

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #73
July 1983
Publishing

Mark L Berch
492 Naylor Place
Alexandria VA 22304

Subs: 10 for \$4.00
Europe: 10/\$4.50 or 7/£2
Circulation: 114



DIPCON XVI was a great Con, meaning specifically, that I had a good time. I travelled, and roomed with, John Kador. I've done this so many times with John since 1978 that it seems like John is part of the experience of attending a dipcon, part of the social and psychological framework of the experience (whatever that means).

Anyhow, on Friday afternoon, we perused the dozens of game company booths. It's always amazing to me to see the tremendous amount of creativity and energy that goes into this type of activity, and who knows, a small stand with a handful of games may be an industry giant by the end of the 80s.

Friday evening was a variant tournament: Gunboat Diplomacy. This is a game with no negotiation ---- just order writing! In the first round, I finished with 2 centers ---- gunboat really is just a mindless game with way too much luck. But then, in the interval between rounds 1 and 2, the very nature and essence of Gunboat changed, and it became a game of great skill, where only the truly skilled can do well. How such a change could take place in just a few minutes I do not know, but clearly it did, because I won my game in round 2, and thereby won the tournament! So remember, regular Dippy is luck, just luck; gunboat is true skill. I was quite pleased with this win ---- I've never come close to finishing even in the top 10 of any dippy tourney. Hats off to Ben Schilling who ran it in a well organized manner, and people did have a good time.

Afterwards was the Hamlin/Luedi/Linsey/Williams beer blast. It was a verbal beer blast ---- people hung around talking about beer, but absolutely no one had any. So everyone who came up the elevator was thinking the same thing: I'll drink someone else's beer. But Brian Lorber was sure plenty could be had in "greektown", a map was located, people were galvanized, and soon, everyone was off, except Eric Ozog and Cathy Cuning who suddenly vanished. We collected more bodies, and soon, 25 strong, we were off. Soon we were knee deep in exotic motorcycles, gaudy hookers, and wall-to-wall greek restaurants. We finally found a place to accommodate such a large group, and had a good time.

Saturday morning was the panel discussion, chaired by Kathy Byrne, and including Fred Davis, Allan Calhmer, Woody and myself. Topics included whether women have an advantage in postal diplomacy, and how games which rely on electronic mail (computer networks such as The Source) should be treated. But the most interesting parts for me were comments made by Calhmer, the inventor of the game. He talked about how to handle some of the most common order-writing errors, his design for the game, and how things have turned out somewhat differently than he intended. I have written a short article summarizing these comments, plus some others he made to me later. This should appear in the next Diplomacy World. Around this time there was also a Diplomacy Auction. Prices ran-

ged from \$3.50 for an old M.O.W. Variant Package, to \$15 for a complete run of Ruritania a zine from the mid 60's. I think this was Caruso's idea, and it worked just great.

The tournament began at 3 PM, a bit late for my taste, but they wanted to give people the chance to play in some other events. This had 16 boards in Round 1, and 12 or 13 in Round 2, which began Sat morning at 9 PM. Thus, it was about the same size as DipCon XII in 1979. The scoring system was very sensible (18 points to the winner or divided equally among those who drew, and 2 points given for every player you outperformed on your board, plus 0.01 points per center as a tie-breaker). The tournament was run by Caruso, Schilling, and, I believe, Pearson, and they did a smooth job. As best I could tell, everyone had a very good time, and the hobby is in their debt for such a fine job. As for me, it was the usual story: Creamed twice. As England, I was stomped by Russia, and then, in round 2 as Russia, I was stomped by England. Nice symmetry! Much the same thing happened at Marycon: As F, E opened to the channel; then, as E, France opened to the channel. Sad, isn't it? The tournament was won by Joyce Singer, with the sole win. This is, I'm sure, the first win by a woman in a major Diplomacy tournament (there were 5 or 6 women playing). Eric Ozog was second, and Dave Kleiman placed third. "Best Country" certificates were given out for each round, an innovation that I began last year, and I was pleased to see kept for this year.

In any game which has 2 success criteria, the possibility of exchanging one for the other arises. This apparently happened in Round 2. Jack Brawner, at the time at 9 centers, struck a deal whereby he would be permitted to reach 17 centers --- and thus best country was virtually guaranteed ---- in return for which he would agree to a draw not including himself. He reached 17, agreed to a three way draw without himself (had he insisted, the game would have been a 5-way DIAS draw). I asked him if he could have taken an 18th center; he said no, in fact, he couldn't even defend what he had. Jack had not done real well in Round 1, so a draw in Round 2 would not have netted him anything. I hasten to add that this is merely Jack's version, but it does raise an interesting question in tournament ethics, assuming there is such an animal.

Saturday nite was the DipCon Society meeting. A bid was Made for MaryCon in Virginia, and Origins in Dallas, and a lively discussion followed. In some ways, this was similar to, and even sharper than, the discussion which took place in 1980 when we had to decide whether to have DipCon go to the west coast. The problem is, 1) It was the Southwest's "turn" under the rotations system, and 2) there are very few pubbers in that area, and more seriously, apparently not many local players. And those are important to getting a large tournament, because the postal hobby just cannot fill 10 or 15 or 20 boards at a DipCon. But Origins is a good "draw", it was their turn, and perhaps this will stimulate growth in the area. Anyhow, DallCon will be the location for DipCon XVII. Also discussed was how to allocate the \$\$\$ from this year's DipCon. The committee decided to duck the question, and turned it over to the general meeting, this resulted in one of the most confused discussions I've ever heard. The result was 40% BNC, 25% MNC, 25% orphans, 10% Census. The latter item makes no sense at all to me --- the census has appeared (under Martin) only once, and that was some time back. PONTEVEDRIA, the game openings list appears regularly, and wasn't funded, even tho it is free. I certainly think the committee could themselves have come up with a better formula. A new committee was elected for next year: Al Pearson, Pat Conlon, and Ed Wrobel, so the committee will be in very good hands for another year. This meeting was chaired by Al Pearson. Its a very difficult type of job, because you have to deal with the fact that some take it seriously, some take it as a joke, you have to let people say their piece but not let things go on forever. Al did a masterful job, it would have worth while taping parts of the meeting. I never would have thought that there would be an artistry in chairing a meeting, but believe me, it was a pleasure to watch Al in action.

There's much more, but I'll stick to some fast takes....being lied to each and every season of 1901-02 by Eric Ozog....keeping a straight face when Kathy Byrne suggested that Cathy Cuning go skinny dipping.....commiserating with Herb Barents on his losing over \$100,000 in one year alone in the games distribution business....watching Jeff Bohner poke at his flaming sausage to see if it would go out getting a several-

months-old trivia quiz set of answers from Mike Barno....hearing Jim Williams and Brad Wilson claim they had just been mooned by a waitress in a Greek restaurant....watching Allan Calhamer give a "thumbs down" to the new plastic pieces....listening to Mike Barno and Jeff Bohner discuss subtle forms of communication used in the first round of the Gunboat tournament comparing the Brad Wilson version with the Brian Lorber/Eric Kane version of a very rainy visit to Flushing, N.Y....learning that The Shogun's Sword will be transferred again, this time from Mike Barno to Cathy Cuning.... learning how Mark Frueh pronounces his name ("free")....trying to fake an NMR in a tournament game (the ploy didn't work)....overhearing one player tell another, "You might as well let me have your home centers because I'm not going to let you build anyhow"....being one of several people to chastize Tom Mainardi for not bringing his giant Diplomacy board....comparing notes on the British hobby with Cathy Cuning (it seems the zines we each get hardly overlap at all)....noticing Julie Martin's.....hearing Chip Charnley EXPLAIN HOW electronic mail diplomacy works..... seeing some very clever buttons, such' as "NO MORE NUKES --- till we use the ones we've got".....

THE ZINE COLUMN #63

The Runestone Poll

Europa Express has won the Runestone Poll, the second consecutive year that it was voted best zine. No other North American zine has ever accomplished such a feat, and this win was richly deserved. In second by just a hair was Diplomacy by Moonlight, which is now, alas and woe, expired. These are followed by Snafu!, Just Among Friends, Appalling Greed, Sleepless Knights, The Prince, Voice of Doom, Dogs of War, Envoy, Diplomacy World, Magus, Bushwacker, Whitestonia, Xenogogic, Pereladra, North Sealth West George, Cheesecake, Coat of Arms, and Diplomacy Digest and Murdrin' Ministers tied for 20th, with other zines trailing. I'm not certain, but I believe that this is the first year ever where a new zine did not finish in the top 5. Top Subzine was "Mos Bisley Spaceport", a roving subzine which has appeared in at least a dozen zines. Topping the GM poll were Doug Beyerlein, John Daly, Bob Osuch, Dave Carter, and Andy Lischett.

For my taste, several zines, including Anduin, VOD, and Whitestonia should have finished higher than they did. Of course, that means that an equal number should have finished lower than they did, and no, I'm not going to be dumb enuf to name them. DD's finish was a little better than last year, but then again, as I believe Al Pearson said, "Its the dollar votes that count", and circulation remains good here. I was especially pleased that DD garnered 41 votes, behind only VOD (54) and DW (48).

One area of complication was the question of how to treat zines which spent part of the year as subzines. Randolph listed 3 zines, Bersaglieri, Festungs Hof, and Hail Jikai! as collecting votes in both categories, and all three of them shifted during the year. I'm not sure that Randolph realized that this was the source of the double listings.

Randolph plans a more sophisticated analysis of the results once his computer is up and running. I still think, tho, that rather than a straight arithmetic mean, that the votes should be processed the same way one does in some sporting competitions where subjective factors are involved (e.g. diving), viz, a few votes removed from the bottom ("grudge votes") and an equal number from the top ("buddy-buddy votes"). At present, one vote is removed, probably from the upper end --- pubbers cannot vote for their own zine. I have a few other suggestions, all of them modest, which I'll probably present in another forum. Anyhow, hats off to Randolph for a good and prompt job, and applause to the winners.

If you are wondering about the graphics around here, I can best respond to you by quoting from Mark Larzelere, writing in #46 of Appalling Greed: "Yes, the real clue to what's going on in a man's mind is best revealed not by what he says or writes, or by who he hangs out with, or even by what he does. Its in his linear separators." How very profound! OK, figure this one out, Larzelere:

LETTERS

Letters this month deal with the topic of publishing. First up is Scott Hanson, with some response to comments made in DD #71:

1) The "Pentagon Papers" were not exactly intended for print, yet the New York Times printed it. Of course, there is a difference that they were not written and addressed to the Times; they were received thru a third party, but that would be analogous to sending off a copy of a NFP letter addressed to you to someone else to print....((My point about the Pentagon Papers was that the desire of the writer not to have something published, copyright law, etc, usually cannot overrule the right of a free press. So people wanting to use "real world" legal principles aren't going to find much support there for suppression. The PP were received via a third party, and if the government had been able to restrain itself from ransacking the office of Ellsberg's shrink, he might well have gone to jail for purloining the papers))

2) I don't mean that all NFP letters are bad. I've gotten myself into a job where confidentiality serves some legitimate purpose....((This refers to Scott taking over the U.S. Orphan Service. In his initial flyer, he says, "All correspondence with the USOS will be treated in the strictest confidence if requested.")). I've used the notation for brief portions of letters, usually dealing with fakes or other surprises. Its using the label to harm that I object to; "I'll be nice to you in public but privately I hate your guts" kind of thing. ((I take your point, tho I don't see things that way. While such an attitude is unfortunate, its better than the alternative, viz, "I hate your guts and I'm going to be very nasty to you in public." For the life of me, I cannot see the harm actually done by informing someone, of necessity off the record, that you really do dislike them, regardless of the public stance. About the only time such a label is used harmfully is when the writer says, e.g., "Yes, I lied about you, and this is DNQ" --- but that awfully rare. If B hates A's guts, I would prefer that B's letter to A saying this be DNQ --- to prevent A from parading it in his zine. I understand, Scott, that neither one of wants to read about B hating A's guts. And, the way I see it, if B makes his letter DNQ, and A feels obligated to respect the DNQ label, then its out of the zine, right?))

3) Printing a NFP letter is a very serious matter. It means going against the wishes of the writer means more to you than any friendship with the writer. Its something I'd do only as a last resort. Its something I'd do, if I felt wronged and whatever relationship I had with the writer had deteriorated to such a level. I hope it never happens, but I can't honestly say it will never happen ... If I felt I had to print a NFP letter, I would. But there'd be no chance of slipping into a feud; a feud (or at least very bad feelings) must be assumed when doing something like that...I haven't entered into this blindly. I've always considered printing NFP letters in certain, very critical situation as being a valid course of action....((With such a cautious attitude, it seems very unlikely you'll ever get into trouble. Still, I wouldn't do it regardless of provocation. And even if the friendship were dead, who knows what 1984 or 1985 will bring?))

For the next letter, a quick background is needed. In the Feb "Kathy's Korner", Kathy wrote a sharply worded editorial, criticizing Barno for writing a letter, and Linsey for printing it. Their names were never mentioned; instead, Berch's was given, as Kathy intimated to her readers that I thought there was "humor in it". Now, Kathy knew perfectly well my views on this, as she had gotten a letter from me on the subject. The April KK had my complaint about this printed. While admitting "poor wording", she justified her assumption by saying, "You have used this numerous times in defending the unnamed pubber." In short, she sez, I didn't do it this time but I did it all along. A large sigh escaped from the Berch lungs. My complaint had only made matters worse, as Kathy had widened her criticism. I resolved: No more criticisms for W. A short time later, Kathy writes me, wondering what I thought of what she wrote. I answered her letter honestly, and since I didn't want this discussion printed, I labeled it DNQ. The next KK had two misquotes from that DNQ letter. When I complained about this, she ridiculed me in KK, saying I had no right to object to her printing this. I located my soap-box erecting kit, prepared a soap-box, and issued forth my editorial lastish, fully aware that the last thing you want in an issue used as a sample is dirty laundry.

And now, riding his white horse, comes Rod Wlaker, to rescue the maiden:

I must express some strong reservations and disagreements with your statements about Kathy in DD #72. Regardless of the merits of your complaints about Kathy, I do not agree these should be linked to her coincidentally being BNC. Don Ditter felt, and I agree with him, that Kathy is fully capable of handling the job, including the sensitive/confidential material she sometimes needs to see, and that she is capable of keeping BNC affairs separate from her personal affairs ... it isn't right to call Kathy's ability into question when she has just taken over the position...The material you're talking about was labeled DNQ (or whatever) by you, yes, but it wasn't exactly sensitive or confidential, was it? I am convinced that Kathy can be very circumspect and fair when the BNC job is concerned. So, lets keep it just between you and her, not between you and the BNC, OK?((I might as well dispose of this issue right off the bat. My criticism of Kathy was qua editor of "Kathy's Korner", not qua BNC (look, its not often I get to use the word "qua", I'm not going to pass it up!)). I didn't make any tie between this problem and her qualifications as BNC. I urged GMs to cooperate with her, and I meant that. If she's good enuf for Ditter, she's good enuf for me. In retrospect, I should just have put the announcement of her being annointed BNC on a different page, because you read something into thier being on the same page that I didn't intend))

Now, as to your specific complaints. Let me say right off that, yes, your statements were misconstrued and distorted in Kathy's translation. I don't know that the term "out of context" really applies when the actual words were not quoted((correctly, I assume he means)), but that is a technical point. Suffice it to say that Kathy did in fact put words in your mouth that you did not say or mean. Thru your courtesy, I have seen your original letter and I agree with the factual substance of your complnt.

But I do not agree with the construction you put on the facts. That is, to use an analogy, you're trying to turn a parking violation into a homicide charge...There was nothing confidential or sensitive about the material in question. Yes, you requested it not be quoted/printed. Yes, Kathy should not have violated your request, even in the minor way she did. But it was minor. In fact, this was a case of abusive labeling. If we are going to use labels like NFP and DNQ, lets keep them to letters, or parts of letters, where we have a compelling reasons to request confidentiality. Otherwise you just cheapen a label In fact, before this flap came up, I would have thought "NFP" was just a way of letting an editor know you didn't expect him to print the letter, it was just personal and he shouldn't feel it was something you intended for his lettercol ... I undersstand your position, but this is the first time I had realized you intended that label to be instructional, not discretionary. (Of course, Mark, with letters the length of yours, I'm just as glad --- where would I print these monsters..?)

There is this to consider, too. Kathy has a long and raucous history of twitting you in KK. What better way to get a rise out of you than use some little innocuous snippet from one of your NFP or DNQ letters? And of course you came right at the bait as if you were the star of Jaws. Yes, of course, I know you take this matter of labeling letters very seriously, and yes, I agree with you, the writer's wishes should be respected out of common courtesy, But one must have some perspective on things. There have got to be degrees of culpability here. I can't bring myself to see more than Kathy trying to get your goat and succeeding. There are of course other disagreements between you and Kathy which give this otherwise petty affair a sort of bitter twinge. That is regrettable and, I hope correctable. However, in this particular instance, you're trying to tell us that a border incident is really a fullscale invasion.

As to thematter you mention concerning Bruce Linsey, it seems to me that this matter is so complex, involuted, uncertain((etc, etc. I'm not going to get into all this. My only point in mentioning that at all in the editorial was that Kathy had said herself that what she printed in KK was drawn from Bruce's OTR letter)).

I do know this: I trust Kathy totally, just as I trust you. If I felt it were necessary for her to know something I regarded as sensitive, I would not hesitate to give her that information --- and I would not lose even a nanosecond of sleep worrying... But to err is human, and it is always possible for Kathy, or you, or me to misinterpret ... I am therefore not telling you that Kathy is perfect. I am telling you that Kathy

is reasonable and trustworthy, and there is not one word in your editorial which demonstrates otherwise....I hope that Kathy will offer to print a correction to the misinterpretations...She should understand and accept your personal feelings in the matter and print a correction. That she owes you. And I should think the BNC might expect a little correction from you.((Sheesh! Next he'll expect a game-long 2-way Berch-Byrne alliance, followed by gazing deeply into each other's eyes))

((The main issue where I disagree with you, Rod, and probably the only issue of any interest to those few subbers of mine who are still awake, is whether it was legitimate for me to label it as DNQ. No, what she quoted wasn't "sensitive", and I never said it was. If I had written something sensitive, I don't think she would have quoted it. But thats not the only legitimate grounds in my book. I wanted the process, whereby I put criticisms into KK, stopped immediately. I realized as soon as I saw the May KK that this was counterproductive, that my legitimate complaint was just being used against me. In response to her letter, I explained in some detail why I didn't want to continue to present criticisms in KK, and I further emphasized that by making the letter DNQ. That to me was the true breach of faith on Kathy's part. She did not respect my desire to halt the Berch-knocks-Kathy-in-KK routine, and she should have --- even if the letter hadn't been labeled. Its not the misquotes --- thats a common error, easily corrected, something you get used to.

And, Rod, I DO think its legitimate to keep criticisms out of zines; I don't beleive in the let-it-all-hang-out theory of publishing. And one of the ways you keep it out is with a DNQ or NFP label.. If you don't want something in a zine --- for whatever reason --- I don't think its abusive to label the letter accordingly. As for whether I've made too much of this, well, I don't think so, but thats not really a judgement for me to make. Thats for others to say. But I will say this: If Kathy in the June KK had just admitted that she made a mistake, there would have been no DD editorial in #72. None. It was her ridiculing me for even objecting that was the last straw. I do, however, regret using the word, "burned". "Singed"would be better))

((Your comments are, as always, welcome, but as far as the pages of DD are concerned, that should be enough (oh, alright, a lot more than enuf!). Kathy, of course, retains the right of reply.))



((Hoaxzines have been an integral part of the North American hobby, especially over the past 3 years. In England, they are fond of saying how we take things too seriously. So what happens when there's a British fake? We turn to Fall of Eagles #45, 6-26-80))

Tom Tweedy: You must consider yourself fortunate in not getting a copy of The Mag - it was terrible! I thought it was in really bad taste, and told Clive Booth so (who accuses me of doing it!). I'm not sure what the editors/editor was/were really trying to achieve ; if it was an ego-boost it didn't succeed. Anyone going to that trouble and expense -- typing, duplicating, envelopes and stamps etc - should try and make a better job of it. Why waste everything on a spoof? If he/they has/have something to say, why not produce the zine "seriously"? My God we could do with some new zines, especially humorous ones.

Richard Hucknall((editor)): Clive has let me see his copy of The Mag and altho I felt it was funny in parts I was left with the feeling that it was a waste of time and effort. I agree that this kind of thing is pointless unless there is a motive of some kind behind it, and I confess I couldn't see one. Now, if it had been issue #1 of the third incarnation of Ethil the Frog written in Piggoteese it would have been immensely more enjoyable. ((I have seen other examples of this very stuffy attitude toward fakes. Yes, being funny just isn't good enuf, there has to be a "motive" -- a spoof is a mere "waste"))



((From time to time I've run items on team publishing, as such a plan provides a much better zine than one person can provide. This account of the travails of such a deal comes from Arrakis #55, March 1976, and was written by Dave Head. At the time, all the people involved were in High School, and used ~~the~~ Gestetner, an arraignment which was chancy from the start))

Arrakis has seen a considerable amount of change in the past year and a half.

It has gone from a one editor zine under Leeder to a 5 editor zine when Kitching, Monahan, Johnston, and I joined with Leeder. We only produced one issue (#39) as a 5-editor zine. The new editors sections in #39 were not too good, but I think we could have, with a little practice, made an excellent zine. But good things must come to an end, and Leeder had to leave and move to Calgary. Without his experience we bumbled thru the next few issues as a 4-editor zine. #41 was however a respectable 9-pager... At that time, Monahan was about our best writer, but he never had time to develop this to its fullest. And with increased pressures from school, he had to leave us. #43.... showed a change in style, we no longer typed up our own page, but typed all the games onto the same stencil to reduce the wastage of space. The infortunately cut down on comments from the GMs. #44 was our first 10 pager....

From issues #45-53 we were a 3-editor zine. With #46 and #47 we experimented with deviding the page into 2 columns, but a number of people protested, so we returned to the old format. During this period, the Huntsville Diplomacy Association also surfaced. This period also saw a gradual increase in errors made by Kitching in the games he was GMing, and a decrease in his interest with Diplomacy and publishing. We told him a number of times to get his ass into gear but we received little response from him. The climax of the matter came on the night of the deadline. Brian Johnston called Kitching asking him to bring his stuff for 74CW and 74HB over, but he hung up on Brian. What you read last issue was typed up right after that. If it seemed rather blunt and cut-throated well it was as we were both quite angry. ((Johnston took over the 2 games, and the zine dropped to 2 editors))

....With #54 Arrakis has almost turned full circle being a 2-editor zine. But don't be thinking that the domino theory is at work here. Neither Brian or I have nay intentions of skipping out....We intend to keep the same format for a while at least. Each issue will likely be limited to 10 pages to make it under the 1 oz limit. That would seem rather odd in the old days when we had to grope to make it a 10-pager.... Arrakis will remain as a Huntsville based zine ofr at least another couple of years. I'm in grade 11 now and will be here until 13((Dave went on to say that then he'd either take the zine with him to college, or turn it over to another editor in Huntsville. The saga was not over, however! With #67 in Jan 1977, Doug Hayward and Steve McLaughlin, both of Huntsville joined the team. In #73, Steve was dropped, bringing them down to 3, and with #76, Johnston left to attend U. of Toronto. The Head-Hayward team continued for a while, but by #86, ~~Hayward~~ was clearly in charge, with Head reduced to a GGM role primarily. By #93, only Hayward's name appeared. But in #95, it was announced that Head would be taking over for the summer of 1979. A few issues later, the zine was dead, its games transfered to other eanadian zines. While there have been other zines which changed editorial hands, in nearly all cases, (in North America, I mean), it was an abrupt shift from one person or group to another completely different one, often involving a delay. So far as I know, there has never been a North American zine with as fluid an editorship as Arrakis. Team publishing nowadays takes a differt form. Except in cases where the editors live together, there is one person who produces the zine, and various subzine editors produce material for the zine, giving the typed masters to the editor. The best examples of these now are The Modern Patriot, Coat of Arms. I don't know if the practice of having a zine with 3+ subzines even exists in Britian)).



((Writing in Impassable #50 was Frank McIlvaine , May 5, 1975))

THE HONEST REVIEW

Advertising makes or breaks many services and products. In Diplomacy there are two primary ways to advertise: thru direct mail or thru referrals known as plugs. Direct mail is a very nice way to let someone see your product but it is very expensive. New zines typically direct mail a few issues out to friends or people that they have addresses for This is a generally expensive way of doing business. In the Diplomacy zine business profit margins are almost non-existent. Sending out a lot of samples is

is not a very productive way to get subscribers, some people will not want to get your zine because they don't want to enter another game, some because they don't like your format, some because they are broke, etc. A much better way for this direct mail system to work is to have someone write to you (enclosing a stamp or two) and ask for a sample. This way you know the person has at least a very marginal interest in getting your zine, the free issue then becomes a good investment, and even better if the person making the request has sent in the stamp for the zine ... I assume you have printed a few extras so the cost of giving one of those extras away is only the cost of the stamp.

With that type of system, you must be mentioned by some people to attract the attention of those looking for games. This is also a very good way for a GM with no openings to provide his readers with a service: A game opening section. Plugs are very short descriptions of the zine and are often more concerned with rates than contents. There is also an "Honest Review". An Honest Review is one that knocks the zine to be reviewed. This, by contrast, assumes that good reviews are dishonest, a connotation that I object to. Oh, I'll admit that I've seen honest reviews which didn't knock anyone but the usual connotation is one of knocking.

I'm not saying that an editor should favorably review a zine he doesn't like, not at all. There are a few ways that this can be handled. If an editor gets a zine he feels is less than adequate he can simply not review it. Even if the first issue is bad, that is no reason to assume that the person editing it will not get better with experience. Anyway, giving an Honest Review to a new zine is fairly rare, as they are reserved for the big zines. A very good way to start a feud.

About the only review of a new zine of the "Honest" type that I have seen was a review of Binary in which the editor knocked Harry Riley and his zine. No matter how good or poor this article was, the timing was horrible because Harry ((the publisher)) had died just before of a brain hemorrhage. The writer then apologized in the next issue ... saying that at least Harry had never read the article. Had Harry lived thru his ordeal and as recovering read this article, I doubt it would have aided his recovery at all. It is a totally subjective sort of thing anyway ... Since it is traditional for zines to give away samples for a stamp or two, each member of the community can receive a copy, if he is interested, and decide for himself if he enjoys the material or not.

Diplomacy World has had more "Honest Reviews" ((written about it)) than any other zine I have ever seen. It has been knocked by a few zines over and over again. Heck, even if I were a firm believer in these articles I would have to get a sample just to see what the fuss is about. One zine after knocking DW complained that in Walt's listing of openings, their was left out.... To my way of thinking, it is a sign of class that DW does not feel that it is desirable to knock those zines in return and start a feud((DW was then under its founder, Walt Buchanan. That policy has been followed by his three successors as well)).

To sum up I feel that you should always be honest in your reviews and if you feel a zine is not up to par you can simply remain silent about that zine. An exception is after you have published a favorable review of a zine and that zine has gone sour. In that case I would think it is your obligation to pass on the news to your readers. I would think this would apply in cases where the zine was failing to appear with any regularity or lack of interest had reduced the zine from a good one to a sloppy thrown-together job. A minor change could be reprinted or not as a news item. The knocking of another zine without good reason does the hobby no good, in this hobby we are all able to make up our own minds on the merits of a zine if we are given a sample copy. One bit of advice is never subscribe to a zine without asking for a sample..... ((How to review a zine that you don't like, or feel should be criticized, has always been a problem. The simplest and most common solution --- ignoring the zine --- has its drawbacks too. I have, on at least three occasions, gotten letters from people saying, in effect, "You never plug Zine X so therefore you must think its terrible." It may be that I simply don't have anything to say about that zine. Also, Frank's notion that a sample will take the place of reading a review is not quite true. A sample may be unrepresentative in some way. A careless GM may have managed to avoid all errors for that

particular issue. A publisher may have fattened up the issue considerably. I'll admit that I go to a little more effort to correct the spelling in an issue that I know will be used as a sample. A review, which looks at more than one issue, can thus give a better overview. But on the otherhand, you never know how someone is going to react when you tell your readers something about it the publisher doesn't want to hear. There is always the risk that it will be viewed as personal criticism, and sometimes it is just that. Who wants to be tagged as a writer of nasty reviews? In British zines which I've seen, criticism seems to be much more acceptable, particularly criticism of new zines. This is usually carefully worded ("One area which I'm sure he'll be improving is....."), but it is not rare; here its almost unheard of.) ((For further comments on zine reviews, you might want to check out Pat Conlon's "Free Speech Alley" in TMP #12/13))

From Richard Hucknall in Fall of Eagles #20, June 1976 (yes! Twice in one issue!):

....Last evening I did some interesting calculations. For the first time, I looked deeply at the financial situation of FOE with the following results:

Subbers credit held	£52.93	Savings and Loan Account	£88.79
Game deposits held	£54.00	Cash on Hand	£ 9.64
Jotto Prizemoney	£ 2.80	Stamps on hand	£12.77
Game deposits	£ 7.00	Estimated value of paper, stencils, envelopes and Ink on had	£21.00
<u>Total Liabilities:</u>	£116.73	<u>Total Assets</u>	£132.20

Interesting eh what! A profit! I must admit that I was surprised to find that I was in pocket ((I assume that means in the black)). I should perhaps explain that since I began FOE I have always kept the finances separate from my own money and so I am able to produce such an account. I've never seen this done by any other zine and I suspect that the majority would not be able to do so. The cash assets include retained zine credit and deposits from dropouts, altho one or two dropouts do in fact owe me money. FOE has also financed the purchased of a duplicator for £20 so I suppose that increases the profit even further. There has also been a few other handouts in respect of boxes of chocs to the woman that used to duplicate FOE at the office before I had my own duplicator, and also the person who arranges the printing of the covers.

So I'm making a profit! Should I be embarrassed? I don't know. No allowance has been made for the time I've put into it or the overheads such as lighting and heating during the late hours of the day when I've made trips to the Post Office to post the zine. Most editors calim they are making a loss, but many charge more for their zine than I do. ~~So~~ I did a few more calculations. Since FOE began it has started 7 games with a 50p gamefee, 6 games with a £1 gamefee, and at present has 6 players on the waiting list with a £1 gamefee paid. This totals £72.50. This immediately shows that gamefees are subsidizing the zine. Perhaps not a particularly surprising revelation, but it makes me wonder how zines fare which are charging nothing or very little for a game. So what of the future?? Game starts will now slow down as I restrict myself to running a maximum of 15 games so there will not be large numbers of gamefees flowing in to subzidize the zine. Nevertheless, in the healthy financial position I find myself, I see no reason why the zine cost of 16p((about 35¢ then)) should not continue until postal charges or stationary charges increase dramatically.((By June 1980, sub fees were up to 26p, game fees st ill at £1))

Not reflected in these figures is one very big perk. That is that I trade FOE for 22 other zines. I suppose that to make allowance for all those trades I should pay the cost of those zines into the FOE finances and this would show me making a huge profit. I am not prepared to do this and consider trades as some "payment" for my efforts and time spent in producing FOE. Anyway, if it wasn't for the fact that I publish FOE then I doubt that I would pay to receive more than half a dozen zines -- I couldn't afford it. Incidentally, trades account for 25% of FOE readership.

I think I'll be using some of the cash I have to buy a better typewriter ...

Nothing elaborate., one of those E30-E40 portables.....

((The next issue had some response. Triple parens are Hucknall))

Adrien Baird: Do you charge FOE for the use of (presumably) your typewriter? Also, is the typer going to last as long as it would otherwise have done if you didn't produce FOE? ((No, I don't charge FOE for the use of my typer. Perhaps I should sell it to FOE and then pay FOE for the use of it for other purposes. Seriously, I doubt if it can be worn out --- its a cranky old portable that cost me about £15 4 years ago))

Paul Openshaw((Schoolboy publisher of Whiskey Mac))) What I think you should do with any profit is send it to up-and-coming young schoolboy editors!

Keith Black: If you are convinced that you have excess profits that you wish to plough back, then I suggest more competitions or games with prizes, or special incentives for worthwhile contributions.....((I have always given free issues for worthwhile contributions but these are few and far between. Every zine publisher is screaming out for articles Competitions and games with prizes? Well, I ran one with reasonable success some issues ago.....I don't want the zine to grow too big and so space available may be a little limited))

((Calculating profits is a somewhat tricky business, even if you keep records, which most pubbers don't. Trades are obviously a major form of "income" or compensation for running a dipzine. Any honest financial accounting must count these as income, except for zines that you wouldn't get if you weren't publishing. And even those provide you with value. This is not a minor matter. A pubber trading with, say, 20 zines is saving himself well over \$100 in cash costs, and many zines do carry that many trades. The mutual subs system does keep those monies separate. On the other hand, wear and tear on a typer or duplicator cannot be ignored either, especially for a person putting out either a very large zine or one doing it for a long time. Other allocations are more arbitrary. Most pubbers, for example, will piggyback letters onto the zine. These may be enclosed or a short note written on the zine itself, may include game orders, etc. This too can amount to quite a bit --- a mailing of DD can easily include over a dozen such letters. Should that postage be charged to the zine or not? Its quite rare to see any sort of accounting. John Leeder, one of the earliest users of mutual subs in the hobby, used to print these every so often, and more often than not, he would show a substantial to modest profit. His zine was never that expensive. A great deal, however, turns on the above factors, and whether or not gamefees are included. It could be argued that these are not fees for the zine itself, but are for GMing services, and thus ought not be included, which would throw FOE sharply into the red. On the other hand, most zines could not exist without games, and of course, for many pubbers, running games is their prime motive for publishing, so in that sense, the zine generates the gamefees, and thus it should be counted as income. Alternatively, one could argue that the question of profit and loss is irrelevant in a hobby, and is not even a useful context in which to look at a dipzine. Then again, there have been zines which failed in major part because of financial problems (tho these are by far the exception among folds). Attitudes vary widely. Brux at one time was selling his zine for less than postage, and Beyerlein runs his orphan-games zine at no cost to the players at all. Others take the attitude that they invest enormous amounts of time in the zine, so it shouldn't require enormous amounts of money as well. Profits and losses may run at cross purposes to other goals, providing conflicts. Except for zines which are foto-offset (which have a high fixed cost), the more subbers you have, the more you lose if you lose money on every subber. But then again, most pubbers would prefer to have more rather than fewer subbers --- thereby increasing their losses.))

Finally, special kudos go to ROD WALKER for winning the first Don Miller Memorial Award. Rod has turned DW around, puts out a top-notch games openings list, contributes to a lot of zines, and to me is one of the people that makes the hobby endlessly interesting. And a tip of the hat to Larry Peery for organizing this project.

THE ZINE COLUMN #66

Larry Peery is conducting another poll, the "1983 Power Poll", asking people to name who they think the most powerful 30 people are in the hobby. This reflects one of the most enduring hobby myths, viz, that people in the hobby wield true power. In fact, power is quite rare and limited when it does occur. Probably the best example is the DipCon Administrative Committee which has the power to shape the tournament, and DipCon activities however they like, but even that affects only those who attend. The BNC has the power to call a game irregular, but even that primarily affects only whether a game is to be rated --- and even there, a ratingmaster could ignore the recommendation. But beyond that, what are we talking about? Sure, I have the "power" to present my opinions to 100+ subbers, but, for less than \$30 in postage and Xeroxing, you could do the same thing. True power, such as exists in the "real world", is very hard to come by in an open-ended environment like the dippy hobby. Still, people will believe what they want to believe. There have been, and perhaps still are, people who believe that Bruce Lindsey is "dating" Alex, that Bernie Oaklyn was basically a decent guy who got a raw deal from the hobby, etc. And there are probably people who believe that there are 30 powerful people in the hobby. Myths don't generally die....

1983AY I suspect is a hobby first --- two people in it with the same name (both Ron Browns are in it).....Another of Mark Lew's quirky thoughts appears in VOD #80, where he writes, "So what happens if I order "A Mun does not Hold" ? It's ambiguous ((actually, I think he means "unordered")) so it holds, but if you do that, you are making it not follow orders"..... Eric Kane has announced the "KaneKon" getogether. A nice description he gave for it in Anduin #21, tho mentioning the date for it might not be a bad idea, Eric.....A new ratings zine, Stars, appears, touting the system of the same name (not to be confused with Walker's old "Stars and Bars" and Palfrey's "STAR" system. This uses Calhamer point Count (1 point for win, or shared equally among those who drew), no division by # of games, and covers only games begun during last 5 years. At the top: Kathy Byrne (Bern Sampson, 5364 Red Lake, Columbia MD21045).

Scott Hanson 233 Oak Grove #306 Minneapolis MN 55403 has taken over the U.S. Orphan Service from John Daly. If your games are seriously delayed, and you cannot get a satisfactory response, he's the person to contact. If you do write him, the more facts you give him, the easier his job will be. He's looking for 2 "associates" to do "leg work". I imagine this is for breaking other people's legs, but check with him to be sure....A tip of the hat goes to Terry Tallman, for taking over Fleming's games during the latter's escape to Mexico. Terry's North Sealth, West George has one of the odder House Rules around --- you "may not vote against a concession to his or her position" I'm sure there's something wrong with that rule, and when I can figure out what it is I'll let you know.....

Diplomacy World #34 is out, with stuff by Allen Wells, Scott Marley (a great piece of doggeral), Mike Mills, a pair by me, a roundtable from Peery, an editorial by Walker, and a great deal more. If you like DD, the odds are high you'll like DW, because both specialize in articles (DW's are originals; mine, reprints). Rod tells me the percentage of the hobby which gets DW is rising, which is a good sign (Rod Walker 1273 Crest Dr Encinitas, CA 92024. Subs 4/\$8 for a zine which is a bit fatter than it used to be).

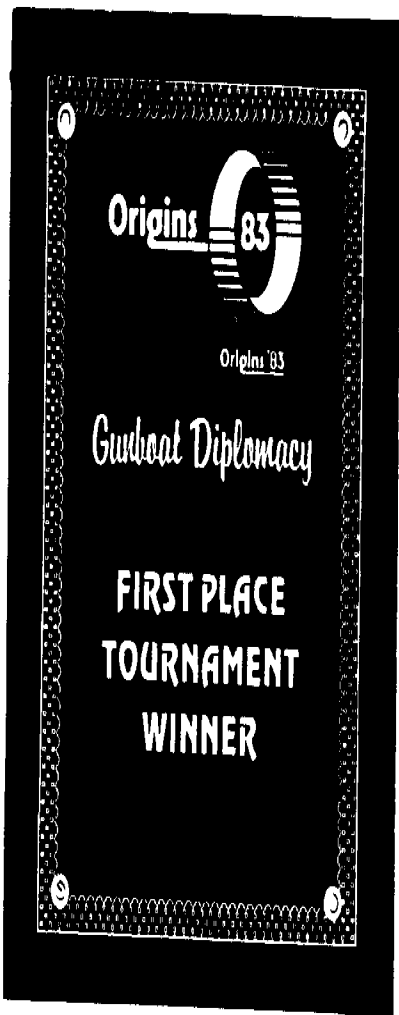
For those with a computer and modem, you may be able to play in an electronic mail dippy game! If interested, contact Russell Sipe TCL920 or c/o Computer Gaming World P.O.Box 4566 Anaheim CA 92803....Claude Gautron 620 rue St-Jean Baptiste, Winnipeg Manitoba, CANADA R2H 2Y1 now publishes the french language Quinipique dippy zine..... Available from Roy Henricks 128 Deerfield Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15235 for \$2 is The Zine Register, with information about most North American ^{zines} and (thanx to Cathy Cunning) quite a few overseas zines. The most interesting parts, to me at least, were where pubbers described their own zines. The publication is a labor of love and a very revealing look at the state of the hobby....Fred Davis, Jr (1427 Clairidge Rd) is the most experienced variant GM in the hobby, and his Bushwacker is the oldest variant zine. He presently has openings in Zeus, Pride of Armies or 1885 III, whichever fills first. Gamefee is \$8, which covers a sub to the zine for as long as the game lasts. Baltimore, MD 21207

Mark L Berch
492 Naylor Place
Alexandria VA 22304

If (73) appears by your name,
its time to renew your sub!



If you can't believe it...



Larry Peery (76)
Box 8416
San Diego CA92102