

HOUSE OF LORDS #20

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 of the day, and an 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.

"I try to avoid feuding because I never remember how to spell it."

- Andy Lischett

"**OPERABLE** is the last straw. Who cares how Bruce reviewed zeens six years ago? I'm simply not interested in watching you and Mark Berch takes pages and pages just to knock each other's reputation down another millimeter."

- Simon Billenness

"When I first received my copy of *House of Lords*, I was appalled by the slander, bold face lies, whining, and yellow journalism. I haven't seen many zeens that can even hold a candle to these vicious attacks on esteemed publishers, players, and general dip riffraff. So please accept my check for renewal. As for your special offer, I already have an 8x10 glossy of a dip polluter engaging in sexual acts which are illegal in all States except for San Francisco. But I will take that poster size blowup of Melinda Holley riding a mule in the nude. I'm curious to find out what a nude mule looks like."

- Richard Wheat

Yes, François, we find your invention of the "quotes about the zeen" section of *Passchendaele* to be extremely original. Certainly nobody else could come up with such a brilliant idea. Keep up the fine work.

You can get this zeen one of three ways. First of all, by sending me one American Dollar per issue. Second, by trading publications with me. Third, if you don't pub, but get some interesting zeens which I don't get, I may be willing to trade for a few issues of those. Make me an offer.

I also expect a fair amount of participation from all of you out there. This zeen sinks or swims on the basis of your contributions. Yes, we spell it "zeen."

Your editor for this evening is Dick Martin, 17601 Lisa Dr, Rockville, MD 20855-1319.

Each subheading has at one time been the subject of a New Business "feature." That's how we choose topics, more or less. If you'd like to see a particular topic discussed, just write a couple paragraphs worth of your opinions on the subject to get the ball rolling and we'll go with it.

announcements

services

Don Williams (1521 West Ave, J-8, #163, Lancaster, CA 93534) is the new BNC, taking over from Steve Heinowski. Don is on the lookout for a good accountant—any volunteers from the crowd? As his final act in office, Heinowski promises not to bind his predecessors to the idea of separate BNs for Canadian games. I think that's very thoughtful.

Ken Peel has transferred the *Zeen Register*/Zeen Bank to Tom Nash (5512 Pilgrim Rd, Baltimore, MD 21214). Any further inquiries should go to Tom.

Brad Wilson (PO Box 126, Wayne, PA 19087) and Michael Hopcroft (2190 West Burnside, #108, Portland, OR 97210) are now doing the *KGO Zeen Directory*. A new one should be out about any day now? Hey, I don't know.

Last but not least in transfer news, yes, it's true, the coup has succeeded, the fair Julie has been ousted as *HoL* editor, to be replaced once again by the evile, ugly, horrendous...me. Yeah, good luck to you too.

Cal White just wants to set the record straight on the slate of current CDO officers (elected):
 Doug Acheson, 95 Dundonald St, Barrie, Ontario L4M 3T4 (Co-ordinator)
 Randy Grigsby, 93 St Vincent St, RR#3, Barrie, Ontario L4M 4S5 (Committeeman)
 Cal White, 26 Emerson Ave, Toronto, Ontario M6H 3S8 (Committeeman)
 So, what do these guys do, anyway? See next item...

old zeens

Declared Dead by CDO: *Praxis, Lord of the Boards*. Interestingly, *Praxis* showed up not long after the announcement. Perhaps this was a mere "ghost" issue?

Simon Billenness has decided to fold *Excitement City Unlimited*. Simon had lost interest in publishing long ago, and finally decided that formally folding was the right thing to do.

Prisoners of War is duly noted here as the prettiest zeen we have ever received. Every single issue is a pleasure to look at, the graphics are nice, the writing is good, and it's definitely worth a look. What the heck, send Wallace Nicoll (48 Broughton Rd, Broughton, Edinburgh, EH7 4EE, UK) a sample of your zeen and ask if he might send you a *PoW*.

new zeens

What was announced last issue as "Americanized United" by Bernard Beary (1196 Normandy Rd, Macon, GA 31210), is really going by the name *Mad Dog* (only in polite company, though).

Maniac's Paradise, Douglas Kent (54 West Cherry St, #211, Rahway, NJ 07065) openings in Dip, Gunboat, Stock Market Game, maybe more. No game fees, just \$9 per year. Monthly zeen.

Down At The Mouth, Vince Lutterbie (1021 Stonehaven, Marshall, MO 65340) gunboat variant, Downfall VII. And that's about all I know.

Moonlighting, from Andy Bate, Richard Egan, and Richard Jackson (10 Stanshalls Drive, Felton, Bristol BS18 7UW) is a six-weekly zeen dedicated to the publication of all variant-related service information: Miller Numbers, Variants Openings Survey, UKVB information, variant statistics and news for the UK. Send subscription and trade inquiries to Richard. These guys seem to have a properly irreverent attitude.

Have You Heard, from John Caruso, is the newest in the roving subzeen world. We have the honor of publishing his debut issue this time. Sure, it's a little dated...

conventions

And in convention news, it's CanCon 89, August 4-6 at University of Toronto Scarborough Campus. Write Doug Acheson (95 Dundonald St, Barrie, Ont L4M 3T4) for details.

(World?!) Dipcon XXII will be held somewhere near San Diego, CA on the weekend of July 28-30. Maybe you should write Larry Peery, Chairman of the Dipcon Administrative Committee (PO Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102, USA) for all the gory details. Or phone him at (619) 582-2904. If you're interested in attending, he'll be happy to talk to you any time of night or day. And remember to use the secret code phrase: "Long Live the Feud!" to get that extra special discount.

miscellany

For Sale: From John Caruso (636 Astor St, Norristown, PA 19401 (215) 272-1678), Gettysburg, Airforce, War At Sea, D Day, PanzerBlitz (with errata, gamers guide, and PBM sheets), PanzerLeader, Kriegspiel (with extra maps), WWII (SPI), Seelowe, UFO, Frederick the Great (pouch), Conflict (original—metal pieces), Stratego (original—wooden pieces), Othello, APBA Horse Races, Across The Board (also horse racing). Contact to discuss prices or for more info. Flexible with price. They are all pretty much in good shape and are not used. They are just accumulating dust.

[What do you think we are, a flea market? Go! And take your fleas with you!]

the concept

(MARK LEW) rod walker's tolkien *dramatis personæ* in *hol#18* (which includes obscure characters like dain ii and lotho sacksville-baggins, but omits eomer and galadriel) reminds me of something david perlmutter did a few years ago, equating hobby members with members of the soviet communist party. i'll send a copy if i can find it—i think it was in *irksome*. i was sergei kirov, the stalin lieutenant whose mysterious murder is now presumed to have been the work of stalin himself. in perlmutter's version, uncle joe was michalski, i think.

how about a new department for such lists? some pubber (i think it was dick) once asked for comparisons of hobby members to titan creatures, and i tried my hand at that. maybe i'll start the ball rolling with dune, but i can't decide whether to make brux the atreides or the harkonnens...

okay, here's the dune list:

duke leto atreides—dick martin
 lady jessica atreides—julie martin
 paul atreides—kathy caruso
 thufir hawat—brad wilson
 duncan idaho—john caruso
 gurney halleck—bob olsen
 reverence mother gaius helen mohiam—rod walker
 imperial planetologist liet-kynes—melinda holley
 baron vladimir harkonnen—bruce linsey
 piter de vries—mark berch
 dr wellington yueh—jack masters
 count glossu "beast" rabban—françois cuerrier
 feyd-rautha harkonnen—chris carrier
 emperor shaddam iv—john michalski
 princess irulan—gary coughlan
 count hasimir fenring—mark lew
 margot lady fenring—scott hanson
 stilgar—steve langley
 chani—don williams
 jamis—don del grande
 alia atreides—robert sacks

by the way, i don't presume to tell you or other pubbers what to put in your zeens, but my preference is that my letters not be printed in all lower-case.

[Not bad, Mark, though I would prefer to be Leto II. And sure, lists like these can be both fun and informative.]

{Markie, I know you've said you don't want to be the "e e cummings" of Dipdom, but as I've told

you before: I like seeing your letters in miniscule only—it makes them stand out from the rest of the zeen. It's an old habit of mine to look for a letter from you first. I think it's wasteful of you to throw away such a distinctive stylistic trademark—they aren't easily cultivated, you know. Like a nickname in *KK*—some people will give up every shred of dignity to have one.}

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Michael Hopcroft reminds us that "publishing problems and experiences" are good grist for our mill, so let me throw out a few observations for anyone's comment. First, I heartily approve of what Michael cites as Audrey SF Jaxon's limited-time-trade policy because it not only removes some of the sting involved in yanking away a trade (pubbers have such fragile egos), it also makes life far easier for one trader in case of the other's messy fold. If I published a zeen, I'd adopt Audrey's idea.

Second, in response to Michael's problem with being billed for back issues he didn't ask for, I'd just ask Mike why he paid the bill! The extra issues were the pubber's mistake, and he should swallow the costs for them. Of course, a recipient of such extra issues should write/call and ask the pubber—as I have—"Why am I getting this? I've never sent you money!" It's perfectly all right for a zeen recipient to take advantage of a pubber's generosity (in sending issues beyond a sub's expiration, conducting a "double trade" with a zeen and subzeen as some have with us, or sending several samples for free). It's also fine for a recipient to benefit from a pubber's mistake in sending issues to someone not on the sub or trade list for that zeen. But, at the same time, I think it's up to the recipient to thank the pubber for generosity or question him/her about a potential mistake. After all, you never know when you'll end up in a Dip game together....

Third, I'd like to thank those novice pubbers out there who have sent me a cover letter with the first sample of your zeen. It's a classy touch and inspires confidence in the pubber's professionalism and reliability, even if the letter isn't very long. Even if Bruce Geryk *did* do the same thing with our copy of the first *BI*!

Fourth, I have a suggestion for all pubbers: If you find your zeen is going to be unavoidably delayed, why not send a quick note out to the subscribership letting them know that (and maybe even why, so readers won't be calling to bug you if you're on a two-month Alpine vacation or collapsed in bed with the flu)? Obviously, I'm talking about substantial delays here, not just a day

or two. Sometimes, when we haven't gotten one of our zeens in a while, we have been completely at a loss, not knowing if the pubber folded, died, or became a victim of the Postal Service! I think such a note would be vastly appreciated, considering what recently appeared in my mailbox: a very nice note from Melinda Holley explaining that *Rebel* would be late because she had been ill—followed about a day later by a *HI* subscribers note asking why the zeen hadn't come out! And all this happened, mind you, less than a week after *Rebel* was due....

To address George Mann's questions about feuding: You're going to get as many answers on whether it will "improve the hobby" or "discourage newcomers" as there are hobbyists! Just look at the last issue of *HoL*: Do you really think that Derwood Bowen and Ken Peel will give you the same answers to these questions as Robert Sacks and Brad Wilson? As for what would happen if there were no more feuds, I think hobbyists would have to actually write about (*gasp!*) gaming or current events or their own lives instead of Linsey and Berch and the Bad Boys. Those who found such topics boring or objectionable would leave the hobby. Those who stayed in the hobby would do what hobbyists have always done during lulls in the feud. And you don't need to speculate on what Chris Carrier would do under these circumstances, because he admitted a long time ago that the last lull in the feuding nearly drove him out of Dipdom!

I notice your "voice of the brackets" is mostly missing from *HoL* #19. Is that because of what Ken Peel wrote you, or just because you've been too busy to write much? I know there are times when, with my eye on the clock, I churn out *HI* or our game adjudications without many of my own comments because I can't afford to slow the process down.

(STEVE LANGLEY) I missed your responses—the best part of *HoL* is the editor's notes.

(DAVID HOOD) Oh, please go back to including your remarks in the zeen. I think that makes the discussion much more interesting.

[Gee, wonder if you'll feel the same way now that it's me back in the brackets again.]

(LARRY PEERY) I waded through *HoL*#19, and I have to say it was the first issue I found boring. I'm not sure why, but perhaps it was because I got the feeling that so much space was

being wasted on so many trivialities.

I'm really sick of reading about Linsey and some of these topics. I just skim over it. It's the same old bullshit over and over and over. And there is so much that needs to be done if we are going to keep our status as a hobby alive and viable.

I'm hoping for a good turnout at Dipcon this year because I want to sit down and talk about some of these things. I don't want it down on paper, and I want people to be able to speak their minds freely. I also want some input on what should be done with the Archives, etc.

[Exactly where will Dipcon be held this year, anyway? I've heard of dedication before, but you're the only person I know who's actually bought a house so he could hold a con....

[Yes, Linsey has become exceedingly tedious over the years. Don't think you'll get much disagreement there from anyone. So why don't you surprise us all with another one of your classic brainstorms? After all, we were able to milk the diptax idea for years—you're due for another masterstroke.

[You're bored to death by all these topics, yet you'd love to have the whole gang come over so you can talk about them? Larry, you never cease to amaze me.]

(JOHN CARUSO) If David Munzenmaier HMC* wishes to drop the * (which presumably means without sanction), he should sign the covenant. Then he could be DM HMC-UC and be sanctioned and recognized! (as a full-fledged freak)

Ken Peel is flat out wrong with one assumption. I didn't bring up the comparison between myself and Linsey regarding playing the game of Dip. That was Linda Courtemanche. I pointed out her "flawed" opinion of our past *vis a vis* present association in Dip, along with his numbers compared to mine. That is all. My point—to compare his past and his non-playing present with mine—is like comparing roller skates to a dune buggy. Or like comparing glass to diamonds. A person who only played in a handful of games was never really a player to begin with.

I did miss your bracketed comments, Julie, but I did find this issue of *HoL* the best to date. So a quandary. Do you add your comments and spice things up—or leave them out? I say put in a couple. Pretty please?

[I'm hoping someday we can get Run-DMC as HMC-UC. Munz has been pretty slack lately. He

may be removed from office for non-performance at any time.]

(DON DEL GRANDE) *Warning!* There is a fourth way to receive *HoL*; pay someone who receives it \$2 per issue for their issues. This is what Chris Carrier has offered in *The MegaDiplomat*. Between the “abortion contest” and the “poll of the poll,” he’s not leaning one way or the other, is he?

I think there’s too much panic over the Hinton “Opponents Wanted” ad in *The General*. I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if that ad was submitted three or four months before the issue arrived in mailboxes.

Why all the talk about hobby members who aren’t in a lot of games? I can barely remember the last Dip game I was in; it was a press game in *Erewhon*. The only game I am in right now is a “Multimind” game (three simultaneous Mastermind games) in the British *Mad Policy*.

Issue 13 of *Retaliation* (the last issue with that title—although issues since then have included the word in their titles) was dated “Special Flag Day Issue” (June 14) and mentioned something about “putting out an issue on (Dick’s) birthday,” so I figured that Dick’s birthday was on June 14.

[Certainly you can do better than \$2 an issue. Hold out until the price hits \$4, then sell sell sell.

[You underestimate the power of those “Opponents Wanted” ads - I got no less than thirty players from them, some over a year after the last ad ran. If AH can’t be bothered to protect its readers (and itself) from the likes of Elmer though, that’s their problem. Remember, those folks will only remember what a dud the *General* ads are, not how bad dipdom is (not having been exposed to dipdom *per se*).

[Nope, my birthday’s not the 14th. Close, though.]

(MARK NELSON) A subber (player) who starts up a new zeen and offers to trade? Whilst new zeens are always welcomed, I am always a little nervous about such zeens, basically for the reasons that Michael gives. I normally offer to sub whilst the new editor still has credit with me; when his credit runs out, I’ll offer to trade if I like what I see or I may sub, or I won’t do anything. Somebody once tried to blackmail me into trading with him! He joined a game in *The Yorkshire Gallant* and then started a new zeen, telling me that if I didn’t trade, he would drop out of the game. I told him what he could do with his trade; he folded soon afterwards. Hence my reasons for feeling

nervous.

As for Michael’s problems with François Cuerrier, this is an excellent example of how a novice publisher should not act. All that was required was a calm letter sent to François pointing out that there had been a misunderstanding; the matter could then have been discussed amicably in private. Instead, Michael blows his top and tries to get a cheap shot in. A good way to start a feud.

Feuds can be fun, when light-hearted, but serious feuds have no positive aspects. All they do is discourage novices from taking an active role in the hobby. If the figures Ken Peel quotes are accurate, it seems that the UK Hobby overtook the North American Hobby in size during the mid-1980s; given the differences in population across the Atlantic, this is rather striking. But then as I understand it, the mid-1980s were a period when not only was the American Hobby indulging in some heavy feuding, but in addition, there was little publicity outside of Dipdom. Recently you’ve had some great publicity (*ie, The General*), but how many of the new influx will stick it if feuding escalates?

Why not resolve to stop printing the feud material in *HoL*? If Berch/Linsey then stop printing material, you’ll have stopped the feud; if they carry on, then you’ll be able to claim that they are responsible for the current feuding. OK, this is an oversimplification, but perhaps it is worthy of thought...

Seems like you’re starting to attack Mark Berch now that Bruce Linsey is old hat. Since I’m sure that there are people who get *HoL* now who weren’t in the hobby a few years back, wouldn’t it be more helpful to print a few examples of the nasty things that Berch said? Dick saying that “Berch and Linsey forced Dick to shut down *HoL*...I recall Berch...supporting an earlier zeen with a similar sub policy...” is pretty much of a cop-out and creates the impression that Dick is trying to mislead people by being “economical with the truth.” Hell, I’m sure he wouldn’t do this, so why not start giving solid examples?

David Munzenmaier hits the nail on the head when he suggests that pubbers should be more responsible for what they publish. You should really consider not printing accusations which aren’t backed up by examples.

[Oh, so you think I shouldn’t print the thirteen typewritten pages of feud material Mark Berch sent for this issue. Good thought—when he demands his “right of reply,” I will just refer him to you.

[Where did you get your version of what

happened between Hopcroft and Cuerrier? It was my understanding that Michael did try to work the matter out privately, and François responded by sending him another issue and another bill including that new issue as well.]

(ROBERT SACKS) To Munzenmaier's question: "Shouldn't the first priority of *any* pubber be the positive advancement of the hobby?" The *first* priority of any publisher should be the honorable fulfillment of his responsibilities. That quibble aside, what makes you think that both sides aren't trying for "the positive advancement of the hobby" *as they perceive it*? The Dark Side believes that it must control the hobby for whatever good they desire—positive advancement to them is whatever furthers their control. The Rebels believe that Dark Side control, and the tactics Darksiders employ, are harmful to the hobby—positive advancement to us is whatever diminishes the Dark Side. (This is slightly simplistic, but only slightly. It also ignores the fact that certain actions which would diminish the Dark Side are illegal or otherwise unacceptable, and so we do not undertake them.)

[To me, the first priority of any publisher is to enjoy publishing. All else is secondary. Advancement of the hobby, honorable fulfillment of responsibilities—mere platitudes of little practical value. Readers can tell when a pubber is just going through the motions, and I don't know that anyone really enjoys those zeens.]

(MARC HANNA) Apparently, many prominent Hobby Contributors feel that the best way to be rid of feuding is to avoid it. Thus, we see hobbyists framing careful sentences and paragraphs designed as feud neutral, or comment that they have no desire to be a part of the feud. Some publishers try to screen novices from the feuding, as if feuding is a Hobby embarrassment, a "skeleton-in-the-closet" which only mature hobbyists are capable of bearing, like an albatross, around their diplomatic necks. The weight of this bird is such that it stretches their appendage, ostrich-like...into the sand where, heads buried, the feuding will disappear, ignored. Maybe. Maybe.

I don't like this feuding, folks. But we can't get rid of it by pretending that it doesn't exist. Nor do I claim to have the answer we all (?) seek to the question, "How do we stop this feuding?"

Attack it? Feudists (or Feudalists, for those traditional readers) naturally look and behave like fools. Poke fun at them? Make them feel as silly as

they look? Even ashamed? It doesn't seem to be a very mature approach, I know. But don't worry—the feudists can't teach you anything about maturity—while they feud! - REX

(BRAD WILSON) Too bad Hopcroft ran afoul of Canada's predatory pubber, Herr Cuerrier. I guess the Canadians like him because he's the closest thing to a controversial Canuck pubber (although after Bob Acheson said in his zeen that he'd give Linsey's offer to be the grand guru of Canadian "novice attracting" the "ejection button," that may change), and he's beloved on this side of the border by the Dark Side because he's on their side all the time, but I fail to see why dippers give him the time of day.

On George Mann's questions: 1) Does feuding improve the hobby? If it gets an undesirable out of the hobby, then yes. If it sparks a debate about a hobby institution that brings about positive change, then yes. If it's just done to insult and attack, like Carrier, then no. 2) Does feuding discourage newcomers? Probably if the first thing they see is a Linsey mass mailing or something like that, but if not, then no. 3) Would Dipdom be more fun without feuding? Maybe; but maybe not. A hobby of *High Inertias* (I like *HI*, by the way) and feud-free zones might be too dull, too white-breadish.

Ken Peel's point about participation in games is well-taken, but note that many of the High Hobby Poobahs don't play or GM the game at all and seem interested in the hobby only for Megadip purposes. There is a difference between a Peel, who may not play in 100 games, but contributes to the hobby in other ways, and a Rod Walker, who does little except write hate letters.

I think that feuding *has* rejuvenated John Caruso!

A potential new topic: Humor. Where have the funnymen/women gone? I love Dip zeens that make me laugh, but lately it seems as if homegrown humor is in short supply. Pubbers are lifting cartoons/comics/jokes from newspapers and magazines to make up most of the humor content of zeens, and while this isn't a bad idea at times, you get the impression pubbers are relying on it too much. I try to write humor for *Vertigo*, but it's not easy and I'm not real good at it; other than Ted "Swizzle" Stick, I've not written much memorable humor—although Perlmutter's subzeen is getting better every time.

I do at least try, though; many pubbers don't even bother. Of all the zeens I get these days—about 20—only a few make a stab at

homegrown humor, and a bare handful—*Kathy's Korner* and *Countermeasures* jump to mind—succeed consistently. For satire, there's *Graustark*, I guess, and very few pubbers can be as funny in such a small space as Andy Lischett, the James Thurber of our hobby, can be. But generally, it seems as if everyone's so serious these days. Is it too hard to write humor? Aren't pubbers interested in it, or readers interested in reading it? Are we too sensitive to allow *Brutus Bulletin*—style funny stuff these days? Where's the witty press, a la 1981-era *Retail*? Have the Bad Boys—who were hysterical at times, I thought—scared us off humor? Am I missing something? (Probably, but...)

[There does seem to be a lot more of the serious stuff in zeens these days, and less humor. In large part that can be attributed to the decline of several very funny people (Michalski, Olsen, Perlmutter, Kathy, Julie, Konrad Baumeister, Terry Tallman, the Jack Masters "adaptations" to name a few), without any new blood taking their place. Perhaps the largely humorless mind-rasslin feuds have discouraged funny folk from speaking up. Then again, this is the eighties—age of "safe sex" and "just say no." What is there to be funny about?]

(JIM MEINEL) How about starting a new section in your zeen called "Lost Boys"? I'd like to know where the hell Kevin Tighe disappeared to. Paul Gardner told me he found God (who turned out to be a woman) and has since vanished. His zeen came back as undeliverable over a year ago. Anyway, perhaps there are people wondering whatever happened to... (on the other hand, the general public response could be "good riddance" to those who disappear).

[My response to those who disappear would be, "So, you finally got smart." Julie says some people who disappear want to disappear and would rather not be found (or revealed) even by well-meaning friends. We are still in touch with a few people who want to remain friends with us but not have anything more to do with Dipdom. I don't believe Paul Gardner falls into that category, though: he's still publishing *Not New York*, and his address is 20 Spruce St, Brattleboro, VT 05301. Tell him *House of Lords* sent you.]

Yes, this is *House of Lords*, the only zeen in Dipdom good enough to have a heavy metal band named after it. Ask for it by name.

archives

(JIM MEINEL) I'm an incurable pack rat. Buying our house last summer has just given me a place bigger than your standard two-bedroom apartment to stash away all my junk. That junk includes three large boxes of zeens, game orders, and adjudications and hobby correspondence going all the way back to 1985. That was the date I sold all my old zeens to Nelson. Nothing got thrown away. Larry Peery every once in a while eyes my collection lecherously for its archival value. One of these years I suppose I'll unload it on some hobby archivist. As with any good set of historical documents, there's a lot of good shit in there for that turbulent hobby period of 1985-87. Ancient history as far as I'm concerned.

bad boys

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Well, a publisher who misses the Bad Boys. I must remember to send him a Christmas card this year. I recall remarking in an earlier *Nutmeg* that I would miss Geryk too—and with my luck he'd run away before I had a chance to reload! Seriously, I have no real desire to harm this creep. I just wish he would go away. If he thinks he's above us all anyway, I don't recall any crying obligation for him to hang around. Maybe he could do well in some other field of endeavor; I just wish he would get the hell away from Dip and let us "turbo-freaks" get on with our business.

(JOHN CARUSO) A mellow Bruce Geryk? That I gotta see.

burnout

(CAL WHITE) I guess if I'm qualified to comment on any topic in *HoL*, it would be this one. When I dropped out of the hobby in 1978, I could almost literally smell smoke. I had been doing three zeens, running the Boardman Numbers, and so many other little things which, even by themselves, were a full load. I don't have a clue where I found time to manage all that.

Now that I'm back, I am fully alert to the possibilities of burnout. I think the trick to avoiding it is much like Ken Peel says: "Cut back and float, wait and see." It's impossible to do *all* fun things in this hobby, so you have to decide what you really like doing the most and target yourself. For

example, if you really want to publish a zeen, you should cut back significantly on *everything* else and do a good job. If playing is your thing, don't even consider publishing. You may have the free time now, but running a zeen (like virtually every commitment in Dipdom) requires at least a three-year span of your life. I've felt guilty about the mess I left in '78 for eleven years now. I don't recommend it to anybody else.

(JIM MEINEL) As with just about any activity people engage in, it takes a while for them to find the happy medium of their level of participation. I play in no games right now, and just run two or three games, which I find is a comfortable level for me. I shudder when I hear about people playing in more than fifteen games and who adjudicate more than that. Makes me wonder why they're not out doing something else after work and on the weekends. Sooner or later they discover burnout.

[I wonder too. As soon as I figure it out, you'll be the first to know.]

(MARK LEW) as you know, i don't profess to keep my zeen on a regular schedule, and i don't let the zeen get in the way of the real world when my life gets busy. an interesting phenomenon i've noticed before and am experiencing right now is that the longer period of time i take between zeens, the harder it is for me to get started again. sometimes i tell myself that i'll send out short issues just for the sake of maintaining a publishing rhythm, but i never do it.

census

(CAL WHITE) Neither my publisher (to my knowledge) nor myself were ever asked to submit our mailing list to the Census. Was it supposed to be American-only? By the way, FYI, in 1977, the estimated *worldwide* Dip community was approximately 3,000.

[Well, it was mentioned in *HoL* when I stole the project back from Ken Peel. Maybe you weren't a subber at the time.... There will be no excuse when the next edition comes out this fall, though, as everyone will certainly know by then, yes?

[Copies of the 1988 Census are still available from me at the bargain basement price of \$1. Once you get it, you'll wonder how you lived without it.]

computers & filing systems

(JOHN CARUSO) I just bought myself a new toy, an IBM compatible. Haven't done anything on it yet. But I have big plans—word processing, storage, the Auction, gaming, and I plan to try GMing and programming. Now if only I could figure out which wire goes to which outlet....

(MARK NELSON) Anybody who is thinking of pubbing a zeen via a computer does not need primarily an amazing desk-top system or a spell-checker; what they need is a decent printer. No point in having fancy equipment if you can't read the end-product. A useful tip is to vary the fonts used on different articles; page after page of small computer print tends to put me off reading a zeen.

(MARK LEW) i do a lot of work on real-world typesetting machines, and though they do okay with hard-hyphenated words, they do have trouble with em dashes, rather like your program did on page 13. many publications avoid the problem by putting a space on either side of the dash.

(ERIC KLIEN) As to the expensive CompuServe services, I should point out that Usenet, which is available at most universities and many companies, is *free* and allows you to play in my zeen *Electronic Protocol*. People who don't have Usenet access can pay \$10.00/month to a company called Portal, plus \$2.50/hour non-prime time. Write to me for details.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Both Compuserve and Genie have items of enough interest to make them worth the cost. CIS has additional fonts for my desktop publishing software, as well as the occasional hint for things like *Dungeon Master* and the latest *Doctor Who* news; Genie has an "official Star Fleet Battles" section run by the designers.

If you (or Andy Lischett) are having problems with word processors that take hyphenated words/phrases as one word, try putting a space after the hyphen where you want the line to end. The problem that drives me mad is having the hyphen (or is it a dash?) by itself at the beginning of a line. Speaking of publishers, the best one for IBM is *Xerox Ventura Publisher*, although *WordPerfect 5.0* does include many DP abilities (including graphics and changing font types).

[Well, *ReadySetGo 4.5* gives us total control

over hyphenation and other such goodies. And the hyphenation algorithm it uses is pretty good: accurate and fast. We're usually just too lazy to correct those few errors it does make.]

COSTS

(KEVIN BROWN) I lose about \$10-12 each issue of *Pilot Light*, but I don't see that as a major loss for the enjoyment I get from it. To me, if you don't like publishing enough to take the losses, you should either find a way to cut losses some or quit publishing. If Michael Hopcroft enjoys publishing enough to take a significant portion of his income to spend on it, then he ought to do it. If not, I'm sure he'll decide to stop. This sounds simplistic, but it's not as easy as it sounds to say "I enjoy publishing 'x' amount." I believe that deep inside each publisher's head there is an alarm that will one day ring and tell him, "That's enough," and that publisher will publish no more. Just as a similar alarm said, "It's time," when he/she started publishing.

(JOHN CARUSO) When Tom Nash was 35, back in 1964, he made \$5,000 a year? And now, 25 years later, he only makes 1/15th of that? What's this world coming to?

One question: how did costs become the Michael Hopcroft section? Give the guy a break. Hey, Mike, remember one thing—and it's as true as the nose on your face. Opinions are like assholes. Everybody has one. Do your thing. Publish as long as it's fun for you.

(MARK LEW) it's nice to see everyone defend mike hopcroft's right to publish, but i don't seen anywhere the accusation that he's being defended against. did somebody actually say that he shouldn't be allowed to publish? geryk, maybe?

(DAVID HOOD) I agree completely with Mike Hopcroft's statement that the real enemy is time, not money. I didn't mean to imply with my comments before that Mike is some weirdo for pubbing on Social Security income. I was simply suggesting that maybe he cut back a little to avoid over-extension, which can lead to burnout. I would hate to lose him—although that would be one less wishy-washy, namby-pamby, artsy-fartsy liberal to contend with. (Just kidding, Mike.)

(BRAD WILSON) How can Michael Hopcroft afford a computer on whatever dole he's on, and I

as a working person can't afford new shoes? Life isn't fair. On the issue of publishing costs, I get copies done at 4¢ a copy and still lose more than I should. Then again, perhaps it's time to raise my 30¢/issue sub fee. The flip side of my problem is Elmer Hinton, who's back again with another *Kaissa*, charging \$14/12 issues *and* a game fee of \$5 *per game year*. Hard to believe that people will pay that kind of scratch for poor GMing and a six-page rag.

(MARK NELSON) Michael's pubbing position? My experience is that as a student (admittedly in the UK), you have (a) much more time to produce a zeen, and (b) not an insignificant amount of disposable income, compared to your time/money after you have graduated and started work. In short, the first two years of a college course are perhaps the best two years to publish a zeen.

(CAL WHITE) If Michael Hopcroft can be on social assistance and not only publish but still *eat*, then nobody should run him down for it. I needed the same kind of help from the government shortly after my graduation, and I tell you, it's not only lean times, it's damnably hard on the ego! I wish I'd had the distraction of Diplomacy to help me through it. Unfortunately, this was before my return to the hobby.

custodians

(CAL WHITE) As I write this, it's still a scoop, but by your next issue, it'll be old news: Canada now has it's own block of Boardman Numbers. From now on, games started in Canada will get the "C" block. Also, Randy Grigsby has agreed to do the same with the Miller Numbers. Julie, would you be willing to do the same with the Miller Numbers UTC?

[Letter from Ron Brown to Julie, November 19, 1988: "Regarding the Miller Number situation, though it is generous of you to offer a block of numbers for Canadian use, I am someone (sic?) mystified. The MNC is Randy Grigsby and he is aware of the situation and issues involved. I am sure he will be addressing the situation. It's all this bizarre 'covenant' stuff that is part of the reason I am arguing that Canada should go its own way. If you read the letter in *Hagalil Hamaarvi* surely you realize that."]

(BRAD WILSON) I note with amusement Heinowski's questions for the next BNC. You'd think the position applied for was CEO of General Motors, not what amounts to a glorified chief clerk of the Dip hobby. Some of his questions ("What would you change?") sound a lot like Fred Davis' "dead hand of the past" dictating to future BNCs. Hmmm, what's this, the Heinowski Covenant? As for who should be the next BNC, I propose we give it to whoever will do as little as possible. I hate activist hobby officers.

It's a comfort to know—yea, it makes me sleep better at night—that Paul Milewski is watching the BNC finances like the proverbial hawk. In all seriousness, he makes an excellent point about "imperial BNCs." Perhaps it's time the hobby addressed my question I asked in *Vertigo*: Who needs the BNC?

To answer David Munzenmaier: Yes, the BNC/MNC can and will assign numbers to games against the GM's will. I'm sure that our editor as MNC/uc doesn't, but Randy Grigsby has interfered in my zeen by assigning my games Walker numbers, and you can ask Dick about Heinowski's assigning number to *Retal* games. Here's a thought that should send veritable shivers down the spines of all Hobby Service Fanatics from Ellicott City to Amherst and back again: Dick wasn't and isn't the only GM running games without Boardman Numbers....

[Ooooh, anarchy! I love it so! In all fairness to Heinowski, I think somebody asked him to give the *Retal* games numbers. Fine with me. As long as I am free to ignore them, the BNC can give games I run as many numbers as he likes. I think Don Williams will make for a fine BNC—he'll be too busy tormenting Olsen to police the rest of us.]

(TIMOTHY MOORE) One of the most disconcerting things for me coming into this hobby was to find that there was in-fighting about the very services that keep it alive. I have never read the Covenant, but it seems to me that a document outlining the duties of a custodianship should be public knowledge and ratified by all who will be served by it (*ie*, the publishers of zeens). In addition, a transfer of this custodianship should also be accepted by the hobby at large. I don't know personally who receives more inquiries for Miller Numbers, Julie or Randy, but wouldn't it be common sense to have the one that receives the least to step down for sake of unity, no matter what the cause of the rift? Or put the Custodianship up to a vote from publishers of zeens at least ten issues

old having a readership of at least twenty? (Arbitrary, yes, but does not allow someone to "stuff" the ballot box by having friends start up a zeen just to vote.)

One final question: are we here to have fun and meet people, or are we playing Megadiplomacy, much to Chris Carrier's delight? Just wondering.

(MARK NELSON) Paul Kenny asks, "What did happen between Walker and Greg Costikyan that started the MNC split?" The answer to this question is nothing. The MNC split happened after Costikyan had passed on the MNC position; in addition, Costikyan agreed to the use of the NAVB system for allocating Miller Numbers. Whatever the relative merits of the two Custodians (and the allocation of number to non-Dip variants by the MNCuTC is a good idea), the MNC split was instigated after Costikyan by parties not directly concerned with the affair.

I accept Robert's comments on the NYGB position, and I'm glad he's cleared the position up. Is there a need for more zeen registers? I don't think so; the *KGO'ZD* would be more than adequate if it was given enough publicity and the presentation improved.

[Amazing—I never knew you were so intimately acquainted with Greg Costikyan. You wouldn't mind showing us the letter where he told you, for example, that he agreed to the NAVB system, would you? Or are you just repeating (and garbling) your indoctrination from Fred Davis?]

(JOHN CARUSO) Let me try to give a quick explanation of the MNs and BNs. The MNs are Miller Numbers and they are given to variant games of Dip. There are presently two people giving out these numbers. BNs are Boardman Numbers and they are numbers given to regular Dip games. Numbers cost you \$0. You can, at your option, donate to either the BNC/MNC/MNCUC. You don't have to get a number, though in the BNC case, it is wise. It's insurance in case the GM disappears, and it allows the BNC to log the game. But it isn't mandatory. If the BNC finds an unnumbered game, chances are it will be assigned a number. The MNs don't operate like that, as far as I know.

As for the split in the MNC/MNCUC—the Covenant was signed by Robert Sacks and Greg Costikyan when Greg received the MNs from Robert. Robert claims the Covenant binds all future MNCs. Others thought otherwise. When Lee Kendter became MNC, he repudiated (for lack of a

better word) the Covenant. When Lee passed on the numbers to Fred Hyatt, Robert created his own MNCUC position after all negotiations with first Lee, then Fred, fell through. Robert appointed Karel Alaric MNCUC, and KA picked Julie as successor, and Fred chose Randy Grigsby. That's where we stand today.

No, I didn't have a diatribe over the MN problem a few years ago. I just conducted a referendum to try to resolve the problem. Yes, the position I've taken does put me in direct conflict with Dick and Julie over this, but so what? Can't we disagree and still be friends? Dick and I have had at least two other "major crises" and our friendship has survived both. For Don Del Grande to insinuate that because Dick and I disagree, we should feud, is plain dumb. (That's why we call him Del Dumb, I suppose.) Anyway, Dick, Julie, and I are a perfect example of people who can disagree on something and still be good friends.

Anyway, what the MNC/MNCUC dispute comes down to is this: Is the Covenant that Robert-Greg signed years ago binding on future MNCs, and does it give Robert the right to replace an MNC who disregards the Covenant?

Where did Mark Berch get his inaccurate notions that Kathy was working with the USOS? Probably a little birdie told him. He believes everything little birdies tell him.

The apprentice BNCship? You have to have someone volunteer and be selected before you can have an apprenticeship.

[It also helps to ask for the volunteers.

[One interesting thing I've noted from playing games on Compu\$erve: they use the Robert Sacks "anonymous standby" policy. So are the CI\$ games all irregular, or are Robert's games regular again?]

(DON DEL GRANDE) The solution to the "Roberts Sacks' will" problem can be based on the last cartoon in the fifth *Eyebeam* book:

"Upon my death, I'd like my worldly goods to be collected,
Then call the hobby services and let them be directed,
To select the single service toward which the sum is hurled;
The carnage that results should be reported in *Dip World*."

(ROBERT SACKS) The will isn't written yet. Basically, the money goes from the Trustees via the corporation and the NYGB to be distributed among the projects supported by resolution of the NYGB

with the current project officer determined by the Registrar of Projects in accordance with the project's registration, the charter of the Registry, and the NYGB's guidelines. Since the IRS code is an overriding document, any project which refuses to register cannot get funding.

Machiavelli is numbered by the MNC under the Covenant.

The Atlanticon flyers give the event numbers as NYnn and show NY as New York Game Board.

Peel has so botched up his explanation of the Diplomatic Congress so often that I have to believe it is deliberate. This is public notice: Ken Peel is not authorized to speak on behalf of the Diplomatic Congress, nor to "explain" its history or policy.

In the same way, he seems to be deliberately misrepresenting my activities as Registrar of Projects and Registrar of *KGO* (why he makes up silly titles is a mystery, except that it aids in his deceptions and misrepresentations). Olsen was listed as retiring when Olsen told me to so list him. And Kathy does have her mail from Linsey examined to see if there is any OGP business—of course, since he neither runs nor plays in any games, that isn't very likely. Finally, I have not stripped Linsey of anything, except my support for his activities—don't I have a right to do that? What difference does it make if Robert Sacks opposes the existence of the Runestone Poll, and supports *Masters of Deceit* and the *KGO' Guide for New Publishers* as rivals to Linsey's projects, unless, could it possibly be Robert Sacks' support means something positive? Perhaps my patronage list means something: "Karel Alaric," Simon Billinness, Jeff Bohner, John and Kathy Caruso, Steve Courtemanche, Fred Davis, David Hood, Michael Hopcroft, Lee Kendter Jr, Tom Mainardi, Dick and Julie Martin, Ken Peel, Tom Swider, Brad Wilson. You don't suppose they all work on my projects because my support and opinions mean nothing?

(BOB OLSEN) I don't always agree with Rob't Sacks—he's a giddy, wacky fellow distinguished from Darksiders principally by his complete absence of malice—but he is one-hundred-point-zero-zero percent correct on one matter, and Ken "Sexa" Peel is wrong. I *am* an editor emeritus! I am, I am, I am! I'm retired, senile, washed up, lost my fastball, lost my slow curve, can't even find the mound. Luckily before my final collapse I was able to convince Steve Arnawoodian, the most competent hobbyist I know (and think about the implications of *that*) to continue with *Masters of Deceit*. And Ken, a pretty

good guy for a Mac owner, is typer-upper and (in effect) new editor. Me, I just sit in a corner and nod off, which tends to convince Ken that I'm assenting to all his plans. Well, yes, but not *knowingly* (I never do *anything* knowingly!)

Well, now it can be revealed, Kathy Caruso and I have had a good deal of acrimonious argument in recent weeks (watch the pencils fly to those Yellow Legal Pads!), but it has nothing to do with the Orphan Service. Rather I refer to her stupid, dogmatic belief (if that seems like a clumsy and inept construction, don't worry, I borrowed it from a master of the form) in the Mets, and her refusal to acknowledge the supremacy of the Cubs. Even though at this writing the Cubs are in first (*first!!!!*) place in the NL East, and the Mutants in last, still she refuses to change her ways. I've warned her, though, if she doesn't support the Cubs, I'm going to attack Don Williams and blame her.

As to the USOS...for my part, I haven't heard a word from Rod Walker in six months or so. Guess I'm on my own. Not to worry, though. At the moment I'm banging out orphan replacements like the Darkside churns out truths.

(MARC HANNA) Kathy Caruso says: "Since I don't write to Mark Berch, I would like to straighten out some inaccurate information he printed in *DD*."

What!? Apparently, we can infer that Kathy will *read* Mark Berch but won't *write* to him. Kathy, I can't imagine the circumstances wherein I might be impressed by your fortitude and ethical responsibility in this case.

Maybe you'd better talk to John about this situation! For example, he's willing to read and verify the Poll. Just think of the time you'd save Mark B (not to mention *HoL* readers) if you would verify his remarks yourself....

In conclusion, I'd better add that I read Mark Berch. To be fair, I need to review your zeen. Mind if I send you a sample request? - REX

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Putting together the Directory has had some interesting moments so far. Mark Berch has written me twice asking that I treat him fairly; he's afraid Sacks will order me to slam him or something, or Brad Wilson (with whom he apparently has a disagreement) will poison my review. Well, in matters like this it pays to be honest. I don't have a grudge against Mark, but unfortunately I didn't care for the *Diplomacy Digest* sample he sent. Lucky for me he's willing to swallow an honest bad review, so one bullet

dodged. I have ten pages of reviews so far, covering some twenty-five zeens. I've really enjoyed getting some of the newer zeens like *Dipadeedoodah!* and *The Scribblerist*. Dick may recall my request for a *Retaliation* sample. It's been fun so far, actually. My poor disk drives are working overtime, though. Maybe someday when I get some extra money (some chance) I should go to my "friendly" retailer and get the system cleaned and "tuned up." How much does that sort of maintenance cost on your Mac?

This Hobby needs a Hobby Morality Custodian like it needs a Personal Life Custodian. Which means that despite our best intentions we get one anyway. What Fun! What Joy! What Bliss! What Hooley!

[Maintenance cost? What maintenance cost? If it's not smoking, we don't fix it.]

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) I see Paul Milewski wants some info on the Covenant. Well, if he gets *Rebel*, I'd direct him to *HI* #33, where Robert submitted the Covenant for print, with explanatory information. And if Paul finds the print of that issue too pale to read, he is welcome to write us directly for a copy.

By the way, applause is due for the selection of Michael Hopcroft and Brad Wilson for the *KGO'ZD* editorship! I'm not clear on what the distribution of responsibility will be, but I know the two of them can put out a highly entertaining, topflight product. (Okay, Brad, can I have that sundae now?!)

(STEVE HEINOWSKI) I will address the "transfer fund" questions in *E79*—just what I need, something to take up space. You may, of course, feel free to reprint from *Everything* if you like. Personally, I don't see what the problem is. (1) Start with \$200 (2) add \$100 (3) —> \$300. Not having transferred it yet, I cannot tell you what that cost may be, not having had to withdraw, or not the \$100 for Spe {??} operations, I can't say that that is either.

(LARRY PEERY) Paul Milewski's analysis of the finances of *Everything* is the second biggest waste of space I've ever seen in *HoL*.

(JIM MEINEL) Paul Milewski's analysis of the BNC's financial status provided a much-needed look at what is going on with that office. Being a fellow CPA, I agree with his conclusion that a fuller and more accurate reporting of finances is

needed to prevent another disaster. I realize that not everyone possesses a skill in accounting, and I also understand that the current deficiencies are not intentional. Perhaps it would be helpful if the BNC could have someone with the requisite knowledge to whom he/she could turn for assistance?

(KEVIN BROWN) I'm glad there's no United number custodian, and I hope there never is one. I would never accept a number for my United league and would fight to the bitter end anyone who tried to give it one.

[More anarchy! You guys just kill me! So *why* are you so violently opposed to United numbers?]

(JAMES NELSON) Regarding the allocation of MN/BN to zeens, if a pubber doesn't want to have one assigned, then that should be it. No pubber should have *anything* thrust upon them they don't want. It is within anyone's right to refuse a number, although of course, in practice, he can't do anything if the Custodian assigns one. I'd say it shows very bad manners to assign a game a MN if the pubber doesn't want one.

Randy Grigsby is therefore wrong in allocating numbers to games in *Cheesecake*. So would Julie be if she gave out numbers for games in, say, *Bushwacker* without being asked by the publisher.

However the problem arises when a split of the people concerned occurs. If the pubber wants a number, he gets a number. If he doesn't, he shouldn't. But what if a player, or more than one, wants a specific number? Is it bad manners for numbers to be assigned to a game because a player wants one, but the pubber doesn't, or already has one of the other ones?

The same argument can be applied to specific variants. I don't rate two-player "variants" as variants—I think of them as two-player games. I'm running a couple, but won't be asking for MNs. However, unless I point this out, I'll have numbers assigned by the MNC (UK). Is this wrong? Should a Custodian have the power to issue numbers to games without being asked? If a Custodian is asked not to issue numbers, he shouldn't, but if he's not asked, should he? If I'm assigned numbers for my two-player Abstraction II games I'm GMing, I'll not be happy, as I've asked for numbers not to be issued.

What are your thoughts on Martin Lewis, the British MNC Assistant to Randy Grigsby, declaring independence from Randy? Do you see this as a step in the right direction, *ie* Martin breaking away from what you regard as a bogus MNC, or is this

action to be frowned on as it breaks away from the status quo of tradition?

I say that last point because Robert Sacks, who you're closely associated with, is one of the few people I know of who still refers to the foreign MNC as "Assistants." It was the same Robert Sacks who tried, when he was MNC, to tell the British hobby that their Variant Bank Custodian was "not official," and that the Bank should be passed on to Sacks' appointed Custodian (Sacks, and the "appointed" Custodian were laughed out of the British hobby).

dipcon

(BRAD WILSON) Robert Sacks is upset with His Peeriness about what would seem to be most unreasonable demands on bidding for a Dipcon. Robert's group, which includes myself, John Caruso, David Hood, Jeff Bohner, Kathy Caruso, Tom Swider, and others, has worked hard on preparing an East Coast Diplomacy convention: we'd like to host a Dipcon or a World Dipcon (the latter of which I personally consider something of a farce), but it looks like Peery and the usual crew has pretty much "rigged" (to use Sacks' wording) the bids. Therefore, it would seem as if Dick's observation in last issue that Peery is going to hijack the 1990 World Dipcon for San Diego is quite accurate.

This raises a pet point of mine: let's assume Peery and Co get the 1990 World Dipcon, but the North American Dipcon, usually the leading Dip event of the year, goes to Chapel Hill or the new East Coast con. Throw in Origins in Atlanta and you have *three* major cons (more if you include regional cons) for people to choose from. And then there's Cancon up in Toronto. How can *any* of these events fulfill the role they're supposed to: that of some kind of comprehensive con? No one will go to every one, and the result will be small turnouts and more fragmentation. *Why* do we insist on downgrading our Dipcon for this chimera of World Dipcon? If we must have a World Dipcon, it should be held in conjunction with Dipcon to assure maximum turnout. The health of Dipcon should be our primary concern, with World Dipcon a very poor second. I grant you that Larry Peery thinks any event he's at is the premier North American hobby event, but less egomaniacal minds should prevail.

(DON DEL GRANDE) I couldn't believe that Larry put "World Dipcon" on the Dipcon

pre-registration form either. (The copy in *Life of Monty* had the words removed.) I still think that World Dipcon should be held out east somewhere, because an eastern con (a) is closer to the North American "Dip population" as a whole in North America, and (b) will be more attractive to European visitors (who might attend an eastern non-WDC rather than a San Diego con of any title).

(LARRY PEERY) To: Whom It May Concern
(eg, Don Del Grande and Dick Martin at the moment, perhaps others later)

From: Larry Peery, Dipcon XXII
Administrative Committee

Re: World Dipcon Pre-registration Flyer

Reply by: Not Needed

Greetings!

Well, I hate to disillusion you two (and anyone else who inquires about this will get a copy of this memo as well) but I *am not* trying to take over World Dipcon by a fait accompli!

The World Dipcon letterhead that appeared on the pre-registration form sent out with the Dipcon XXII mailing was an unintentional error. I spent almost 10 hours putting that mailing together and by the time I finally got to the pre-registration form I grabbed the wrong letterhead out of my stationery stack. I have about 12 different letterheads and logos that I use for different purposes, and the two for Dipcon XXII and World Dipcon are almost identical. So, I didn't notice it when I did it. In fact, it wasn't until I got a note from Del Grande that I found out I had even done it. By the way, Don, in spite of your sending back the form, questions, etc, you didn't include your *check!* You did the same thing last time you re-subbed to *DW*. Is that an accident or standard policy? I assume it's an oversight. We do make those occasionally. Except Dick, I don't think he does.

I'll try to remember to print a copy of both letterheads in the next mailing so people can see what happened. Not that the conspiracy theory will go away, I'm sure.

[Why do you even *have* World Dipcon letterhead, Larry?]

(TIMOTHY MOORE) Those Dipcon flyers came from right here in this house, and the "IDTR Sanctioned Event" part of it was my addition. Ron Cameron asked Audi and I to design a flyer for distribution to pubbers and to cons in the area. I had read in *Life of Monty* about the IDTR and mistakenly thought this was a hobby-wide institution. (This was before I found out about the

factionalization of the Hobby.) And by the way, the phrase "the national championship of postal diplomacy" was not on the original flyer we sent out. It must have been added by someone else.

As for voting on World Dipcon at the San Diego site, I thought that had been the process used to decide the site of previous Dipcons? Some may argue that this event is not a Dipcon, but why change a process unless it hasn't worked well? You easterners may worry about stuffed ballot boxes, but I don't see any group out here bidding, and I think it would be unfair for Larry Peery to present a bid himself. If you are worried of such things, then rewrite the bid process to say that the host city cannot submit a bid for a con the next year.

I don't think anyone would purposefully try to take World Dipcon from the east. I do think that if someone out here thought they could put on a great con, then they should not be dissuaded from voicing that opinion and submitting a bid.

[To the best of my knowledge, there is no formal mechanism in place for determining the site of the next World Dipcon. At the moment, the plan is to "let the American Dipcon decide" where it goes. That will hardly seem appropriate when the world version is headed for Australia or back to England.]

finding new subbers

(LARRY PEERY) Actually, there shouldn't be any problem for any hobby pubber in finding players or subbers. There is a tremendous number of inquiries coming in here from people about the game and hobby as a result of the game flyer, etc. The problem is in finding good zeens with game openings to refer them to.

[Why not just print all their names and addresses in *DW* as we used to do with our inquiries? Impress us all with this tremendous flow of new blood. Give these people a better shot at finding a home, on the off chance that their idea of a "good zeen" doesn't coincide with yours.]

(BRAD WILSON) I agree with Ken Peel that the hobby seems to have "picked up steam" in recent months. I would guess that an accurate number of Dipdomites in North America is around 1000, with many university types being under-counted in censuses. I definitely think more needs to be done to recruit new hobbyists in the "nurseries" of the hobby: gaming shops, college

game clubs, and local cons. Don't wait for an organization to do it—go out and put up flyers at local sites of those kinds extolling PBM Dip and giving your name and number as a reference, or Peel's address as a contact for Zeen Bank/Zeen Register info.

[Make that Tom Nash's address for Zeen Bank/Zeen Register info.]

(KEVIN BROWN) It appears to be boom time in the American United hobby as three new leagues have started since November. Prior to that, there were only three running in America. As for new subbers, I don't know about Dipzeens, but specialized zeens like *Pilot Light* have a much more difficult time finding new subbers. After all, most everyone in the hobby has played Dip; very few have played United. But new subs have been trickling in, so maybe it's not as difficult as I thought at first.

[But once you develop your niche, *Pilot Light* should be fairly stable, yes?]

(CAL WHITE) The CDO is printing up some flyers to try and attract new blood. We are hoping to get as many CDO members as possible to take these flyers right into game shops in their area and post them. It's all part of an attempt to continue the "revitalization" of the Canadian hobby. We already have a new zeen listing, a game openings sheet, novice zeen, novice package, and census.

(TIMOTHY MOORE) I don't know about most of the people in the hobby right now, but I do like to play FTF and find that is the perfect way of getting new blood into the hobby. Many folks can't afford the time to play FTF often, and when you open up such a wide vista that this hobby is, you have them hooked.

(JAMES NELSON) Finding new subbers is an issue I can speak on because of first hand experience. When I changed the format of *Variants & Uncles* (both contents-wise and frequency), I looked at my circulation list and thought "God, isn't this list small?" I immediately went away and thought about how to resolve this matter. Basically, in Britain anyway, forget reviews. Pubbers congratulate most people's zeens, and I've found this method is very poor for attracting *new subbers*. Reviews are more likely to attract people wanting to trade. Another method is the flyer sent out with a zeen. Sometimes difficult to arrange, but not very

expensive. This is going to appeal more to Joe Average in Subberland, *but* most flyers will be binned instantly. The third way, and by far, in my experience, the most effective, is to send out sample copies. Don't send them out to any old fool, in fact, any old fool can do that. Look at your zeen and decide what market you're aiming it at.

Variants & Uncles is for people interested in variants and/or playing variants to quick deadlines. Then target people who you think may be interested in that zeen. If you zeen is a chat zeen, look at who writes letters in zeens; if it's a variant zeen, look at who plays lots of variants, etc.

But what I think is very important in finding new subbers is treating anybody who inquires like someone important. Someone for whom the sun shines from the behind. Write back immediately, answer any questions, treat them with respect.

A common faulting is that people think that more subbers will mean that they make less of a loss. Not so! Where do *American* people get these strange notions from....

(MARC HANNA) I must beg to disagree with our illustrious HMC's opinion concerning New Subbers. *HoL* is a well-produced and enlightening zeen, though apt to be somewhat confusing for the uninitiated. I don't think it would "scare" a new subber into not writing or playing.

Please allow me to drone on about how I got started in Dip. About 4-5 months ago, I decided PBM Dip would be fun, so I perused some back issues of *The General*. I sent some inquiries out to Dick Martin, the "1988 Crazy Wacko," and others. Later, I found another back issue that plugged *The Cream Shall Rise*, and wrote Bruce Linsey. Dick was very prompt with his response (thank you, Dick) and so was Bruce (thank you, Bruce). The latest "Wacko" and the others did not respond, to my recollection.

Both Bruce and Dick directed me to Ken Peel and his *Zeen Register*; Ken's prompt answer made it easy after that. Because of my dual introduction and Bruce's comments about you and Dick in *Cream #4*, I felt compelled to subscribe to *HoL* and am happy that I did.

The important thing to remember, I guess, is that a new subber who wants to subscribe will seek those sources he is most familiar with. Since Dip is nominally a wargame, *The General*, as suggested by Mr Peel, is an excellent reference. To advertise you'll have to subscribe, though, and it can take several months to see your "Want Ad." But what's a few months among Dippers?

David Hood had some interesting comments

about a zeen review zeen, featuring “prominent hobbyist” reviewers. With all this “prominent hobbyist” feuding going on, would it work? Could we really ask our hobby “leaders” to bury the hatchet (elsewhere!) and allows some objectivity to harmoniously blend in the same review? How do we choose a prominent hobbyist? What about those fringing on prominence? What about those hobbyists who *think* they fringe on prominence and want to be heard?

Frankly, it’s a really good idea, but maybe an open forum zeen with open participation would be more appropriate. Unfortunately, the feudalists don’t “even themselves out”—they just keep trying to dig themselves deeper than the other faction. “Prominence,” in some cases, correlates closely with “feuding.” Prominence shouldn’t then be the selection criterion. - REX

gming procedure

(JIM MEINEL) Press is fun to read but a bitch to type. That about sums up my feelings on the subject as a GM.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Answering yet another Michael Hopcroft question, Steve and I run our games with grey press. I agree with Michael that press-writing spices up a game, and we’ve been blessed with some of the most prolific and entertaining press-writers in the hobby: Don Williams, Steve Langley, Kathy Caruso, Glenn Petroski, and (dare I say it?) Cochise himself at the helm! We’ve also enjoyed hearing from Stan Johnson, Larry Botimer, Mark Howorth, and Mark Sheron—and even from a usually press-shy Hobby Holley! The result has been a couple of delightful press games, and that’s the way Steve and I like it, even if we do have to type up the stuff....

(BOB OLSEN) I see that the famous WAP rule has raised its robotic head once again. I used to think that it was nothing more than a big joke caused by a paucity of actual game experience chasing too great a fondness for theorizing-in-a-vacuum, but lately I have begun instead to see the outlines of a nefarious plot. What was Mark Berch’s reason for dreaming this up? Since WAP is basically a way of encouraging and rewarding incompetent play, the answer is obvious—he’s trying to arrange for Woody to become the #1 player in all Dipdom! Recruiting Woody for the Junta would be a real coup—for one thing, just think of all the votes Woody’s hamsters

could deliver (and they’ve all seen two issues of everything—Woody lines their cages with Dipzinnies). Aha!!! A conspiracy unmasked!

(DAVID HOOD) Kathy Caruso brings up a good point in “GMing Procedure.” There are some standby players (notably herself) who are active in their new game from the word Go. There are others who feel their position as standby should be only to protect their own centers, not to change the face of the game. I have actually had standby players refuse to ally with me because they thought it might alter the outcome of the game! Still other standbys prefer to see just how silly they can make their moves, since they were not the original players and therefore should not be held responsible for the end result. A fourth type of standby tries to determine how the original player would have played the position, then emulates that model.

With so many different types of standby players out there, I think a GM should be sensitive to how each of their standby players plays. Then a GM who prefers a certain philosophy can help engender it in a given game. For example, I wouldn’t waste Kathy Caruso on a one-unit power going down the drain because I’d rather use her in a six-center power that could still have a role in the game. I *do* have standbys on my list, though, that I would rather put in the former position rather than the latter one. Anybody got any thoughts on this?

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) My use of standbys is very informal. Every so often I try keeping a list, but I always find myself misplacing the bloody thing. What I usually end up doing is asking a newer subscriber who has said they want to play to take a standby position. I was amazed when Kathy Caruso agreed to stand by in one of my games soon after she joined my sublist (kicking and screaming all the way). She promptly told me “Troughton” was a stupid name for a Diplomacy game. I had to explain who Patrick Troughton and William Hartnell were, which is usually a given in my circle. Then she played along with remarkable fervor. So I have become converted, if you will, to an informal approach to the question of who stands by in a game. I can’t tell you who ended up standing by in my Gunboat game; if I did, you would be astonished!

“Follow the Rulebook” has always been what I expect to hear when GMing. Little did I know that it is important which Rulebook to follow! Now everyone is telling me how much superior and how much clear the First Edition (Games Research)

rules were over the Second Edition. Since #2 is all I've ever had, I feel a little in the dark. The first time I ever saw a Dip set was about ten years ago in a cousin's house; it was the big board with wooden blocks. It it's intact, I wonder if I could buy it. I remember seeing something once about a Canadian company willing to sell their edition of Dip to Americans. Did the Hill stop that?

(JOHN CARUSO) I once tried a sample game using HRs making NMRing illegal. Needless to say, the game never went past Spring 1901. I couldn't get orders from one player, and since I had no contingency rules in such a case and no one would stand by, I had to abandon the game. Of course I kept the sub/game fees. How do you think I saved the money to buy a house?

I see David HMCUC fell prey to just the kind of thing that befell Kathy a few years ago, except what Kathy received wasn't a private letter, but a story in a zeen that about 100 people read. The article was insulting and demeaning to Kathy and was written by a young lady who had never met her. Needless to say, Kathy shot off a very sarcastic letter to the girl. I suggest if the letter becomes public, then fire away, publicly or privately, or do nothing. Whatever you're more comfortable with. Children have a right to conduct themselves accordingly whether dealing with adults or not. They don't have the right to make anyone open game to their fancies. Do note, though, that *if* it's a game letter, maybe this "child" is taking the part he is playing a bit too far. It might not be a bad idea to convey that message too.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Why do we need "the perfect houserules"? Here's a quote from the preface to the official Laws of Chess (as published by FIDE, the international chess federation): "The laws of chess cannot, and should not, regulate all possible situations that may arise during a game, nor can they regulate all questions of organization... FIDE takes the view that the laws should be as short and as clear as possible and that minor details should be left to the discretion of the arbiter."

(MARK LEW) "perfect houserules"? how can there be perfect houserules?

i wrote a lot of press, oh, eight years ago. for a long time since i've had no interest in it at all; i ignore it as a player, and i discourage it as a gm. (the best way to discourage it is simply not to print it.)

actually, it is brown v. board of education that

is "simply wrong." more precisely, it's good policy, bad law, and it's already coming back to haunt us. but perhaps this isn't the right zeen in which to pursue the topic (unless you want to start a new section for constitutional law).

i was 14 when i started in the hobby and i kept my age (mostly) a secret, not because i was worried about age discrimination in games, but because i wanted to be treated like a real grown-up. having a forum in which to write and interact with people who didn't know me as a "kid" helped me considerably to mature intellectually and emotionally. off the top of my head, i can think of three of my hobby contemporaries (now dropped out) for who this is just as true, and i'm sure there are many others.

(BRAD WILSON) I don't like WAP, or Eric Klien's illegal NMRs (too many delays). What's wrong with the current system most GMs use? NMRs hurt, sure, but why should the delinquent player be helped and the dedicated player not? I really don't think a few NMRs ruin a game; I think bad GMing might more often than NMRs. But I fully support all kinds of experimentation, so that players will have a wide choice of rules to play under and can pick the GMs whose systems they like. If we all did the same things, life'd be boring.

Paul Kenny's points on "personalizing" standbys are very well taken, and I do roughly the same thing. Flexibility is the key.

As for press: I run most of my games on grey press, which seems to allow enough latitude for freedom of expression. But I always have a black press game or two, too; adds a little spice...

Printing ages on a sub list strikes me as needless. If you want to know, just ask. Most people will tell you.

(MARK NELSON) Perfect houserules are like the Holy Grail: you're always searching for them and they're not up to much when you find them. The most stylish houserules were Dave Thorby's: (1) The 1971 rules of Diplomacy apply, (2) The GM's decision is final. But more extensive houserules are perhaps desirable...

My main policy on standbys is to make sure that people aren't playing together in multiple games; it only encourages cross-gaming. There are certain people who I'm not keen on calling; I prefer my standbys to be active players who give it a go! Personally, I enjoy playing as a standby; you pick up a range of positions and can stick into some interesting tactical positions without all the hassle of playing the opening seasons.

As for press, nurture and encourage it! I don't care for black press games personally, and use country name (Gvmt) + GM dateline as reserved. However, how many players read the houserules? Since I started using this houserule, none of my players have submitted press using their reserved dateline! Since they've all used country name only, the game is in effect black press. This opens up interesting possibilities for faking press. Whatever HRs you have on press, an ingenious player can find ways and means to get around your rules and forge official press.

Guest GMs are OK as long as they live within easy communicating range. Depends on the kind of turnaround you want as well. But I'm all for guest GMs; they look after this games-rubbish and let the pubber concentrate on the serious stuff (like writing to Julie)!!

(ERIC KLEIN) As to the nearly useless Computer Diplomacy program, I would recommend the Judge program instead. With this program, if you wish to change one unit's order, you simply change that one order. With Computer Diplomacy, you are forced to retype in all the orders to change one order—what a pain! Judge also allows you to separate the build season from the move season. It is available for \$20.00 from Judge Software, c/o Les Casey, 33 Nestow Dr, Nepean, Ontario, K2G 4M2, Canada. For IBM compatibles only.

And finally, I should mention something even superior to the Judge program—it is an invention called a guest GM. I currently use seven of them in my zeen *Electronic Protocol* and am about to get one for my zeen *Protocol*. Since I require them to submit the results electronically, all I have to do is cut and paste their results—no retyping! I believe guest GMs are the way to go if you are a lazy bum like me.

(JOHN BARNES) Game events over the past few weeks, not only in *The No-Name Flyer* but also in a game in which I am playing, have convinced me that my present rule of *always* combining seasons is just not workable. But I am not sure what would be better, and would like some comments on what you like about other methods. I intend to change my houserule, so tell me why it should be the same as the one you like!

One of the reasons I originally wrote this rule as I did was that I believe players should be able to determine *in advance* what rulings would be made in hypothetical situations. While nobody knows what the situation will really be, it should be

possible to say that “*if this happens, then that will follow.*” When a separation can be called for *after* moves or builds have been published, that predictability seems compromised. Players do not even know how many seasons will be included in the next results.

Looking at it from another angle, it is a basic premise of the game that players do not always have to do what they say they will. When a rule makes it more difficult for a player to conceal a change in plans, I feel that there is a contradiction with one of the given assumptions of the game. And I agree with the argument that separated seasons can make it very difficult for players to shift alliances without warning their former friends.

With those points in mind, why am I changing? First, it is much easier than I thought to develop a situation where there are *large* numbers of possibilities. This past year in “Little Sister,” with ten possible combinations of removals for a single power, demonstrated that clearly. Second, I never considered the case where retreats could influence needed winter adjustments. I cannot ignore this while I am playing a position where I could gain an extra center by being dislodged from the one I am in!

I know other methods are in use. The “separation on request of two players” rule is familiar to most of you. Immediate return mail for retreats, builds, or both, can keep the game moving if the changes are announced by special mailings between issues. Some GMs combine seasons differently, with orders for potential retreats due the same season. Spring orders in this system might include things like, “If Silesia is dislodged, retreat to Warsaw.” Several of you obviously play under rules that allow separation by request of a specified number of players.

What I am considering is some method of announcing a separation at the same time as the deadline. Asking for orders for one season only would tell everyone what was going to happen, and plans could be made accordingly. But doing this every year would really drag the game out, so *is there a good way to tell a turn ahead* when we need a separation? The only idea I have been able to come up with is to automatically separate seasons any time there are more than “x” possible combinations. But even with that, I am not sure how to define “x.” Twelve on the entire board? Six for any single country? Ten in any combination of countries bordering a single country?

{Reprinted from John Barnes' *No-Name Flyer* #18 at his request.}

international subbers

(MARK NELSON) International contacts and international games are two rather different things. I personally don't like international games; my style of play requires rather quicker turnaround of mail and the use of a phone. Alliances seem to be dictated by mailing distances rather than other considerations. But, no matter what, you come across some interesting people in international games. To me, that's what Dipdom is about ultimately: it's the people and not the games which count. Whilst international mail may not be great, this isn't a reason why internationalism is on the decrease; it's an excuse used by people who aren't interested in internationalism.

(JAMES NELSON) Ken Peel has hit the nail on the head. The major difference between the US hobby and the British one is that, being British (you know—the stiff upper lip), we try to make feuds as painless as possible. There are disagreements within the British hobby, but we try to solve them through private communications and not wash dirty linen in public. Washing dirty linen does not build bridges, it just widens the gap.

Also I think British hobby people are more willing to have a compromise—my own view of the American feuds is that people are not willing to give an inch from their point of view, and that anyone who disagrees with them is totally wrong. Cronies seem to delight in character assassinations of their “bosses' enemies.” In a hobby based on a game called “Diplomacy,” there at times seems precious little of this commodity in the States.

I don't have any subbers, but I do trade with quite a few foreign zeens. It is worth the effort just to see a change from “the norm.” Most British pubbers I've asked are reluctant to trade with foreign zeens. There are two reasons always given, both of which I feel are quite feeble.

The first is that it is too expensive! Too expensive! Is that a crummy excuse, or what? Zeens make a loss anyway, so what does a bit of extra money cost. And anyway, if you're after subbers, then you charge them that little bit extra for international postage. Trades, of course, are expensive, but if someone is willing to lose money in America to send them his zeen, why shouldn't a Brit do the same?

The major reason is that most British pubbers have very bad impressions of the American hobby. Let's face it, you don't give a good impression of the hobby with all your back-stabbing and

infighting. If a little green man was to venture down from Mars and took the American Dip hobby as “normal,” he'd wizz back up again in pure terror, tail(s) between his leg(s). British pubbers on the whole are not prepared to get involved and don't want to know. Myself? I find it...somewhat refreshing...

However, these two points don't explain the reluctance for contacting with the European hobby. The only reason I can think of why there are so few contacts between the British and European hobbies is the language. Virtually all European zeens are edited in German or French. That obviously presents a big problem. But most people are just not prepared to make the effort—even the people who have excellent languages don't bother. Out of the North American and British hobbies, *five* people voted in the European Zeen Poll (four Brits—*need I say more?*)

(BOB OLSEN) Speaking of Pesky Kenny, I read with enjoyment his treatise on the CDO and Ronald Brown. Ken's got the gadfly moves just about down. But I'm afraid I must side with Ron's position, as far as it goes, on this one. Trouble is, it doesn't go far enough. The problem: how to prevent corrupt Americanism from polluting the precious bodily fluids and purity of essence of Canadip? Separate custodians are only part of the answer. I believe that Canada's southern border should immediately be fortified with a Maginot Line, complete with machine-gun nests, long-range artillery, and special dogs trained to sniff out contraband plastic stars and anchors. (In fact, the very existence of plastic stars and anchors demonstrates the degeneracy of this corrupt land of ours. I remember—permit me this senile reminiscence if you will—the days when a skilled artisan would spend months carefully carving each and every wooden army and fleet in the Dip set. Whatever happened to *craftsmanship*? They probably mold the plastic stars and anchors out of the same stuff they use to make Big Macs, and Mac IIs...) Only thus can right-thinking Canadianism gain the ascendancy it so richly deserves.

(JOHN CARUSO) Everyone is under the mistaken impression that the Brits don't feud. Yeah—and this is Argentina. The Brits don't feud in their zeens. I used to get a few zeens. What they do participate in is group mauling. If someone comes up with a bad idea, they all crucify him. If someone does something the majority disapprove of, they all lynch him. And rarely does anyone come to the aid of the attacked. Plus I find the Brits

very “class” oriented. They believe that those beneath themselves can never be any better than where they are. That’s where your position in life was meant to be.

You’ll also notice a very pro-Brit attitude and an anti-American one in Brit zeens. If we here in America weren’t so mellow, there’d be an international feud at the borders. What do you call all of the labelling of the Americans as feuders? At least we aren’t afraid to stand up for ourselves. It may not look good to all who view Dipdom USA, but it’s a far cry better than the “In Crowd” “blind lock-step” of the British hobby. Tranquility is preferable, but not at the expense of individuality or the freedom to disapprove.

(BRAD WILSON) Gee, I’m touched to see that Cuerrier is pissed off because you’re not quite quoting him accurately, but, of course, he feels free to insult you by asking about your, uh, breast size. If you can’t take the heat, Franny baby, step out of Dipdom.

lettercolumns

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) You want a letter column? Look at *The Scribblerist*. If Mark can only keep it up, he’s got a classic on his hands. I only hope he manages to keep it a feud-free zone, because if things start getting personal it could really get poisoned.

(JOHN CARUSO) I only suggested to you, Linda, more topics you could discuss in your zeen. Just trying to be helpful. You don’t have to get huffy over it. After all, aren’t you the one who in late 1988 “whined” to your readers that no one was participating anymore? I stopped participating because your topics were, quite literally, bullshit themselves. Did it ever dawn on you that maybe that’s why others stop writing from time to time too? Or are you that “elitist” that you feel all of your own ideas are super?

out of dipdom

[Cancelled, I guess, due to lack of interest. Sniffle.]

polls & awards

(BOB OLSEN) Hey, congrats on your Marco Poll finish! *HoL* is vastly underrated and should

have done a lot better...I really mean that...

(TIMOTHY MOORE) The Runestone is too complicated. Period. If I am to decide which zeen is the best, a one vote for one zeen rule makes things easier with less chance of anyone calling fraud. But will this stop me from voting in the Runestone? No. Sigh.

[Huh? At present you’re only allowed one vote per zeen. That’s the way it’s always been.]

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) Is polling a duty? I didn’t think it was. This isn’t television, where a lot of money rides on which show is the most popular. This is dip. It isn’t that important whether more people like Zeen A over Zeen B. Polls are something people want to do, but they could go away without having much effect on the hobby, or indeed being much missed.

(MARC HANNA) Mr Caruso seems to have taken a step towards resolving a feudal controversy, by offering to verify Bruce Linsey’s Poll Results. I’m not really sure why Linsey needs “a big chance to prove he really does care for The Poll and not himself.” An unnecessary barb—don’t you care about *yourself*, John?

Just for the record, Bruce was very helpful (and Dick Martin was not any less helpful) in getting me started in The Hobby, in a way which I felt was adequately unselfish. Since then, I’ve received no feud propaganda from Bruce, although he did caution me (in the pages of *The Cream Shall Rise #4*) about disruptive, destructive Hobby characters. In all fairness, these comments didn’t belong in *Cream* either—right, Bruce?

Nevertheless, John’s offer seems genuine. But, how can we verify his verification? Someone must act as a control on the whole experiment. Obviously, a non-partial judge, an objective newcomer, is the *best* choice. The newcomer will act as a third party in the entire endeavor. He must have an appropriate title: The Relative Ethics Custodian Supremo (REX), or The Just, Ethical Relativism Custodian (JERK). I’ll be happy to humbly appoint myself to the position of REX. Ethical Darksiders who disagree with this appointment may call me JERK.

Fingers are pointing! Why not choose the HMC? Unfortunately, the current HMC has disqualified himself because of his recent use of profanity in one of his *HoL* sermons. Sorry, David. Write me, though. Maybe you can still be the JERK officer! Don’t let them call you JERKOFF though.

That wouldn't be nice. - REX

(MARK LEW) I vaguely recall plotting to get a bunch of people to give 10s to a fictitious zeen (*Diplodocus*) but it didn't work out. That was way way-back-when (81?), back when one of those purple-print Canadian zeens was doing the poll. Remember that, Dick?

[Yes, I remember. But I bet you don't remember that several issues of a zeen by that name actually did get printed, do you? Circulation was extremely limited....]

(BRAD WILSON) Why does a Pollster have to send out *any* ballots? Mark Berch expends a great deal of effort to show that the anti-Linsey people haven't been consistent about their position on this matter. Seems to me that the Poll did OK without any pre-printed or mass-mailed ballots. Any mailing of ballots by the Pollster is going to bias the results, so I suggest none be made. But then we'd not break ballot records every year, would we?

Any publisher can ask for 10s for their zeen, as Dick did, and if his/her subbers think it deserves it, it will get them. If not, it won't. Dick got 10s, so *Thorazeen* clearly deserved them, except in Linsey's mind—which is all that matters, of course.

Del Grande's story about the plot to give *VoD* 10s has a familiar whiff to it, but I can't pin it down...as does Kathy's story of one John Fisher's escapades. Anything for a record turnout...why doesn't Linsey just pick out, or for that matter, list the whole Albany phone book as voters? It'd be about as honest.

Linda C, bless her heart, doesn't know that the Linsey Poll award certificates have become a collector's item of considerable worth for people interested in supernaturally silly events. To anyone else, they *are* a waste of time and money...

(KATHY CARUSO) Linda asks what everyone does with their Runestone Poll certificates. I put mine up in the PDO Auction every year as a Kathy Caruso Placemat—value 2¢. I'll be a monkey's uncle, but some dope always bids over a buck for same! So let's not trash them—send them to me and I'll auction 'em off—maybe this year I can auction them as “wallpaper for two bathrooms”!

[I used mine as scratch paper, so no, they are not totally worthless.]

(DON DEL GRANDE) It's official—*Thorazeen* “won the Linsey/Sucker Poll,” while *Praxis* “had the highest rating in the Runestone Poll.” Let's hope Dick realizes that whatever “totally legal and (sort of) promoted by Linsey” plan (for example, giving *Trax* a lot of 10s, now that it's eligible) is subject to the *just as totally legal* right of the pollster to throw out any votes that he feels aren't legitimate.

[Yes, Don, it is totally legal for the pollster to rig the results any way he pleases. But then, why do we need the voters, too?]

(MARK NELSON) I find it very sad that Dick feels that he must try as hard as he can to fix the Poll. Instead of drawing people away from supporting the Poll, this childish vendetta will only persuade more people to support Bruce. I support and agree totally with Bruce on ignoring ballots from people who are publicly trying to wreck the Poll out of pure spite.

Oh yes, why should a pubber be given the right to exclude his zeen from the Poll?

[Every time you write, Mark, I just thank heaven that you support and agree totally with Bruce. You don't appear to understand anything on this topic, and I'm too tired of it to explain it to you.]

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) A quick—but important, I feel—clarification of something in last issue's “Polls & Awards” section. Dick said, of last year's effort to lobby Runestone Poll participants into giving *Thorazeen* a high vote, “Did *Thorazeen* deserve to win? Well, all I'll say there is that it certainly had the votes to do so. Was it a ‘quiet little plot’? Hardly. Of course, I expected Linda Courtemanche to inform Linsey of last year's ‘plot.’ Thanks, Linda, for coming through.”

The first time I read that, I thought Dick was simply thanking me for not blabbing to Linsey about what I had heard at CloneCon about *Thorazeen*. For, indeed, I never did say anything to Bruce about it—I have always figured he's a big boy and can take care of himself. But then, rereading Dick's comments, I grew concerned that they could be interpreted as thanks to me for *telling* Linsey about the “plot”—which I did not! So, Dick, if you hoped I would keep my lip zipped about your plans for *Thorazeen*, I did indeed “come through.” If you hoped I'd be a stool pigeon for Linsey, sorry, but I didn't—and wouldn't—do what you “expected.” If anyone in this hobby ever

wants to label me as a blind Linsey toady, they'll have to do it without cause. I think vote-skewing plots are most definitely his problem and not mine—let him catch on on his own.

[Well, Linda, I guessed wrong. I just figured that since you talk to Linsey on a regular basis, the topic would somehow come up, and you would fill him in on the goings on. Not as a stool pigeon mind you, as I wasn't particularly trying to hide anything. I should have known you'd spend all your time going over the details of those sixteen consecutive wins at *Family Business* you managed to pull off!]

(DAVID HOOD) Okay, I think you have a point about me saying I want to be neutral and then turning around and saying things about Dick and *Thorazeen*. I was trying to say that Dick's *intent* in his "Give *Thorazeen* a 10" campaign was critical—that an intent to screw up the Poll is inherently different than simply an intent to get a 10. Now that I think about it, perhaps the distinction really isn't all that significant.

At any rate, I *will* stay away from such topics in the future because I have found that *any* contribution will be seen as attacking one side or the other. There really are interesting topics in *HoL* that have nothing to do with feuding.

I hope many will follow Bruce's example and declare a moratorium on feuding. Let's move on to something else.

[Let's hope he decides to extend the moratorium permanently. I'll believe it when I see it.]

ratings & scoring systems

(DON DEL GRANDE) The problem with a win/draw scoring system is that a two-way and a three-way draw score fewer points than a win and an elimination. In my scoring system, a win is worth 25, and any other finish is worth the number of SCs minus 7 (but not less than 0) plus 5 for being in a draw; the short end of an 18-16 results scores as many points (9) as an 11-center draw (4+5), and a win/elimination is worth the same (25+0) as two draws that total 29 SCs (15+10).

(TIMOTHY MOORE) The game is made to be won. Anything less than this is defeating the purpose of the game. And unless your scoring system rewards a sole win situation far above a

two-way draw, then why would *anyone* want to risk going for a win, a situation where obviously you will be fighting most, if not all, of the board!

Do people allow games to run incongruently, *ie*, with differing game years played on each table depending on the speed of the players? I would think that would throw any supply center-based system into chaos. At the cons I have run, I have all games run on the same clock to keep this from occurring.

I think Robert Sacks scoring system is great! From now on, i will be using the 80%/80% centers/units rule to declare all draws. This is, of course, if you don't invoke that Scoring System Covenant you have. (Just kidding, Robert!)

(BRAD WILSON) Ratings are boring. But while we're here, any system that doesn't give a clear and significant advantage to solo, 18-center (or conceded) wins is out of whack. People like Hood who try to encourage rational play on a Dip board are forgetting Wilson's First Rule of Tournament Dip, enunciated at Atlanticon 1985: "One cannot assume rational play." If a small power has been stabbed, perhaps the player would feel better suiciding out against his tormentor instead of playing for a few worthless points in Hood's system. perhaps, to such a player, taking someone down with him would be more satisfying then finishing 35th, instead of 45th, in the tourney. I really don't think Hood's much-vaunted system is too much to get excited about—for there are too many factors to add in that effect the way a player plays that are completely apart from the scoring system.

Besides, in a two- or three-round Dip tourney, if you don't do well in the first round, then you're probably not going to win anyway, so the system matters little to your play on rounds two or three. What really might help tourney dip is to stop seeding the second-third-final rounds. I don't know how much this is done anymore, but at Origins 1983 in Detroit, it led to obsessive point-counting and draw-comparing on the top board (of which I was the chief victim, being ranked #2 or #3 coming in) and at other cons—not Origins 83, though—it can lead to listless play on the lower boards. If you just pick the boards randomly, it would prevent some of those ills.

(MARK NELSON) Ratings, *yawn!* Sorry, but this issue has been done to death! The only thing that people see to agree on is that postal games and tournament games are different kinds of games, and require different kinds of rating systems.

I am against any rating system which takes into account the supply centre holdings of any year except the final year; it doesn't matter how well you've done in previous years, it's the final result that counts. Also, I believe that every power in a draw should be rated equally (with a minor differential on supply centre count). If a player is irrelevant to a draw, then he shouldn't be in it; if he's in it, then he is just as relevant as any other player. Come to think of it, the number of players in a draw is irrelevant: the name of the game is to win, and there is no reason why a two-player draw means you've come nearer to winning than a four-player draw.

Truly great players seem to be able to overcome any reputation they have. Edi Birsan wrote an article many years ago on this subject.

[Ratings has been done to death, true. But then, yours is the first letter I've ever seen that ever wondered why different-sized draws have different point values. We learn something new every day.]

(DAVID HOOD) Only thing I want to talk about is Dick's description of the "Death With Dignity" awards. I agree that they worked to some extent at the con—I got one myself—but in the long run people would just realize that almost every game got one awarded in it. The appeal would be lost, since an award that goes out to too many people ceases to be much of an incentive. Although I will say that if one refuses to adopt the incentives that I am talking about in the scoring system, having the Death With Dignity awards would be a good second choice.

Also, concerning how centers exhibit the player's skill in that particular game—I agree with Dick that there are cases when some of us might say a three-center power played better than a five-center power. But in the vast majority of games, I think, center totals at the end are the best determinant of a player's outcome—short of inclusion in a draw.

[But there is no "long run" over the course of a two- or three-game tournament. The Death With Dignity awards were every bit as potent each of the four years we ran the games at Marycon. What's more, an actual award is much better incentive for a player to play hard than small fractional points.]

(JOHN CARUSO) People can't seem to grasp winning and losing very well, can they? Let's put it another way. Let's reduce the Vietnam War into two separate but similar games: in one game, N

Vietnam has eighteen centers, while S Vietnam has sixteen centers. Let's turn it around and say that in game two, N Vietnam, China, and Russia control most of the centers and win, while S Vietnam and USA lose. Now, who should get more points: the winning alliance in game situation #2 or the loser in situation #1? Hypothetically, if you keep playing out the game, the sixteen-center position will decrease and the eighteen-center position will grow. The reason eighteen is the winning point is that it represents an attainable position and also represents more than half the centers controlled.

(JAMES NELSON) The Americans and the Australians seem to have one base thing in common: they can't agree on what is a good rating system. Here in Britain, we use Richard Sharp's rating system. An alternative rating system is the Nelson-Kinzett rating system (not *mine*, though, I stress—it's Mark's), which is a development of Sharp's. These are commonly agreed to be the "best" systems for rating people. Both are complicated systems for rating people, with scores for games based on how good the players in the game are.

It works like this: imagine two identically played games, with exactly the same results. The only difference is that one game is full of battle-hardened and experienced Dip players, and the other is full of novices. The winner/drawers in the novice game will find that their rating had increased less than their mirror players in the experienced game. Likewise, the losers in the novice game will lose more from their ratings than their mirror images in the experienced game.

However, this system still has a snag. It is, and always will be, impossible to get everyone to agree on what is a "good result." Is, for example, a seven-way draw better than a second place with sixteen centers? I would say it is: surely drawing, and hence not losing, is better than losing; whatever the strength of the loser, he has still lost. What is the point of winning a battle if you don't win the war?

recipeready

(BOB OLSEN) I think by "Recipe Ready" you mean the same thing I would call "Burn Before Eating"—a document of such exquisite sensitivity that even to acknowledge its existence would be to compromise its confidentiality. Unless it was politically expedient to do so, of course. By the way, the first, fourth, eighth, twelfth, twentieth, and

thirty-seventh words in this paragraph are Off The Record, whereas the third, tenth, seventeenth, twenty-ninth, and fifty-eighth words are Not For Print, except in Puerto Rico and New Guinea in months that contain the letter "Y." Also, I retain exclusive North American film rights.

(KEVIN BROWN) I have honored the only NFP label I've gotten since I started publishing, and I figure most things that folks would label NFP are things I wouldn't print anyway. Such is the hazard of having a specialized letter column in a specialized zeen. I seriously doubt that I'll have any trouble with NFP labels, but stranger things have happened.

(CAL WHITE) I don't consider an OTR label as *totally* sacrosanct, but it would take an awfully good reason for me to break a trust like this. I think it's a matter of courtesy, really. Mind you, I'm not against being *discourteous* when called for, but I'd hate to establish it as a *policy*.

(MARK LEW) there's not much point in arguing that everybody has to or doesn't have to honor nfp requests, because people can do what they want. after a while, one comes to know whom he can trust with what sort of information, and writes accordingly. some of the people i correspond with use the label and i honor it, partly because i think it's the decent thing to do, and partly because i want to continue to hear their private views. it's interesting to me that so many of your subbers consider brux someone who can't be trusted to honor an nfp label. i know that *i* can trust him to honor one of mine. i'm not sure why i would be treated differently.

i think it's unfortunate that some of you are trying to discourage "not for print" labels on letters. i appreciate them, and i don't consider them an insult to my editorial judgment. i run a very open letter column, and it's not always clear whether a subber means to contribute to the column or is just being chatty. when someone writes me a comment about something interesting, i often like to print it in the zeen in hopes of eliciting comments from others, but if the writer prefers it to remain a matter of personal correspondence, i'd rather keep it to myself. i'm not a mind-reader, so i'm not always sure of the writer's preference, so i like to get nfp labels.

i resent your comment (to berch, dec 88) that they constitute "a sad commentary on your reputation that so many people who write you don't trust your discretion and judgment." it is my

intention to always be considerate to those who write to me. if they let me know their feelings about what gets printed (or about anything else, for that matter), it benefits all of us.

[Julie's (Unlabeled) Letter to Mark Berch, March 10, 1989: "My comment about how people who write labeled letters to you don't trust your discretion and judgment was probably unfair. After all, if you are really untrustworthy in this respect, what difference would a little label make to you? I really only know of a couple people who have written labeled letters to you for this reason; take a wild guess who. I had no idea you were the 'Ann Landers' of the hobby—guess that proves how well you keep a secret!

["Please bear in mind *my* experience with such letters. I've only seen a handful of Recipe Ready letters in my Diplife, and they were all sleazy, Megadip missives. I have come to associate Recipe Ready letters with behind-the-scenes manipulators like Walker, Linsey, Davis, and you (and quite correctly, it seems, since as you say, the majority of the over hundred you've received have been from the other three). I don't recall ever writing a Recipe Ready letter myself. Therefore, it would not occur to me that someone could have a legitimate reason to label a letter."]

(KATHY CARUSO) Mark Berch states: "I think it's a sad commentary on your judgment that you would assign a motive to people (a motive for why they label their letters to Berch) without even discussing it with most of them. I have never had someone tell me that 'If I trusted your judgment about keeping this private, I wouldn't label this, but since I don't trust your judgment, I am labelling this letter' (or words to that effect). So pray tell, who are you talking about?" Well, I'd like to be the first to come forward and raise my hand, and as evidence, I offer my comments in *HoL* #19, pg 34: "...if you have to put labels on letters you are writing to people, then why write to them at all—obviously you don't trust them, and they aren't your friends—so why waste your time and theirs writing! Well, it makes sense to me. I just don't write that type of people *anymore*. (This is a key word—make sure Berch sees it!)"

What I find to be a sad commentary is that Mark couldn't figure all that out for himself. Oh, and by the way—I am very certain of my motives—you were absolutely correct.

(JOHN CARUSO) "Dear Julie-My previous letter to you concerning John Caruso's remarks

contained a copying error. The quote I gave for Kathy on page 32 was correct, but same item on page 31 I copied wrongly. On page 31, col 2, line 7, the last word should be 'thorn,' not 'rose.' The quote also appears correctly a little further down that same column. Mark Berch, cc John Caruso"

I'm sure you've also received a copy of this "correction" from Mr Berch. I had noticed this "inaccuracy" in Mr Berch's copying, but since the entire matter is trivial to me, I let it go be. Obviously, it's not trivial to Mr Berch, and this note appears to be an attempt to cut me off if I try to exploit his inaccurate copying and reporting of a past issue.

One has to wonder, though, how many other such incidents have occurred in print in the past that have "slipped by" Mr Berch's eyes, or have been ignored by others. One has to wonder how many opinions Mr Berch has swayed by printing inaccurate material, such as this, that slipped by his proofreading. One has to wonder how accurate Mr Berch's reporting of non-documented incidents would be if he can't properly relate (*ie*, copy exactly—word for word) a documented issue.

One has to wonder why Mr Berch made a big issue of the entire thing (Kathy's alleged violation of his confidence). When his friend (Bruce Linsey) violated Rod Walker's request (written across the top) not to send feud material to the *DW* subber list, Mr Berch defended his friend's action.

Mark Berch's comments that Kathy made a big fuss over this incident is just plain hot air. Don't believe me? Mark Berch attests a few sentences here to Kathy fussing over the whole thing. Yet back then, he wrote over *two-and-a-half pages*, and now writes another two-and-a-half pages, plus he put out an issue of his *zeen*, by his own admission, over this topic. So who is still fussing over this, eh, Mr Berch? What confidence was violated, eh, Mr Berch? If the so-called quote was garbled (your own admission), how is it a quote, eh, Mr Berch? How is telling everyone "Berch won't respond because he's annoyed" with Kathy more violation of confidence, when it is the plain and obvious truth, eh, Mr Berch? Could it be that you finally caught on a month too late that Kathy was pulling your chain and that she made an ass out of you and that you carried on like a baby to get even with her, eh, Mr Berch? Isn't that the way it went down, eh, Mr Berch?

Mark's comments about me using OTR/etc to him in the distant past are true. But then I realized if I had to send him anything OTR, it wasn't worth it to send to him to begin with. So now, anything I send him, which is few and far between, is

unlabeled. I only use OTR/DNQ/etc now if it's something that is unofficial at present but will eventually be public. Oh, for everyone's information, it was Mark Berch who introduced me to the secretive world of espionage and the OTR/DNQ/etc labels.

Unlike Mark Berch, if you have a problem—game-related or otherwise—and you want my help, you can make it unofficial and I'll try to do what I can. If I can make headway without using your name, using a similar, hypothetical example to another party, I will try. Problems will be treated with confidentiality if that's what you want.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Mark Berch mentions reporters protecting their sources, and his belief that a promise to protect a source is not contingent on the validity of the information being given to the reporter. Mark is right there. I consider it my responsibility as a reporter to seek out those people most likely to know the truth of a situation, and to use that information only if my interviews with them show an apparent knowledge and honesty. If a source will submit to an interview only on the condition of anonymity, and I can find no one willing to be quoted by name, I will protect that person if I decide to print the information. If the information turns out to be mistaken or an outright lie, I will print a correction but not betray the source's identity. To do so would be to endanger the ability of any reporter to get valuable information from sources who fear to be identified. Obviously, if some reporters identify sources for what might amount to just an innocent mistake on the source's part, all sources are likely to fear exposure—and they'll clam up. And where would a story like the Watergate investigation have been under such circumstances?

[What if the reporter finds out that the source was just using the reporter to spread self-serving lies? Is the reporter then justified in confiding to another reporter (off the record, of course), who the source was? Or would the reporter be better off investigating the source himself, and revealing the whole sordid scheme himself? Or would the sensible reporter realize that he's been used, duck for cover and never mention the topic again? And how does any of this discussion of journalistic theory apply to dipdom?]

(BRAD WILSON) On the subject of NFP/DNQ/OTR letters: I would agree with Linda that, as a reporter, such labels are occasionally

quite useful. Even in Dipdom, I think they can be useful to a point, to allow the recipient to learn something the writer doesn't want attributed to him/her. The Dark Side overdoes it with these things, though.

(MARK NELSON) Strange that Michael should mention Bruce quoting people without permission, when he then goes on to paraphrase a letter that I sent him....

[Was it marked "not for print"? He didn't print it, did he? Was it marked "do not quote"? A paraphrase is not a quote. "Burn before reading" is the only totally safe marking you can make. Be careful out there.]

(DON DEL GRANDE) There's an answer to DNQ/NFP/Personal & Confidential letters. Since each side claims that the other violates these labels, *just don't put anything in a letter you don't want made public*. Try telephones. (Supposedly, it's against the law to record a phone conversation without giving all parties involved some warning—then again, it isn't that hard to splice a taped conversation around so that it says anything you want.)

[I don't think that's the case with phone calls. If my memory is correct (go ahead, that was a straight line), either party may record the call for their personal records.]

right of reply

(BRAD WILSON) Well, being a First Amendment absolutist, my zeen follows a simple rule: I offer right of reply (courtesy of reply might be better, I suppose) to anyone. It's not a secret that I'm no fan of Bruce Linsey, but he had and still has a "courtesy of reply" to *Vertigo*. He chose not to use it and to distribute mass mailings, but that was his choice. The only limitation on this is financial: *ie*, I can't put out 100-page zeens, so some lengthy stuff might be delayed an issue. On right to edit: I edit for spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation. But then, since I edit for (part of) my living, that may just be force of habit.

(CAL WHITE) When you come right down to it, the only "rights" you have are the ones which you can personally enforce. Since you can't force a publisher to print your response (short of going to his house and threatening to turn his lights out for

him), it is not effectively a "right." Therefore, "right of reply" can only exist as a self-imposed policy of the publisher. However, should you go to the trouble of making a "mass mailing," the publisher has no "right" to protest. Personally, I wish Brux would stop printing up his *A Response to...* zeens, but I would never suggest that he has no "right" to do it.

women

(KEVIN BROWN) I might have a comment if I were running Dip or if I had any other women on my sub list. OK, I do have a comment on women and dip—of the two, I prefer women.

[Maybe you're a sensible guy after all!]

(MARK NELSON) I found the comments you quoted from *MegaDiplomat* very offensive. What does Chris Carrier think he is doing? Instant death! *Feuds!!* 33-page letters denouncing him!!! *Death Threats!!!!*

[You know, Mark, I really wish you wouldn't get so hung up about this feuding stuff. You British are all so bloodthirsty, it's a wonder we let you associate with us here in the Ammurrican Hobby (Canadian Annex not included).]

(TIMOTHY MOORE) I know why Audi is pubbing—because she likes to correspond and do a good job at something. She isn't here to get involved in the feuds. I don't think that you will ever see her really getting involved in the Hobby in general (a shame, I think, but it just isn't one of her priorities). She simply wants to entertain and provide a zeen free of the BS prevalent in a lot of otherwise good zeens. You won't find her playing in many games or writing as much as her correspondents or players would like. To each their own—I can't push her!

Had a few comments come our way when *Dark Mirror* started, asking if Audrey SF Jaxon was a pseudonym or if Timothy Moore was! I guess since it has happened before, people wonder. Well, to be on record here, we are two completely different people. Our writing styles and handwriting certainly tell us apart.

Once you have a reputation for being an excellent player (Kathy Caruso, Melinda Holley), any advantage you might have for being female is gone. Any unknown female starting out has an advantage playing with any red-blooded male, if

you know how to stroke his a) ego, b) pride, or c) fill in the blank. This is not to say that females have to do this to succeed, it just can be part of their arsenal of weapons that come to bear in a game. Kathy and Melinda have gotten so good at the game that I feel this can't be part of their style of play. Sure they may flirt, but everyone knows that they are playing with matches. A novice or unknown female player can play dumb to her advantage because there are a lot of males out there thinking that they are dumb. Players like Kathy and Melinda have proven that you can be known for winning and still win, regardless of gender. I don't think anyone should take these two for anything other than what they are: exceptional player. Anyone who feels they have succeeded for some other reason than this is only deluding themselves.

(LINDA COURTEMANCHE) Hurrah, a topic about me! (Oh, all right, and maybe a few others...) Is it an advantage to be a woman in Dip? Not necessarily. It is easier to have a high profile in Dip as a woman, because there are so few of us. That can have its good points (serves as intimidation to lesser lights), and its bad points as well (if you're a stabber, word spreads fast and you may find yourself ganged up on). I don't believe the men in a Dip game will first stab a woman in the game because of her sex—they'll stab her if she's a novice or if it serves their purposes, just as they would another man. The awesome reputation of Kathy Caruso and Melinda Holley in the gaming ranks is proof of the "equal rights" a skilled female player can enjoy in the Dip community. However, I do perceive that male gamers tend to classify female gamers as less interested in other wargames and hex games. And that's not always true. However, women in this hobby sure get a lot of fun mileage in the press out of flirting and man-baiting!

(JOHN CARUSO) Finally a new topic I can sink my teeth into. I think being a woman in Dip can have its advantages, when dealing with people that see women as people. Unfortunately in Dipdom, that isn't always the case. Like in real life, some male members in Dipdom see females as dumb broads that should be barefoot and pregnant. That they should be in the home, cooking, cleaning, raising children, and watching soap operas. Yet others see them as objects to throw wisecrack remarks at, such as François Cuerrier's remarks. I remember a convention I GMed in Detroit where one of my female players was having a problem with a male player who kept trying to brush up against her. Disgusting, isn't it? I actually had to

intercede.

Why can it be advantageous to a woman? Simply—you have an extra tool at your disposal. Femininity! A woman can play the meek, defenseless female and get the boys drooling over trying to help her. Would you believe Kathy can still get away with this ploy occasionally, despite her rep as a player? A guy can't do that. A guy can't offer to go on a date with another guy, but a single lady can. Diplomacy is right up women's alleys too, especially married women. Isn't the everyday life of a married woman "appeasing" her husband and making him think that he's the king? They practice it all the time. It's easy to adapt it for Dip.

I can see the other side of the coin as well. Acceptance as part of the Dip community is much harder, mainly because the Dip community is predominantly male, with the males in the positions they consider "in charge."

(MICHAEL HOPCROFT) I was raised in a very feminist household. Especially after my father was kicked out, it was rather hard to grow up as a boy while being constantly reminded what evil scum men are. Men are, in fact, evil scum, and the world would be better off without them. (She didn't set out to teach me that; I picked it up from the letter column of *Ms*, especially all those anonymous lesbians...) In a sense, this is a reaction to all those centuries of men looking at women as useful objects who have some value as amusement but not as beings. To ask what causes sexism is a difficult question, but seeing it in the hobby like this is no fun.

Carrier, of course, has no taste. He likes to jump on people for no reason, and he has his own very strange ideas of what constitute humor. If this were not an "amateur" enterprise which doesn't go "outside the Hobby," you could have a wonderful time explaining the libel laws to him, and the legal consequences of "defamation of character." (Oddly enough, I am a minor participant in a similar battle in British Media fandom.) As it is, we can all hope for the best that nobody enters the contest or that people start telling Carrier not to pull this junk (not that he would listen). I traded with Carrier for a while, but his kind of stuff grows old very quickly. How long has he been doing this, anyway? Anyway, he's probably going after me next. I recall him saying something about mark lew going after me on the old SSI issue or something like it. I don't know for sure because I threw away his zeen before I could read it—nothing like a thorough housecleaning to show what's important to

someone. Actually it was more of an avoidance impulse, the sort of thing that makes me throw away Linsey mass mailers now before I read them. (I've noticed that Linsey attacks *The MegaDiplomat* from time to time, but with little vigor. Carrier in turn doesn't rake Linsey over the coals. Common ground, or mere coincidence?) By the way, in answer to George Mann's question, if the feuds were to suddenly go away, Carrier would start some. He's that sort, and he counts his own feuds as part of the hobby scene even though nobody else cares what the bloody hell he's talking about.

The radical view: "Men, as was noted, are scum. And with a whole society built around their evil behavior, it is only a matter of time before their disgusting, filthy little minds contaminate their dealings in the hobby." I have a great deal more respect for the radical view than is good for my self-image, as there is nothing I can do about being male short of drastic and painful action. Still, there are a lot of areas in this society where women are treated slightly better than dirt. The Hobby is no different.

One other thing I have noticed is that people who are rather aggressive in their emotional makeup, but must keep that aggression under control in their daily dealings, are attracted to the hobby. It becomes for them an outlet for oddities in their beliefs or desires. I must confess that I am no different in that respect; I tend to release a great many of my frustrations while writing press for Kathy, for example, to the point that a certain Larry "Rin Tin" Botimer would probably have me shot should I show my face in the Seattle area. The difference with me is that I am always concerned about the ethics of what I do. I am also concerned that I treat people as they are; Kant's Categorical Imperative must have left its mark someplace. There are a lot of people who see no ethical demands being placed on their hobby activity, or who feel that its "game" nature releases them from any such obligations.

We have seen some of the results. The Bad Boys, in the full height of their spleen, were indulging in all the forms of other-bashing they could conceive. Publishers would think they have a receptive audience will say the oddest things; Cuerrier is a good example of that, a man of whom my opinion declines every time I hear his name or see something he writes. This also happens in reverse; I doubt Gary Behnen likes to read in every issue of *KK* how Kathy and Melinda are going to castrate him and preserve his "wiener"!

The plain fact is that in the Diplomacy hobby

you get some really odd examples of this incredibly strange species. Put them in a field where there are no real restraints on their conduct, and things tend to fall out that are unpleasant. Hobbyists are people with feelings, but other hobbyists all too often do not recognize this. Thus things like this will happen. The only way this will improve is if hobbyists stand up for each other, even to the point of cancelling trades or subs.

By the way, my own dealings with women in the various fandoms I am involved in have to be cautious. There is one woman who is very important in the local Whoclub whom I find very attractive, but I know full well that if it came out, she would use her martial arts skills to do such damage to my sensitive anatomy that whether I found someone attractive afterwards would no longer make much difference. Alas, she only has eyes for her horses and English actors....

(KATHY CARUSO) Now wait a minute, when I said it was an advantage to be a woman, I was talking about playing the game of Diplomacy. I think it's easier for a woman to twist a guy's way of thinking than it is for a man to manipulate a woman. Woman's intuition is also a big plus in the game. I trust my instinct every time, and it doesn't *usually* let me down. ("Usually" is a key word—make sure Berch sees it.)

As for women getting dumped on in this hobby—we sure do! *But*, not by the majority—only by a few. I believe the ones who make their stupid, outrageous, nasty, and often libelous statements do so out of jealousy. Think about it, you, me, Melinda, Cathy, and Daf all get plenty of attention. Perhaps their male egos can't stand the thought of playing second fiddle to a female, or perhaps they know that as women we can see right through them. Better to try and harass us into leaving the hobby than have us expose them for their obvious inadequacies. I mean a "MAN" does not get down on all fours and eat cat food—my two-year-old granddaughter does that. A real man does not worry about who you and I are living or sleeping with—unless, of course, he fantasizes about doing the exact same thing.

98% of the men in this hobby treat us as equals and with respect. You can't blame the entire Dip population because of a few outspoken jerks. These jerks obviously have trouble dealing with a real woman, in Diplomacy or the real world.

By the way, even though we are referred to as the "weaker sex," you and I have put up with more verbal attacks than most men. We have stuck around, yet many males who used to be in this

hobby have left because of much less. I say we hang in—we've sure got the brains to be here, not to mention the bodies (well, I have the brains, you have the body—I thought I'd better clear that up before Berch or Davis wrote in).

Seriously, women belong in this hobby, and as long as the ones here keep fighting the odds, the narrow-minded sexists in this hobby will find it harder and harder to keep us out. The female population has increased over 500% since I joined—can the men say the same? Of the top five zeens in the Marco Poll, three are published by women (you, me, and Melinda)!

So much for this being a male hobby! Hey, it's ours, they just haven't realized it yet!

(CAL WHITE) Interesting topic. I'm not sure that a male has any business answering this question, but you didn't rule it out, so I'll try.

I think the Dip hobby reflects the chauvinism of real life, no more, no less. Whether or not this is an advantage depends on the particular woman. If she comes across as the "weak little housewife/plaything," she may, quite likely, be able to wrap some otherwise sensible males around her finger and gain some gaming advantage thereby.

Your average female (call her the "secretary" type for the sake of an illustration) will probably be treated similarly, but some respect will be shown her in accordance with any capability she displays. A show of at least reasonable intellect will get concurrent recognition. How much will depend on the male she is dealing with.

At the other extreme, if a woman goes to special lengths to refuse *any* preferential treatment, *demand*s her place in a male-dominated social strata, and generally makes it clear that she intends to compete as an equal (or more-than-equal), she will be accorded the outward respect and status as befits her intelligence (by all but a few die-hards). *However*, let her slip up just once, or let herself be perceived as being too abrasive (*ie*, a holier-than-thou feminist), the male vultures in the crowd will be only too happy to pounce. They will try and slap her down as hard as they can, even resorting to sexist name-calling (right, François?).

Guess which category you fall into, Julie? I don't envy you the task of putting up with all the salvos you get from this hobby, but what the hell, hang in there anyway!

(BRAD WILSON) Women in Dip. Wow. Not being one, I risk committing grotesque foot-in-mouthery with this, but here goes: I think

Kathy is right that women have a certain edge when it comes to actually playing the game itself. The first postal Dip game I ever played in featured a woman—Kathy Caruso, herself—and she did a bang-up job (winning as Italy). I think part of that success came from her feminine wiles—I'm not being sexist; I've just never seen anyone else wrap people around their fingers the way she did in that game (I was one of the wrappees). Part of that is no doubt because Kathy is a superior player, but my instincts tell me part of it was because she was a woman. I can't quantify it, but...

It's in Megadip that a female suffers. Given the anything-goes, down-n-dirty sordidness of Megadipping, a female is at a disadvantage. For example, Carrier's disgusting joke on abortion is only possible with females. With men, our culture often considers it to be a bizarre compliment if you've slept with a lot of women, but a woman who does the same is regarded as a "whore," "adulteress," or "slut"—most of which are terms that have been used to denigrate female hobbyists unfairly.

It's inconceivable that a pubber would ask a male reader about the girth and/or width of the male reader's genitalia (well, maybe not inconceivable; I forgot about Steve Hutton), but of course, it's OK to ask a female hobbyist about her breasts—at least according to François Cuerrier, anyway. But, again, our culture allows or encourages this kind of denigration of women, but not men. Ever see a female worker on the street say, "Nice penis" to a guy as construction workers do to women?

As for Davis and Linsey, well, it's hard to think that Linsey's use of the prostitute analogy wasn't intentionally designed to slander you and Kathy. In Fred's case, I think you're merely dealing with an old-fashioned mind, as evidenced by the term "without benefit of clergy."

My overall verdict might be that it is especially difficult to be a woman who is "prominent" in the hobby. One who merely plays quietly is unlikely to be called a whore or a bitch. Even prominent but non-controversial women like Linda Courtemanche aren't abused verbally or in print often (except, of course, for Linda's well-known chocolate addiction). Perhaps it's most difficult being a controversial woman, but that sounds kind of obvious. It's probably easier to be a controversial male, though.

["Easier" in the sense of "more easily tolerable" you mean? Controversy is an easy thing to stumble into for both sexes.]

A common refrain among the newcomers when faced with the turmoil of dipdom is, "If only we had a proper organization, then all our problems would go away." How exactly this would happen is never made clear, though at first blush an organization of some sort would seem to be a Good Thing.

In the past there have been several attempts at dipdom organizations, undertaken with varying degrees of seriousness and success. None have been particularly long-lasting in their effectiveness, though I would guess that the semi-serious People's Diplomacy Organization would have to take the prize in that department at somewhere over six years (and still counting). Oh yes, the CDO has been around (in name, at least) for quite some time also. Typically, these organizations are set in motion by at most a small number of politically active dippers, who then try to gather public support (as the IDA and PDO did) or hide from view to avoid public controversy (as the Rod Walker-inspired Illuminati group, the NADF did). The ultimate objective of each organization has been to bring some semblance of order to this chaotic hobby, to the benefit of us all. Supposedly novices will flock to us, if only there was something concrete to flock to, as moths to a flame. All controversy and feuding would cease, as all worked together for the greater good. Malcontents would be banished to the outer darkness of the Gamesmasters Publishers Association. Goodness and light would rule the day, and a new golden age would dawn.

Do you believe any of that stuff? Nah, nobody in his right mind would. It is too easy to ignore the will of the masses (if any such thing truly exists) in dipdom, or shape it to one's own ends. There is no way to enforce order and keep unruly members in line.

With that in mind, here's my proposal for the United States Diplomacy Association:

The organization consists of three officers (and a fourth, powerless official), and two levels of ordinary members.

The head of the organization, or Prime member, has several du-

ties and powers. First of all, he chooses the other three officers. Secondly, the Prime will choose the topics and legislation to be debated by the organization. The Prime will direct discussions, and make any final decisions of any importance.

Two officers chosen by Prime will be referred to as the Choice officers. Prime will choose these two for their ability to disagree with each other in an eloquent and rational manner. Their sole function is to bring out as many sides of each issue selected by Prime in as economical, thorough, and entertaining a fashion as possible (can't have the troops bored by the debates now, can we).

The fourth officer is the Supernumerary. His job is to conduct non-binding polls of the members to advise the Prime, and to count the ballots when it comes time to elect the next Prime. Yes, the title implies that this person will be good with numbers, but the non-binding nature of these ballots ensures that the officer is not misnamed.

The two levels of ordinary membership consist of those in Good Standing (those who have registered with the Supernumerary and are eligible to vote for the next Prime), and the Standard Membership (all others).

Elections will be held each year, and no one person may hold office for more than one consecutive one-year term.

There may be some reasonable rules established by the Prime (failure to be civil at all times should probably lead the list), and provisions for declaring backsliding members as Tainted. Rules questions may be a good topic to start with.

Anyway, that's my idea. All we need is for someone to declare themselves to be Supernumerary, set an election date, take a few nominations for Prime, and start signing up members in Good Standing like wildfire. Any volunteers?

So what are your thoughts on organizations? Comments on this one, or any others you may have come in contact with, real or imagined, are welcome.

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