

February 15th, 1989

Hell, is it really #17 already?

We've started school again. I'm taking a couple of proficiency courses which are required but don't count towards my final degree. "An Introduction to Computer Methods" is a useful crash course which is incidentally teaching me all about my PC. "An Introduction to Quantitative Methods" is a fancy title for a maths course with a business angle. In our first lesson we learnt the distinction between real numbers, which obey various laws of arithmetic, and imaginary numbers, which have more esoteric properties and are used by chequebooks and the US Federal budget.

Speaking of numbers, I've decided to raise the cost of overseas subscriptions. Unfortunately it costs me 90c merely to mail a zine to Europe or Australia. I still make a loss at the new price of \$1.25, but, at least, it's a smaller one.

You should find a flyer or two enclosed this issue. If you gave to the Diplomacy Alliance Against AIDS, your receipt should be enclosed. If you wrote your cheque payable to the American Foundation for AIDS Research, you may be pleased to discover that the cheque has finally cleared. I'm sorry for taking so long to deliver the money to AmFar. This, of course, is one of the reasons why I'm not running the Pledge Drive next time; I simply don't have enough time!

Nevertheless, I seem to have managed this month to juggle my homework and publishing a full-size issue. (Although Rod Walker did provide his usual help in padding out the page count.) This summer I will only be taking one course. The crunch will be in the Autumn when I attempt to take two full courses.

PLAYLIST: Bob Dylan, Desire; Edie Brickell & New Bohemians, Shooting Rubberbands at the Stars; U2, Rattle & Hum; Jesus & Mary Chain, Darklands; R.E.M., Green, and a fascinating compilation of Marc Gascoigne's favourite singles and tracks of 1988 including New Order, Danielle Dax, Public Enemy, Wire, Swans, Womack & Womack, Nick Cave, A Guy Called Gerald, Psychic TV and much more. That should make Francois Cuerrier feel inadequate.

READLIST: Schoolwork interrupted The Bonfire of the Vanities & The Field of Social Investment. Aside from textbooks, I've been introduced to that little gem, The Elements of Style, by Strunk & White.

Excitement City Unlimited is published by Simon Billenness & Barbara Passoff, 630 Victory Blvd Apt. 8F, Staten Island, NY 10301. Home phone (718) 981 6247. ECU costs 75c if you live in North America and \$1.25 if you live elsewhere. Sorry about the price hike. New Yorkers Against Koch.

EXCITORIAL: WORLD DIP CON NEWS

I've been keeping contact with possible bidders for Dipcon '90 and, more specifically, World Dip Con II. Here's my current status report.

CANCON I spoke to Randy Grigsby about a week ago. He said that he wasn't interested in bidding for either Dipcon or World Dip Con. Cancon is only in its first year and the organisers need more experience before they're ready for "the big one." I predict that Cancon, in future years, will become a major event and a contender for both Dipcon and World Dip Con.

THE DIPLOMATIC CONGRESS I spoke to Robert Sacks and he is definitely interested in bidding for both Dipcon and World Dip Con. The con will be held in conjunction with Phrolicon, a regular SF event. Robert Sacks' position is that he will not boycott the bidding process but if he feels that the process is rigged against him, he will have no qualms about promoting his con as an alternative World Dip Con event.

I feel a sermon coming on... It is important that Robert Sacks' bid for both Dipcon and World Dip Con be considered seriously. If the procedure is conducted unfairly, it will devalue both Dipcon & World Dip Con as well as causing unnecessary and harmful controversy. While I don't personally favour giving either event to the Diplomatic Congress, Robert Sacks has a perfect right to make a bid and he better damn well be treated with the same respect accorded to the other bidders. End of sermon.

DIXIECON I must confess a personal bias here. Dixiecon is the best established purely hobby based convention right now. From my contacts with David Hood and the Carolina Diplomats I am satisfied that they would be the best organisers for both Dipcon and World Dip Con. Ken Peel and I have joined the Dixiecon committee and we are already hard at work expanding the con's local base, preparing an official bid and setting up a comprehensive network of publicists (in Britain, Australia, Germany, France, the Netherlands etc) to promote the con in their respective countries.

David Hood is an impressive con organiser in the Walkerdine mould: patient, pragmatic and very hardworking. (Like Walkerdine, he's also a loopy conservative, but we won't go into that...) Whenever I suggest something, David comes back to me a week later with it done already! Cons are largely dependent on the people involved. If David Hood is a person with responsibility, I'm confident that the con is soundly based.

LOS ANGELES I called Ron Cameron yesterday. Basically, after some thought, he agrees with David Hood and myself that holding World Dip Con in LA and Dipcon in the East is bad logistics. Consequently, he now supports holding Dipcon and World Dip Con at Dixiecon.

I'm very gratified that Ron is the kind of person who can review a situation and change his mind. If everyone approached the topic of World Dip Con with Ron's open-minded and constructive attitude, the site selection would proceed very smoothly.

ORIGINS Robert Sacks and Cathy Ozog have written to the organisers of Origins '90 which will take place in Atlanta. Their view is that Origins will provide the same kind of "big convention" backdrop that would have been provided by teaming up World Dip Con with the Avalon Hill Championships. Cathy would be prepared to present a bid on Origins' behalf at Dipcon in San Diego.

My view is that Origins has a certain appeal. However, Atlanta is a little far from the major hobby centres to guarantee the necessary good hobby turnout. Robert suggested over the phone that an Atlanta would encourage the Texas diplomats to attend. However if hobbyists from Houston and Dallas fail to attend Dipcon in San Antonio, they obviously won't go all the way to Atlanta. More worrying is the fact that Robert has written to the Origins organisers already, but received no response. If they don't reply to our letters, how are we expected to work with them if they host the event? At the very least we would need a couple of hobby members in Atlanta to act as liaison between us and the local event. It's a nice idea but I fear that it's just impractical.

SPLIT-SITE EVENT I haven't received my latest copy of Diplomacy World yet, but Larry Peery has apparently suggested that World Dip Con be held over a series of weekends at conventions on the East Coast, the Midwest, and the West Coast. Larry has a great deal of ideas; 10% of them are excellent but 90% should properly be strangled at birth and buried in an unmarked grave at midnight. The logistics of coordinating three conventions a couple of thousand miles apart make me shudder, particularly since at least the Midwest one will have to be organised from scratch. Besides I doubt if attendees from overseas will even want to have to cross the country to be present at three separate conventions. Many hobbyists will come over with limited funds, and others will bring family members who will put up with only one weekend of gaming. Consequently, if there are three separate cons, most overseas hobbyists will only go to one. This, of course, would defeat the purpose of World Dip Con which is to bring together as many overseas hobbyists as possible to one event.

Conclusion

I would be interested to hear what potential international attendees think of the above events. Will people come over with limited funds? Will many hobbyists bring over their families and make a proper vacation of it? It seems that many potential organisers are making assumptions about what overseas attendees will want. It is important to find out if those assumptions are indeed correct!

RESTOCK MY SAVINGS ACCOUNT: BACK ISSUES FOR SALE

Here's a quick resume of ECU back issues which I'd like to sell off. (I can't bear to throw overprints away.) I've bumped up the price of some of the rarer ones to recognise market realities. MBA jargon has certainly rubbed off on me.

#1: 50c, 5 copies

The original backwards issue... UK election review. Houserules. Cline 9 rules. Praxis to win Runestone Poll prediction.

#2: \$1.50, 1 copy

Shawmut Bank buys Britain! Downfall rules. Robocop review I.

#3: \$1.00, 2 copies

Minimalist cover. The Pick of the Sline I (Democrats for Prez), Stab rules. First long letter column (Peel, Geryk, Vu, England)

#4: 75c, 5 copies

Robocop review II. The Pick of the Sline II (The Republicans), Praise for Boardman's pacificism. Letters on Dr Who, politics..

#5: 75c, 6 copies

Bah humbug editorial. British Zine Poll review. Letters on Evan Mecham, Dr Who, presidential politics, Railway Rivals.

#6: \$1.50, 2 copies

We buy Misha Mazda. Moronic car salesmen. Where are the quality zines? ISE news. 1987 albums review. Hobby political leanings.

#7: 75c, 10 copies

Pumping socially responsible banking. Why AmEx ads suck. Letters on politics, Dr Who & zines. I start night classes.

#8: 75c, 9 copies

Hobby news. Praxis to win Runestone Poll prediction (I get it right this time). David Watts on Railway Rivals.

#9: \$1.00, 4 copies

World Dip Con site selection (another unworkable system). Reasons to be Vegetarian. Letters on British TV and politics...

#10: 75c, 10 copies

My decision to work for an MBA. The Rusty Bolts Awards announcement. Recipe. Derek Caws slagged off. HI debate.

#11: \$1.00, 4 copies

First Downfall press. Weirdness in New York. British candy: vital differences. More ISE news. Vegetarianism debate.

#12: 75c, 15 copies

Runestone Poll predictions proved accurate. More Downfall press. World Dip Con I review. Tedious Right-of-reply letter column.

#13: 75c, 15 copies

The Last Tomatocon. World Dip Con II plans. Cuban Black Beans.

#14: 75c, 15 copies
Post-exam blahs. Runestone Pledge Drive. World Dip Con debate.

#15; 75c, 15 copies
Post-blah high. Walkerdine lectures the US hobby (and about bloody time.) Rusty Bolt Awards Results. Vegetarianism again..

#16: 75c, 12 copies
First computerised issue. Dr Who Season 25 review. ISE news.
Letters on hobby charity appeals and World Dip Con.

Maybe I ought to just stop printing too many copies...
Non-North American residents pay 25c more per back issue.

HURRICANEISISMOZAMBIQUEONEMORERECUPQFCOFFEEONSISTERJOEYROMANCEINDU

HOBBY NEWS

Francois Cuerrier has kindly sent me a review of ECU which he wrote for his zine Passchendaela. It's a good rule that, if you write about somebody, you send them a copy of your comments even if they don't sub to or trade for your zine. It's nice to see that this tradition is being upheld. The review itself is so apt that I'm going to reprint it below as well as sending to the Zine Register. Enjoy...

"EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED

Without a doubt, this is the official organ 'zine for the bleeding heart lib left greenpeace establishment. An immigrant Labourite from Britain, Simon fits right in with the New England radical crowd. Amongst other things, he's an avowed environmentalist, an animal rights activist, and a stubborn vegetarian.

So nobody's perfect.

ECU is a regular 'zine. Games appear to be well run, but judge for yourselves. When Simon doesn't have too much spare time, he cuts back on the size of the issue. Otherwise, the subscriber is treated to a fair amount of entertaining reading - though Simon doesn't believe in going overboard, ever, and therefore the largest issue will only be so long.

ECU is priced at 75c per issue, which is a little expensive for a U.S. zine, but certainly still affordable."

I thought this was the most appropriate (and most amusing) review of ECU I've read so far. I must admit I'm extremely proud to be considered North America's foremost leftist postal gaming editor (though John Boardman probably has a stronger claim.) Somebody has to sock it out with the mushy right-wing libertarian sentiment which is so prevalent in the North American hobby. However, my British readers may find the label amusing since I was considered a wishy-washy centrist back home.

Francois, however, does fail to mention my growing yuppie tendencies and gets my former political affiliations wrong. I wasn't Labour. In fact, I'm a third-generation card-carrying Liberal Party member, who gave up zine editing at university, partly because I was spending most of my leisure time running the student union Liberal and Social Democratic Society. My parents met for the first time at a Young Liberal conference. (She was a representative from the Yorkshire region. He was part of the Sussex delegation...) My grandfather was the Liberal mayor of Baildon, a small Yorkshire village. I suppose you could say Liberalism is in my blood, though the Red Cross still accepts it every two months.

We need more reviews like this. Send subs to Francois at 2303 Eglinton Ave. E. #305, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 2N6 CANADA.

Meanwhile, back in Britain, the hobby is facing a baby epidemic. Pete and Kat Tanlyn are now proud parents of Marc John. My good friend Mr Gascoigne assures me that Pete and Kat did not name their new offspring after a certain controversial British hobby member, which is just as well. If it were true what could we expect next? Glover Biggles Birks Tanlyn?

Other participants in this New Fertility craze are Brian Creese and Margaret Finnegan. The birth of Matthew Peter Benedict coincided with the hundredth issue of Brian's zine NMRI. I was curious to read that the baby "got himself thoroughly tangled up in the cord, and would have to have had a caesarian". British medicine has turned strangely barbaric in my absence.

Somehow, despite the rigours of becoming a daddy for the first time, Brian managed to put an excellent NMRI 100 containing plenty of fascinating, nostalgic articles. Co-editor, Ken Bain, will be taking the front seat for future issues and he intends to experiment a little with desktop publishing. With its future assured, I have absolutely no reservations about recommending this zine to North Americans who would like to sub to a British zine. (Ken Bain, 47 Medina Dr, Tollerton, Nottingham NG12 4EQ)

Praxis is back. After about a six-month break after winning the Zine Poll, Alan Stewart nonchalantly remarks "nobody ever explained to me that the Runestone Poll winner was supposed to keep publishing. I thought it was like an appointment to the Canadian Senate - you're honoured for your good work and never have to do anything again for the rest of your life." Well, Alan, we cured Conrad von Metzke of that misconception. How many places do we have to lower you in the Poll before you cotton on? The latest issue wraps up the Bad Boys debate, but also devotes far too much space to the Runestone Poll controversy, including an incredibly tedious Dick Martin letter. Overall I get the impression that, despite some amusing commentary between letters, Alan put out the issue on autoramble. This is OK if you're easing yourself back into the editing mode but I hope that Alan gets the hang of writing actual articles again. (Alan Stewart, 702-25 St Mary St, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M4Y 1R2.)

WAITING LISTS

Railway Rushes: Paul Gardner, Doug Brown, Conrad von Metzke,
Map I (Ireland) GM: Brian Longstaff 2 wanted

Railway Rivals is a commercial game based on railway building.
You can find it in game stores but you have to look very hard.
Railway Rushes is an RR variant. Rules are available on request.

International Diplomacy: Mark Weidmark (Canada), Mike Gonsalves (USA)
GM: Mark Nelson

Mark Nelson informs that he will be sending house rules soon
but this may just be a vile rumour. (Especially since I've received
nothing over the last two months.) I'm looking to attract a
smorgasbord of players from North America, Europe and Australia &
New Zealand, with none of the three groupings taking up more than
three spaces. Consequently, I'm particularly looking for players
from Europe and Australia & New Zealand.

STANDBYS

All Purpose: Doug Brown, Mark Lilleleht, Mike Pustilnik

Cline 9: Paul Gardner, Mike Gonsalves

International Diplomacy: Bill Young, Robert Acheson, Mike
Gonsalves, Brad Wilson, Ian Whitchurch

Downfall: John Dods, Ian Whitchurch, Jason Bergmann, Brad Wilson,
Pete Gaughan, Mark Nelson

Railway Rivals: Paul Gardner

I'm planning to consolidate the standby lists for Cline 9 and
international Diplomacy into the "All Purpose" list. This would
reflect reality since I've been "raiding" the international Dip
lists to find standbys for "Artichoke Hearts", the international
Cline 9 game. Let me know if you have any objections.

On the subject of international Diplomacy, Richard Walkerdine,
John Cain and myself have decided to plug each others games. The
problem with opening lists for international games is that you
invariably attract too many domestic players and not enough
foreigners for a truly international flavour. To counter this,
Richard, John and myself are going to direct potential players
from our own countries to zines from abroad. In my case, this
should hopefully result in more requests from the UK and
Australia & New Zealand. North American players, looking for
a game of international Dip should check out the below two zines.

Mad Policy: Richard Walkerdine, 13 Offley Road, Hitchin,
Herts, SG5 2AZ, United Kingdom

Victoriana: John Cain, 78 Banool Road, Balwyn, 3103, Australia

Subs can be sent to both of these zines through the International
Subscription Exchange. Just send a straight forward US dollar
cheque to Paul Gardner specifying which overseas zines you want.
ISE: Paul Gardner, 20 Spruce Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301, USA

WILLIAM RUFUS DEVANE KING: AUTUMN 1913

Please note: Last report I failed to note the Barbary order
a lib holds.

Retreats: Barbary f mao-can

Barbary: Jake Walters

f can s f wao, f alg-nor, f spasc-por, f sao s f wao,
f wao holds, a lib-alg

Germany: Mike Pustilnik

f nao-wao, f nao-por, f iri s f eng-nao, f eng-nao, f bre s..
f eng-nao, f bel-eng, a rum-ser, a bud s a rum-ser, a tri-alh
a tyr-tri, a vie s a tyr-tri, a mun-tyr, a ukr s a sev-run,
a sev-run, a nos holds, a war s a nos, a stp s a nos,
a sil-gal, a bur-mar, a gas s a bur-mar, a par-bur

Italy: Robert Acheson

a ven-tyr, a pie s a ven-tyr, a apu-ven, a rom s a apu-ven,
f adr-tri

Persia: John Crosby

f ant s Barbary f wao, f mar-spasc, f cas s a geo-nos,
a kaz s a geo-nos, a geo-nos, f bla-sev, a arm s a irn-geo,
a irn-geo, f ion-wms, f aeg-ion

Russia: Bob Gossage

a alb s a ser, a ser s Italian a ven-tri (no such order),
a bul-run

Retreats: Persian f mar-lyo/otb, Russian a ser-gre/otb
German a tyr-boh/otb

CENTRES

B: 8: nor, alg, can, por, tun, spa
G: 22: kie, mun, ber, bel, vie, den, nwy, hol, edi, stp, swe, tri
lon, war, say, nos, bud, rum, lpl, par, bre, +mar, +ser
I: 5: rom, nap, cor, ven, pie
P: 10: ara, jor, ira, eth, egy, say, cre, ank, con, mar, +sev
R: 2: ser, bul, gre

ADJUSTMENTS

Germany: build one or two
Persia: no change or build one
Russia: disband one or no change

PRESS

Rome-Berlin: You all set for those long, Russian wars?
GH-Rome: If Germany gains one more centre, the war is over
already!
Sparta-Athens: Cover your mouth when you yawn.
GH-all: I want Mike in all my games. He spots all my errors!

DEADLINE: Saturday, March 16th, 1989

DICED DATES: SPRING 1901

Austria: Jake Walters
a vie-tyr
England: Marc Hanna

France: Tom Nash
a par-bur

Germany: Brad Wilson
a mun-bur

Italy: Derwood Bowen
a ven-tyr

Russia: Glenn Petroski
f sev-arn

Turkey: Jason Bergmann
a say-arn

Gamenotes

COA for Derwood Bowen to 251 Ward Street, Salem, VA 24153

DEADLINE: Saturday, March 18th 1989

PRESS

Russia-Austria: Tough starting like this. I want to know what Simon thinks of blood red pieces. ((Red chili peppers, yum!))

Russia-Turkey: I may never read your press. My sub lapsed on the gamestart announcement! ((but a \$5 cheque quickly followed.))

Russia-England: We may have problems. I can't tell German from English pieces in my set.

Russia-Germany: Do you ever write? ((I had to phone him twice at work to get his orders!))

Russia-France: Looks like they're finally going to let you play with my blocks!

Russia-Italy: Got to keep your stories straight.

Russia-GM: How'd I get into this one? I don't remember anymore. ((You asked....))

Russia-Gana: Concede to me now and I'll give all of you survival. ((Perhaps, they'll concede if you spell the word correctly..))

Italy (Paranoia Fringe)-Austria (Paranoia Central): Hope your Spring '01 didn't go too bad. ((But how can he tell?..))

Italy-Russia: Hope your paranoia was kept in check.

Paranoia Fringe-France: Hope you didn't sneak where you shouldn't. I got sand in my eyes and can't see.

Buffalo Springfield: Paranoia strikes deep/Into your dots he will creep/It starts when you're always afraid/Step out of line the man comes and takes your dots away

GM-Turkey/England: No room for your press, I'm afraid...

BLACKRIOTNICKCAVECOCOSTEEL&LOVEBOMB DANIELLE DAX DINOSAUR JR DROPAGU

Artichoke Hearts: Cline 9 Diplomacy (International), Autumn 1904

Braised Celery: Downfall of the Lord of the Rings, Solmath 3019-II

Spectreman: Railway Rivals (Map K), Round 10

Attack of the Killer Tomatoes: Railway Rivals (Map N), Round 3

Carnivore: International Diplomacy. Spring 1901

BRAISED CELERY: SOLMATH 3019-II

Dwarves Doug Rowling

A Lhu-Nen, A Ang-BMa, A NRh-SRh, A Crn-Wit, A Esg-Eot

Elves Cathy Ozog

A RRu holds, A OFR-Crk, A OFO s A Gla-And, A Gla-And,
F For-Fld, A Har-GHa

Gandalf Paul Gardner

Fe

R

Gandalf

Gondor Iain Bowen

A/Faramir Ano s A MTi-Los, A Dru holds, A Lan s A Leb,
A Leb s A Bel, A Bel s A Leb, A MTi-Los

Mordor Rod Walker

A Dag-EMy, A SRh-Wil, A oth-SRh, A SMi s A SRh-Wil,
A And holds, A DGu s A And, A Bro s A And, 2A Nur-ELi,
A Oro-Udu, 2A Osg-Ano, 2A Nit s 2A Osg-Ano, Nazgul Nit
paralyses Rohan C Ent, 2A Sit-Leb, Sauron Osg-MMo, A MMo-Oro

Rohan Doug Brown

A WEm-Wol, A Gap-Ene, A Eas s Gondor A/Faramir Ano,
C Fan-Gap-Dun, C Ent-Nin-DMa, H EEm holds

Saruman Richard Biddle

NMR! A's Ise, Hol, Cel, KDu all hold, Saruman

Unbar Mark Lilleleht

AF BAY-Bel, A Por-SIt, A SGo-Por, A HRd-Cit, AF SOU-Dru

Retreats Gondor 2A Ano-Ent, Faramir Ano-

CENTRES

D: 5: Ere, Iro, Blu, CDn, Esg
E: 8: Iml, Lor, ERH, GHa, Fld, Gla, RRu, +Crk
G: 5: MTi, Bel, Lan, Leb, Dru, Ano
M: 14: 3 x off, Bar, MMo, Udu, Nur, DGu, SRh, And, Osg, Sit,
Kha, +Ano
R: 8: HDe, Edo, EEm, Wol, EEm, +Dun
S: 3: Ise, Dun, KDu, Hol
U: 5: Hrd, Hav, Cit, SGo, Min

ADJUSTMENTS

Elves: builds A Lor, A ERH

Gondor: GM removes A Ent

Mordor: build A Bar

Saruman: GM removes A Cel

Rohan: build A HDe

GAHENOTES

I expect Iain will be pissed but I couldn't see I had any choice but to remove his A. He didn't include conditional disbandments and, according to my houserules, units in non-supply centres are disbanded before units in supply centres. Units are then disbanded on the basis of furthest from the nearest home supply centre first. Unfortunately, the A Entwash was further from Iain's home supply centres than his A Lossarnach. So it goes.

I'd like to clarify the rules on a couple of points.

Firstly, if Mordor stations a 2A in Oroduin by the Crack of Doom, he can effectively prevent the Ring from being destroyed by Gandalf, because the unit will destroy Gandalf before the Wizard has a chance to fling the Ring into the lava. My ruling is that, even if Gandalf and the 2A arrive in Oroduin at the same time, Mordor can still kill Gandalf before Gandalf has a chance to act.

If a neutral power puts on the Ring, it will not affect Mordor that turn. The following turn, Mordor will lose the use of the Nazgul, the three off board centres whilst having his 2As reduced to single armies. This gives Mordor the opportunity to specify which units will be lost etc. The new Ring-wearer gains full benefits on the following turn also.

It's a shame to see Richard Biddle NMR! Could John Dods (PO Box 2110, Ahurini, Napier, New Zealand) please submit standby orders for Saruman?

DEADLINE: Saturday, March 4th, 1989

Oh yes, Mark adds his vote in support of prophetic retreats and builds. Could Doug and Paul give me their opinions too? I'm basically all in favour of them but I am interested to know what you all think.

PRESS

Gondor-Umbar: He'll destroy you too!
Gondor-SauRod: Will be in touch very swiftly

NEAR BRIE (CHEESESHIRE), late Solmath 3019. "Come along, come along, me hearties," cried Gonegoose the potty old wizard, trying to encourage his little walking party to hurry. He had already concluded that it would have been much less trouble to take the Ring himself and try to resist its manifold temptations than to shepherd this motley lot through Middle-earth (it used to be called "Middle-earth" before the developers had scraped off all the topsoil and sold it to a bunch of elves that lived west of the ocean someplace).

Gonegoose waited for them to catch up: the Barfin brothers Bobsey and Flopsey, the new kids on the block Dorothy and Toto, plus a mysterious dude who had joined them and preferred to be called Kemo Sabe (which, Gonegoose reflected, was an ancient term of the Middle-level Upwardly-mobile Elves for "the rear end of a horse"). As usual, the delay was due to the semi-friendly competition between the three lads for the Dorothy's attention (and the inexplicably tenacious defensive gestures of the dog Toto).

It was growing dark, and Gonegoose had begun looking for a secure and covert place to make camp. Typically, he picked the most obvious landmark in the vicinity, a high spot which the road signs identified as Bare Hill.

As the sun set, the little party lit a merry campfire and set about toasting some marshweeds (a few puffs of that stuff and you won't care that you're on most indefensible and easily visible spot for

miles around). The potty old wizard was pretty well potted when he heard some rustling sounds. Sure enough, a few masked men drove a herd of cattle by the hill.

A while later, there were some more sounds. Gonegoose peered woozily through the dark for a while without results. Then he opened his eyes and instantly saw them! They were halfway up the hill, creeping stealthily toward the little group. They were already close enough that, even in his condition, Gonegoose could make out their nasty black robes and big, protruding, bulbous noses. His heart sank; their secret mission had been discovered by the most dread of Sauron's minions: the Schnazzgul!!

Peculiarly, Gonegoose felt a sort of relief. It would, after all, perhaps be a blessedly short quest.

[Next issue: Episode Four -- Sorry About That, Gonegoose.]

* * * * *

BARAD-DUR (still) 3 Elfmash ["Solmath" in Mordoria Irredential 3019):

Sauron the Great stared down at the mob of would-be Ring Bringers. Not a promising lot, that. He thought. He decided to conjure up a few Troll guards. Raising His hand (the one with five fingers), He made a gesture simply crawling with mystic significance. Poof! A squad of U.S. Marines appeared. Gotta watch that wrist, Sauron said to Himself. Kinda cute, though. Maybe I should spend a couple of weekends in Oceanside. Maybe nephew Bowenmir will enjoy these. Maybe they'll beat the crap out of him, too. He made another Mystic Gesture -- deppof!, they were materializing on Rath Dinen. All right, the Lord of Middle-earth thought, let's try it again.

Wimp! Oh, wonderful; the wrist was just not going right. This time he got Jim & Tammy Bakker, Pat Robertson, Jerry Fallwell, John Metzger, Hermann Goering, Amie Semple McPherson, Helena Blavatsky, H. Ron Hubbard, Benito Mussolini, Dan Quayle, Warren Gamaliel Harding, and a cowering creature that looked for all the world like Slimeon Bilgenest. "Ye Valar!" Sauron said; "what's all this, then?" He decided to send that bunch to another nephew who'd certainly know what to do with them. Dewimp! As they vanished, Sauron's smile was particularly evil. Dear little Caligula might really enjoy that bunch, He thought. All right, now for some real trolls.

Whoosh! "Doooooh!" said Bilgenest, sort of surreptitiously stroking and tickling the tail of the nearest guard. "These are really real trolls. Your Unspeakable Unholiness." Sucking up a thick rope of drool, he puckered.

"Bilgenest!!" Sauron roared. "Save your unspeakable, disgusting, loathsome, perverted lust for later, when We have time to watch. Now -- have the guards take all these nice per ... uh, things ... to some of Our darker dungeons, and We will take a look at their little trinkets later."

"Ok, chaps." Bilgenest said, "you heard His Regurgitative Repulsiveness. Get going. March." The guards stood motionless. "That's very good. All right, now: Slimeon says, get going. March."

The troll guards grinned spike-toothily and began rounding up the cowering, quivering suppliants at Mordor's Throne. After they were taken below, Slimeon asked, "Your Impious Ickiness, aren't you avidly anxious to have the Ring?"

"Naturally, my little growth of puswort."

"But, your terrific Tawdriness, what if one of them has it?"

"Ah, but they don't, my hairy flittering blowfly. Do you imagine that the Ring could be in this room and We would not know it? None of those pretentious wretches has it, however. We shall take great delight in pointing out this error -- and its consequences -- to them one at a time at Our next office party. In the meantime, we believe we'll take on the aspect of a Marine and top over to Rath Castro to see how dear nephew Bowenmir is doing."

INFLAMMATORY MATERIAL

Linda Courtemanche Interesting lettercol in ECU about World Dip Con, even though I tend to hold out little hope that overseas attendance at ANY World Dip Con will ever far outstrip the number of Americans you saw in England this past summer! It's simply too expensive for most hobbyists, since so many are students, just starting out in careers, or have little mouths to feed. I find it hard to envision flocks of Americans in Australia in '92, considering how few could even make it to San Antonio last year! Perhaps, instead of an ambitious "World Dip Con" agenda, con organisers should just be content to publicize their events in overseas zines so that those hobbyists who do happen to have the spare money and time can attend. I believe this would save eager planners a lot of heartache. Call me a pessimist...

((You're right in thinking that only a handful of people from overseas will make any World Dip Con. I'm telling potential bidders that, at the most, they can only expect between 5-10 attendees from abroad. That's not pessimistic - merely realistic! Fortunately, I think those who are bidding for the event know that already. Although I want to go, I'll never make it to the Australian WDC '92, but maybe it will be easier for the Californians.))

Ron Cameron You are quite correct regarding logistics concerning Dipcon '90 and World Dip Con being held in two different geographical locations. I do agree turnout would suffer at each location. //

Maybe you can inform me why a write-in vote for the selection of any site is not warranted. Obviously, Larry Peery would be against such a proposal, but has it even been discussed? Should it be discussed? Has a mail vote ever been considered?

Don Del Grande As for WORLD DIP CON, I agree that it should be held in conjunction with DIPCON. There are problems with whatever system is used to decide on the site: if it's based on the choice of whoever is at DIPCON 1989 in San Diego, then there won't be many East Coast voices in the process, and that's (almost certainly) where it will be held, while if proxies or other off-site voting is allowed, there's too much chance for someone to stuff the ballot box.

Doug Rowling I note the inclusion of the San Diego con flyer. I note with alarm the part which states that voting for World Dip Con will take place there, and presumably be binding on potential organisers. No such voting system was used for the last World Dip Con, which was arranged by common consensus through the letter columns of the hobby, particularly through the good offices of Richard Walkerdine and Derek Caws. I appreciate that in the UK there were only ever two possible venues, and in North America, because of the distances involved, there is a multiplicity of relatively small cons with less than 100 attendees.

As the UK and Europe are likely to provide most of the non-North American component, and the "world" aspect of the con, I am slightly unhappy that these potential attendees are not likely to have much say in the general location of the con. I am perturbed that any voting in San Diego is likely to have many local attendees, who will naturally vote for the con to be on the West Coast. This may well put off those Europeans who are on a tight budget.

((It seems that Ron and Doug are unfamiliar with the traditional method of choosing the annual North American Dipcon. The site selection is governed by a charter which makes it near impossible for Dipcon to be held in the same part of the country year after year. The site selection meeting, held every year at Dipcon to determine the next year's venue, is restrained from keeping Dipcon in their area. Consequently, they only evaluate bids from elsewhere thus ensuring that Dipcon reaches all parts of the country over a four-year cycle.

Unfortunately, World Dip Con has no similar tradition. Also, the methods which worked in Britain, will not necessarily work in North America. For my part, I'm doing my best to use the British method of discussion and compromise through letter column debates. However, if we're still left with two or more contenders in July, I generally favour leaving the decision on World Dip Con to the Dipcon selection meeting in San Diego.

It's wrong to assume that those not present will have no say in choosing the site. I won't be able to make the San Diego Dipcon, but I've already helped to persuade Ron Cameron to abstain from presenting a Los Angeles bid for World Dip Con. By participating in the ECU discussions, and those in other zines, anyone can help influence the World Dip Con site selection. So keep those letters coming!

I would be concerned if there was a West Coast bid for World Dip Con, because, if World Dip Con is held on the West Coast while Dipcon makes its scheduled appearance on the East Coast, turnout at both may be disappointing. In the event of a West Coast bid, I would prefer that the World Dip Con site be decided by a mail poll of zine editors. A poll of the entire hobby would be too complicated, too costly and vulnerable to ballot stuffing. A poll of zine editors is better because editors are a compact & easily definable group which is well-spread geographically and well-informed on hobby matters. As it is, a West Coast bid looks remote. I'm also heartened to see that such West Coast hobbyists as Ron Cameron and Don Del Grande are looking beyond geographic partisanship and supporting the idea of holding World Dip Con in conjunction with an East Coast Dipcon.

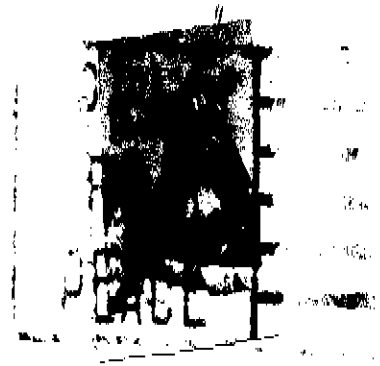
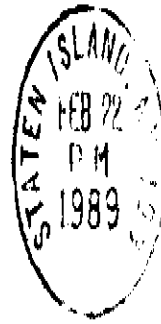
In any case, World Dip Con doesn't amount to much yet: probably just half a dozen extra attendees for the host con. It's less of a prize and more of a responsibility.))

SIMON BILLENNESS & BARBARA PASSOFF

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



YOUR CREDIT IS: TRADE?

THE ABOVE LEVEL IS OK/NOT QUITE WHAT I
HAVE IN MIND....

Larry Peery

Box 8416

San Diego, CA 92102

Notably absent from Franklin Pierce's oath-taking on a raw and snowy day in 1853 was the vice president-elect. William King of Alabama was enjoying a visit to Cuba and took the oath of office there.

DEADLINE: Saturday, March 18th, 1989