huge amount of disc space. Once perfected, it should be a real time saver, and the computer can catch a lot of small errors. He will even be able to enter orders as they come in, rather than starting the whole operation on deadline day. Of course, there are still a few bugs: "...The first time I tried to run a FO1 season (and the SG chart) the computer promptly reported to me that Austria had picked up 3 centers for a total of 6 (which was correct), but he had to remove 14 units." The printing quality is good (he'll not have to retype) even in Dragon & Lamb's reduced format (Box 57066 Webster TX 77598, subs \$6/10 issues, GF of \$3.50 (too low) plus a deposit of \$2.50 (good idea) against dropout),

5. Mike Mills has published a second Zine Directory, with capsule descriptions of all N.A. zines, and addresses of British and Central European ones. This represents a lot of work, and is a useful product (50# 1585 Quaker Road Macedon NY 14502) Good Job!

6. Europe Express, mentioned lastish as upcoming has arrived, and looks very impressive indeed. It has a delightful chronology of how Gary was practically forced to publish this to defend himself, a thorough accounting of the amazing Masters' run of fake zines, and a nice collection of letters from various europeans! Gary is a very talented writer. I hope he sticks to his plan for just 3 games (I can't tell you how many times I've seen such good intentions abandoned, and later games pushing all the "good stuff" aside) There are references all over the place to other zines --- I like this kind of interactivensess (Gary Coughlan 4614 Martha Cole Ln Memphis TN 38118. Subs are 10/\$6, with a GF of US\$4).

7. Writing in Voice of Doom #30 Doug Beyerlein suggests a "Diplomacy Vacation" saying that "There is no better way to shake the cobwebs from the mind, view the current situation from a fresh perspective, and generate new creative juices", he hopes that "Maybe we will all feel a little more excited and creative," and give people the chance to "collect their breath before charging back into battle." What Doug wants is a complete cessation ("we all have to vacation together") Getting everyone, or practically everyone, to cooperate just isn't very realistic, but I disagree with Doug that it won't work unless there is "One month when there is no postal Diplomacy." Personally, I enjoy Dippy too much to give it all up for a month (tho I do have to give it up, reluctantly, when I vacation overseas). But it still would be useful.

Postal Diplomacy has a somewhat relentless quality, and I for one could use some time to catch up on things, or to get started on some creative projects that always seem to get postponed due to the press of letters/DD to get out. The idea is sound. Unfortunately, Doug has complicated things by going ahead and suggesting a month, so that there will now be 2 discussions. His chosen month is August, which I think is a poor choice. Usually people have more time during the summer (particularly students) so that Dippy in summertime has less of a tendency to push other things aside than in, say, March. And getting a chance at those other things is one of the reasons for the vacation. Also, Aug is right after DIPCON, usually, and DIPCON often gets the creative juices going --- which shouldn't be wasted. A better choice would be December. Mail service is much poorer in Dec, and there are usually an avalanche of competing responsibilities. In short, Diplomacy is less enjoyable in Dec than any other month, so I think Dec is a better choice. If there is general agreement on this plan, Ill cut DD back to 11 issues per year, regardless of which month is chosen. However, some may oppose/ignore this. I urge them to speak up, and not be cowed into silence if some big name pubbers come out first in favor of the plan.

8. Incidentally, VOICE of Doom sports a very high degree of reader participation. Looking at the letter column (which does include some of Bruce's responses, tho not overly much) and other reader contributions, but excluding press, I count 9 pages in the Jan 1981 issue and 16 pages in Feb 1981. Furthermore, for better or worse, these discussions tend to shy away from the usual name calling and also tend to stick to dippy. Topics have included Rulebook problems, the right of the GM to kick out players, treatment of off-the-record conversations, etc. And there's a good range of people, too, not the same 3 or 4 every issue. And speaking of GMing disputes, Bruce took quite a pasting when he voided the Austrian order "A Vie-Tro". Some of the arguments were pretty dreadful. One GM (who perhaps can be excused because he is inexperienced) pointed out that the Austrian player "was a very enthusiastic standby --- something you don't find too often." NO NO! A GM must be completely impartial, and when it comes to adjudicating orders everyone, regardless of their enthusiasm, must be treated alike. As those who have seen some of my writing on the Rulebook know, I feel that GMs are much too reluctant to use the "Badly written order" sentence of the Rulebook, but this clearly isn't one of those cases. The Rule says "...which can nevertheless can have only one meaning..." Tro could be Tyo, with one letter mangled. But it could also be Tri with one letter mangled. So there are two possible meanings, and thus the rule does not apply. Some writers pointed out that Tro is closer to Tyo than Tri. But even if true, the Rule book doesn't say "Take the closest of several possibilities." What's more, I'm not so sure its true. If I had to guess, I'd have said Tri was intended. After all, Tro has the first two letters right of Tri, but only the first and third of Tyo. And finally, people argue that Bruce should be so strict. This is a worthless argument to use with Bruce. A GM should be accurate, impartial, etc, but also consistant. Bruce has a reputation, accurate in my opinion, of being a fairly strict GM when it comes to the HR and the Rulebook. For him to be otherwise just on this point would be inconsistent. Bruce's ruling was correct, and I'd like to think that a majority of postal GMs would rule the same way.

9. The following appeared as a "Paid Advertisement" in Just Among Friends #5  
A PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Dear Al,

Glad to see you're accepting paid public advertisements. Hey--answer me this--What common thing do JAF and Whitestonia have in common? Answer--Neither was wver plugged by Mark Berch. Let me take this time on behalf of myself to mention Mark Berch's name as many times as possible. Maybe I too can gain a plug from Mark Berch. A couple of issues ago, I plugged Mark Berch's Lexicon and Diplomacy Digest, his zine. The point is, Mark Berch doesn't always give reciprocating plugs. In fact, Mark Berch basically plugs zines of pubbers who are either close friends with him, or those which have services which Mark Berch deems necessary to the hobby. It is true he's also plugged new zines, but only after Mark Berch's name has been mentioned.

Anyway, I have no bad feelings for Mark Berch. Mark Berch can plug anyone he wants, it's his option. I only feel that Mark Berch placing a quota on the number of times you mention "Mark Berch" in your zine is a bit far out.

This has been a paid advertisement by:

MARK BERCH  
John Caruso

PS. I almost forgot my own name.

I've been known to needle a few people in my time, so I recognize an expert job when I see one! My reason's for not plugging Whitestonia will go in a private letter to John. But he is right when he says that I do not believe in "reciprocating plugs." I think its bad policy, and in my case its not practical. I appreciate his plug for the Lexicon (altho I wasn't aware he had done one), but in the space of a few months, about 2 dosen zines at least plugged it, and reciprocating all of those would have really clogged things up here at DD. But beyond that, a plug is given because I have something good to say about a zine, and have no serious reservations about it. The fact that they've plugged DD is nice, but that alone is not enough to commend a zine. The quality of the writing, GMing, press, repro, etc --- these are the real reasons for plugs. If all it took was mentioning DD, I don't think my plugs would carry any weight at all --- nor should they. Now, as for plugging "close friends", this is more complex. I'd be curious to know how Caruso comes to learn who my close friends are. But its true --- if I really like a zine a lot, I tend to write its pubber more, and witing people is one mechanism for becoming friends. And favorite zines tend to get mentioned more. Brutus Bulletin/Michalski and Paschendale/Cuerrier are good examples of this process. And yes, if I think the service is valuable to the hobby I will mention it. I really don't have any relationship with Daly or Mills but I will mention their services. New zines are with a few exceptions not actually plugged, but I will give their names and addresses.

10. Also in JAF #5 is a proposed outline for a Diplomacy Player's Association I think the players in the hobby could use such an outfit, to look after their mutual interests. While I don't agree with all the ideas set forth, the idea (which originated with Jerry Jones, who doesn't have time to pursue it) is very worth pursuing, and if you are interested in helping, I suggest you contact Al Pearson (Rte 1 Box 177B5 Kearneysville W.Va 25430. Subs are \$5 per year) (~~Not~~ Fred DAVIS)

11. Another super collection of fine reading appears in the 5th anniversary issue of Saint George and the Dragon (#61). Included are very clever piece of dippy satire by John Caruso, in which I was the principle target (and which shows a very good knowledge of NADF. The guy is a riot!); "Proxy Battles", by John Kador, discussing two basically different types of puppet-relationships; my own article, third in a series on end-game play; Bruce Lindsey on player rights; an incisive --- and rather critical --- article on how tournaments have been run in the last few years, some humor items and much more. A real winner --- its clear that Bob's call for contributions hit paydirt. Alas, this is just the silver lining on a grey cloud. Bob is having to cut back on his postal dipplomacy. There will be no openings until at least June, and he wants to get StGeo down to 8 pages eventually. This is so sad, because Bob' is as reliable and accurate as they come in the hobby. But Bob still intends to hit #100, so he'll be around for a while (Bob Sergeant 3242 Lupine Dr Indianapolis IN 46224; 10/11/82)

12. A year or so ago, I complained that certain Midwestern publishers (I was referring to Michalski and Sergeant) took time in their zines to discuss the weather, a topic I consider boring and dated by the time it arrives. Well, the hobby has fixed me but good, as pubbers all over now prominently feature such comments, labeling them "Mark Berch Department". Look, guys, the only reason I mentioned this was so that you'd create the "MBD" and I'd get my name mentioned more often. So if you keep this up (with or without the MBD label --- its already associated in your readers' minds with MBD) you'll only be playing right into my hands, OK?

13. Once upon a time James Massar published a zine called " ", pronounced the same as quotes. Now in England, Richard Scott (who used to publish Fifth Column) has apparently come out with a zine called "\_\_\_\_\_". Peter Birks decided to pronounce it Blank Underlined, or BU. NO, not right protested Richard, the underlining is just

for convention, its not part of the zine title. Oh, alright, said Peter, we'll call it Blank Underlined, or BU. (Incidentally, does anyone know the difference between underscored and underlined?). I just thought I'd mention this so you'd know why Britishers think we take the hobby and game too seriously.

14. One of the measures of the hobby's health is whether the number of openings and the number of those seeking games are in approximate balance. If there are too many openings, newcomers may not be able to get the show on the road. Even worse, GMs may press their readers to enter more games than they otherwise would, or lower their rates, or may enter too many games themselves (on a I'll-enter-your-game-if-you'll-enter-mine type of deal with someone in the same predicament). And if there are not enough openings, newcomers may become discouraged at long delays in getting into games, or at repeated sorry-no-openings-but-here's-your-sample-anyhow responses. Or they may go to some of the really marginal characters, or may pressure other GMs to open more games they really want to. I suspect things are reasonably close to being in balance, but in England they are not. Apparently a big push has brought in quite a few new people -- Richard Hucknall reports that the Central Gamestart Service (which supplants the usual way pubbers get new games) is getting requests for games at the rate of one per day. By contrast few pubbers have openings, and few new zines are coming on stream. It also seems that of the class of 79, only 2 zines of any significance are left. By contrast, here Envoy, Dogs of War, Retaliation, Voice of Doom, Shogun's Sword, Cheesecake, Infidel, and I'm sure I've overlooked a few, are still going strong. If the squeeze gets bad over there (hasn't happened yet) I wonder if they'll try playing in North American zines.

15. Earlier in this issue I referred to people getting into too many games, getting too deeply into the hobby. Here is a perfect example, from Al Rodriguez: "... I became much too involved & almost choked on the hobby. I am down to a much more reasonable amount of games and can now enjoy the hobby as one should. It sure is easy to get carried away." The hobby was lucky with Al, because all too often the response is just to chuck it all. I know several people (such as John Machir) who did just that, and I'm sure that many of you know of other cases as well. I hate to be repetitive, but its a real, and major danger to the hobby.

16. And speaking of Brutus Bulletin Bruce Linsey, following the old admonition to write about what you know best, published his 6 rules for feuding in #84 (I wrote a similar article some months ago, and it will see the light as soon as a certain publisher gets around to running it). His rules contain much good advice, but I want to mention his rule #2, which says that if the atackee doesn't get your zine, its your job to send him a "courtesy copy" of the attack. Bruce then sez that he has a list of exceptions to that rule, people who don't get copies. He then has the gall to turn around and bitch that Bob Arnett doesn't doesn't send Bruce copies of Bob's attacks on him. I do not mean this as any defense of Bob Arnett. When it comes to sleazy feuding tactics, he has few if any peers in the hobby. The reason that Bruce-the-clairvoyant gives is that none on his list will "will ever change an iota". Baloney. If Bruce can use his reasons to create an exception list, then Arnett can use his reasons and create his exceptions. And others can decide to stick to Rule #2, and make their exception-list for some other rule, perhaps an even more important one. The rule is a good one, and unless there is a compelling reason (e.g. the person has written you that he doesn't want to be annoyed by your zine) it should be followed. I do not mean to pick on Bruce; when we discussed this point last summer he pointed out that others don't follow this rule, and indeed, Michalski chimes in with mention of his list too. These rules are made to protect others, not oneself, and so it is not up to oneself to make the exceptions. I have stomped Tretick and Boardman in some issues of DD, and they always get copies. If for no other reason, I do not want to give Tretick even one reason to complain about unfair treatment from me, of talking behind his back and not telling him. I hope Bruce and those who agree with him will reconsider.

17. Robert Sacks 4861 Broadway #5-V N.Y.C. NY 10034 publishes a \*Known Game

Openings" with very up-to-date information on both regular and variant game openings, Giving all pertinent information. This is printed in a few zines like EE, and you can get a copy with just a self-addressed stamped envelope

18. An interesting project would be to look at the longevity of the class of 1980. To do this first we'd need a complete list of such North American zines, including those which have already folded. Publish the list and see if anyone knows of others. Assuming that they were uniformly distributed in 1980, July 1 would be the first anniversary, tho this could be done more precisely by getting the exact starting months for each. Then thru the years we could see how they did as a group. Further, if it were possible to conduct "exit interviews", we might be able to come up with some generalizations on why zines fail, see whether failure rate is correlated with type of repro, etc. So long as it is not turned into some kind of competition, that might be a useful project. The natural person<sup>right of</sup> for this would be Mike Mills, and he should have first refusal, but if he's not interested, and you are, let me know.

19. TZC does criticize what goes on in other zines, sometimes, so it seems only fair that it have DD as its target, too. Lew Pulsipher was sent a copy of #43, as one of his articles appeared there. This engendered the following:

"... I do think it is extremely discourteous to reprint anything written by anyone without their permission. If you reprint anything that I have had published, without permission, again, I shall do my best to condemn the action and encourage others to condemn it. I can't really object if an editor reprints some material directed at him, such as Warden reprinting Boardman's tirades, but the editor should try to obtain permission even tho he won't get it. In any other case, to reprint without permission is theft, pure and simple, regardless of whether the material is copyrighted or not. (On the otherhand, a letter sent to the editor is, of course, fair game, unless the writer states otherwise.)

"This question has come up several times in the hobby's past. The most celebrated case was the Birsan-Wlaker whitewash after Walker reprinted material copyrighted by TDA. In that case, and others, I maintained the same attitude I describe above. Its easy enough for younger editors to be lazy and not bother to obtain permission, but more experienced hands really cannot be excused."

I then wrote Lew, making sure I could run his letter, and asked whether his "to reprint without permission is theft" was to cover cases where permission was neither given nor withheld. He said the letter could be run, and went on:

"To reprint anything covered by unexpired copyrighted without the copywrite holder's written permission is definately illegal. While it is legal to reprint material uncopyrighted; in my opinion, it is a kind of theft to reprint material without the author's permission. This is my view regardless of whether you ask and get no response, or ask and told no, or don't ask at all --- no permission, no reprint. As far as this hobby is concerned, if a writer has left the hobby it is sometimes possible to contact him thru someone else in the hobby; perhaps in this case one might be satisfied with permission acquired second hand, thru the still active friend. If the person is really long gone, unreachable, then I just wouldn't reprint the material. I believe that I gave some exaples of how reprinting can cause embarrassment or worse for the victim, in a discussion about variants in a past DW. For example, author promises to give exclusive reprint rights to an editor, and finds the next day that some other person has reprinted the material without permission.

"The subject matter of the piece is not relevant, tho I can conceive of cases in which it would be courteous to ask permission of one person to publish what someone else has written about him."

If I were to follow Lew's standards, DD would probably have to be shut down. Thus I do not claim any objectivity whatsoever. I'll start with the uncopyrighted material. I do not consider reprinting this to be either theft or discourteous. The

core question is this: What was the writer's intent when he had his article published? Did he intend to retain this as his private property --- in that case, later reprinting could well be theft. Or was he just putting in the pot, dedicating it to the public? I opt for the latter. First, by not copyrighting it, or saying "Do Not Reprint", he has in effect signalled that he does not treat it as just his private property. He could do so easily, but does not. In both law and in common sense, the failure to put restrictions means that he doesn't want them. Second, there is my own personal experience. When I started publishing, I wrote to about 80-100 pubbers, all I could find, asking for blanket reprint permission. Fewer than half even bothered to answer, and of those who did, only one objected. What they said, in general, is: fine, just make sure its credited properly and I get a copy of that issue. Additionally, I have sent out many copies to persons whose material has been reprinted, and Lew's letter is the first objection that I have received. I therefore conclude that those whose uncopyrighted material has been reprinted do not consider it to be theft, and so neither do I. And as for being "lazy" and "discourteous", I reject this totally as well. In #41, for example, I reprinted an article by Don Kellogg. I haven't the slightest idea of who his friends are. And even if I did, to write them, and bother them about this would be discourteous, in my opinion, since its all unnecessary. Even when I can get the permission, this can take months of delay. Yes, I can write Edi Birsan to his old address in England and see if he objects. Meanwhile the Germany issue waits and waits and waits until perhaps I decide he isn't going to respond after all. The extra time/effort will have to be subtracted from something, and the delay will harm things as well.

If a person, having printed something without any limitations, later says that I do not have permission, the situation is more complex. Bob Lipton asked me not to reprint a certain article, because it was poorly written. Fine --- that's as good a reason as any --- that article will never be reprinted here. There are other valid reasons too, but I will not say that all such requests will automatically be honored; each will be judged on its merits. This is because a donation, once made (to the public) cannot automatically be undone, any more than you can always get a gift back.

As for material with an unexpired copyright, Lew's statement that reprinting this is "definitely illegal" is simply not true. I don't want to get into a big legal discussion (well, actually, I do, but I don't think that you all are interested), but there are many exceptions, some of which are encompassed by the "doctrine of fair use." This is the way, for example, that you can quote something in a book review without permission. For example, suppose someone criticized me (or one of my friends) in an editorial that was marked Do Not Quote (at the time, or later) or covered by Copyright. I have two choices. I can paraphrase what he said, thus avoiding the reprint altogether. Or I can reprint and respond. In many cases, the latter will be more fair, as some bias could slip into my paraphrase, but the reprint technique lets the writer say it as he intended. I once had a pubber hint to me that if I criticized him (or (re)printed material critical of him --- I forget which) that he might withdraw permission to reprint stuff from his zine. No such pressure tactic will ever work on me. Now, obviously, if I have something of Lew's, I'll write him first. But particularly if the item was not copyrighted, I am going to want a valid reason. And I am not going to spend my limited time seeking permissions for the ordinary article, because I do not think such permissions are necessary.

20. Remember the DD Third Anniversary awards a little while back? Well, Jack Masters has gone one better. In Black Frog #35 he announces his "personal hobby awards", the Black Jack Awards, in various categories. Also included were the "Golden Frog Awards", which are hobbywide awards. Murd'ring Ministers was zine of the year, Enchain Macha sophomore zine of the year, Bruce Linsey as Hobbiest of the year, Kathy Byrne as Female Hobbiest, Proliferation of fake zines as the Event of the Year, plus a bunch of "Special Hobby Contributions" etc. The coverage of the past year's events/people was quite extensive. What Jack is doing, really, is thanking all those who made 1980 so much fun for him. He was really quite there about it, and I think its a great idea.



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