

# HOUSE OF LORDS #10

This is HOUSE OF LORDS, a zeen by, for and about publishing and publishers, GMing and GMs. It runs no games, and is available to just about anybody. It's composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and a vast array of letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Hopefully, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth.

You can get this zeen any of several ways if you are a publisher or GM. First of all, by sending me one American Dollar per issue, and agreeing to trade. Second, by sending me one American Dollar per issue, and writing something at least once every other issue, or so. Third, agree to run this off for me (at no cost to myself, and in the manner to which I have become accustomed). I can keep on trying, can't I?

NonGMpubbers are obviously limited to the second option only, having nothing to trade (too bad). But really, I'd rather that you took the time to write rather than trade (or, better still, do both!), as the more you put in, the more you get out.

Another alternative is to write and make some sort of arrangement with me. Say the magic words ("I'm contributing!") and I can be amazingly easy. There really is no set policy, and I feel free to change with the winds—so be prepared to keep up with me!

And your publisher for this evening is Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way N, Rockville, MD 20854-6128.

As I expected, this issue is a little bit smaller than last. After reading #9, it seemed that there just wasn't a whole lot to comment on. Not so this time, as everybody should be able to come up with something for new business. We're a little bit later than I'd expected, delayed by the usual end-of-semester crunch and a much larger issue of RETAL than I'd expected. One thing's for sure, I like this not being on a regular schedule—two sets of deadlines may be just too much. It's been a really slow holiday season, Dip-wise, and I'd just as soon it stayed quiet for a while. Here's hoping that 1987 is as good a year as 1986...only better!

The laser print sure is nice, isn't it? This time we'll scratch the surface of my page layout program (ReadySetGo 3), with simple multi-columning. No fancy graphics, no major arranging. Start simple, work up to the good stuff. Words to live by.

## Announcements

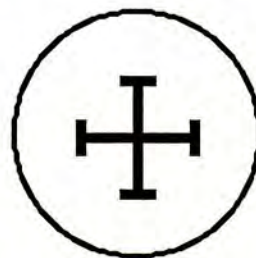
Scott Hanson (3508 4th Ave S, Mpls, MN 55408-4511) is doing PONTEVEDRIA, a listing of postal dip game openings. If you're interested in some semi-free publicity, send Scott your name & address, game fee, sub fee and schedule. A copy of PONT is available for SASE, and it's updated monthly. Scott is also threatening to turn POMMES MIT MAYO into a slightly less modest publication than it has been.

In a similar vein, Brad Wilson (224 Valley Park Dr, #9, Chapel Hill, NC 27514) has rechristened VERTIGO as a full fledged (small) zeen. Four years and seventy-seven issues old, VERTIGO is finally coming of age? Dip, politics & music are areas of interest. Sub goes for 22¢ an issue, games are free.

For a truly brand new effort, try BLUNT INSTRUMENTS, by Bruce Geryk (5748 Blackstone Ave, #310, Chicago, IL 60637). Cost is \$1.10/issue, \$10/10 - and he'll run Dip and non-Dip on suggestion. BLUNT INSTRUMENTS is the second Mac & laser printed zeen in Dipdom, so you can expect it to be pretty. We Mac dilettantes take that sort of stuff seriously! A good first effort, worth giving a look.

On the down side, I hear of the fold of YGGDRASIL CHRONICLE, formerly by Howard Dawson. The games have all been transferred to GRAUSTARK. Simon, what will you do with the hundreds of copies of YGGDRASIL CHRONICLE you have in the zeen bank? Good timing, eh?

For something a bit different, I'm running a game of Avalon Hill's Magic Realm. Tell your subbers, tell your friends, tell your enemies - I don't know of any other Magic Realm games currently under way. Go ahead, give me a plug, I can take it. Just keep up a sub to RETAL, that's all it takes. My info is up above, but in case you missed it: Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way N, Rockville, MD 20854-6128.





## The Concept

**BOB OLSEN:** I hate to be the one to break this to you, but you are guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor, even worse than Elitism—namely, *de facto* Elitism! Do you realize that all the contributors to issue #9 are publishers? Shocking. And a demonstration both that the whole Controversy was a phony one, and that you were a silly goose to bother trying to legislate something that would happen naturally anyway.

For the first time in a long time, I'm somewhat optimistic about the future of Dipdom. It's vital to get some new people in, and it looks like that's finally happening. RETAL in particular is getting some good new people...some of these guys already write cute press—how precocious!

It's also good to see that some of these novices are coming in with a sound understanding of the nature of the hobby. Just recently a novice was called as a standby in one of my games, and he wrote to me offering—this is *so* touching—to be my toady! And said that in order to cement our relationship, he would write fawning press about how wonderful I am. Now there's a man who understands what Dipdom is all about! Not surprisingly he's a MASTERS OF DECEIT reader—we train 'em right. ("Give them to me when they're young, and they're mine for life.") And who is this paragon? I'm not telling. Hey, I saw him first! He's *mine*!

I don't really buy Russ Rusnak's theory that The Feud has caused all the decline of Dipdom. In fact, I have looked into this and find that though far be it for me to ever exonerate Don Williams, his attacks on me have only caused 48% of the problems in the hobby. The remaining 52% can be attributed to the declining literacy rate (Media Hype #1), Crack in Our Schools (Media Hype #2), holes in the ozone layer, and electromagnetic pulses. But it must be admitted that Williams is the single biggest factor.

By the way, I agree with John Caruso. The big question is not: "Are Canadians arrogant?" but rather: "Why do all Canadians wear funny hats?"

((To cover their funny heads? Actually, Bob, our days of *de facto* elitism may be coming to an end. Excuse me if I indulge in some heavy handed foreshadowing here....))

**RUSS RUSNAK:** Regarding the last HOL, your little skirmish with Elmer Hinton seemed to

be the most entertaining part. Somehow, I have a hard time thinking about either of you as being snobs. As editor and chief, not to mention supreme lord, of HOL, I can't see why anyone would argue with you about your guidelines for receiving the thing. The point is, it is your creation and you can do whatever you damn well please as long as you don't cheat anyone out of money.

Elmer seemed to present a very arrogant attitude. I like that. No matter how much I like it, though, I have a hard time believing that he can get people to pay \$4 a move. But if he can, who are you (actually, "we" for that matter, since I agree with you when you say he is overpriced) to argue. If he can command that price, the odds are that he is offering more than games and news. If that is all he is offering, his subbers are fools, or they simply don't realize what is available for a lot less. Maybe we should raid the "professional" ranks for new players. Showing them a game can cost \$10–15 (game fee and sub) rather than the \$80+ Elmer wants could bring a lot of new enthusiastic players. (Under no circumstances can I believe that anyone would pay \$50 or more for a game map when he could buy the game for \$20 or so and set it up for himself.)

As a brief suggestion, why not solicit comments from players of "professional" GMs and see what makes these pros worth so much more. It would be interesting, anyway. It could also either help those of us that are struggling amateurs, or at the very least provide us with a good laugh about how some people are willing to waste their money.

((My impression is that Elmer can charge \$4 a turn not because he offers more, but because his players don't know any better. A few have made the transition to greater Dipdom (Melinda, The Smiley People). I don't know how many of his players have been exposed to Dipdom and still stay exclusively in KAISSE. Invading the professional gaming ranks is a good idea, but very difficult to pull off. Where do you get the names? Not from the GMs, certainly, as that's their income. I was in contact with a professional gaming magazine a few years back, with the idea of getting some publicity for Dipdom, but the magazine (PBM Gamer?) folded after three issues.

((Arrogance is fine if it's based on ability and a proven knack for getting the job done. If it's based on sheer ego, then it gets on my nerves. Unfortunately, that's the basis of much of the ar-



rogance I am familiar with in Dipdom.

((You'd be surprised at the sum of money some folks spend on gaming. A recent story came to our attention of one gamer who spent around \$10,000 on gaming in about six months. Needless to say, he's burned out now (and busy finding ways to pay off his debts). But at least he won the game.))

**PETE GAUGHAN:** As you may know, humans make sense of the world by imposing patterns on it. We call this *green* and that *blue* when there is very little physical space between them; linguistically, English speakers claim that [p<sup>h</sup>] and [p] are the same sound, /p/.

All this by way of explaining: Elmer Hinton seems more and more to me to be another Robert Sacks.

The relationship is clear when you see them next to each other—Elmer claiming some kind of legitimacy for his “professional” activities, while Robert goes on and on about how right and wonderful his NY Game Board is.

**MELINDA HOLLEY:** I suppose I'm old fashioned. I can see the usefulness of a word processor (I'm using the one in the office...the typewriter here is still broken. Actually it was allegedly fixed, but wasn't so...). You can edit things quite nicely, and there's really not a lot of difference between a typewriter and the keyboard of a word processor. I think better when typing and don't do too many rewrites (maybe that's the problem, huh?). My problem with using the word processor is that I'm continually looking at the monitor and marvelling at what I'm seeing. Then I don't concentrate on what I'm *doing*. When I'm at a typewriter, I don't even look at the paper. I just look at what I'm typing from. I've sat down and written short stories at the typewriter. The only rewrite I had to do then was to correct typos. It seems my brain gets in gear when I'm typing. I suppose I should have a keyboard grafted onto my fingers?

((Or maybe you should put up a shield to block your view of the word processor screen? That way, you won't be tempted to look at it so much. I prefer to do my work on the word processor, because much of my editing consists of arranging things how I like them. Taking a sentence out here, adding one there, moving a paragraph...I don't type fast enough to make retyping whole pages economical. Hey, if you can orga-

nize your writing well enough in your head just to type it straight out, more power to you!))

**BRUCE LINSEY:** Just out of curiosity, if almost anyone can get HOL, who (if anyone) can't? I mean, jeepers, you've let *me* on board....

((Why do you have to keep reminding me? And really, what importance is it?))

## Costs

**JIM BURGESS:** My new zeen will cost 25¢ an issue. I hope that will cover postage, but I know it won't. I emphasize content over form. So I xerox on cheap paper, 4¢ a sheet (both sides). Lots of competition keeps copying prices low around Brown University. I don't keep records well, so I try to keep things simple. I almost went for free, like The Boob Report, but I figured that would make it difficult to kick out deadwood. Wait 'till you see my policy...if they were giving *yours* a hard time.....

((Yeah, just how do you expect to keep your policy straight? For instance, do you get the discounted rate after contributing a couple times, or for promising to contribute, or....))

## Dipcon

**SIMON BILLENNESS:** How do we go about holding Dipcon in Britain? Good question. For starters, I've started to push the word around Britain. I write an occasional column about the North American hobby for the British zeen MAD POLICY. In the last one, I talked about Dipcon and asked if anyone in Britain would be interested in working with me on the project. The article hasn't seen print yet, but I'll let you know what the response is.

I'd also like to know more about the Dipcon Charter. Would there be anything preventing Dipcon being held in Britain?

Of course, if Dipcon is held in Britain one year, then there should be a North American Diplomacy Championship held somewhere in America. After all, there have been several British Diplomacy Championships held while Dipcon has remained in America.

**ROBERT SACKS:** What expenses? The transportation, meals, and lodgings of the organiz-



ers? The NYGB treats those as tax-exempt donations under current law, and as long as there is no element of pleasure in the trip, it remains tax-exempt under the new law. The membership fees of the organizers? We do refund those, but that is a minimal expense. Prizes? We give merchandise certificates based on attendance to the extent required. Forms and certificates? Negligible or non-existent costs. What expenses?

The committee is not supposed to award subsidies; the Dipcon Society is supposed to decide how to award its monies and proceeds. If it was a committee decision, and not a Society decision, to withhold funds, then the committee has embezzled Society funds for its own purposes. The committee is not supposed to put on a Diplomacy convention, just coordinate with the host convention and tournament, and organize the business meeting and arrange for other functions.

I understood that the Marycon tournament was totally superceded by the Dipcon tournament.

((It would be more proper to say the two tournaments were "merged" for a year. As this had been a long time goal of Marycon, I see nothing to complain about here.

((The expenses I'm talking about consist mostly of the costs of communicating between committee members and between the committee and the host con—phone calls and postage. Transportation, lodging, etc, don't even figure in. You mean that you don't have any fun at cons, just so it can be tax deductible? That's silly!

((I believe that the greater society can elect to leave fund dispersal up to the committee. This has been fairly common practice in the past, and has been vulnerable to abuse. Better not to have any funds dispersed and lower the cost to the con attendees than have the endless behind the scenes politics over subsidies. Interestingly, there's not nearly the same demand for a committee position as there was in the past. A change for the better for Dipcon, though some "services" that relied on funding have fallen on hard times.))

**BRUCE LINSEY:** Just a quick suggestion regarding having Dipcon in Britain. If we do this is, say, 88 or 89, let's simply insert it as an extra year in the rotation as opposed to having England take the place of (for example) the East Coast. That way, no one in the US can claim that his region was passed over in favor of England; the whole schedule is simply pushed back by a year, and everyone's happy (he said naively...).

**JIM BURGESS:** I'd go to Dipcon in Britain, but I think Dick's right, most Dipdomites are too poor to go. A nice idea would be a rotating World Dipcon that would rotate among established cons in Europe, Britain, the US, Canada, and Australia. I wouldn't expect to attract a great number of international participants, but for those who are interested it would provide an opportunity to meet Dipdoms around the world. But *don't* send our Dipcon to Britain. It would be very close to skipping it for a year. Less than ten people from the States would go. Larry Peery and Gary Coughlan would be good US coordinators of such an idea (oh yes, Simon too). I still like the idea of one national Dipcon in one place too.

((What's so bad about skipping it for a year? That may have the end result that Dipcon will be more treasured after its absence. There's not a big demand for it at the moment.))

**PETE GAUGHAN:** Well, I'm getting a little worked up about Dipcon. I have a half-finished article for DIP WORLD, but let me pull a few highlights from it:

- \* The decision to hold Dipcon revenues for future Dipcons was made after a *lot* of debate; and in the end, the decision was made to *strengthen* the Dipcon structure by providing better advertising and better prizes.

- \* The one-Dipcon/year idea will "die" *only* if the hobby wants it to. The Charter is as strong and clear as it was ten years ago.

- \* We *have* regional cons, which are doing well. Why does anyone want to expand those at the expense of my only chance to meet a national sample of Dipsters?? If it weren't for Dipcon, I never would have met John Michalski (who lives in the *same region* as I currently do), Ed Henry, Ben Schilling, Terry Tallman, the Corbins, Mike Conner (again, in my region), Bob Olsen, Bob O'Donnell, and Bruce McIntyre.

A note: despite Sacks' comments, the Dipcon committee has *never* ignored a bid. I was the Chairman for two years (admittedly, I did a better job on Seattle than on Fredericksburg, since I was tired of it after one year). In those two years, Robert wrote many times regarding a possible bid and the surrounding requirements—but *he never submitted a bid*. He never even said anything like, "We want Dipcon and here are our dates...." Robert Sacks is a stickler for formality, but he never formally (or informally) offered to host Dip-



con on a specific date and place.

Dipcon in London is possible under the current Charter, but it would be up to the Committee to decide which region it is in (and thereby, when London or other UK cities would be eligible).

If the British hobby seems more uniform than the American (or North American) one, it's because the UK is more homogeneous than the US. Don't compare the UK to the whole US, compare it to the Boston-Washington corridor; both are compact and uniform with minor regional differences.

I always seem to be "clearing things up" in your zeen. I promise I'll quit when everything's clear....

((Well, Pete, if you think the Boston-Washington corridor has only "minor regional differences," I wouldn't suppose you've spent much time there!

((Could you explain what better kind of advertising is planned, and what "better prizes" will be offered? This is the first I've heard of anything like that.))

## Diptax

**RUSS RUSNAK:** I am still completely opposed to anything even remotely resembling a Diptax. I really hope the idea will fade soon. If people keep talking about it, somehow the foolishness might gain some serious momentum rather than talk from a few self-proclaimed hobby important folk.

((Shocking as it may seem, Russ, Diptax is alive and well in a slightly modified form.))

**LARRY PEERY:** I like the idea of each GM collecting it and deciding where it should go as long as it doesn't all go to the same one or two big name services. There are, or ought to be, some smaller services that get a bit of help. Hanson's approach is a good one. Alan Stewart is out of his mind. He's more of an organizationalist than I am. I don't agree with your idea at all. I don't think a hobby custodian should have to underwrite the costs of his service at all.

((And there we have it, Alan Stewart's mind is so easy to read because he's not in it to begin with!

((Custodians underwriting their own services

is the only practical way to do it. Is it fair—probably not. Does it work—yes.))

**JIM BURGESS:** My main problem with the Orphan Service going broke was my financial situation at the time. Essentially, my wife Charlotte, who thinks we're a lot of nuts, was funding the Orphan Service. I stopped making phone calls (back to this in a minute) and cut expenses to a minimum (YVSC being the sole exception, but the publicity turned around the financial problem). I find Dick's position a bit contradictory. He says about Dipcon: "They already donate their time, why ask them to subsidize expenses as well?" and about hobby services: "If the custodian can't afford to run the service out of his own pocket, he should give it to somebody who can." Now I'm the *last* person to favor more organization, but I agree with Dick's first statement more. Obviously, any Diptax is going to be completely voluntary.

At the same time, hobby funding brings responsibility. I try to be as open as possible about sources and dispositions of funds. Twice a year, I publish a summary and deposit a copy of the complete record with the publisher of DW. I've never seen any other custodian do this (with the exception of Larry, perhaps) mainly because I suspect complete records don't exist. I'm not blaming anyone, but for gosh sakes let's keep things informal at the same time. Why push custodians out because they don't feel like being part of a bureaucracy?

Phone calls by USOS: I would like to be put on record as supporting use of the telephone as the primary instrument of gathering information by the Orphan Service. Why you may ask, do I feel this is an issue for discussion in HOL? Well, if Dipdom is going to fund hobby services as I suggest above, then it has a right to some say about how the money is spent. I know the Orphan Service itself is split on the matter, but I don't think the reason why is worth thrashing in public. Instead, I'll just voice my personal opinion. I use the phone as much as I can for two primary reasons. One, it simply gets the job done faster. If you're searching for names and addresses or other information that you need before sending out a letter, then writing someone to get that information delays the primary letter by *at least* a week. Longer, if the person you write to doesn't have the information you need or forgets to write back for a while. More importantly, the Orphan Service always is dealing with games in trouble, where peo-



ple are losing interest. Calling someone puts them (GMs and players both) in a position where it is harder to ignore you. About the only argument (other than \$) is the old saw that if the players won't put forth the effort to get game information and addresses to the Orphan Service we should let the game be abandoned. I don't happen to think that's the right attitude and letters are far too often ignored.

((I don't think I'm being contradictory regarding funding. Dipcon is the only "service" which is capable of funding itself with ordinary income—largely because it actually provides a tangible service. It should do so. To expect it to contribute to the coffers of other services at the expense of its organizers would be unfair to those organizers. Otherwise, the organizers might as well contribute the \$100 or so it costs to organize Dipcon directly to the services and save the effort of arranging Dipcon to serve as middleman.

((I'm not aware of any custodians pushed out by "bureaucracy." Enlighten us please, or are you speculating?

((In the past, funding hasn't brought responsibility but rather the desire to protect the funding for its own sake. This situation has been much improved over the last few years.

((Depositing a copy of your expenses with the pubber of DW isn't any great shakes. Larry is the first decent DW pubber in years, and depositing a copy to a past editor would have been as useful as tossing it into the wind outside your front door.

((I never found phone calls to be all that effective when I was doing orphans. Either I didn't have the number I needed, or my calls were forgotten as soon as I hung up. Or I ended up talking to Scott about other stuff. Really, if it takes an extra month to get a game restarted (during which time it's always possible for the GM to come out again), it takes an extra month. There's little difference between restarting a game four months behind and one six or eight months behind.))

**BOB OLSEN:** Now why would MOD ask anybody for money? To reiterate something I wrote to THE NOT FOR HIRE one time (but which unfortunately turned out illegible...maybe it was for the best...), MOD is not a Hobby Service, but rather a humble publication, nothing more. The whole idea was to be completely independent; accepting money and posturing as a Service seems to me to be assuming an obligation and ceding

some degree of control to others. (It helped, of course, that Woody gets cheap copying; but if the publication hadn't been feasible on its own terms, it wouldn't have been done.) Likewise, not one freebie sample was sent out, and we never asked anybody for a plug; issuing and receiving demands for egoboo was something we weren't interested in, nor does anybody pretend that all must bow down before MOD as a Sacred Hobby Patriotic Duty. The publication has made its humble way entirely on its own merits, if any, and is as it was intended to be: unbought, and unbossed. I like it that way.

((Ah, a "service" after my own heart!))

## Ethics

**BRUCE LINSEY:** Thanks for presenting my side of the "struck out totally with SUPERNOVA" business. I didn't think my response was excessive under the circumstances, but tastes vary. As it turns out, the point is a moot one anyway. I've recently agreed to distribute Scott Hanson's game opening lists with SUPERNOVA, so if you're on that, you're in.

((I don't know whether I am or not.))

**MARK BERCH:** In response to your question, yes, if you actually wanted to reply to comments I made about you in DD, of course I would print it. I can't conceive of how such a reply could run to 15 pages, but if it does, it does. No, I'm not going to abdicate my "responsibility to provide an interesting zeen"—any more than I'd abdicate my responsibility to let you reply. In 15 pages, I'm sure you'd provide some entertaining reading. If not, there's the rest of the issue.

You asked, "For instance, the endless back-and-forth between you and Langley in THE NOT FOR HIRE (over "stolen" mutual sub fees, I think) was not only hopelessly tedious, I still couldn't figure out what the true story was when it was all over. You both looked bad, and to what end?" The "end," from Steve's point of view, you'd have to ask him. The purpose, from my point of view, was to rebut Steve's oft repeated charge that I was a thief. This consisted of my pointing out several errors in Steve's account (some of which he admitted) and his preparing fresh scenarios for me to rebut. Incidentally, I don't agree with your description of it as



"endless." What it came down to was Steve's insisting that on the cover of a certain MAGUS there was a note, if he was "telling the truth." I produced xeroxes to show there was no such note; he countered with a fresh allegation that I was "deliberately attempting to manufacture misleading evidence." I replied that I would bring the originals to Dipcon, and anyone could inspect them. (No one did.) Thus, while you say, "I still couldn't figure out what the true story was," had you come to Dipcon and inspected the originals, you could have. But beyond that, it was simply a matter of my word—that the xerox was accurate, versus Steve's word—that the xerox was not.

You ask, "Suppose the reply thoroughly mixes response to X with accusations about Y...." The right of reply covers only that—the right to reply about what was said about oneself. It does not include the right to air new accusations, even if the writer believes they are related. If I got such a letter and was unwilling to run it (which, incidentally, has never happened to me), I would send it back. I would point out specifically what the problem was and ask him either to withdraw the letter, or to edit out the offending material. If he was unwilling to do this, I would edit it myself—unless he told me that I was not to edit the letter, in which case, it wouldn't be run. In short, I have an obligation to let him reply, but no more than that. If he doesn't provide such a letter, or doesn't permit me to edit the letter down to that, then he's waived his rights.

((In other words, if someone is put on the defensive by something you print, he has no right to expect anything but to remain on the defense through countless rounds of replies?

((While proving that Steve was incorrect to call you a thief, you admitted to stealing (he simply had the wrong instance). What did you accomplish by this?

((I was at Dipcon, running the Dip tourney, you may recall. Did you announce your offer of inspection to those present? Or even those who might have been even vaguely interested?))

## Filing Systems

**PETER SULLIVAN:** My address list is kept on computer, although I keep a manual file as well, as a back up. I put the date on each file every time I update to make sure that the two lists are the same. It seems like unnecessary duplication of effort, but in reality, I find both files useful—the

computer one for running off address labels, the manual file for looking up someone's address to send a quick note off about something.

The whole question of computer address lists has been put into question by a new law in this country—the Data Protection Act. This states that anyone keeping information about other people on a computer (card files aren't covered) has to pay a £30 registration fee and stay within a certain code of conduct. It's not yet clear whether this applies to such things as zeen address lists—some editors have been trying to cover themselves by saying, "If anyone objects to me keeping their address on computer, I will refund their sub." Me, I take the view that if they can't trust me not to misuse their address, how can they possibly trust me to GM their Diplomacy games?

((What kind of unenforceable law is that? I can't believe that you even concern yourselves with a law like the Data Protection Act!

((I keep a printout of my latest listing along with the electronic version, though I rarely use the paper version any more.))

**LARRY PEERY:** No, it isn't so bad making the copies as deciding what to file them under and where. Actually the way we work it is based on the system that the Durants used for their writing. Mike handles the books, money files, sub lists, etc on the computer. That's against one wall. I sit on the other side of the room, facing him (he has his back to me, facing the wall) so I can see what he's doing, make corrections, answer questions, etc. In front of me is the typewriter which is where I do most of my work. Scattered around the living room/dining room are boxes and trays of papers and materials. The garage is filled with more junk. The problem is where are we going to put the ham radio setup? That's the latest gizmo we've got. Just think, soon Dippy will have its own radio station. Urgh....

((Aw, you make poor Mike sit in the corner! I would think that with the way you write letters your paper situation should reach critical mass any day now.))

## Finding New Subbers

**KEN PEEL:** As I think you know, I have been working for some weeks now on putting together a game store flyer for postal Diplomacy,



first with the advice of Simon Billenness who spearheaded a similar effort in Britain, and more recently with the help of Bruce Linsey, who found out about the effort from Simon and wrote me with some suggested text for the flyer. Bruce's suggestions were very good, and by and large the text of the draft flyer is based on what he sent me.

So now that we have a draft flyer, it is just sitting there in my Mac, electrons bouncing around in excitement, and it seems to me that it's about time to go with this thing.

So, you wonder, just what is a game store flyer? I hope you will print the draft, which will explain a lot. The idea is to find a local dipster in as many metropolitan areas as possible—and no city that has at least one game store is too small—who will take a batch of flyers out to their local game stores, post one on the bulletin board, and ask the proprietor if he or she would be willing to make them available at the checkout counter.

The second role of the local contact would be to act as, well, the local contact listed at the bottom of the flyer. I think this is a very important aspect of the flyer. From my experiences with the WAR-THOG flyer (which we have in two or three Washington area stores), I have found that people are far more likely to call than to write as that first contact. I doubt that the flyers would generate a burdensome quantity of calls, and having a real live body to talk to and answer a potential novice's questions might make a big difference in the amount of response we get.

So, consider this the official announcement of the game store flyer. To make it work, however, we need people (lots of 'em!) who can drop the stuff by their local stores. It will take very little time, and the impact may be substantial. For instance, when Simon Billenness was doing the same thing, he figures that before he was done maybe 200 novices came in through the flyer. Let's do it, eh?

((Glad to help, and this sounds like a good idea.

((I'm not really hot on phone calls as a method of contact, though. For some reason, the phoners are usually the first ones to drop out of their games. They don't have the temperament to write enough to make their positions worth playing, and don't have the patience to stick out a two year long game.))

**PETER SULLIVAN:** As for attracting subscribers, I relied almost entirely on plugs in other

zeens to start off with. This was a fairly slow method, but then I wasn't looking for a rapid start, just a steady response at a level I could cope with. My first reviews were all highly favourable, and thus I was able to keep to my circulation targets of 30 by issue 5, and 50 by issue 10. At its peak, my circulation was just under 75; it's lower now as I've not had much in the way of game openings to attract people of late.

The few people I did send samples to were not novices, but big-name old-timers. This was on the grounds that the service I was offering—fast games with some chat—was more reminiscent of zeens in the early days of the British hobby. I had a very high response rate of the few I did write to, but my budget prevented me from doing this on any large scale.

((Over here, many big-name old-timers don't play anymore, they just talk about it. It's the total novices that are eager to play. It's only taken me about four years to rediscover that.))

## GMinG Procedure

**ROBERT SACKS:** To your question as to whether my games have officially been declared irregular, you will have to address your question to the BNC. My impression is that the past BNC has declared all games I have or may ever run irregular. The appeal procedure he set up collapsed after I proved he had lied about not receiving certain documents entered in support of my position, and the new BNC has refused to review the situation. The game chart for the game in question was published in THE ORPHANAGE at the end of August, 1986, including the GMs official statement that the BNC had colluded with a player and otherwise acted improperly, but has not to my knowledge been published in EVERYTHING.

Obviously you are unfamiliar with the NYC mails. A letter from NYC to NYC takes about 10 days. A letter from NYC to NJ can take 5–6 months. One letter from Hinton at the start of this year never arrived at all, but I don't think he believes me. The Post Office routinely returns perfectly good mail with perfectly good addresses as unknown or undeliverable. Local players have no advantage.

((In which case, local players have a decided disadvantage, right?

((I've also been unable to find out whether your games have been declared irregular. Not be-



ing a subber to EVERYTHING makes it difficult, of course. Have you had *any* game endings published recently?))

**RUSS RUSNAK:** Recently I got into a rather heated discussion, you might even call it a shouting match if you were inclined to, regarding the practice of a GM confirming a vote. I believe that a GM should not confirm a person's vote, regardless of the player's wishes. My opponent believes that if a player chooses, a GM should make that player's vote public.

My opponent in the discussion believed that since a player's vote is part of his orders and the GM publishes orders, it is perfectly all right for a GM to confirm a player's vote. Another big reason in favor of the practice was because it has been and is common among a large number of well-respected GMs around the hobby.

I believe that a GM should not confirm a player's vote, regardless of what the player wants. I believe that votes are a part of negotiations between players. Individual vote promises, as well as negotiations in general, may be true or false depending on the player's inclination. In short, votes are a part of negotiations, and a GM has no part in those. I feel that a GM confirming a person's vote because that person requested it is the same as a GM stepping in and vouching for a player. This definitely seems to be the equivalent of GM interference. If a GM will vouch for a player's vote because the player asks, it seems that he should also tell a player's moves to an ally while phone orders are being submitted because the player has requested that his ally be notified in order to build a stronger bond of trust.

The idea that since the vote is part of the orders it should be published is foolish. (I knew it was foolish during the argument. Unfortunately, I couldn't figure out how to phrase why.) If votes are a part of orders and should be published, why should it make any difference what a player requests? According to that line of logic, all votes should either be published or not published. A player request should have no influence whatsoever. It really bothers me to see a large number of GMs state that votes are secret, yet turn around and ignore this rule at a player's request. It seems as though they are ignoring their own houserules.

The other argument about the fact that it is common, therefore it is right, is also a farce. History is full of things that were common, but also wrong. Examples would be the common belief that the world is flat, the common belief that hu-

man sacrifices would bring better harvests, or the belief that F Por-Spa(NC) and F Spa(SC)-Por is a valid move. While the people that believed these things were wrong, they were not unethical. The reason I bring up the unethical bit is simply because the person I was arguing with stated that since I thought all these GMs were wrong, I was accusing them of being unethical. I wasn't, I was just stating that they were wrong.

Considering the fact that you had a ringside seat to the discussion, you are more than welcome to make your own comments. Also, when you consider this is your show, you have probably already figured that out. I would really be interested in seeing what others have to say in that matter. While I realize that I am in the minority, I think this is one case where the majority is wrong.

((As Julie and I remember it, you called it GM interference and ignoring houserules, both considered unethical.

((Why does this have to be a question of right or wrong? As I told you at the time, I either reveal no votes (in my old games) or all votes (in my new games). I changed because I feel the new way is closer to the way face to face games are played, and that's my goal as a GM: to play a FTF game by mail. Really, this seems to be a perfect gray area for each GM to decide as they please. You state good arguments for both sides, why not allow for a little diversity in Dipdom? If we all ran games the exact same way, it'd be great...if you happened to like that style of GMing.

((Uh-oh, what's that you say about human sacrifices?))

**BRUCE LINSEY:** Robert Sacks's games are variants. A GM should not just call on a volunteer to submit orders without giving the other players a chance to negotiate with whoever is going to be coming into the game. Robert's use of this practice indicates purely and simply that he doesn't recognize the underlying point of the game: that all orders should be subjected to the persuasive influence of the other players. The standby policy he uses makes his games gunboat, in part. I consider myself reasonably tolerant of diverse GMing procedures (*mine* were certainly different), but if I'm the BNC, those games don't get Boardman Numbers.

I also disagree with Robert's policy of not calling standbys for "isolated" one-or-two-center powers, though that is far less serious than the other matter. Even a tiny power can swing the



balance of the game through skillful tactics and negotiation. And just as importantly, other players should have the opportunity to try and influence the actions of those units. This is impossible if there isn't a player controlling them.

((Well, it is a good thing you're reasonably tolerant (as opposed to being unreasonably tolerant).))

((There are quite a few games you would be declaring irregular, that you don't seem to take into account. Those with "neutral moves" for S01 NMRs, for instance. Or all the LIBERTERREAN games run with "phantom" standby orders. Or that use "general orders." Or that use the Berch-proposed "automatic pilot" orders. Or 81IB. Or other GMs that have called (and still call, rarely) for anonymous standbys. And how about no-standby games?

((And nothing, of course, prevents the potential standby from writing to the players already in the game.))

**ANDY LISCHETT:** Robert Sacks' standby policy described in last issue (letting people submit standby orders for any position needing them) has a drawback not mentioned. If Mr A NMRs, Mr B can easily ask his non-Dip-type friend Mr C to submit orders for the NMRed position. If I played under those rules, as soon as I'd joined a game, I'd buy a subscription for a friend who couldn't care less, and have him submit *my* orders every chance I got (and I would feel no remorse).

If Robert were to drop that method and just assign standbys, he could get two of the advantages he mentioned (no GM favoritism and no chance of calling one person for different countries during the game) by calling the first eligible standby on the list, noting the position he's called for, and then putting him on the bottom of the list.

I also think it is wrong for a GM to determine that a one- or two-center position is not worth a standby, but some zeens have a shortage of standbys.

((You could work the same sort of deal with a third party in any sort of game, if you wanted. What would keep you from getting your friend a position in your game from the very start, for instance? Why bother to wait for another player to NMR, when by then it may be too late? Hey, it's a game, and there are plenty of loopholes if you want to win badly enough to cheat yourself of the competition afforded by live opponents. Why

stop at one friend? Get six and win in record time!

((This seems like another one of those gray areas, like revealing votes, where GM diversity is particularly suitable. No solution is perfect. Calling one specific standby runs the risk of of both the original player and the standby NMRing—all too common. Open standby calls run the risk of not getting volunteers for the trashier positions, and not knowing who to write to.

((Having won a game as one of those "inconsequential standbys" I cast my vote against civil disorder as a permanent condition for any power, big or small.))

## Out Of Dipdom Experiences

**ANDY LISCHETT:** I also discovered postal Diplomacy through the flyer. I joined a game in an awful zeen named ATLANTIS which came out every two to four months if we were lucky. I struggled through some other slow zeens like ZEPPELIN and THE LONER, but eventually found some good ones.

**KEVIN TIGHE:** My dormmates and I first played Dip off of a visiting friend's board. He left us a map so we could make our own board and pieces. A year later, the gaming group broke up, and I thought about doing a postal game with everyone. I sent away for a rulebook and a few maps. Well, my plan never worked out, but AH included The Flyer along with the rulebook. I wrote to Jones at DIP WORLD, he sent me a game openings list, and I was on my way. Well, my first game never even started when the zeen folded a month after I subbed, but I then found APPALLING GREED, started a game as Germany, got eliminated by 03, and *then* I was on my way.

((Hmmm. Are *you* claiming to have invented postal Dip too?))

## Polls

**BRUCE LINSEY:** Without going back and checking, Dick, I'd guess you're wrong in speculating that a single person has accounted for a shift of ten positions in the Runestone standings since I've been running the Poll. With over 200 voters each year, such an effect is extremely improbable. However, I may just go back and check to satisfy



your curiosity (and mine). Keep in mind that even someone were to vote a highly-regarded zeen low and all other main list zeens higher (your worst possible case), that would affect its preference matchups only where there'd been a tie or a victory by one vote anyway. As for two or three people "voting in concert"; yes, any group of people acting together could influence the standings more than one person could, but I have no reason to believe that anything of this sort has occurred. The Poll's purpose is to give each *individual* in the hobby a chance to express his opinions, and I'm not aware that anyone has used it for other than that.

Of course it's possible that one person's ballot influenced the results quite heavily before I was running the Poll. In its first year, for instance, only 19 people voted. But obviously I have no way to check on this.

As for people who boycott the whole thing, I don't think that this group is large enough to have all that great an impact on the results. Quick, how many boycotters can you think of offhand—people that aren't voting just because I'm the pollster? Fifteen or so? Maybe. Some of the 85 boycotters came around in 86; there are probably a dozen people in the hobby who hate my guts so violently that they'll automatically boycott anything I run. There's nothing I can do about that, but even if *two* dozen people boycott, this is far more than offset by the droves of new people voting now who never voted before, thanks to all the publicity the Poll has gotten in the past two years. My main gripe, then, is not that the boycott is seriously skewing the results (it isn't), but that the people bitching about the Poll not being representative are by and large the ones who are boycotting. The sheer hypocrisy of this complaint astonishes me.

John Caruso says that "if a pollster goes out and calls and write his friends to vote, but doesn't do the same for 'Joe Average,' this is where the poll is inaccurate." Agreed, of course, but this does not refer to my handling of the Runestone Poll. I have attempted to make the ballot available to *all* hobbyists (pretty successfully, thanks to cooperation from a lot of publishers), and even those people I contacted directly (by phone and letter in 85, by letter only in 86) weren't limited to my personal friends. That this even approached being true is a myth. I mean, I sent out over 400 ballots last year—if Caruso or anyone else thinks I have *that* many friends, I'm flattered!

In any event, I'll continue working for a high

voting turnout, and obviously I'll always encourage everyone to get out and vote. How representative a poll we have will depend on how large a fraction of the hobby votes. I'll be more than happy if I can hit 200 ballots again in 87. (Keep in mind that the Poll never even had 140 ballots before 1985.)

You are correct when you tell Dave McCrumb that discarding a zero does affect a modified mean. Since an extremely low (or high) vote affects a modified mean score only slightly (as compared to its effect on the mean), discarding it only has a small effect too, but it is measurable.

Just for your info, Dick—not that I think you really much care—I plan to vote HOL a 10 in the 87 poll if you continue putting out this much good stuff on a regular basis. You're welcome.

((You're right, I really don't care.

((The "boycotters" are the kind of people who vote for 20 or more zeens, though, and that would have a *drastic* effect on the final results, since the preference matrix essentially is the poll. To shrug off ten percent of the population (twenty percent of the old high) as insignificant is painting a rather rosy picture, isn't it. If ten percent of the US voters, all Republicans, didn't vote in our last presidential election, the landslide would have fallen in the other direction!

((While it's not generally assumed that the *only* people who got phone calls for votes were your friends, how many of your friends that didn't vote didn't at least get a letter?))

## Publisher's Handbook

**BRUCE LINSEY:** Your review of ONCE UPON A DEADLINE brought up a number of good points. I hadn't thought of including articles on finding new bodies or on maps; it would certainly be nice to put those in the next revision. Would you like to write either (or both) of them? If not, maybe someone out there in the HOL audience will want to do it—write me directly and let me know. No rush: it's going to be several months yet.

There *is* some discussion of DIAS, though it's not a full-blown article. Check out the von Metzke houserules forum. If the general feeling is that the topic should be covered in more depth, we can work on that. In fact, you're probably a good choice to write part of that discussion too, Dick, since you're one of the very few GMs who use DIAS. Maybe you and some GM with the oppo-



site stance would be able to come up with a dialogue debating the pros and cons of DIAS games?

GMs Helper: Sure, I'll be glad to run it, though I'd include it in the body of the handbook instead of as an insert. It's your baby, Dick, so would you write up a short blurb on how it's used or whatever text you think should accompany it?

We disagree on how much the "Modes of Zeen Production" section can be condensed. I did edit Hinton's offset article quite a bit—it was too long—but the section is about as I want it right now. But I do agree that Wallace Nicoll's stuff in the graphics section needs editing and retyping. I'll have to work on that.

As for the early introductory articles being too negative overall, I knew this when I was putting the thing together and tried to get permission to include Pete Gaughan's excellent (and enthusiastic) "Publish...It's Good For You!" article to balance some of this out. However, Pete felt that the piece needed work, and has since agreed that he can have it ready for OUAD's revision. That will help somewhat. However, I'm not going to remove the cautionary material either; I think it's important for publishers—to-be to think about the next couple of years before getting started. Six months is hardly time to complete a game even on fast deadlines, and the hobby doesn't exactly need more batches of orphans from publishers who decide too late that GMing isn't their bag.

I have a higher opinion of some of the articles than you do. The von Metzke item on press and Steve Knight's material are, I think, exceptionally well done. And while there are a few pieces of "gravel" in the handbook, I certainly don't think they dominate it. But then, that's purely a matter of taste.

One other comment, this one in reply to Scott Hanson. It is true that OUAD reflects to a great degree my (somewhat unusual) views of GMing. But it also gets heavily into Mike Barno's view of GMing...and Mark Berch's...and Paul Gardner's...and Doug Beyerlein's...and Randolph Smyth's...and Fred Davis's...and so on. I don't think that it can legitimately be claimed that only my views are presented at length, though it's true that the reader will get a heavy dose. That's understandable, since I put the thing together.

Anyway, I'm paying attention to Dick's comments and everyone else's, and will take all of this into account when I start work on the revision.

One final note in regard to timing. My initial plan was to have the revision ready by next spring. However, spring is the Runestone crunch

(busy season in Dalton, Mass), and I want to take my time, so I'm now thinking of a target date closer to next September or so.

Thanks, Dick, for running this discussion.

((Did you really read my main gripe, that the whole production is too big? If so, why are you asking me to contribute to the problem? Sure, I'll write about a half page article for you—if you cut the total size to less than forty pages.

((You are correct, six months is too short a time to finish even a fast game. However, it's about right for getting the feel of GMing. The problem isn't so much one of being *able* to finish the games, it's *wanting* to finish the games. But it seems easier to find homes for orphans than to start games in the first place, these days.

((For most of my 7+ years of GMing I've never been sure what I'd be doing even six months down the road. However, desire has seldom waned, and I'm still here.))

**JIM BURGESS:** Though Bruce Linsey correctly relates my feeling that OUAD is not oriented to the small publisher (about 80% of the hobby by rough calculation), I want to disassociate myself from his solution. I don't see how one paragraph or even one article is going to deflect the overwhelming massiveness of the work. I even was overwhelmed and it has contributed to my delay in getting out the first issue of my zeen. I hate to say it, but I chucked OUAD in a box and I'm back to winging it. Dick's right and I'm almost sorry my all too stiff article ended up on the last page where everyone can see it.

((Really? Well, that's one vote against—to balance Bruce Geryk, who couldn't have started BLUNT INSTRUMENTS without OUAD. Hopefully, Bruce will tell us what he found so vital in OUAD. (OK, Bruce, that's your cue.)))

## **Fresh Tofutti**

**SIMON BILLENNESS:** I do intend to include ZIAMVIA with each issue of the ZEEN REGISTER, but I really don't have the room or the time to collect the names and addresses of all the novices coming into the hobby. I think I'll just stick to listing people who use the ZR or Zeen Bank, plus any other names Larry Peery has time to type up for me. The advantage ZIAMVIA has over your listing is that it reaches every editor in the hobby. The disadvantage is that ZIM is four—



monthly, whereas yours is more frequent. Besides, I reckon it's an advantage to have more than one new blood listing.

((Blood is OK, meat is not, hmm? By the way, we loved the vegetarian chili.

((How about sending me just a rough copy of what you've got each month or so? That'd be enough for me to go on, and that way we get the best of both worlds, both wide *and* frequent distribution. And we have a chance of getting these novices while they're still novices!))

Nhan Vu, 626 Heather Ave, Placentia, CA 92670  
Ed Brandon IV, 1235 Cumberland Rd, Aurora, IL 60505

Al Morrow, 2475 Village Ct, Aurora, IL 60505  
Henry Rosenthal, 535 Stevenson St, San Francisco, CA 94103

Steve Smith, 1500 W Dempster, #105, Mt Prospect, IL 60056

Tal Seaman, 420 22nd St, Cloquet, MN 55720  
Perry Thompson, 5759 Red River Dr, San Diego, CA 92120

## NEW BUSINESS

### Why?

The most frequently requested topic over the years has been motivation. Just why do we spend hours slaving over hot typewriters, word processors, ditto, mimeo or xerox machines? What is so important about putting out a zeen that we often stay up later than we should, stay inside on beautiful days, and eat cold pizza. I don't know about you, but I *like* cold pizza.

When I started publishing in 1979, it was because there seemed to be a shortage of game openings. Most of the "major" zeens had no openings, and there didn't seem to be that many new zeens to fill the gap. I'd only been playing by mail since 78, and had only seen two different zeens, but GMing seemed easy enough and I figured that it was the least I could do to help—I'd run a game or two of my own to help ease the shortage.

RETAL #1 consisted of a page and a half of outlining how the games would be run, essentially house rules, and didn't even have a name. It existed to run games and little else. I took a bunch to Origins to hand out, but after seeing what "real" zeens looked like got cold feet and didn't give out any. Using the postal service would be easier on my nerves. Somehow we managed to fill a game or two, then a bunch more, and before long RETAL had no openings either. Games remained the primary focus, but it was time to try for something more. I'd always tried to write a "front page article" each issue, featuring some facet of the game. The articles were usually serious in nature, and like all such articles, of dubious value. It took

me over two years to break that habit and switch to free-form ramblings. At the same time, the zeen became a circus, for which I became the ringmaster. That was fun. A *lot* of work, but fun. My objective was to see what heights I could inspire my readers to, whether it was as press writers, game players, article writers or straight flights of fancy. Looking back at some of those old issues, we did just fine.

So over the years RETAL's objective shifted from promoting games and press to seeing how entertaining we could be and on through the mercifully short "BRUTUS BULLETIN replacement" phase and back to being a zeen to play games in (with a slightly smaller emphasis on press this time). Now a recent burst of new faces is pushing us on into the circus phase again. Hopefully the lessons learned the first time through will permit me to avoid a second crash landing with RETAL. I've long since given up trying to direct the zeen, I just try to follow and not get too far behind.

Publishing is fun for me just to see what we can come up with each month. RETAL is a palette which permits me to express myself in writing for the permanent record. Some people write diaries, I do a zeen. Since I like GMing and playing games in general, a dipzeen just seems like the natural thing to do. I've also been doing this for so long that I have no idea how or why I could stop. At times a vacation sounds like a good idea, but only for a short while. Putting out a zeen and entertaining my players is just too much fun to



consider quitting.

HOUSE OF LORDS is a slightly different story. As some of you may know, the idea for this zeen came from a failed Canadian zeen, PEERLESS (see? I told you those Canadians were arrogant and wear funny hats!) by Bill LaFosse. It was a good idea that just didn't quite pan out, and that I would have liked to have seen succeed. Eventually I figured that if there was going to be a successful zeen for and about publishing, I'd have to do it myself. So I started HOL because it seemed like an interesting and useful thing to do, and I knew I could do it right. Our first run, despite the wave of negative propaganda which capsized it, turned out well.

Now that the bad feelings have largely subsided, we're back again. Hey, I still think it's an interesting concept that has some life left, and you guys are every bit as perceptive as the pubbers were who contributed to the "first edition." HOL will exist until such time as it seems to have run out of interesting things to cover and contributors interested in voicing opinions. That's one reason I'm so harsh on deadwood here. If you have nothing interesting to say, we must not be saying anything interesting to comment on. Deadwood is my barometer on the quality of the zeen.

These days I run HOL as a way to provide some cohesion for a fragmented Dipdom, and provide a permanent public storehouse for ideas. That's why I'm happy to see stuff like the Diptax, or the game store flyer, or a foreign Dipcon talked about here. Even if the original idea doesn't catch on, somebody can build on it and come up with something different years down the line. And it really is nice to hear that some folks pick up little

tips on how to make their zeens and games run a little better, just by talking about the way we do things ourselves. The difference between doing an adequate job and a really superb job is often just a dash of imagination. If HOL helps spark your imagination and get you thinking, that's what we're here for.

Well, that's enough from me on that for now. I know each of you has your own particular reason for publishing. We're all eager to find out what they are, so let's hear 'em. Excuses for not writing will not be accepted! If I can write a long page of semi-random thoughts on why I publish, certainly you can come up with just a little something, eh?

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We're still holding over a little bit of stuff for next issue that just didn't fit this time. Stay tuned for more exciting twists and turns.

In late breaking news, Avalon Hill has decided to include a PBM flyer in the next run of Diplomacy sets. Yay! Now if only they'd bring back the wooden blocks....

If you have any further ideas on the game store flyer (of which a draft copy should be enclosed with this issue), either write to Ken Peel (8708 First Ave, #T-2, Silver Spring, MD, 20910, (301) 495-2799) or me (and you already know my address). Either way it'll end up in the right place, as Ken and I are *really* the same person. See, you learn something new every day!

Take off until next time, you hosers!

Dick Martin  
26 Orchard Way North  
Rockville, MD 20854-6128