

HOUSE OF LORDS
Issue #1
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NEW BUSINESS

Hello, and welcome to Dipdom's newest zeen. This will be a different sort of zeen than what you're used to, though. It will run no games. There will be no press. But there will be GMs galore, and publishers too. At least, that's how I envision it to work. HOUSE OF LORDS is a zeen by, for and about publishers and publishing/GMs and GMing. It will consist primarily of letters and the discussion of topics relevant to publishing in the modern world. Subscribers will be limited to publishers and GMs, active and retired. Under enough duress, this may even be made available to regular dippers, but I don't anticipate much demand. As a matter of fact, the zeen this is semi-based upon, PEERLESS, died a quick death. So why am I trying to revive a flopped idea? I'm crazy. Besides that, a few years have passed and this time it may work. At worst it flops again. At best, we can start up a forum for publishers to discuss all the boring stuff that only publishers are really interested in, and can talk about from experience.

This will be a "non-partisan" zeen, to the best of my ability. I will probably kick off each discussion by stating my point of view and asking for responses. If you disagree or see things differently, feel free to write me back and tell me in no uncertain terms how you feel. The same if you agree. Both sides (or more) will be presented if I get them. I will not try to force you to follow my lead - this is just an info rag, not propaganda sheet. Issues will be published monthly, and I don't plan to put any limit on the number of pages this will run. There are three ways to get this on a regular basis. 1) Send me a number of stamps, or set up a small account of real money (\$1 or \$2 should be fine) and I'll send you a copy for the price of postage; 2) set up a trade, all for all; 3) trade or sub to my regular zeen, RETALIATION. My preferred method is #2 as it is by far the simplest for me. But if you would rather do it some other way, let me know.

Format will be a section of Old Business - any topic that has been brought up in the past and is still interesting after a month and hasn't been beaten to death, also New Business - the month's feature topic, and finally Future Business - my intro to the next month's New Business. Probably have some little details on the side - notices, announcements and stuff like that. I'll try not to be too chatty (as I've been so far) and stick to the topic at hand, unless of course it works better some other way. I'm very open to suggestions.

HOUSE OF LORDS also has another possible use. Mark Leudi circulated a flyer at Origins 83 regarding the compilation of a Publisher's Handbook. I'd heard rumors of such a mythical beast in the past, but never seen one. Do you think this would be a useful little project, or a waste of time? Whatever, you can write Mark (or me) and tell us what you think or volunteer your efforts or both. Mark's address is at the end of this issue (as will all future addresses) (?figure that one out?). This zeen could be used to hash out the details, if Mark wants to do it that way, and to solicit contributions. As for the actual new Publisher's Handbook (if there is to be such a critter), Mark will probably end up doing all the editing/typing/printing for it unless he decides not to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 1983 Census will be run by Dick Martin (me) after all. Any and all pubbers are requested to send copies of their address lists to me during the months of August and September (or print address lists in your zeens and make sure I get a copy). I will compile the census listing during October and come out with a listing by the beginning of November. C'mon guys, printing your address list is the least you can do for your players, and an annual listing shouldn't be too much of a strain.

There will be some changes from last year. First off, I'll be a lot more organized than last year. Second, I won't have to drive 20 miles each way in the middle of the night to get to the computer. Third, rather than try to cram it all into a few

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long sessions (which didn't work anyway) the effort will be spread over an entire month. Fourth, hopefully we'll get a better turnout of lists this year for a number of reasons. Fifth, it will be cheaper - probably free for contributing publishers and only a dollar or two for anybody else. Sixth, it'll be xeroxed rather than run on computer paper, perhaps reduced. Seventh, there will be no more than ONE revision. They killed me last year. Eighth, Fred Davis has agreed to do his statistical analysis this year which will be included with the original census (rather than just his readers in BUSHWACKER). That's all I can think of right off hand, but it should be a significant improvement over last year. I can promise that it will be as handy an item as ever - I'm still using mine from last year (considerably marked up by now), and don't know what I'd do without it. I'll try to avoid digest size, as it will be harder to read and hand write changes. Basically, it'll be invaluable and economical this year, I don't mind running off a bunch of copies xerox like I did on the computer. So submit! Not only do your submissions increase the value of the thing, but gets you a free copy of the results as well. How about it?

The RUNESTONE POLL results are out for this year, though I haven't seen more than just a ranking of the top zeens, subzeens and GMs yet (without actual scores). Which brings us to our first order of business....

FUTURE BUSINESS

POLLS

There was a tremendous debate earlier this year regarding the big daddy poll of all, the Leeder/Runestone poll of zeens and GMs of North America. It wasn't clear for some time who would run the poll and using what statistical method, or who would be the pollster. There are a number of other polls each year: best player, best writer, most boring, hobby vegetable, best zeen, etc. running from serious to silly. Are any of them necessary and useful, or even "good?"

I have always viewed the polls with some skepticism. The Runestone poll in particular always seems to have a number of "fluke" zeens that finish where nobody expected them to, and this hurts its credibility. I really couldn't care where I finish, how could I? If I put my ego on the line like that, I'd have an ulcer in no time! It seems so random. Sure, a nice finish is nice, but nothing more than that. A poor finish is written off with a shrug and a "better luck next year."

So what's the big deal? Last year Leeder "sold" his poll results to DIPLOMACY WORLD. He did the work, why not? It became a question of profiteering the innocent voters and was roundly booed by many prominent Dipdomites. I thought it was a clever move, myself. If the results had come out on time (or even close) in DW, it would all have blown right over. And all these poor pubbers chafing to find out how well they did in the annual popularity poll. Wasted effort as far as I'm concerned.

Of course, one of the big reasons for pubbing is recognition. Who doesn't like letters that say, "Great zeen, keep it up forever, here's \$20 for 40 more issues!" Nobody I know, that's for sure. But the polls are so unreliable/unpredictable that they're almost meaningless. Which way is better - the superdetailed Peeripoll, or the simple ranking of the Marco poll? Whew, it makes my head spin. But still I vote on - it's nice to be asked how I feel about something.

So what I want to ask is: do you pay any attention to the polls? If so, which ones? If you finish poorly (or well) do you think it gets to you? Which is more important, finishing well or not finishing poorly? Or don't you really care? Is putting out the best zeen/game you can reward enough for you? Do you think your subbers/players are or are not voting for you? Why did you finish where you did this year or years past? Are these enough ideas for you to answer, or can you come up with a few on your own - what did I miss? Put on your writing caps and drop me a line.

The following page was distributed by Mark Leudi at Origins and is self explanatory.

GOON SQUAD #1

July 13, 1983

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This is GOON SQUAD number one, tossed together by Mark A. Luedi, P.O. box 2424, Bloomington, IN 47402, (812) 339-8258 (only thru August 11), for the purposes of coming up (somehow) with a new publisher's handbook.

Yes, Rod Walker noted this in the latest Diplomacy World (#34), after I had totally forgotten about having mentioned it to him. You see, I queried about half a dozen fellow Dip types and publishers about the need (?) for a new publishers handbook. Unfortunately, none of them responded. I plumb forgot all about it. Well, until two days ago when I got my DW. My, was I shocked!

So, GS will be a flyer devoted to the establishment of a new publisher's handbook. A lot of these will be distributed at Dipcon, so that I can save on the postage. A lot of pubber-types will be there, and may give me a piece of their minds without having to wait to get home to type up their remarks. GS will be irregular in publication, and is free to all of those who actively take part in this project. Donations will not be discouraged.

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About two years ago, I wrote John Michalski, asking for a copy of the Publisher's Handbook after reading a plug in Lone Star Diplomat. He wrote back, saying the last copy was out on loan and that he would send it to me as soon as it was returned. Apparently, it was never returned. I have never seen one. However, I have heard that it is full of all sorts of useful and relevant information for publishers and would-be publishers. Information that I, and surely others, would have found most helpful. It's always easier learning from someone else's mistakes.

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- 1) Is a publishers handbook something that should be available; i.e., is one needed?
- 2) Could someone send me a copy of the Old Publisher's Handbook? Might our best solution be a reissue of it, with or without additions/changes?
- 3) Let me know if you'd like to help on this project, including more than just writing something. Some sort of "group critique" may improve the final product.
- 4) Some suggested topics to think about for articles. General overview, copyright laws, ethics, basic editing, graphics, reproduction, postal regulations, book keeping, GMing, what makes a good zine, format, etc., etc., etc. I'm sure there's more. In doing some of these articles, it may be nice to contact other publishers to see how they do things. If you've got ideas for other topics, go for it, and there's nothing to keep two people from doing the same topic. Another topic: computers and word processing.
- 5) Unless someone helps subsidize this project, I cannot even send out complimentary issues. Your reward is the satisfaction that some publisher is going to benefit from your article.
- 6) Scheduled publication: January, 1984. Things should be pretty much falling together by the end of November. If possible, and practical, it will be moved up. No idea of cost yet. Reduced digest format, xerox.
- 7) Thanx, and hope you'll be a part of this project!

P.S. Publishers! : No need to plug this: most people will be getting one of these. May need help with those who's retired.

Mark A. Luedi

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THE END

This just about wraps this up. So guys, am I wasting my time, or will this blossom into something useful? The choice is really up to you. I'm willing to put in the effort if you're willing to meet me halfway. That can be an additional bit of Future Business - is the crazy fool wasting his time and money or is he not? Let me know.

ADDRESSES

Mark Leudi PO Box 2424, Bloomington, IN 47402 (812) 333-8258

(phone #)
(until 8/13/83 only)

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POSSIBLE FUTURE TOPICS

All the items listed in GOON SQUAD item #4 plus house rules, Guest GMs, subzeens, deadlines, editorial policies, size vs cost and anything YOU can think of. How about it folks?!?

NAIL IN THE COFFIN

This has been made a reality by the push of a Dipcon Society grant for the census. All that should pay for are the stamps to send this out, but might as well kill two birds with one stone, yes? Don't forget the addresses, by the way. Good night.

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