

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Letters

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This will be a strange issue. There has been so much response to DD #76/77, together with my verbose replies, that I was barely able to fit it all in. Several things had to be ditched, including the address page, since I needed page 12, The Zine Column (the first time its been gone in years), and several plugs. One that I do want to include as especially apt for this issue is "The Case for PBEM". Its the full story, including Walker and Byrne letters, reprints from various places, all kinds of explanations of how it works, samples of what electronic mail zines look like, etc. Its very handy to have it all in one place (Russell Sipe P.O. Box 4566 Anaheim CA 92803. \$3)

A March issue of DD is very unlikely at this point, since the Basement is about to undergo some remodeling, which will force me to move my entire operation to another room which in the long run will work out better.

I got a response, of sorts, from John Michalski, which appeared in his subzine "Mos Eisley Spaceport" #52, which appeared in the otherwise excellent Anduin #29. If you'll recall, I took John to task for giving a completely inaccurate version of something that Peery had done. John apparently lacked the gumption to either confirm or deny this --- he just ignored it, in favor of a counter-attack of sorts. He gets off to a wobbly start by saying that the issue was a courtesy copy (free) sent after his sub had lapsed, which was not true at all. Then things deteriorate with the following: "The piece starts out well, stating how he will limit his attack to "just one example: John Michalski", but then goes on to spend more space blasting the BNC and John Caruso than he does me." Makes ole' Berch look bad, eh, till you realize that John has garbled the quote. I didn't say, "just one" (or "only one" or "exactly one", etc), and indeed, I didn't have "just one example. To make matters worse, he then accuses me of, and I quote, "personal insult", "flinging mud", and "name-calling" (that last one appeared twice). That calls for a few quotes, doesn't it? Alas, John suddenly remembers that he doesn't have that issue any more (which didn't stop him from the earlier "quote"), and so lamely says, "I'll spare you those gems for now." I've sent off another copy of the editorial to John, and I defy him to produce examples of those three things. Disagreeing with Michalski, Caruso, and Byrne is not the same thing as "personal insult". Its sad, really. In the old days, Michalski would never have resorted to confabulating a quote.

Our next item will require some background. Its concerns a zine, House of Lords which most of you have probably never even heard of. Its published by Dick Martin, who also publishes the gamezine Retaliation. HoL, like DD, carries no games because it is a discussion zine. Topics have included ethics, filing systems, polls, etc. There is also an announcements column. Sounds interesting? Believe me, it is. And you ordinary dippy players, salt of the earth as it were, aren't allowed to sub.

The zine ^{was} ~~is~~ open only to those who have GMed or published a dipzine. Nobody else. His reasons are so inane that they aren't worth discussing in detail, but suffice it to say that Dick doesn't think that others are knowledgeable enuf to contribute to discussions of such topics as polls, and ethics. I don't mean to isolate Dick on this --- quite a few pubbers agree with him on this --- you'd be amazed at what some of these guys have said, so this kind of elitism is not just Dick. It is of course his zine, so he has the right to do this. Its the mentality of it that I object to. Please note that willingness to contribute its not the crucial factor. If you're not a GM/pubber, it doesn't matter how eager you are. And if you have been a GM/pubber, you don't have to contribute, or even promise to. You can still get the zine to read.

His desire that you ordinary schmucks not see what is in HoL goes far beyond his not wanting to go to the trouble and expense of sending you a copy, as you will see from the following two incidents.

The first few issues of HoL had a discussion of polls. There was a wide range of views and contributors. Many aspects were discussed, including the role of polls in the hobby, how pubbers reacted to them, how they are conducted, the importance of turn-out, etc. This took the form of letters of varying size, plus Dick's comments which usually followed each one. Dick's comments were often very well done --- poking for possible flaws in the reasoning, looking for where their arguments might lead, challenging some of their facts, etc. Taken together, it amounted to the most interesting discussion I've ever seen on polls, either in North American or British zines. I express an interest in reprinting this discussion. Dick asked me specifically what I had in mind. I wrote him back, in a letter Dick will refer to shortly. I said I'd tell my DD readers about it, give them some description. I'd make it available via Xerox or some such, for those who were interested. Dick wouldn't have to lift a finger for all this to happen.

His response, which was printed in HoL #4, was astonishing. He layed down 5 requirements. In all my years of reprinting, I have never seen anyone lay down such requirements. Keep in mind that the bulk of material I would be reprinting wouldn't even be written by him --- and still he had these rules for me to comply with. I could not possibly comply with his requests. Dick is no dummy, and I rather suspect he knew that I could not agree to what he was asking. I explained to him why I couldn't agree to his terms, but it doesn't seem to have done any good. Dick doesn't want you to see it.

The second incident begins with DD #76/77. In the discussion of the DipTax, I quoted several times from HoL, altho not from Dick Martin. That produced the following:

Dear Mark,

1/10/84

It is my understanding from your last letter that I would be receiving complimentary copies of DDs that contained excerpts from HoL.

I have seen a double issue DD containing quotes taken from HoL. Was this issue a fake, or are you in fact not sending the promised issues?

I do not approve of your using HoL as a source of material for your editorializing on personalities. HoL was intended as a "peaceful" forum - but your lifting quotes (and misinterpreting them, as well, as I had feared) endangers that goal. I will not tolerate this, and will take whatever action you force upon me to prevent its recurrence.

I put a lot of work into HoL, and demand little in return. The least you could give me is a little respect. The last thing I need is you acting like a little child with a toy that you dare me to take away.

Take care,

Dick

He won't let you subscribe, he did not want that discussion on polls reprinted, and he doesn't want HoL used as a source of material for DD editorials. He really doesn't want you to see it. I decided to ignore some of what he said as pointless to even discuss, and then sent the following:

Dear Dick,

1-29-84

I have been publishing a reprint zine for 6½ years, and in that time reprinted hundreds of items. My policy has always been to send the complimentary copy of the issue or item reprinted to the writer. A copy would go to the publisher if:

- a. The publisher himself wrote it
- b. The writer is unknown (in effect, I assume the publisher wrote it)
- c. I am commenting on the zine per se

As you did not fit into any of those categories, you did not receive a copy. However, so that you don't feel left out, I am enclosing a copy of that editorial for you. There is nothing inconsistent with my last letter in this approach. You would have gotten a copy then under a. (you own material would have been used extensively) and c. (I would be expressing my views on HoL).

Your second point I find difficult to take seriously. When you print what people say, then that's "peaceful", but when I print the same words, then suddenly it becomes dangerous. This is carrying egotism a bit too far. I must say that this is the first time I have ever heard of someone objecting to the reprinting of material from a letter which they had not even written. You have not bothered to explain to me how my reprinting from HoL in any way "endangers" your work. If people want their letters kept in confidence, you have no business publishing them. Otherwise, what is the problem with a second audience? The notion that these quotes can be seen by a select audience but not the hobby at large is elitist gibberish. I might add that neither of the people quoted from HoL have complained to me that they did not want their HoL material to appear in DD.

I am perfectly willing to give you "respect" for your work in HoL, which has printed some very interesting letters. But I am not sworn to an oath of secrecy as to what appears there. I do not accept the notion, which I view as implicit in your stance, that the rest of the hobby is somehow not fit to hear what was said there, or that either the letter writers or HoL will be harmed by having these comments reach a wider audience.

As for the last part of your last sentence, ("...that you dare me to take away!"), I would suggest that you avoid such analysis of my motives. You have no talent for it.

After this exchange of personal letters, which is reprinted above, I did not hear from Dick again until HOL #5 arrived at the end of Feb. My above letter was printed. Dick had a response, but it wasn't a personal letter to me --- it was put in the zine. And you know what that means --- I can't reprint it. Had he put it in a personal letter to me I could have run it here, but since it was just an item in HoL #5, I cannot reprint it ---- Dick repeats that he strenuously objects to any reprinting, saying that again in #5. He has also changed his subbing policy. If you have been a GM or publisher, you can get it via 1) paying \$1 per issue, 2) a straight trade, 3) writing for HoL, which will earn 1-3 issues per contribution. If you haven't been a GM or pubber, the sole method is to pay \$2.50 per issue. Contributions in writing from non-GM/pubbers are not valued sufficiently to earn sub credit, apparently. Also available from Dick is the Hobby Census, \$1 for the reduced print version (which I have --- its very legible) and \$2 in the full sized version. Well worth it for those active in the hobby, and it represents an impressive amount of work on Dick's part (Dick Martin 26 Orchard Way North, Rockville, MD 20854).

Some of the actions of Kathy Byrne were mentioned in DD #76/77. The following is her reply. The numbers inserted in double parens are mine, and are keyed to my response which follows the letter.

Dear Mark,

January 14, 1984

Peeribashing? It looks a lot more like Byrnebashing to me. Excuse me for mis-

understanding Larry's ((Peery)) statement⁴ but he did clearly state in Xenogogic that anyone joining a game in his zine would have to pay the tax. That to me is mandatory -- no ticky, no shirty - no dollar, no playie! ((1))

As for your comparison to the BNC voluntary donation of \$1 - you state on page 21, "Those who make donations are treated exactly the same as those who don't, except that the former have their donation noted in Everything." What would you like me to do, form a black list and say these GMs refused to send a \$1 for their numbers. Sorry, but in my opinion, that is unfair. ((2))

No, I do not agree with the diptax, but not for the reasons you stated. ((3)) If you had bothered to read exactly what I had said instead of picking one line out of an editorial your readers would not have been misled. My reasons were very clear - "I've played with too many unemployed family men, who can barely afford a stamp for a letter in a game and too many college & high school kids with the same problem. In my opinion, those who can afford to put the extra money into the hobby will, and those who can't shouldn't be made to." ((4)) Quite a difference from what you printed. If you are going to give my side, then please state it accurately & not to suit your own purpose. ((5))

As for my refusal to give Wes Ives a Boardman Number, I think I know a little more about this than you do. ((6)) Unless of course, Wes has sent you all the letters between myself, Lee and Walker that have been exchanged on this game. He wants to be treated the same as postal games yet he refuses to follow the rules that postal GMs must follow. For the information of you & your readers, at this very moment there is a play by mail game being run with anonymous players using maildrops - the game is being run under a Miller Number! The players can negotiate right from day one & it is still a variant, just like Wes' game.

I will tell you that being BNC is not easy, but if you feel that you can rule better than I can, feel free to take over my job. And when you do remember if you make an exception for Wes, you must make it for others. You can list 84C - GM: Ives - players unknown! And then you can do the same for every other pubber who decides to run his games anonymously! And then you are no longer the Boardman Number Custodian but the Miller Number Custodian too! Wes is running variants & I don't care if he is running them by Pony Express. Electronic Mail has nothing to do with his games not getting Boardman Numbers.

Since I've become BNC, I have gone out of my way to accomodate the "E-Mail" games. Russell Sipe and Chip Charnley have no qualms with my decisions; maybe that is because they supply the standard information for a number. If Wes will do the same, Wes will get a number. ((7))

As for your statement on page 23 that "the PBEM game whose conclusion is reported is not listed separately....", may I ask where you read that I ever said they would be listed separately? You made it seem like someone hit me over the head to get me to agree to this. I never had any intentions of listing them separately, and I was very surprised to see your comment. ((8))

My opinion or Bill Quinn's, on the likeness of PBM & E-Mail are totally our opinion, we are doing everything to treat them as fairly as possible. We are not responsible for them being rated, and don't want to be. But we do wish you'd state our side accurately, and stop making it seem like we are trying to hinder electronic mail ((9)).

Kathy

((1)) Larry clearly stated that this was voluntary. You didn't mention that, but instead talked about people being "forced" to pay it. In that sense, you could be said to have misrepresented it. The notion that the people you refer to are being forced to do anything is absurd, because no one is forced to play in Peery's zine. That's like saying, "Berch can't force subbers to pay 40¢/issue for DD!" Of course I can't, any more than Larry can force anyone

Look, GMs raise their game fee all the time, and it doesn't seem to cause much of a stir. Larzelere once charged \$2 or \$3, its now \$6. Kane raised his from \$2 to \$3

Ron (CAL) Brown once charged \$3, now charges \$6. Loads of other examples could be given. They raised their fees, and put the money in their own pocket, to be used for defraying the costs of publishing or whatever. Did you say that they couldn't "force" their players to pay the increased charges? Did you give your speech about unemployed family men and insolvent high school kids when they did that? No. But when Larry Peery says he's going to raise his GF by \$1 --- and not even for his own pocket, but for hobby custodians to use, then its CALL OUT THE DOGS! You're not the only person to take this stance, I know. But this kind of double standard really ticks me off. He said it was voluntary, and you treated it as mandatory. Your friends raise their game fee, and you issue no protest; Larry raises his, and its a different story.

((2)) People in this hobby can be so paranoid. The fact that I describe your policy does not mean that I am criticizing it. My point was, we have precedent for a voluntary Diptax, because that is what the \$1/game contribution to the BNC amounts to. Not all of my readers know exactly how you operate. To emphasize the fact that it is truly voluntary, I said, "Those who make donations are treated exactly the same as those who don't..." Then it occurred to me that that quote was not literally accurate, since there was there was one little exception. So I gave that exception, "except that..." That's all I was doing.

((3)) You are mistaken. I did not, in fact, "state" any of the reasons that you gave for not agreeing with the diptax.

((4)) "...be made to." More reference to compelling people to pay.

((5)) Yes, a lovely speech. I'm sure that every time Caruso raised his Game Fee, you gave this speech to him.

At any rate, you have completely and totally missed the entire point of the editorial. As this same issue arises in Caruso's letter, I'll discuss it there. at ((9))

((6)) Ah, yes, the I-have-secret-information-that-you-don't-have-so-sit-down-and-shut-up routine. I'll agree, if there's facts that I don't know, which directly bear on the question of whether or not Wes' games are variants, then I could be totally wrong. But what are they? I've heard from Wes, Rod, and Kathy, and saw the article in the recent DW, and I still haven't come across any new facts I wasn't aware of.

((7)) This thing boils down to two issues: First, are these games variants? And second, if they are not variants, should they get BNs?

The traditional definition of a variant is a game in which there is a significant change in the Rulebook. By "Rulebook", I mean the seven player version of the game, including the standard map. In the Wordworks games, the players do not know each other's names, tho they can communicate with each other in secret via Wes' computer. Nothing in the Rulebook requires that players know each other's names. Its completely incidental to the game. Therefore, these games cannot be variants --- unless we want to completely overthrow the definition just to make Wes' games variants.

Yes, I'm aware of earlier variant games, and in this regard, I must make a correction to what I said earlier in DD #76/77. There are three types of anonymous games. In the earliest type, players communicated only via press; in a second type, "gunboat" there is no communication at all. These games are properly variants --- because they violate the Rulebook, which provides for "secret" negotiation if the players desire. There is, however, a third type. The first of these that I'm aware of is (1975BG). The players all had pseudonyms. The GM, Richard Sharp received all the letters and then re-mailed them. Thus, secret negotiations could take place. The only difference between this game and the Wordsworth game is that Sharp re-mailed via the Post Office, and Wes' via electronic mail. Sharp felt that the game was not a variant, and thus deserved a BN, and the Associate BNC, Richard Walkerdine, agreed, and gave him one (this is a British game). When the gamestart appeared in Everything, the BNC (Beyerlein) said that it should probably have been given a Miller Number. I should also point out that Sharp and Walkerdine were highly esteemed members of the British hobby, not two kids who did not know what they were doing. Sharp later ran a second such game, (1975II). This time the listing in Everything was as follows:

(1975II) Dolchstoss. Sharp. Anonymous game; players' identities withheld until end of game.

I quoted this format because I think Wes' games should be handled in the exact same manner, except for a notation that the game is PBEM. Beyerlein did not repeat his suggestion that the game should have gotten a Miller Number. This was not an oversight ---

that issue had a description of how these games worked, and Doug's opinion that they should be treated as "irregular", a label that Doug felt applied also to local games.

The other games of this type are much more recent. Kathy tells me (i.e. I'm not speaking from direct knowledge, only relaying what she tells me) that there are games, run by e.g. Rauterberg and Henricks where pseudonyms are used, and players use maildrops (or via GM if they lack maildrops). Again, the players don't know names and can communicate in secret. These games have been given Miller Numbers by the MNC, Lee Kendter, Sr. Kathy and I agree that these games and Wes' games are fundamentally the same and should be treated the same. Assuming that the players can all communicate in secret, yes, I think those games are not variants.

Thus, Kathy has two conflicting precedents in this matter. Kathy has told me that not only does she personally think that these games are variants, but ^{also} that she should act in accordance with precedence here, referring to Lee's decision that the games are variants.

Precedence is important, it gives a sense of continuity and predictability and a sense of equal treatment. But it is not a straightjacket; it is not something to be blindly followed. If it were, Lee's ruling would be "wrong" --- after all, he broke with the precedent set by Walkerdine. He had every right to do that if he felt the precedent was wrong.

If these three games are treated as variants by the hobby, there are a number of messy problems which could result:

1. How many pseudonym players does it take to make a variant? There have been a number of games with one or two pseudonyms in them. So far as I know, no such game has ever been denied a BN on that basis. No BNC has ever withdrawn a BN when he learned that an alias was being used. No BNC has ever stated that the use of a pseudonym/alias would bar the game from getting a BN. (Indeed, I suspect that there are a number of GMs in the hobby who would permit the use of an alias, provided that a) The GM was told the truth, and b) the GM was convinced that the player wasn't doing this to gain an unfair advantage). So: One or two: OK -- Seven: A variant. Well, what about 6? 5? 4? 3? Where do we draw the line? Why do we have to make such an arbitrary decision in the first place? If the tradition has long been set that an alias is permitted, why should it suddenly be no good to have 7 of them? At least in Wes' game, every one is on an equal footing, not true with a game with one player in an alias.

2. What exactly is a pseudonym? Suppose that everybody knows its an alias and who the person actually is --- e.g. a Cartier/Brannan situation? Does that really count as an alias? No? Suppose its a real alias at the start of the game, but by the time its over, everyone knows --- an Oaklyn/Tretick type situation. For some of his games, Oaklyn would have been viewed a legit name at gamestart, but as an alias by the end, as the truth came out. Does the game then switch from being a variant to a standard game? Suppose this, in effect, happens to everybody? That is, part way thru the game, all the aliases are dropped and people use their regular names. This is in fact what happened part way thru (1975BG). Does the game change its status? Or what about a situation like Patricia Efron, whose nickname was "Pattie". But, at least for her early games, she signed up at "Pat Efron" and referred to herself as Patrick. Is that a real alias?

3. If we junk the Rulebook as the deviding line between standard and variant games, what do we use in its place? I have discussed this with Kathy, and I've been unable to get a clear answer. The closest I got was the "normal and usual way of running a game" (this is a quote from a lone conversation). Well that is a real miasma. OK, there are only three of such games, so they aren't normal, true. What happens when there are 13? 30? When these games acheive some level of normality from use, do we then reclassify them? I know of one game with 10-week deadlines. So far as I know, its the only one. One game. Thats even rarer than three. Do we call that a variant? Of course not! Why? Because it doesn't matter about the deadline times. The same goes for the names. It doesn't matter. What about games where the GM is a player? Thats certainly not normal and accepted! And yet such games have always gotten BNs. If those games have gotten BNs even tho the method of running them is not normal, then why not these games? For us to start demanding that the games be run according to "normal" practices when we've never done that in the past to me would be a real disservice. The normal and usual has always been the standard for determining what is "irregular",

not what is a variant.

7

Finally, there is this, my bottom line argument: What is so essential about knowing the names of the other players? Why has this been elevated to such a central role that without it, we have a variant? If its so vital, why is it not in the Rulebook? What difference does it make? If I revealed that my real name were Berch Mark, not Mark Berch, would anybody care? Would it turn any games into a variant? Would it matter in any postal games? I have played FTF games where some of the other players were known to me only by first names or nicknames. I did not know their full name, and it didn't make the slightest bit of difference. So why should it matter in PBM or PBEM games? If at the end of a game, all seven players said to the GM: Surprise! We all lied about our names! Would the game suddenly become a variant? Of course not --- it wouldn't matter. Some will think "anon" makes for a better game, some will want to know the names, just as some will want 2 week deadlines, some 5 week, some 10 week. But these are just matters of personal preference --- they do not reflect the core of the game itself, and thus should not determine whether or not the game is a variant. Wes' is willing to have the names published when the game is over, and that is all the BNC should need

Ah, but these games are somehow, different. This is surely true, tho I don't see that this difference is all that important. I would suggest that Kathy handle this situation exactly like other BNCs have handled similar situations: 3 or more players from one locality. Blood relations in a game (player-player or GM-player). Two or more players at the same address. GM as player in the game. In all these cases, there was something unusual about the way the game was set up. These games all got BNs, but, at least some of the time, the BN was put in parenthesis. See Everything #47 for some examples. Wes' game to me fits into the same category. Again, there was something unusual about the way the game was set up --- so why not treat it the same? Give it a BN, and put it in parenthesis, and give it a note as to why -- just like the others. After all, if we can give a BN to a game in which the GM is a player ---- which seems a lot closer to being a variant than what we have here ---- we can give one to Wes too. This solution, I feel, would be fully consistant with past practices.

((8)) You misunderstand. I was not talking about you, but about Bill Quinn. He had suggested a "separate report". See page 16.

((9)) I don't think that either one of you is trying to "hinder" PBEM. In fact, I don't even think that's within your power, even if you wanted to, which you don't. PBEM requires only two things to thrive: GMs willing to run the games, and players interested in participating. The only question is whether we in the established hobby are going to benefit by the growth in the PBEM hobby. That we can affect. If we erect unnecessary barriers, or try to belittle the legitimacy of these games, or fail to go out of our way to integrate, then we will lose. I personally believe that they have more to offer us than we have to offer them, tho of course there's plenty to go in both directions

Next up is Robert Sacks:

I should like to explain why the allocation of proceeds from tournaments is not a tax, instead is an anti-tax. Most event givers at conventions pocket the proceeds of their events. They use the proceeds to pay only prizes, event fees & staff memberships, but also food, transportation & housing. If an event giver does not pocket the proceeds, but gives them away, this is not a tax. The fact that my expenses are low (the 1981 proceeds were over \$100 for each of the three projects (which received money from Sacks)) is due to my not charging food, transportation or housing to the proceeds. (I certainly don't charge for labor.) Now the reason why I (on behalf of the NYGB ((New York Game Board))) donate the proceeds to the hobby services is to thwart the demands for any tax or fee to support hobby services. The NYGB's commitment to providing an independent source of funding to the 4 independent projects (BNC, MNC, OGP ((Orphan Games Project, whose existence is a semantic point. The current orphan people don't use that exact name)) KGO ((Known Games Openings, Sacks' listing of some game openings in regular and variant Diplomacy, plus sundry political criticism, etc))) has been opposed or obstructed by projects and zines which want a cut even tho they charge for their ^{own} work ((I have no idea what he is talking about here)) Dipcon committees & most conventions which have diverted finds to themselves ((I've never heard of a

DipCon committee doing this, and if the host convention does it, there's not much you can do about it), large prizes, hobby groups, and projects and zines which charge for their work ((I've never heard of a zine which charged for itself getting funding from a DipCon committee)), people who propose to tax the hobby for the benefit of their own groups/power and projects & zines which charge for their work ((sound familiar?)) and farce groups ("North American Diplomacy Federation", "People's Diplomacy Organization", "Pennsylvania Gaming Board", "Kansas Gaming Board") that appear to ((be)) trying for power and funding, if they weren't so laughable ((these outfits are either a) unknown to me --- sorry ---- or b) real outfits which have never sought funding from any tournament)) I should mention that the NYGB's corporate aegis (NFW&SFA, Inc of NY) has received an IRS tax exemption letter. Corporate resolutions authorize the collection of tax-exempt contributions for the BNC (Byrne), MNC (Kendter, Sr), OGP (Hanson & Martin), KGO (Sacks), Census(Martin), Novice Project(Linsey) & Zine Directory(Henricks). Checks may be made payable to the "NYGB" indicate which projects are to receive support on the purpose line or in an attached letter.

((I should point out that when someone or his actions are criticized at DD, they have a right of response. That is the only reason the above appeared without major editing to remove all those vague accusations that Sacks is so fond of making.

We all know what a tax is, and it doesn't matter whether its called by that name, or "revenue enhancement", as Reagan is fond of saying, or "anti-tax", as you call it, they all come down to exactly the same thing. A tax is something that you pay in addition to the cost of the item. If I pick out a bag of apples which cost \$1, and the clerk rings up \$1.04 on the cash register, the extra 4¢ is a tax. It doesn't matter what the government does with it, its still a tax. The government (state of Virginia in my case) could give the money to the BNC and it would still be a tax on my bag of apples. The same is true with you. You made a conscious decision, as did I, to charge more than the actual cost of running the tournament. That additional amount is in fact a tax, and its a mandatory one, since the players had to pay it if they wanted to play in the tournament. The fact that you did n't put the money in your own pocket (altho, to the extent that KGO is your operation, your funding that amounts to just moving money from one pocket to another) doesn't make it a non-tax. The only, and I repeat only differences between what you have done and what Peery proposes is 1) you apparently are raising more than \$1 per player (\$1 was Larry's proposal) 2) You have a different committee to distribute the funds. His proposed committee would be drawn entirely from the postal hobby, and in that sense would be totally responsible to it. The NYGB is a different matter entirely; as I understand it, most of its officers have little or no connection to the postal Diplomacy hobby, for better or worse.))

We turn now to John Caruso, dated 1-16-84

Peeribashing? Who me? I think not. I'm entitled to my opinion of Peery's ideas, just as you are. After all, Peery did ask for opinions on his "trial balloons" Your DD editorial, however, sounds like Peerystroking to me. Whatever -- please try to show more care and accuracy when attempting to represent the opinions of others to your readers ((1))

You sated that the \$1 donation to the BNC is a form of "Voluntary Diptax" Since when is a "donation" a tax? You also singled out the BNC for listing those who have donated. Rod Walker (remember him?) also lists those who donated to his projects Zim and Pont, respectively. Scott Hanson does the same with the orphan service. Why did you single out only the BNC's donations? (Could it be that its because the BNC is Kathy Byrne?) What's wrong with giving credit and recognition where it is due? Or are you opposed to that? The beautiful thing about voluntary donations is that those who can give, may do so, and those who can't afford to, don't have to. But the individual still has the choice - to give or not to give. Please be careful. You seem to be misrepresenting the \$1 donation to the BNC and some of your readers may take it the wrong way.((2))

Another point you are totally misrepresenting is your calling the DipCon game fees a form of "mandatory DipTax" The truth of the matter is that there is a diplomacy tournament game fee at almost every major convention, at least at every major convention that I've ever been to. Usually between \$2 and \$4. That is not unusual, as most other tournament games at major conventions also have a game fee of \$1 and up. Do you

know that?((3))

You stated that the "express purpose" for your \$4 fee was to "generate funds". We decided on \$3 as the fee we thought we needed to break even, based on A) Your reported DipCon costs B) Your \$4 fee being too much C) Projecting a worse possible turnout D) Hoping the \$3 fee might attract more people thereby generating more funds. Then we proceeded to cut our projected expenses, and did so quite successfully I might add, just so we could generate more funds. Need I say that we acquired our funds by quite a different method from the one you used....With a smaller attendance and a lesser fee at our dipcon, we had approximately \$350 left over for hobby services. We still have not received the money from MDG, tho((4))

You also reprinted a quote of mine but did you bother asking me to explain the statement? Did you present my other published remarks to your readers ((5)) or tell them that in HOL #4 I have over a page of positive, constructive, alternative suggestions to Peery's DipTax((6)) Of course not, that would not have suited the purpose of your editorial((7)) Since you distorted my quote ((8)), allow me to correctly present it. "A voluntary DipTax is stupidity" because its contradictory, as voluntary means not mandatory, and tax means a required or mandatory levy, that must be paid. A contradiction, no? In my book, a contradiction is "stupidity". "Mandatory is unenforceable" unless you plan on printing a blacklist, thereby generating arguments, feuds and fueling thought for witchhunts((9))

Another interesting point about Peery's proposed DipTax is that you hid from your readers is that he also suggested that friendly cons (such a ByrneCon, PudgeCon, etc) collect \$1 a person as a DipTax. I wish you'd print all points of both sides if you are going to editorialize (10)

While we're on misinformation - you screwed up on page 23 under Zine Column #70 You are not the "only one to make the top 5 of both lists." What do you call Kathy Byrne?(the #1 player and #4 writer) A ghost? I know you probably wish she didn't exist, but trying to ignore her in poll results is carrying a fantasy a bit too far((11))

((1)) I consider everything I have written to be careful and accurate.

((2)) I am misrepresenting nothing. I view the donations to the BNC as voluntary Diptaxes. Taxes are normally thought of as mandatory, but they don't have to be ("a payment of money or performance of services for the use of the government or for the benefit of the public" sez my dictionary). If you told an Italian that taxes were "mandatory" he'd burst into laughter. Virginia has a voluntary tax --- its right on the tax form, but you don't have to pay it if you don't want to.

((3)) Of course I know that. I've have been going to major tournaments since 1976 and have probably been to more of them than you have.

((4)) You expect me to believe this? You set a fee to "break even" and you came up with \$3?! I have never heard of a major dippy tournament with operating expenses anywhere near that high. And don't use my reported DipCon expenses as a basis. Those are a matter of public record and came to less than \$1.50 per person. You raised about \$350-odd for distribution to the hobby -- and this came from cutting your projected expenses? Those must have been some "projected expenses" if you cut \$350 from them. And once you did, why didn't you lower the entrance fee? As I explained in the response to the Sacks letter, once you decided to charge more than your costs, in this case, your "cut" costs, you were in fact charging a tax. The fact is, John, you had every intention of charging so much more than your expenses that you would have substantial funds left over for distribution, the same as I did, and thats a tax. And I don't have to read your mind, you put your intentions in writing. The following quote was written by you in the April "DipCon Society Column":

"Before I get to the scoring systems, just a few words about what we intend to do with the money collected. We do have some expenses, like awards to the winners, a small printing bill, and another few minor costs. But, we should have about as much, if not more than last years DipCon had, given a similar amount of participants. We intend to provide funds to the hobby custodians for services which run in the red. We are presently asking all custodians that provide a service, but are functioning in the red, either due to no fees, or handing out your service for free, or the fees and donations you receive do not cover your costs, to submit to any one of us, a request for funding for the 1983 year, to carry you thru dipCon 1984. Make your requests reasonable!"

(emphasis added. This is a complete unedited quote and represents all that John said)

John's intentions and expectations were fully realized, and they did indeed have more money after expenses than we did (tho I understand the Convention organizers still have not released the funds yet). It is crystal clear from that quote that John was anticipating a substantial surplus. That surplus, the amount charged above estimated costs, is indeed a tax, it was to be distributed to hobby custodians, and that is the fundamental aspect of Peery's DipTax (as applied to tournaments) --- which of course John criticized as "Uninforceable" or "stupid"

((5)) I saw no other published remarks by John on the topic I quoted him on. See in this regard my comments under point ((9))

((6)) This is just great. Dick Martin bitches that I did use HoL as a source of quotes, and John Caruso bitches that I didn't!

((7)) Exactly so.

((8)) I am getting more than a little tired of this kind of talk. I did NOT distort your quote. It was copied, word for word, correctly, and there was nothing in the context that indicated that you intended anything other than what the quote clearly states. There is nothing the least bit inaccurate about it.

((9)) That's all well and fine, John, but you seem to be forgetting that that's not what you wrote. You didn't say "A voluntary Diptax is stupidity as its self-contradictory", you said, "A voluntary Diptax is stupidity as near no one will pay." That's a completely different concept. So I distorted nothing and I didn't even interpret --- your words were so clear as not to require any interpretation. You can't come up with a completely different notion, and then say I should have known that's what you meant. On the issues themselves, I don't think it's self-contradictory for reasons set forth in ((2)) above. Mandatory can be enforceable, in that you and I did it. To the extent that we had a monopoly --- we ran the only DipCons that year --- it was mandatory for those wanting to play. By contrast, Peery doesn't have a real monopoly -- as there are a dozen other postal GMs.

Before I leave this topic, I need to point out that you and Kathy have COMPLETELY missed the point of the editorial. You all have acted as if the topic of the editorial was --- or should have been -- "The Pros and Cons of the Diptax" or "Is the Diptax a good Idea?", or, in John's case, "Are There Better Ways of Raising Money for Hobby Projects." Having decided that such was my topic, I was then blasted for not giving Kathy's arguments against the Diptax, John's alternatives, etc. I indeed did not include those remarks. I should add that I have several arguments which I could make in favor of the idea of the Diptax, why I think some of the funding alternatives are less desirable than the Diptax, etc. I DID NOT PRESENT THOSE "PRO" ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXACT SAME REASON THAT I DID NOT PRESENT THE "ANTI" ARGUMENTS --- IT WASN'T THE SUBJECT OF THE EDITORIAL. My subject was how there had been "grossly misleading descriptions of what Peery is doing" (emphasis added) It had been described as maditory, unprecedented and impractical -- all of which I felt were very misleading descriptions. Whether the Diptax is a good idea or not, whether there are better ways of raising the money, are all well and fine as issues, but that wasn't what I was addressing. If others want to editorialize on that topic, fine, but that doesn't obligate me to, and that doesn't mean that I should be criticized for not having such a pro and con debate. So long as I did not print the "pro" arguments, I don't see that I can be criticized for not printing "anti" arguments.

((10)) You are a fine one to talk about printing "both sides if you are going to editorialize." Lets have a look at your editorial on the Diptax in Whitestonia. I've got it here in front of me, and strangely enuf, I don't see both sides at all. I see your "anti" arguments, but I don't see any "pro" arguments. The same goes for Kathy's editorial. Now, I'm not saying that an editorial necessarily has to give both sides. I am saying that before you take me to task for not printing both sides, you ought to check out your own zine first. Look at Kathy's editorial in that issue (#80). That was directly on the subject of whether or not to have a diptax --- and it gave only one side of the question.

((11)). Oops. I did indeed forget Kathy's name --- as you can see from the two lists which I printed, she also was in the top five. I apologize to Kathy for this

oversight. And no, I don't think ~~Chapin~~ Kathy is a ghost. (1)

Before I leave Kathy and John, there are a few points I'd like to emphasize. As most of you are aware (altho many of you probably don't care), Kathy and I have had our scraps in the past, and will probably have them in the future too. The sharpest disagreement between us in this issue is the question of what is a variant, and some of you may think that this disagreement is merely an outgrowth of such conflict. Disabuse yourself of that notion. This is just a difference of opinion. Kathy made her decision before she knew my views, so her decision could not have been in reaction to that. She has been conscientious in considering this matter, and has consulted some of the same people I'd consult if I were in her shoes. When I've written her about this, I've gotten prompt replies -- and even a friendly fone call. Kathy has made some other decisions which I totally agree with -- such as retaining the term "irregular" for very badly GMed games, and giving BNs for PBEM games --- and which were not simple or easy decisions. By all accounts, numbers are being given out promptly, Everything comes out on time, etc. Kathy has my complete confidence as BNC. Of course, I think she is completely wrong on the Wordsworth games business. And if I had to bet one way or the other, I'd bet that some day she will change her mind, especially after the issue is discussed further in the hobby.

With regard to Kathy and John, as you can see, we have a lot of differences of opinion. But that's all that they are. I think they are both sincere in believing that their views were misrepresented, and I am sincere in believing that they were not. This is not a feud, and we don't plan to take these disagreements to other zines. They don't believe some of what I say, and I don't believe some of what they say --- and there's nothing wrong with any of that. I don't think that either one of them hate me, contrary to an offhand comment made recently by someone who ought to know better. All three of us have something to contribute to the hobby, each on our own way. I look forward to cooperating with Kathy and/or John in the future on activities of mutual interest, just as we have in the past, and I'm sure they both feel the same way.

And now for a change of pace. The following is from Richard Reilly. I am required by the International Society of Egomaniacs to print the following:

....To resubscribe, or not to resubscribe. Not an easy question, for you see, I'm a rather poor student -- "poor" monetarily, that is -- and can't afford too many zines...Perhaps if I reflect on the contents of the past 10 issues, I'll be able to decide.

Quite frankly, Mark, some of those issues were boring! I suppose that's the problem with a zine such as yours, which focuses on one topic per issue. If a reader's not interested in the topic, well,there were good issues. And then some were sort of a mixed bag.

And then came Joshua...

I'll be honest, Mark. My initial reaction when I realized you were devoting a whole issue to the birth of Joshua was, "Oh, no! I don't wanna read about Berch's baby!" Yet for some reason, I continued reading it .. and went on...and on...and Mark, I have to say it: That was the best issue of DD I received, as well as one of the most memorable of all the zines I've read. I don't know why. It was just...wonderful! I enjoyed it ... I was moved by it ... Not only that, but it was educational to boot.! For that issue, I thank you.

As for resubbing ... well, DD is about the best source of Dip-articles, news and views, I've seen yet... right up there with Diplomacy World, but not nearly as expensive. So of course: a check for \$4 is enclosed...

((Now, that's the sort of note I like to get with a resub. Some issues being "boring" is inevitable with almost all my subbers. To begin with, no one is perfect, not even the DipiMaster. Second, the themes cover the whole range of the hobby, and few people in the hobby are interested in every aspect (I'm certainly not). Thus, every so often, a theme issue is going to hit one of your who-cares topics. The response to the "Joshua" issue (which I think is the best essay I've ever written on any topic) is fairly similar to that engendered by the "Israel" issue (#46), with several people saying that they were skeptical (to say the least) when they first saw it, but then were very pleased. One criteria of popularity is the kind of response the issue gets. Another, very different standard is how well the issue holds up in back issue sales. #46, tho extremely pop-

ular at the time, does very poorly in back issue sales --- most of its sales are to people who are buying complete runs of the DD back issues. By contrast, the "country" issues generally get very little if any response, but always do very well in back sales. An even more extreme example is the stalemates issue, #10/11, disliked at the time, but trailing only the Lexicon and Son of Lexicon in back issue sales. I suspect that the Joshua issue (#74) will sell about as poorly as #46)

This next item isn't really a letter but a reprint, but its on the right topic. It comes from Brad Wilson's subzine "Vertigo" (in Coat of Arms, I think), so here's Brad:

...((Should)) electronic mail (i.e. on/thru computers) games be counted in postal dip stats....Computer mail and games just aren't postal. Mark Berch can point to all the similarities between mail/electronic mail all he wants, and talk about how much telephoning goes on. The? he asks, how different is telephoning from computer mail? Well, Mark, I can call you but I sure can't ring you up on my computer -- I don't have one and can't afford one. I'm sure as hell not going to buy one just to play dip games. As for telephoning, maybe you and Edi Birsan can afford \$200 fone bills - since you play in one game, you don't have that many people to call -- but a lot of people only can fone when it is absolutely necessary or someone else is paying. And argue as much as you want, but getting a communication over your computer is not a letter. No more than knowing how to drive a car is knowing how to drive a semi. It involves the same skills but its not the same thing. And Joe Clement (Terran #88) can tell me how affordable computers are, but \$200 is still a lot of money.. Anyone can use the mails for 20¢. How much else can a computer that costs \$50-100 do? (with no accessories). I would think the people who buy a computer just to play Diplomacy are in a great minority. Until computers become as affordable and as universal as the USP"S" I strongly oppose oppose giving electronic mail games Boardman Numbers.

((Let me clear up a possible misunderstanding on my telephone usage. I am one of those who has a very limited budget for long distance calls. I haven't spent \$200 on game-calls, even totalling all of ~~the~~ ^{my} postal games together. In 83X, all but one or two of my calls have been local.

The cost of a computer system is sruprisingly cheap. Russel Sipe, using discount prices, says one can be done for \$181. That includes the membership in Compuserve, which you won't need if you play with Wes' system, and these are new prices --- used will be lower. But OK, lets assume that this technology is a barrier, meaning that PBEM games can be played only by a "great minority". The question, tho, is whether that is a sufficient reason to deny Boardman Numbers. So lets look at some other games with barriers.

"Novice"games are out of reach of the majority of people in this hobby. And this, I might add, is an absolute barrier. Brad may some day be able to afford a computer system, and the barrier will disappear, but Brad will NEVER be a novice. Or how about all women games? Short of a sex-change operation, Brad, you are never going to get into a game like that --- its off limits to 95% or so of the postal hobby. Or how about "invitational"games?, such as the current DW Demo game, or something like the "PudgeCon Invitational" Virtually the entire hobby was prevented from playing in such games. There's nothing wrong with any of these games --- and no one has suggested that that the barrier that each of these games has should prevent them from getting a BN. We should do the same with PBEM games. We should not be bothered by this barrier, especially since it will slowly crumble anyhow.

My point about the use of telephones is one of consistancy. We have never required exclusive or even predominant use of the USP"S" as a prerequisite for a BN, and there's no reason to start now. Games which have been designed strictly as telephone games (in one of them for example, no addresses were printed, just fone numbers. It was a N.Y.C. telephone game) have been given BNs with no one batting an eyelash. So if we permit telephone games, with little or no input from the USP"S" to get a BN, it would be a real double standard to say to the PBEM games, "Sorry, you don't use the USP"S", so no BN." And a fone call is a lot further away from a letter than a computer message is. PBM and PBEM are both written, do not require an instant response, do not involve tone-of-voice considerations, etc. None of these factors apply to fone calls. Kathy Byrne has ruled that being PBEM is not a barrier to a BN, and I think she's 100% right.