

HOUSE OF LORDS #9

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 almost anyone. It is composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and a great many letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Most importantly, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth.

You can get this zeen any of several ways if you are a publisher or GM. First of all, by sending me one American Dollar per issue, and agreeing to trade. Second, by sending me one American Dollar per issue, and writing something at least once every other issue, or so. Third, agree to run this off for me (at no cost to myself, and in the manner to which I have become accustomed). What, still no takers on that one? Oh, well, I can always try.... NonGMpubbers are obviously limited to the second option only, having nothing to trade (too bad). But really, I'd rather that you took the time to write rather than trade (or, better still, do both!), as the more you put in, the more you get out.

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

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

This issue is earlier than I had expected, even though I should know better by now. Monthly is fine with me, honest, though I realize that you may feel a little beleaguered trying to keep up. Just do the best you can.

Going to have to hold over the stuff I have on irregular games until next issue, but everything else should fit this time. A few reviews of ONCE UPON A DEADLINE as New Business, the maps that didn't quite fit last time, and all of our other usual topics. If you'd like to use any of the maps on a large scale, let me know and I can run off a sheet with just the one you like, for you to make further copies.

As usual, feel free to suggest future topics that you'd like to see. My schedule is by no means fixed. Next time we'll go with the most popular reader request.

This is my first try at doing a zeen using the Apple Laserwriter printer that I've heard so much about. A print shop close to campus has a Laserwriter hooked up to a couple Macs for doing resumes and that sort of thing, and I've talked them into letting me run this off for a cut rate: only 40¢ per page plus \$15 an hour to use their machine. I'd hoped for 25¢ a page, but this isn't too bad. What I spend on my master copy, I should be able to save on postage and printing - the laser prints about 25% more on a page than my Imagewriter printer. If it works out, I may make this a regular thing.

Announcements

New zeens are just popping up all over the place, two new ones in the last month, one recent, and one more in the near future. OVER THERE, by Hugh Christie (and a cast of thousands) (43 E Houston Ave, Montgomery PA 17752) just started up last month. OVER THERE features Dip & variants, for \$6/10 issues, game fee of \$5. Hugh also plans to focus on education.

Also new is THE ADVENTURER, by Jason Russ (Stonehouse Rd, Somers, NY 10589). The first issue promises Dip, Civ, Titan and music quizzes - subs \$6/12 monthly issues, no game fee.

THE VORTEX, David Gorham (806 S Euclid St, Fullerton, CA 02632) is on its fifth issue, but still looks very new. The focus here is on an AH computer GMed Dip games, \$10 for a year's sub, no word on game fees.

Further information from Dr Jim Burgess (100 Holden St, 3rd Left, Providence, RI 02908-5731) tells me that BOOB REPORT will be going big-time real soon now for the low, low price of 25¢ an issue.

No folds to report, so looks like a good month for Dipdom.

The latest ZEEN REGISTER is now on the streets, and available for \$1.50 from Simon Billenness (630 Victory Blvd, #6F, Staten Island, NY 10301-3521). A good little production, and if your publication isn't in it, it probably should be.

The PDO Relief Auction III is moving right along. Simon and John Caruso (29-10 164th St, Flushing, NY 11358-1428) are working together on it, and have split up the workload. They could always use some publicity, and maybe some more items for auctioning. Don't send the items, just a description and a minimum acceptable bid (if any). Due date for info to Caruso on items to be auctioned is Nov 29.

Old Business

The Concept

(MELINDA HOLLEY) Ignore the comments on the color of your covers. I think they're distinctive...as long as you don't use pink. I HATE pink. Comes from a childhood where my mother (temporarily) had this idea of trying to make me into a sweet-natured, delicate, feminine little girl. Somehow it just didn't take.

I'm doing this on the office word processor during lunchtime. The typewriter is broken (I much prefer the typewriter) so I get to pound everything out on this monster. Actually this is quite ideal to lose weight. You can't eat if your hands are busy (sort of a variation on the "idle hands make the Devil's work" theory). Reading during lunchtime allows you to eat. If you're writing (say Dip letters), you still have one hand to eat. You can't eat and type with two hands. And for resisting those after-dinner snacks...keep those hands busy. When I'm not doing Dip-related things (Yes, Bob Olsen, I do manage to accomplish other things), I stay away from snacking by working on a quilt. You cannot eat and embroidery quilting blocks at the same time. It's a physical impossibility. Now, whether this will work or not, I'll have to let you know. But in theory, it's a good idea. (Not to mention that maybe I'll finally get that darn quilt done. I've only been working on it since New Year's of 1983, and it's about one-quarter done.)

((You prefer the typewriter? I make too many typos to be happy with a typewriter, and my writing style is better suited to a word processor. Since I don't make rough drafts or outlines, I just jot down a couple ideas on the screen. Then I revise, add, delete, and revise some more until there's a semi-presentable piece of writing there.

((So I can thank my Mac for keeping me trim, eh. Two hands for the keyboard, and one for the mouse doesn't leave me with much free time for my hands! Builds hand-eye coordination, too!))

(ELMER HINTON) Well, a note; and you still under direct orders from Uncle Roddie not to write to me. Shame, shame.

As it happens, I did see that part about subscribing *and* writing every other issue - but you haven't explained why that wouldn't be cheaper than trading and paying (I presume you're replying to my comment; so you stand corrected). I disagree about the "obligation to participate" crap: I'm here for entertainment. If that comes from reading rather than writing, who has the gall to say nay to that? As for trading - I, in particular, provide readers with news. I like to keep up on events, and provide them to those who don't, can't, or won't be pressured to get every zeen going. I think that's a valid reason. In any case, if it's only participation you want, what about the third combination: trade and write every other issue?

What my prices have to do with it, I don't know. Your snobbery is not well placed considering that as the amateur side dies, the pro side grows, and the fact that over 99% of all turns played each month cost an *average* of \$4 must be very upsetting to those who can't cut it....

In any case, you fail to mention my many openings at amateur rates: a novice game (\$10 plus sub), a regular game (no frills - same price), a variant (sub only, no fee), on top of that one pro fee opening (which, I'll remind you, I've never had trouble filling, by the way).

I noticed that you changed zeen to "zeen" in my quote.

I trust you noticed my maps - since you're interested. Players tell me they like maps that they can play from, and they say mine fit that bill better than most others. I'm not sure why, though, but the space names being visible may be one reason.

By the way - obligations aside, do you mean to say that someone who wants to read what's going on, but doesn't have time to participate in many forums (or do you propose the others be dropped in preference for yours) can't get HOL nohow?

Sorry you didn't like my comment but, let's face it, another 40 pages of reading material, with only a few pages each on numerous topics, does not enthrall me *regardless* of the quality of the discussion.

((Well, if you're not interested in quality writing, I can refer you to plenty of other places - and be glad to see you go. Very clever of you to puzzle out that there's really no advantage to trading over writing. Did you spend a lot of time figuring that out?

((If you're simply here for the entertainment, you're not here, period. Since I'm the one subsidizing the zeen, I get to make the rules, and there's no shortage of gall to enforce them around here.

((I suppose the six new games I've started this year are simply the last gasp of a dying hobby. But with the thriving professional postal Dip hobby charging \$4 a turn, is it any wonder we're in trouble? If by some chance you're comparing us to professional role-playing GMs and that sort of thing, you're only fooling yourself.

((Since you have no trouble at all filling your professional openings, why bother to open the other kind?))

(STEVE LANGLEY) Who needs another forum zeen? Clearly you have a few who are enjoying and contributing to such. Perhaps none of us need such a forum. Certainly that segment who already know all there is to know about publishing and GMing can do without. As for myself, I am continuing to learn better ways to accomplish my goals. Thanks to you and Andy Lischett, I am adding standby notes to my GM helpers (before I kept only the player names and relied on memory for standby history).

Perhaps if Larry Peery was more clear, he wouldn't be misunderstood. I have no idea what of his I misinterpreted. But then, maybe it wasn't me.

((Or maybe he misinterpreted your interpretation?))

(PETER SULLIVAN) Many thanks for the copy of HOL - I'd be delighted to receive it and contribute, given your "no feuds" stance. As for the actual mechanics of trading, although I'd like to receive HOL by air, so I get a chance to give you some feedback, I'd rather send you my zeen C'EST MAGNIFIQUE by surface (although I'll send you the first one by air so you can see what your getting). Would this be okay - after all, with my frequency, you'll be getting up to a 3-for-1 trade for it? I'll send you some cash for the \$1 an issue via the International Subscription Exchange.

I find the idea of a zeen like HOL fascinating - if you were to do it in this country, you wouldn't have any trouble with feuds; on the other hand, I doubt you'd get enough response to make it worthwhile. Perhaps you'd like something on the differences between the UK an US Hobbies?

I'll write some more soon, but anything I send you now won't reach you in time for the next issue

PS. You are aware of the English "slang" meaning "House of Lords," aren't you? Rather apt, actually.

((Sure, tell us about the UK hobby. For instance, have most of you met in person at one time or another? No, I'm not aware of the slang for "House of Lords," though my mind boggles at the possibilities. Fill me in!

((What do you find fascinating about the idea of HOL? I've had a couple of other people say the same, but none have been able to explain what they meant.

((If you manage to publish three times as often as I do, you deserve some sort of medal.))

(KEN PEEL) Hey, guess what? Tomorrow is my birthday! Therefore, I figured that it would be okay for me to play around a little. So sorry, really, if I made you fail one of your exams tomorrow. Interestingly enough, I was talking on the phone to Susan today about the problems of procrastinators. You see, I am one of the worst. I seem to spend my life struggling from one crisis to another. Strangely

enough, that is one of the things that I happen to like best about my current job: that is, absolutely everything is done in crisis mode...therefore, I actually seem to be able to get things done.

((Me too. Which reminds me, I need to write a Civ article for POLITESSE by tonight. Oh well, who needs sleep?)

((Happy birthday, you old geezer.))

(SIMON BILLENNESS) If you want to establish some British contacts with HOL, you'll have to trade. We Brits simply do not bother with mutual subs. You'll find it very difficult to insult us - virtually nobody in Britain takes the hobby too seriously.

Thanks for the new HOL. That certainly was a fast turnaround, wasn't it?

((You got that right.))

(JOHN CARUSO) Thanks for issue 8 of HOL. Of course I'm trading and subbing to HOL, and yes, I will be writing in from time to time, just as I've done so here. I may be burned out, but dead I'm not.

I think I can explain Alan Stewart's "flip-flop" regarding HOL and the alleged "elitist" policy. It's not so much that now that Alan pubs he can (or could have under your old policy) receive HOL, but that it was easy for him to qualify. You see, in Dipdom, there are no restrictions on who can GM or publish or even start up a service. Unlike the real world, where "elitists" are a segregated, governed group of people, in Dipdom, and in HOL specifically, there is no segregation or ruling body. In real life, to get into many exclusive clubs, first you must have wealth. Then you must possess the charisma to persuade the "club" to allow you entry. This doesn't even consider the fact that you must be the right race, religion, nationality, etc (all of which, by the way, is unconstitutional, yet these elitist clubs get away with it for the most part). MENSA is another form of "elitist" group. You have to possess a higher standard of intelligence (near genius level) to get into the club. Yet high intelligence, money, or even high pol finishing had nothing to do with being a part of the old HOL. Just doing the job of pubbing, GMing, or running a service, and there is no governing board to prevent you from doing so. There was then, and is still now, nothing "elitist" about HOL. Never was, never will be (hopefully). Yet those who wrote the "elitist" editorials tried to make people believe there was something "elitist" about HOL's policy. Not so, and I think it is *that fact* that made Alan realize his initial impression, based on the editorial, was "rather silly." It isn't the idea that it now is a self-interest thing to Alan, but how readily easy it was for him to get into this "elite" (as the editorials falsely claimed) group.

For the record, I'm sure you realize that I disagreed with your previous policy. I'm now glad that you've opened HOL up to anyone and everyone who wants to get it, if for no other reason than to show everyone that there is nothing "elitist" going on (at a minimum) and as an education in what is going on around Dipdom.

CANADIAN ARROGANCE: I get tired of hearing about this. There is no such thing. Canadians have their own views of things, just as we do, as Britons do, or anyone else for that matter. To lump people together because one or two persons have that view is stereotyping. All Canadians are not arrogant, just as all Americans are not Republican, or all Russians are not communist.

((Or that Poland is dominated by the Soviet Union.... Really, John, the Canadians were fighting it out to see who would win the title of "Most Arrogant" and now you've spoiled their fun. Heartless, that's what you are.

((No, of course we're not elitist. Elitism here is strictly in the mind - if you think you belong, you do. The whole idea is that everybody has some unique insight that's valuable if only we can pry it out.))

(BRUCE LINSEY) Please tell me how you know Alan Stewart's reasons for changing his mind on the elitism issue. Someday I may end up in a game with him, and it would be handy if I too had this

talent of being able to read his mind.

Elmer Hinton's assertion that we don't need another forum zeen is refuted simply by the fact that yours is successful. If the market were already saturated, you wouldn't be getting all these letters. That's like saying, "With THE DIPLOMAT, REBEL, FROBOZZ, SLEEPNESS KNIGHTS, (etc, etc), why should anyone else start a gamezeen?" As long as you get the business, more power to you.

((Well, if I told you the secret of how I can read Alan's mind, then it wouldn't be a secret anymore, would it?))

Costs

(MELINDA HOLLEY) Frankly, I've never done a study of what it costs (each issue) to put out REBEL. I tend to avoid stuff like that...especially if it deals with money. When I started REBEL, I wanted to keep the costs as low as possible. A former schoolfriend had just opened a copier's business, and I became one of his first customers...at reduced rate. Ah-ha! I thought - this is great. So I put a sub cost at \$0.20/issue. Then the postal service raised their first class rates to \$0.22. I figured "What's the difference?". Then my copier friend decided the life of a businessman was too much for his free-wheeling nature and closed up shop. (He'd pretty much left the actual running of the business to his employees who, frankly, didn't know what they were doing.) I think 95% of the publishers lose money in pubbing. It's part of the business. Anyone who breaks even is awfully lucky.

((But reading Pete's stuff below make me feel like my nominal loss is really a profit!))

(PETE GAUGHAN) PERE had just hit \$2/copy at the end, mostly because of my stubborn insistence on the best copier I could find. When sub rates were 75¢/issue, costs averaged \$1.25 to \$1.75/copy. Boy, it sure was nice back in LA, where I could get good 3¢ copies. Of course, here I had the advantage of being the only game in town - back in LA, I was a bitty fish in the California Dip pond. But anyway....

Dipcon

(ROBERT SACKS) In the two years you were gone, the Dipcon Committee, in violation of its charter, refused to put two bids to conduct Dipcon to the Society. In addition, the Dipcon Society voted not to provide any funding to any hobby services. It has become clear that the lessons of the '82 Dipcon have been lost - the Dipcon has gone into business for itself to the detriment of the hobby, the hobby services, and other conventions, and to protect its privileged position it will engage in any corruption. The Dipcon, as something special and unique, is dying.

There will be an annual Diplomatic Congress held in conjunction with Atlanticon's east coast convention (in 1987 that will be The Diplomatic Congress of Baltimore 1987 held at Origins, 2-5 July 1987 at the Baltimore Convention Center & Hyatt) including NYGB Tournaments in Support of Hobby Services, the traditional Open Hobby Meeting, a Diplomatic Gaming Seminar, and possibly other events and meetings such as a NAVB Variant event if they decide to participate.

I certainly felt that the two Dipcon proposal was well worth considering at the time. Certainly requiring that changes to the Charter be ratified by the other Dipcon would be an improvement.

Peery's proposed single scoring system imposed on several tournaments fails because the tournament system, the scoring system, and how the players play under the tournament and scoring system are not separable. As a side consideration, by what right or qualification would the Dipcon committee impose the scoring system?

Don't look now, but there are at least 5 or 6 major diplomacy conventions each year. What, besides the name, makes Dipcon special? The present practice where the Dipcon disrupts the tournament of the host convention, and then goes into business for itself, suggests that if corrective measures are not taken soon, there may not be a situation left to correct.

((I see no hardship in taking some of the financial burden off the organizers of a dipcon. They already donate their time, why ask them to subsidize expenses as well?

((Depoliticizing Dipcon by dropping funding of any services has been one of the best things to happen since I've been aware of Dipcon. No longer will the committee be a political football to be fought over to protect subsidies to particular services (at the expense of competing services). Instead, they can concentrate on just putting on the best Diplomacy convention possible.

((Dipcon in no way interfered with the running of Marycon last year.))

(STEVE LANGLEY) London would be a great place to hold a Dipcon. I'd make much more effort to get to London than I would to get to San Diego, say. Is there anything in the rules about holding Dipcon in London?

The reason Dipcon is a series of regional cons is that Dipdom is a small hobby. If we numbered in the high thousands, we could populate a national convention of good size no matter where (within reason) we decided to hold it. As it is, we populate small cons. We aren't doing at all badly for what we have to work with.

A multi-event (multi-location) Dipcon would be a lot of work. It would compete with itself for some Dippers. It would not be able to set up an actual "top board." Other than that, it might be fun. I do not volunteer to be on the committee.

((Well, your average dipdomite doesn't have a whole lot of disposable income or time. Students are notoriously poor, and adults would rather spend vacation at the beach. It's a long trip from most everywhere to get to a Dipcon.))

(SIMON BILLENNESS) I was just joking when I suggested Britain host a Dipcon, but after seeing you and Bruce Linsey gung-ho for the idea, I wonder if it might work.

There are two established annual cons which Dipcon could associate with. Firstly there are the British National Diplomacy championships held in Birmingham usually every November. It attracts about 150-200 people each year from all over Britain, as well as several people from the Continent. After Malc Smith smashed you lot at Marycon, perhaps an American could win a British tournament as revenge?

Another possibility is teaming Dipcon up with Manorcon, which is also held in Birmingham but usually in July. This hosts another Diplomacy tournament which tends to be more of a team event. Perhaps a "North American All-Stars" ensemble could be teamed up? The con, which takes place in a Manor House, converted into student accomodation, also hosts other competitions, including several light-hearted sports events. A couple of years ago Barbara and I were in the Loughborough University soccer team - Barbara even scored a goal mainly because the other team (all men) were too gentlemanly to tackle her! Last year they even had an American football competition, which, I hear, was not as gentlemanly....

The good thing about having Dipcon in Britain is that people could use it as an excuse to see the rest of the country. Birmingham, for instance, is only a couple of hours train ride from London. With England only about the size of the New York State and having a far more extensive rail network, travel around the country would be very convenient.

((So who would be interested in putting up a Dipcon bid from England, any prospects?))

(JOHN CARUSO) It looks like we see at least one new idea, similar to my more than one dipcon per year idea, as well as a legitimate observation about the Dipcon process. Larry Peery's observations are indeed correct. Most Dipcons are little more than regional events, with very few people travelling 1000 miles to attend the Dipcon. I noticed that years ago - that's why I proposed the two Dipcon per year idea. Larry's idea goes one step further, and personally, I think it's a great idea. Have a bunch of regional cons, all over, the same weekend, all rated with the same rating system, using the same rules, and

allowing a similar number of rounds. Of course there are details that have to be worked out, such as who is to decide what weekend, who decides on the rules, scoring system, etc, and where each con is to be, but I think an answer can be found right within the Present Dipcon charter. The society (the people at the meeting) already choose the site and committee. We could have each area select its own site, and its own *one* representative onto the Dipcon Committee. The the committee can choose the scoring, gms, rules just as they now do. As Larry suggests, it could be heralded as "Dipcon Weekend" across the country, even across the seas. Why not include Europe, Asia, Africa, anyone and everyone, anywhere and everywhere. As Simon Billenness correctly points out, Britain is slightly larger than NY, yet there are many more hobbyists there, and they'd be more than willing to travel the distance to go for a national convention. Except this could be a "global" event.

Failing this, the least the Dipcon process can consider is allowing non-American areas a fair shot at hosting a Dipcon. Places like Britain or even mainland Europe. But personally, I think Larry Peery's idea of a universal "Dipcon Weekend" is an excellent idea, and one that I am prepared to support fully. Unlike some of Larry's other, short-lived, ill-conceived trial balloons, this is one bird that can fly.

In my opinion, a good time to have such a "weekend" would be from late June to early September sometime. When school is out. The committee could consist of approximately seven members, four more than a present Dipcon Committee. The Dipcon Charter would have to be amended to allow for a "Dipcon Weekend" and the extra committee members, along with rewording some parts to allow each area to only vote for its own committee member and following year site.

I don't feel it's important to get the major conventions such as Atlanticon, Pacificon, Gencon, etc, to coordinate their cons with a "DW". Having many smaller Dipcons and one central Dipcon might be the best route to go. This whole idea would need a lot of work and cooperation among all parties within Dipdom, something that hasn't happened in over 25 years. Yet the original concept of Dipcon was launched. So why can't an improvement of that concept be adopted? After all, Congress approved tax reform.

And to not skip over Dick's question - I think Dipcon in London would be excellent. Just because Americans founded Dipcon doesn't mean we can't share it with our fellow hobbyists overseas. Some of the old timers would have you believe that if Dipcon isn't on the east coast every other year it isn't worth attending. Or that it must be on the west coast. And that people flock to Dipcons from all over the nation. They do not. They only do so if they can afford to, have the time, and if there is reason to go (such as thrill seekers, or those curious to meet a hobby celebrity).

Russ Rusnak also hit on a point. Why are we afraid to acknowledge "that the hobby is geographically split"? It's obvious it is. Dipdom is not just the American or North American hobby, as we perceive it. There is overseas too!

Here there is east coast, west coast, Madison, Texas, etc. Why? Sure there are certain special needs and regional interests, but don't we all share the same objectives? To meet people and enjoy a game and a hobby! That's where I give the Brits a lot of credit - they appear to be uniform in their hobby participation. Why must we here criticize, and try to make everything this way or that way. Why can't we all flow in unison, instead of trying to "torpedo" others' tasks/words? That is one reason that our American hobby is stagnant (or appears to be anyway). Too much fighting and outwardly appearing dissention. Too many people don't stick around or never try out Dipdom because of it, and the preceding bad reputation for the US Dipdom hobby. Americans, you don't think we have a bad reputation, let the Canadians and Europeans answer that - how do we look to them. And that's how we look to novices/newcomers/would-be-newcomers.

((Why should Dipcon Weekend be limited to any one weekend? If each tournament used the same rules, each one of the biggies you mention could host one "leg" of Dipcon - like the Grand Slam in tennis. Better that than sitting in my basement with a four player game simply because it's "Dipcon Weekend."))

(BRUCE LINSEY) I vote in favor of a London DipCon! That would give me just the impetus I need to visit England, which I've been promising myself I'd do for years now.

((So it seems to be unanimous then - all seem to be in favor of giving Dipcon to Britain, or at least letting them borrow it for a while. Now, how do we go about making it happen?))

Diptax

(ROBERT SACKS) Mr Walker made his proposal to the then BNC, Lee Kendter Sr, that the BNC charge a compulsory \$2 fee per number, \$1 for BNC expenses and \$1 for the NADF Treasury. If Mr Kendter will publicly assure me that Mr Walker made no suggestion, proposal, or any other communication that in any way resembled this, I will apologize to Mr Walker and retract the assertion. Until then, I will treat Mr Walker's denial as another one of his "I didn't write to you about that for publication so you can't tell anyone" denials.

I think Hanson's approach is the best. Everyone decides to allocate funds to hobby services decides how to allocate the funds. If a project has excess funds that it can reallocate to other projects, that might take care of some shortfalls. Otherwise, as Martin points out, these are services the custodian should be able to afford to do.

I wasn't aware that Burgess had financial problems, but then I haven't heard from him in over half a year. I understand he split from the OGP so that he could seize games which were not orphans; I'm not sure - as I said, I haven't heard from him in over half a year.

((I think you and Burgess simply disagree on what constitutes an orphan game. Understandable, as it can be a very grey area.))

(RUSS RUSNAK) Somewhere in HOL #8 someone mentioned something about a new hobby board of sorts. While I don't agree with any attempt to organize the hobby, there was something that especially bothered me about this proposal. It recognized both sides of the "great feud" and wanted to represent them on some committee. I think this is foolish to say the least. Despite the coverage the feud has received, the active number of participants is rather small as compared to the hobby at large. From what I have seen things are even starting to die down as far as the thing is concerned. I guess I'm trying to say that the feud has hurt the hobby as a whole, so I can't see rewarding feuding members by giving them some sort of extra power or status because they were a part of large group of people that proved just how easy it is for normal intelligent adults to act like spoiled brats.

(MELINDA HOLLEY) My idea about taxation is that the people who want a service should pay for it. That goes for the Diptax as well as any sort of taxation. I've always wondered what would happen if the American voting public ever got a chance to actually vote themselves on the Federal Budget. How many items would remain? Does anybody really know what's in the Federal Budget anyway? If the Diptax *were* in effect, I think Alan Stewart has a basically good idea. One custodian would be asking for trouble. I think a panel of three people would be better. How you would get those three people is another problem. Volunteers? Who chooses the volunteers? Election? Who runs the election? Who counts the votes? The whole idea would be bogged down in administration. So I think the best thing to do is for individual publishers to set up whatever arrangements they feel would be correct and disburse their own funds to whatever service they feel would be worthy. A possible problem here, however, is inevitably some service would be slighted for whatever reason.

(STEVE LANGLEY) I started laughing about 2/3 way through Alan Stewart's rather cumbersome evolution of a Dipdom Sources Custodian. I agree that each GM (or player) should donate as their interests direct. Russ doesn't feel the need for hobby services. Others, with a bit less drive, do. If a custodian wants financial aid, he should ask for it. If someone wants to help, he should send money. We don't need any more organization than that.

(SIMON BILLENNESS) "Diptax" is a horrible word. Everybody hates paying tax, so the mere

mention of it is a turn-off. If somebody did want to organize such a scheme, they should think of a new name first.

Why doesn't the hobby take note of such fundraising successes as Live Aid and USA For Africa? They made giving money *fun*, not just an obligation. What I like about the PDO auction is that it's interesting, enjoyable, and above all, *voluntary*. It also generates less bureaucracy than a "Diptax" scheme.

One idea for fundraising in the future could be Dipcon T-shirts. They could range from the straightforward "Dipcon 1987" to "I survived a weekend in Madison," or "I stabbed a Mad-Lad," or stuff like that. Does anyone know anything about having T-shirts made? Is anybody in Madison interested enough to organize it?

I am encouraged by editors such as Alan Stewart, Conrad von Metzke, and Scott Hanson who have decided to set aside subscription and gamefee money for hobby services. If there is going to be a hobbywide service funding scheme as Larry Peery envisages, it should encourage and complement existing grassroots activity, rather than create more bureaucratic mechanisms.

In the final instance, however, I can't help agreeing, at least in part, with you, Dick, when you say services should be self-sufficient. Fortunately, most services are: MASTERS OF DECEIT and SUPERNOVA won't be asking for PDO funds this year, because Woody and Bruce either don't want or don't need the money. Unfortunately, some services like the USOS, MNC, and BNC can't raise enough by charging, so they need some support. Where I differ with you is that I think it would be too bad if a good custodian gave up running a service because he couldn't run it "out of his own pocket."

((Sure, Diptax is a terrible word and somewhat of a misnomer, but it sure is catchy.

((Julie has been asking me for some time if she could run a bake sale for dipdom services. I hope she doesn't expect me to do the cooking. Likewise, I don't know how much interest you could drum up for T shirts. Probably not enough to make them worth the trouble, but it may be worth looking into.))

Ethics

(ROBERT SACKS) Be careful of the player who praises your GMing efforts. He may be trying to pull a fast one under the rules. Be careful of the player who tries to intimidate you into doing things his way. He *is* probably trying to pull a fast one.

Berch assigns to me the position "if someone lies about you, you're entitled to lie about him." That is not my position. Rather, if someone lies about you, you're entitled to tell the truth about him, without giving him the opportunity to tell more lies at your expense. Similarly, if someone rips you off, you are under no obligation to expend anything to accord him "a courtesy."

(STEVE LANGLEY) Your example of THE NOT FOR HIRE making both Berch and myself look bad was well taken. Interminable "right of reply" squabbles are not productive of anything except bad feelings for the squabblers and disgust for those exposed to the squabble. If THE NOT FOR HIRE did nothing else, I feel it demonstrated that truth.

(BRUCE LINSEY) On page 23, you write, "I've managed to talk Woody into referring MASTERS OF DECEIT inquirers to me (struck out totally with SUPERNOVA)." I object strenuously to this deceptive statement. You did *not* strike out totally with SUPERNOVA. Let's review the facts, shall we?

On September 1, you wrote me and said, "Please add my name to the list of GMs with game openings you include in SUPERNOVA."

On September 5, I wrote you back a letter (which I'm sure you'll agree was extremely polite and cordial throughout) and told you, "I don't include a game openings list *per se*. The insert contains a list of zeens which I personally would recommend to a novice most highly, and from among those I normally check off the ones I know to have game openings. Additionally, I'm currently sending out copies of the ZEEN REGISTER with SUPERNOVA, unless I know the person already has the ZR."

Then I added, "Obviously, RETALIATION isn't currently on the list of zeens I regularly recommend to people (as you can see from the enclosed flyer). However, I periodically update the list, and I might be willing to add RETAL at my next update. First, I need to know some things. Are you willing to let me sub to RETAL again? (I can't recommend a zeen if I can't see it, obviously.)"

Now, this is (I think) a reasonable request - how can I possibly recommend a zeen to people if I don't read it? But on September 8, you wrote back to me, "Am I willing to let you sub to RETAL again? No. I prefer to have my subbers participate in the zeen in some way, and don't need more deadwood than I already have."

What happened here is completely clear. You asked me to list the zeen; I responded that I at least needed to be able to see it to recommend it; you flatly refused to let me subscribe. But in telling this story to your HOL readers, all you revealed was that you "struck out totally with SUPERNOVA," as though I went and turned you down cold. That is deception, pure and simple, and I resent it.

As a side note, I should also add that I offered to list HOL on the flyer, but you wrote back, "As for listing HOL on the flyer, well it's just not a 'novice' sort of publication." I'll take that as a refusal too, unless you tell me otherwise, in which case I'll go ahead and list it.

The point, it seems to me, is why are you being so damn difficult about all this? Would it hurt you to let me sub to RETAL? (You're one of the very few pubbers with the gumption to refer to me as "deadwood," that's for sure!) And if you insist on barring me from getting the zeen, would it really have hurt you to print the entire story in HOL, or else not mention the matter at all? From where I sit, it looks like you were simply intent on creating a public stink about the affair.

That's my biggest complaint with the issue, and it's also a classic example of how a single line of criticism can require several paragraphs of response.

Moving on to your exchange with Mark Berch on right of reply, I think your line about "seemingly having the entire alphabet of war" was a classic comeback; I laughed out loud on that one! And while I tend to agree with Mark that right of reply is part of fair play, I also see your point about how it could be carried too far, or how the publisher might legitimately disagree with the writer on which topics can rightfully be included in a "reply." It's not an easy question to deal with all the time. For example, you mention a sixteen-page reply to a single paragraph, which sounds as absurd to me as it does to you. Yet note that it took me seven paragraphs to phrase my reply to your five words "struck out totally with SUPERNOVA," and I don't feel that was the least bit excessive in this instance, as I had to explain a whole sequence of facts in some detail. A toughie.

Berch "looked bad" in refuting Langley's charge that he is a thief? Boy, it didn't look that way from where I sit!

((Perhaps, but if he had just stated his position in a paragraph or so, he would have come across better. Most of us don't care a bit for endless legalistic detail, and couldn't even figure out what the original point of the dispute was by the time it was over.

((It might have been better had I just said "Struck out with SUPERNOVA" and left "totally" out of it. In retrospect, that sounds better - I just didn't think of it at the time. But all explanations aside, that is exactly what happened. To take this as criticism is certainly being defensive, as I made no effort to place any blame on either party. For all the reader knew, I could have been making outrageous demands that you quite properly turned down.

((To my mind, this is a perfect example of a reply out of proportion to the remark that caused it. Presented here for your viewing pleasure.

((As for calling you deadwood, well, there's no shortage of gumption around here. Just ask Elmer. 90% of my RETAL subbers are in games, and I like it that way. You have no intention of playing in a game, and I have no reason to believe that you would be any more lively this time than when you subbed before. That's only the half of it though. I have no desire to have you looking over my shoulder and judging what I do. That was an unpleasant experience before, and I don't wish to repeat past mistakes.

((How can you recommend a zeen you don't see? Well, you can ask someone whose judgement you trust that gets the zeen for an opinion. Or you can get hold of one of those "pass around" issues that seem to account for so many votes in the Runestone poll. Use some imagination, you'll come up with

something. Why, I'll even send you one just to get you started!

((Please, no listing for HOL. The less this seems like a "hobby service" the happier I am.))

Filing Systems

(RUSS RUSNAK) Going through HOL, the first thing I want to say is that Becker is a thief. Way back in the glory days of the midwest at 8002 S Nagle, Becker stole my filing system. I was the first in the midwest to use a beige box filled with 3x5 cards. I want the recognition I am due, and I will not let fiends like Becker deny me.

((Heavens no, we wouldn't want that! But did Becker steal the whole box, or just the idea?))

(MELINDA HOLLEY) You mean people actually have a *system* for keeping things in order? Gee, what will they think of next? I don't keep zeens. Sorry, folks. I appreciate all the zeens I read and enjoy most of them immensely. But I don't have room to keep all this stuff. As far as the games I'm in as a player, I have this poor, battered manila folder (which will be buried with full military honors) that houses all my games. Each game has a map (showing current positions), the last adjudication, SC ownership, my last set of moves, my current set of moves, and my (hopeful) next set of moves, and (finally) any notes and/or reminders for my failing memory. This boils down to five sheets of paper. The games are placed in chronological order of deadline (Oct 1, Oct 5, Oct 7, etc.). When someone writes me, I refer to the master list (on the front inside cover of the manila folder) to see what the deadline is, find the game, and see what needs to be done. I either make note of what I've been told (via the letter) or keep the letter for future reference in the next set of moves.

((*One* folder for *all* those games?! Whew, it doesn't need a military burial, it should be in the Smithsonian. Or Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum.))

(DAVID MCCRUMB) You really keep everything from your games? I had heard about such people, but tended to doubt it. My habit of throwing away orders more than two seasons old comes from when we lived in a small trailer and had no room for a large filing cabinet. Now that we are in a house, the habit has carried over. I only save all the correspondence for my CIV game (makes it easier to find past mistakes).

((Yep, I save it all. Really, it's a matter of laziness more than anything else. There are some things that I really would like to save, but I don't have the time to separate them from the things that should go. So it all piles up, and eventually ends up in a box in the basement. If there's ever a fire, the house should go up in minutes - it's full of paper!))

GMing Procedure

(ROBERT SACKS) When a game starts, I manually create three documents: the game chart, the who's who/name & address list, and the game map. The adjudication is prepared by hand each turn, starting with the positions at the end of the previous turn. As a publisher, I also maintain a funds received log, a mailing list with subscription expirations, sign up sheets for each game opening, and an expense and accruals log. As orders come in, I pencil them in to the current adjudication, noting calls for draws, press, etc. At adjudication, the supply chart and game map are updated, the next adjudication started, and everything typed.

Whenever I need a standby or a replacement I call for volunteers to send in orders. Where the position is only 1 or 2 centers and isolated, no volunteer is called for. If the present player (or the immediately resigned or dropped player) sends in orders, he retains/resumes the position; if a previous player for that position sends in orders, he resumes the position, with priority given to the earliest player; otherwise, the first eligible standby to submit orders for the position will play it. A standby is ineligible if

he has been in the game previously in a different position, if he is in the family or household of another player (or the gamemaster), or if he lives near other players (plural!). If multiple positions are available and a standby requests one over another, if he is the first to submit his request, it will be honored.

The advantages to this policy are its ethical features: there is no possibility of GM favoritism; no player is coerced into taking a position; there is no possibility of irregularity due to the GM naming the same player standby to two different countries during the game; the game proceeds as expeditiously as possible.

((Doesn't this standby procedure give local players an unfair shot at getting the better standby positions?))

(MELINDA HOLLEY) REBEL runs 12 games (9 regular and 3 gunboat). I keep all the games in (yet another) manila folder. Each game has an SC ownership list, map (showing current positions), everyone's last set of orders, and the current orders. Also in this folder is a copy of the last issue of REBEL and a copy of the rulebook. When orders come in, I paperclip them with the proper game and stuff the whole mess under my bed until the deadline.

When I start adjudicating the game, I check to see if anyone has protested against the last adjudication. If not, I remove the last orders and put them in File 13. In a notebook (expressly for this purpose), I write down any builds, retreats, removals, etc. Then I write down each order (grouped by country). (In the process, I check the players' orders against their final positions in the last issue of REBEL.) Then I go back and underline orders which fail, noting any units which are destroyed or dislodged. In the right-hand column of the notebook I put down the unit's final position. Then I double-check to make sure I haven't screwed up (murmuring several prayers in the process). Feeling reasonably sure that I haven't totally messed up, I adjust the map accordingly, make any necessary changes in the SC ownership paper, etc., and paperclip the whole mess together again.

This goes on for 12 games. I type the zeen from the notes in my notebook, referring to the players' orders for any press. I keep a list of standbys in my address book. I mark not only how many times I've called them, but also for what position in what game (thus preventing me from calling the same person for the same game more than once). My address book also contains a list of REBEL players and what games they're currently in. All this seems quite repetitive, but it provides me with a series of checks and doublechecks. This is *totally* necessary, since I usually start preliminary adjudications on Friday evening...while watching Miami Vice.

It seems a lot of people are going to computers and word processing to adjudicate their games. I prefer to do it by hand. Frankly, it's helped my playing ability in dealing with support orders and cutting support. You get a whole different perspective for the game in watching rather than participating. And while I appreciate the convenience of word processors, I much prefer typewriters. I've always been able to "think" better on a typewriter...even better than writing with pen or pencil. Of course, it helps if you're a rapid touch-typist.

(DAVID MCCRUMB) You are correct, using a computer does not save time, but the ability to distribute it over the month helps quite a bit when the deadline comes up.

((I also like the flexibility it gives me. I can try several different layouts, cut or add material, or change things almost at will. Of course, there's a downside as well. You can be as cavalier as I am and, say, lose several hours worth of work by pushing a single button.))

Out of Dipdom Experiences

(MELINDA HOLLEY) I got into Dipdom via fantasy role playing games. How's that for unique? I'm an avid AD&D (Advanced Dungeons & Dragons) player. So far our group hasn't gone into the WV hills and disappeared into an abandoned coal mine or stabbed someone in a semi-religious ritual yet. But

what we've done to our characters/alter egos.... In any case, I saw an ad for a fantasy role playing game through the mail. This intrigued me, and I wound up in touch with Elmer Hinton. He mentioned that he also ran PBM Diplomacy games and was I interested. I said sure and signed up. Then I thought I'd better get the game and see exactly what I was in for.

That first game put me in as Russia and in contact with several hobby members including Steve (Cochise) Courtemanche and Kathy Byrne. I casually mentioned (during the game) to Steve if other people ran PBM games. (You see I was the novice's novice...I didn't realize I could move F Sev-Rum. I thought I had to go to the Black Sea first. Steve finally said (in effect), "Get the fleet moving! What are you waiting for?") Steve said that Kathy had a list of other GMs and so I wrote to her. Kathy referred me to people like Steve Heinowski. So I hold that my entrance into the hobby (for those of you who would like to get even with the *real* people responsible) is totally due to AD&D, Steve Courtemanche, and Kathy Byrne.

(BRUCE LINSEY) Count me as the second person you know who came into the hobby via the game flyer. Me and Bob Olsen - certainly a mixed bag, yes?!

I enjoyed Russ Rusnak's comments about why players join the hobby. Curiously, my reasons for being here have evolved over time. I started out because I wanted to play Diplomacy games by mail - the flyer made it sound so tremendously fun (accurately, I hasten to add). But now, in four regular gamestarts, I've done everything once: one win, one draw, one survival, and one elimination. Having thus accomplished all the possibilities, I've now retired from active playing (though I may join another game in three to five years; I'm starting to consider it). My reason for staying in the hobby now is entirely different than my reason for having joined it. Namely, so many of my best friends are here! I'm an introvert in person (really); I make friends far more readily by mail. When I think about the dozens and dozens of wonderful friends I know through this crazy pasttime, people with whom I share a mutual kinship and caring, then I know that I'll be here a long, long time.

((Actually, it's not at all unusual that your reasons for being here have changed over the years. But that's next month.

((You've done everything possible in a mere four games?! Why, you haven't even played each country yet! If you can accomplish all there is in that few games, then Diplomacy is not the work of art I thought it was.))

(PETE GAUGHAN) I was a teenage Mensa member (horrifying, ain't it?). Fred Davis' Mensa Dip group got me into this, the only good thing I ever got out of the arrogant, mindless Mensa world. My first zeen was SNAFU!, and I still think my view of the hobby and preferences of zeens are a product of enjoying that so much.

((Wasn't "I was a teenage Mensa member" a horror movie starring Michael Landon?))

PBEM - Electronic Mail Gaming

(LARRY PEERY) Yes, people (at least out here) are into it and playing. I get inquiries every so often. It's centered in Orange County, which figures. I have a feeling it's like the VHS/BETA thing, or the compact disk change that is hitting the recording industry. Once the methods and hardware sort themselves out, people will adapt to the new tech and use it. Right now I'm so tired of ATT, MCI, SPRINT, etc that I don't touch a phone unless I have to. All I know is that since they split up Ma Bell my bills have gone sky high and I use the phone much less than I used to.

((Perhaps surprisingly, the hardware and software are quite up to the task. Standardization before it became too messy, for once. So your Commodore could talk to my Mac just fine with practically any modem and communication program. As has been mentioned before, PBEM is just a bit pricey on the national scale. Maybe someday it'll be economically feasible for your average person, but not today.

((Unless there's a sudden groundswell of interest, this'll be the last installment of PBEM for now. The topic seems exhausted.))

Polls

(JOHN CARUSO) I agree with Dick in one respect - that for polls to be accurate, they must be representative. Whether or not the Runestone poll, or any other poll for that matter, is accurate is the responsibility of two parties - the pollster, and those who choose to, or choose not to, vote. If a pollster goes out and calls and writes his friends to vote, but doesn't do the same for "Joe Average" this is where the poll is inaccurate. If certain people decide not to vote, that also makes the poll somewhat inaccurate. A combination of both would make a poll devastatingly inaccurate.

(MELINDA HOLLEY) I frankly don't pay that much attention to polls. I figure if my subbers/players aren't happy with REBEL, they'll let me know. I certainly hope they realize they can come to me with criticism. Some have and I made some changes. Some came to me with criticisms and I preferred keeping things as they were. I don't think anybody sits down and goes over *any* poll with the idea of totally revamping his zeen based on poll results.

(BRUCE LINSEY) On page 16, in criticizing the preference matrix used in the Runestone Poll, you wrote this: "The preference matrix is the worst part of the Runestone Poll! Using PERELANDRA as my example (since I've done these calculations already), the pref matrix had a potentially profound effect on the zeen's final ranking. PERE got one zero vote. Factor that out of the modified mean and the ranking goes up three or so notches." (The correct figure is two, Dick.) "Factor the zero out of the pref matrix and the ranking shoots up another *ten* notches! Admittedly that's a 'worst case,' but also a lot of power to place in the hands of *one* voter."

The flaw in the argument is that you are indeed considering the "worst case" possible. It's always easy to attack *any* scoring system using a hypothetical "worst case" scenario.

But what actually happened was not nearly so drastic. If the single zero vote for PERE had not been cast, the zeen would not have risen thirteen places as you suggest, but only two! That's right it would have soared all the way from 30th place to 28th.

I grant you, Dick, that you had no way of knowing this, since you don't have the ballot to examine. Yet is it still absurd for you to try and demolish a perfectly sound scoring system based on a hypothetical "worst case" scenario. For the record, if you'd like some numbers, I'll give them to you:

	mod mean	pref	final	
PERELANDRA's '86 scores:	7.209	5.169	6.185	(30th)
had the zero not been cast:	7.368	5.338	6.353	(28th)

Having disposed of the question of whether the preposterous *did* happen (no), we should then ask whether it *can* happen. The answer to that, as you have claimed, is yes. But then again, it's quite easy to construct a "worst case" scenario whereby a single voter in Illinois might tip that state to one candidate in a Presidential election, thereby swinging the majority of electoral vote that way, and thus deciding the whole election. Possible, yes; reasonably likely, no.

Turning to your reply to Alan Stewart's letter, you should have read what he wrote more carefully. Your reply of "True, sample size is usually not critical for surveys or polls" is exactly the opposite of what Alan said. What he wrote - and it's quite correct - is that sample size *is* important; it's the percentage of the population sampled that is inconsequential.

You then go on to say that you don't think the Poll has been representative for the past two years. The only major bloc of North American hobbyists not voting is that group of people which boycotts everything I touch; if they want the Poll to be even more representative than it is now, they can get off their duffs and vote! Nobody's stopping any hobbyists from voting, after all. It's hard to give a whole lot of sympathy to a complaint that the Poll is not representative when the person doing the complaining is part of the group causing the problem. I mean, we have here the self-propogating malaise: the-Poll-isn't-representative-so-we-aren't-voting-so-the-Poll- isn't-representative-so-we-aren't-... It's all

so sad. If you want a more representative Poll, then VOTE!

Both Simon Billenness and Paul Gardner are correct to note that the Runestone Poll - or any poll - doesn't yield absolute truths. I don't know of anyone who claims otherwise. All we can find out is how the particular people who chose to vote felt on the day they voted, and how these highly subjective bits of data emerge when processed through a scoring system. We try to maximize the significance of this by getting as many people as possible to vote and by making sure the scoring system is a reasonable one. We can look at the results and say, "Hmm. COSTAGUANA in first? EUROPA EXPRESS in second? IT'S A TRAP!, PRAXIS, and EXCELSIOR rounding out the top five?" And if these (and the other results) match our own preferences closely enough, we can conclude that for our tastes, the bloody thing seems to work after all. Or not, as the case may be.

Dick, I think you struck gold in saying that a low ranking doesn't tell a publisher just what needs improving. I am entirely in favor of publishers getting this sort of feedback - it is a very valuable tool. But it is far beyond the scope of the Runestone Poll to attempt to gather such in-depth information. That wasn't part of the Poll's purpose when it was conceived, it isn't now, and it probably never will be. In my opinion, the best mechanism for detailed feedback is surveys conducted by the publisher, who asks his readers directly whatever he wants to ask. I did this twice in VOICE OF DOOM, and I've responded to other zeens' surveys several times. For the Runestone Poll to attempt to gather all the info for all zeens would be a colossal task, when you consider how much of the hobby votes each year.

((Ah, but the worst case doesn't necessarily shoot down every system equally. Flogging that zero for PERE again, the worst case modified mean cost two positions. The worst case pref matrix/modified mean combination cost a dozen places. Which worst case is worse?)

((You consider this worst case unlikely. However, I think its not only likely to happen in the future, it probably already has! Without access to the votes I can't check myself, but I bet that you'll find at least one case where a single person's vote has been good for a ten position difference in the standings.

((Even if you've been lucky so far and it hasn't happened, why push your luck? Two or three people voting in concert have the capability to seriously skew the final results via the pref matrix, far more so than with the simple modified mean.

((Simply exhorting the "boycotters" to vote obviously hasn't worked in the past and probably won't work now. Evidently, some people have lost faith in the poll or the pollster. Or they can't be bothered to waste time on a silly beauty contest.))

(PETE GAUGHAN) It seems that word of PERELANDRA's fold is getting around in quite an unexpected way, mainly because of my letter to Greg Ellis. Although I went on and on about the Runestone Poll in the FEUILLETONIST'S FORUM, I repeat what I said there and in PERE #45:

* I did *not* care much how PERELANDRA fared, unless you count my puzzlement at its illogical placing. I was happy with the zeen and with my readers; I was bitter that people would violate what I see to be a common-sense rule that you should not vote for a zeen you haven't seen at least three of.

* I folded PERE for financial reasons. Quite simple, right? Well, those who didn't sub didn't see my statement of accounts, with the zeen over \$300 in the hole and me going back to parttime work so I can finish graduate school.

* Finances were 90% of my decision to fold. The other 10% was reluctance on my part to publish a zeen which, according to the poll, was mediocre. Finances alone would have caused the fold; the poll alone *never* would.

Also, as I said in the following FF, I really didn't expect Greg to publish my letter, or I would have rewritten the tone and examples I used. If you can make this clear to HOL readers, I'd be very grateful.

Also, you're quite right about the preference matrix and the zero conspiring to hurt me - but Scott Hanson has published his ballot and apologized for that accidental zero, so I calculate it only cost me a place or two.

((Glad that's cleared up. I just hate to see a poll contribute even one per cent to causing a fold.))

(DAVID MCCRUMB) Polls are fun. And that is about it. Unless I finish in the bottom 1/4, I wouldn't let it upset me. My players tell me they are happy with my procedures and layout, and that is who I aim to please (along with myself, of course).

You seem to have not read the scoring syystem for the Runestone Poll. In the modified mean, the lower (and upper) 10% votes are not used. And while a zero will affect the preference matrix, this occurs only when compared to zeens that that person voted on.

((If you *did* happen to finish in the bottom 1/4, what would you do?

((Discarding the zero does affect the modified mean, though not necessarily as much as it would a straight mean.))

Finding New Subbers

(RUSS RUSNAK) I rely on word of mouth for new subbers. Most people who have left WHO CARES? have been happy with the punctuality. As a result I rely on them. I also beg and borrow plugs from people like yourself. While it isn't very dignified, it does work. At least it used to.

(MELINDA HOLLEY) When I started REBEL in 1984, I told people I was playing with about it. Those who suggest that included *everyone* in the hobby exaggerate...somewhat. I didn't have much trouble finding subbers or players. One game did take a couple of months to fill. It was a gunboat, which I think takes longer to fill anyway. Someone is spreading the word about REBEL because I'm continually asked for samples and for possible game openings. I really hate to tell people I have no current game openings because I know how badly I want to play. But I made it a set rule that I would carry 12 games unless the Orphan Service needed me to take a game. (I think Jim-Bob's worried that I'll burn out and he'll have to place all those games.)

((Orphan services have nightmares about placing a dozen games at one time! By the way, adopting orphan games is also a good way to pick up new subbers - and do dipdom a good turn at the same time.))

(STEVE LANGLEY) Except for sending out samples of MAGUS to everyone on my player mailing list back when I got started, I have sent samples only on request. A fair amount of my growth has come through adopting orphan games. The MAGUS sub list has maintained itself at the 50-55 range for years now. Recently, with the MASTERS OF DECEIT mention in THE GENERAL, there has been a small rush of sample requests. The current sub list may be up to 58 or 59 because of this. Recently I have decided to adopt a trade rather than mutual sub policy (much less hassle to simply trade than to try to explain what mutual sub means) and have even sent one gratuitous sample (to you and Julie).

((Gee, Steve, you're the only person ever to admit to gratuitously sampling us. I hope word doesn't get around too fast!))

(KEN PEEL) My experiences with POLITESSE, of course, will be different than those of publishers of postal dip zeens. POLITESSE is much less of a part of the postal dip community than it used to be, and in my mind that's fine, because we're now concentrating on what we do best. Our whole operation is oriented toward finding a constant flow of new blood. In many ways, our local orientation both constricts our options and expands them.

When you mentioned your recent efforts to revitalize RETALIATION, many of the tools you're using are things that Ed and I at POLITESSE have long relied on. I think too many pubbers fall into the trap of rushing around after the same, often shrinking pool of old time players. For instance, the difficulty Del Grande has had for years filling a game could probably be totally eliminated by a little more aggressive efforts outside of "mainstream players." Hey, they all sub to LIFE OF MONTY for the reading material. Go after the new blood. That's where the excitement and the future lies.

So let me get around to the point here: the experience here at POLITESSE in finding new blood. The POLITESSE subscription list is now at around ninety. In that amount are a fair number of traders and others that we could do without, and I may do a little pruning in the next few months. As you know, publishing POLITESSE is a fairly involved process, due to the high sub base.

Anyway, when I took over as publisher of POLITESSE, I was adamant that we would return to our core purpose. That is, serving the local Maryland, DC, Virginia multiplayer gaming community. Ed and I worked together in making that transition...little did Ed know at the time, of course, that he would ultimately be coming back on board as the major substantive element in the equation.

We search out new blood in any way we can think of, and I think that's good advice for anyone. I try to trade with any local publisher, and any others that may be useful outside of the area. For instance, in the latter category would be Billenness, Burgess, Byrne, Peery, and Hyatt. That establishes a certain presence in Dipdom that does not come as a matter of course for a zeen like POLITESSE. Next, both Ed and I keep a lookout for any names, particularly any new names, here and there in zeens that float in. But our major recruiting does not come from such sources. If we depended only on the base of postal dip players in the Baltimore and Washington area, we would still be a small zeen of thirty, and would be no more than a local social club for postal Dippers. Our more significant recruiting comes from ads in THE GENERAL, word of mouth, and flyers posted in local game stores. And, of course, active recruitment efforts in the relatively local con scene.

Such local efforts, some of which you touched upon in your last page piece, can actually cause problems for a postal GM, as you well know from your collateral benefit from some of our local efforts. The BNC does not look kindly to postal games made up of four players in the same area code.

But such efforts need to be made by someone. As I have often said, and as many have often taken the wrong way, the dead do not raise themselves - one has to raise them. In the same sense, the flyer alone will not bring in legions of novices, despite occasional success with people such as Bob Olsen. This does not mean that the flyer is meaningless. It's very important, and I remain concerned about its apparent banishment by Avalon Hill. I received a letter on that from Billenness, and hope to make efforts in that direction as soon as we manage to get Congress out of session for the long election and holiday recess. The flyer is another point of contact. While often not enough in itself, my guess is that it often serves as a way of familiarizing someone with the existence of postal Dip, so that when the next contact occurs, that person is more receptive.

The local contacts I receive are almost always calls. That must mean something. Those calls almost always come from our ads in THE GENERAL and from our postings in local game stores. I always send samples of the zeen almost immediately, and I try to send the next zeen to them as well. I would guess that about a quarter of them sign on. I also get sample requests from postal novices, and these requests come, I would guess, from a combination of word of mouth and the suggestions of Woody and Simon Billenness. I certainly appreciate that those two important contact points for novices try to remember a tangential focus such as ourselves. While fewer in number, the odds of any individual local postal novice joining us are greater (maybe about 50% or more). Dunno why, but the rough balance between postal dipdomites and ftf players remains. That's one of the things I like about WARTHOG best, the balance and diversity of our group.

I may not have said much of substance, other than to emphasize the importance of active recruitment. This is particularly important if the zeen is relatively new. If you have a new zeen, why would you want to simply recycle oldtime players who may already be in five to fifteen games or more? Seek out the new. Try to make your zeen something different. You'll be surprised how easy it is bringing in the new blood. Easier, in many ways, than pumping new life into oldtimers. All it takes is a little effort and interest. I think you would have to agree, Dick, that RETALIATION is in the process of becoming a new zeen due to your recruitment efforts. Good for you. Forget about floaters like me, and burnouts like Ed. Of course, keep us around so that I can keep sending you more energetic young novices to drive you crazy with their local addresses, and Ed so that he can keep the music content of your zeen legendary.

((Funny, but the flood of newcomers seems to have energized the old geezers too. What a crazy world this is. It's true that RETAL has seemingly become a different zeen (again!) over the last six

months or so. Always interesting.))

(SIMON BILLENNESS) The North American hobby over the last few years has suffered from a serious lack of interest in hobby recruitment. The number of Diplomacy gamestarts has declined, as has the number of zeens. Nowadays there are more zeens in Britain alone than there are in North America! This is despite the fact that the British hobby is eight years younger and has a population base which is five times smaller than the US alone. Something is clearly wrong!

I think the most important difference between Britain and North America is that the British hobby has established a far better rapport with the manufacturers of Diplomacy. At present, the British distributors, H P Gibsons, are quite interested in the hobby. They donate specially embossed Diplomacy boards for the British Diplomacy Championships every year, but, most importantly, they make sure that each Diplomacy set carries a flyer for the hobby.

By contrast in America, Avalon Hill appear unwilling to include flyers in the Diplomacy boxes. I was chatting to Larry Peery on the phone a couple of days ago, and he confirmed this. Apparently AH don't think there's anything in it for them, and besides, they've been turned off the hobby because of the interminable feuding over the years.

I suspect that AH could be won over to the idea of gamebox flyers again, but it's going to take several years and a wholesale change of attitudes amongst leading hobby members (no names, no packdrill) as regards feuding. In the meantime, new ways need to be found to recruit new hobby members, if the North American hobby isn't going to decline further. I'm keen on the idea of organizing flyers in gameshops. I notice Elmer Hinton in KAISSA plugging the excellent idea of setting up stalls at game conventions. Does anybody else have any further ideas, particularly ones they'd like to work on?

((I think it's an *advantage* that Britain's not as big as the US.

((I bet a hefty letter-writing campaign to Avalon Hill would get the flyers back in. A hundred pleading letters in the morning mail would have a healthy impact, you bet. I think they're more concerned with our apathy than our feuding.))

(PETE GAUGHAN) I almost never pushed PERE, after the traditional introductory flyer. Besides a listing in the zeen yellow pages, I don't believe I've done any promoting. I had a limit of 50 subbers (never reached), and once I passed 30, I never dropped under that. I *always* sent samples in response to requests, but I included a letter detailing the zeen's features and style. That warned off a *lot* of potential players.

(LARRY PEERY) Finding new subbers??? XENO's a bit different than most zeens because a good hunk of its subbers are not true Dippy hobby members, they are friends of mine, etc. As for hobby members, I've always managed to trade with the zeens I wanted to (note: I was surprised in the last Peeripoll at how few zeens traded at a very high level. The average was only 5-8 zeens per zeen. I trade with something like 40 zeens.), keep a few players and subbers around, and send out comp issues when I felt like it. I've noticed in the last year or two that the sub figures, or at least printings, get bigger as I go along unless I cut back. I can handle a hundred or so with no problem. Beyond that my tongue gets tired from licking stamps.

DIPLOMACY WORLD is a different story. It actively solicits new subbers. It tries to reach as many hobby members as possible. When I took it on there was a backlog of 6-9 months of inquiries about the zeen, etc. I took care of them, then handled the new inquiries fed to me by Rod Walker, Walt Buchanan, others, and from AH. I send each inquiry a flyer on DW, one on the hobby at large, and some general info. I figured it was best to wait until I got DW back on its feet financially and on a reliable schedule for at least a year before I did any major work as far as expanding the zeen's circulation. Well, the time has come. Circulation in the last year has grown about 50-60%, all paid. Now I have to get over the hurdle of getting all the people who subbed last fall to renew. Fifty percent would be a good figure. Eighty percent would be excellent. And then we start expanding again. It's a long, slow process, but in time I

don't think we'll have much problem. As you've noted I've expanded DW from just a single publication to a whole line of publications. DW is the most important one, of course, but the Reprints, Anthologies, BBB, etc, are all part of the program. In time this will pay off in a better hobby. At least I hope so. Each contributes to building DW.

It really, in DW's case, is a question of money. How much money do you want to spend on self-promotion vs hobby promotion? You hit it on the head when you said you have to rely on word of mouth advertising (although we're doing some of that as well). Somehow hobby members and players will find their way to a quality product. It may take a while.

((Why don't you concentrate on finding new subbers year round, and let the renewals take care of themselves? If you have a good zeen, and you sound confident that you do, then there's no reason to "focus" on retaining subbers - you may as well use the effort to draw in new subbers at the same time.))

WHAT THE POST OFFICE WON'T TELL YA

by Bill Becker

I've been working as a letter sorting clerk since February, at first manually, and now with a machine which runs letters by at 60/minute while I hit 2 or 3 number of the zip code on a keyboard (20 keys - 2 rows, which running from left to right are: 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4). Let me apologize for my first weeks on the machine. I guess I was sending 50 letters per thousand to incorrect addresses. I'd say that's down around 5-10 per thousand now. The machine itself also causes errors to be made depending upon what becomes jammed, and whether the machine's inertia "solves" the problem. The machine occasionally gets mail caught on its chain, which greases and mangles the letter. Letters also fall into the machine and get caught on, well, nothing in particular. The machines are supposed to be cleaned of such mail. I believe weekly. (Hey, it's not my job, how should I know, a typical situation in the USPS.)

Zeens such as HOL #8 shouldn't run through a Letters Sorting Machine, one because of the staples, and two its girth does not fit well into the channels, guides, and carts of the LSM. A careful scan of HOL #8 shows me it did not run through an LSM. But lots of zeens do. You can tell if your zeen has been through because it will have a small stamp mark on the side opposite the address (back side), something like A9, or C7, or X3. Hey, now you know.

Anyway, when I'm looking at mail as it runs by on the LSM, the zip code has to be readily identifiable and legible. The zip code should be on the last line of the address, to the right if it is sharing the line with the state or "USA." If you are using the nine digit zip code, be sure to use a hyphen to separate the first five digits from the last four (i.e., 49007-2743). I'm not responsible for hitting your mail to your phone number or your account number when you've used it as the last line of your address. The zip code must be 1/4" above the bottom edge of the letter or it is hidden by the channel that the letter runs by on. If I can't read it, I hit "49" and it drops into a bin in back of the LSM. Eventually, it will get sorted by hand.

The post office also has bar code readers and optical code readers, which are machines that make mail look like tiny accordions when they jam up. Hey, I thought you wanted to know.

Why'd I write this? Well, in some zeen, somewhere, someone asked where the zip code belongs in an address, and since I can't find the particular zeen, I thought this was the best way to answer.

((Maybe that was Alan Stewart in last issue. Glad you decided to answer here, as this article answers a couple questions I've always had - like what hose numbers on the back were.))

Fresh Tofu

(SIMON BILLENNESS) FRESH MEAT What a gross title! Am I to assume that you don't know I'm a vegetarian?

I'm afraid I'm going to have to close down Fresh Meat (ugh! pass the tofu...). I have an agreement signed by Joe Schmuck (a totally obscure gamer who dropped out in 1976) giving me total authority over all new hobby member listings in perpetuity. I might permit you to continue with Dead Animal Flesh (or something like that) provided that you sign the enclosed covenant in blood (your own please). Thank

you.

((Vegetarian, huh? Actually, if you plan to do ZIAMVIA (a new blood list, of sorts) on a regular basis, this Fresh Whatever column will become less valuable. In the meantime, another installment....))

Mike Boyd, 18 St Augustine Dr, Greenville, SC 29615
 Ted Davis, 1604 Miles, Kalamazoo, MI 49001
 Steve Emmert, PO Box 319, Virginia Beach, VA 23458
 Michael Hopcroft, UC Box 123, Pacific University, Forest Grove, OR 97116
 Dave Hopkirk, 1509 N Hathaway, Santa Ana, CA 92701
 Tom Johnston, 330 N Elmer, Griffith, IN 46319
 Ivan Kolodny, 64 W 89th St, New York, NY 10024
 John McDonnell, 1124 Bonnie View Dr, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
 Richard Pinelli, 416 W Briar Pl, #28, Chicago, IL 60657
 BM Powell, HHC, 2d Bde, 3d Inf Div, APO NY 09031
 John Ricotta, 1093 E 74th St, Cleveland, OH 44103
 Garret Schenck, 42 Pelham Hill Rd, Shutesbury, MA 01072
 Rodney Schmisser, 1811 Tilden Ave, Ft Wayne, IN 46805
 Larry Taube, 5200 Bennington Dr, Greensboro, NC 27410
 Mark Thompson, 2731 Hillsboro N, #111, New Hope, MN 55427
 Erik Van Rossum, PO Box 95155, Seattle, WA 98145-2155
 Richard Wheat, 8014 W Woodway Dr, #2042, Waco, TX 76710
 Joe Zizek, Box 1179, Edson, Alta, CANADA T0E 0P0

New Business

Publishers Handbook

(SCOTT HANSON) In depth critical analysis of the pubber's handbook? Shit, I haven't even *read* the whole thing yet! The one omission I noticed was no discussion of DIAS. The whole thing also reflects Bruce Linsey's exhaustive viewpoint of GMing which, shall we say, is not widely shared by the hobby. But on the whole it's a damned good and useful effort, and well worth the money to send for and the time to read.

((The following is blatantly stolen from C'EST MAGNIFIQUE #27))

(Peter Sullivan) ONCE UPON A DEADLINE, the new American Novice Editor's Handbook, has received rave reviews in such diverse places as BUSHWACKER, COSTAGUANA, and HOME OF THE BRAVE. Having now got my own copy, I suppose it's time for a review.

The package is split into two halves, one concentrating on publishing, one on gamesmastering, although there is inevitably some overlap. The whole thing is huge, some 200 pages in all, and contains articles and opinions from many leading US - and some British - hobby figures, some culled from zeens of the past few years, some appearing in print for the first time.

The Gamesmastering section contains useful hints on the mechanics of adjudicating, houserules and loads of discussion on the problems that can arise. If the package has any fault, it is that its editor, Bruce Linsey, was one of the strictest GMs in the Hobby with long and detailed houserules and this inevitably colours the tone of this tome.

Some of the potential problems which are dealt with are rather remote (e.g. if one of your players is also playing with you in a zeen where forgery of orders is allowed, should you use your knowledge as a GM of how that player writes orders to help you forge orders to help you as a player in that zeen?) but it's entertaining to hear others' speculation on such matters and instructive to note the diversity of opinion.

The Publishing part of the Handbook is probably superior to the Gamesmastering part. It deals less with hypothetical problems and more with the meat and bones of zeen production - articles, art, lettercols,

printing and zeen administration.

One small peeve - I sometimes found it irritating that the editor's presence was so lingering. Bruce has a tendency to interrupt using double brackets a little too much, although this may just be me. All in all, a very useful publication, even if you never intend editing a zeen, or expanding into the North American hobby.

(BRUCE LINSEY) The new publisher's handbook is good, but it could be improved. Dick Martin has asked for people to review the product. This could be an especially valuable forum, since my plan is to publish an updated version of OUAD in perhaps five or six months, and I'm eager to hear all reasonable suggestions for improvement before then.

What is good about the handbook, and what is not? It has several strong points, the greatest of these being the diversity of viewpoints and hobby personalities presented. There are many points on which publishers and GMs legitimately differ, and the handbook generally does a good job of presenting both (or all) sides. The writing is mostly of high quality, and the coverage of publishing-related topics is pretty thorough. Perhaps most importantly, the handbook gives people the right blend of enthusiasm and caution: the potential publisher can see that he will be getting into a rewarding activity without being blinded to its drawbacks.

But the handbook has several weaknesses. Here are some of the ones I've already perceived. First, the whole thing is a bit overwhelming; a potential small-time publisher could be frightened if he has the impression that he has to learn 200+ pages worth of advice to succeed. While I don't plan to axe much (if any) of the current material, I would like to add an article specifically designed to help someone start publishing a *small zeen*. An important part of this article will be a paragraph or so explaining that much of the advice in OUAD can be ignored in the production of a small-scale zeen. (Jim Burgess has pointed out this weakness, and I agree with him.)

Parts of the handbook could be edited better. Wallace Nicoll's material in the center of Book I could use some retyping and revising, and Book II on the whole is poorly organized. Plus, some downright embarrassing mechanical errors occurred in the production: the pound signs were omitted from the ISE description, and a line was inadvertently left out of Steve Knight's "Internationalism" essay. These, of course, will all be corrected. One of Randolph Smyth's articles ("Non-simultaneity") is badly in need of a major bit of rewriting to make it applicable to today's hobby; he has already submitted the needed changes. And while the handbook contains about the right amount of humor, it's all in Book I; Book II is too dry. Anybody have any funny articles about GMing...?

I'm eager to get the constructive criticisms of anyone interested, so let's hear it. If you thought the first version of OUAD was pretty good, I promise that the second will be still better - but I need your help to make it that way.

(DICK MARTIN) To be right up front about it, I don't like ONCE UPON A DEADLINE. There, I've said it and I'm glad. Sorry to ruin the suspense. With that said and out of the way, I'll try to explain why.

First, in case you haven't seen a copy, a little background information. ONCE UPON A DEADLINE is "a handbook for Diplomacy publishers and gamesmasters," though handbook may be understating the case. It clocks in at 206 total pages, in three reduced print booklets - Publishing, Gamesmastering, Foreword/Table of Contents/Afterword - and an insert page listing custodians and "several of postal Diplomacy's top publications." There are more articles by more authors than I can count in the two minutes allocated to counting authors. Seemingly, every imaginable idea is covered from every conceivable angle.

And that is my major beef right there.

Most of the fun of publishing is not in the product, it's the process. It's watching the evolution of the zeen as time passes. The only thing that fascinates me more than reading old RETALs is wondering where RETAL will be six months from now. It's neat to look back and see what we were doing at any particular time, and what innovations had been made since the issue before. Some people keep diaries, I publish a dip zeen. If future generations of pubbers naively try to publish "by the book" rather than just

winging it, then that will be all of our loss.

But rather than belabor the difference in philosophy let's move on the the general approach of OUAD, and what we have here. Due to space limitations, this review will concentrate on the publishing aspects of the production. I read my copy about a month ago, so forgive me if my details are a bit rusty.

OUAD spares no expense in trying to cover all bases, and with all these pages, you'd think that everything would have been covered. You'd be wrong, but not by much. The most glaring omission was our New Business last month: finding new players and subbers. Only passing mention is made of the new pubber's most critical need - bodies. What good is starting a zeen without subbers? In the GMing section there's no mention of DIAS or maps (an insert with a GMs Helper on one side and a few different adjudication maps on the other would be a nice touch).

Most of the details of publishing are covered very thoroughly. Unfortunately, too thoroughly to make for very good reading. For example, the entire Modes of Zeen Production section, seven pages worth, could probably be condensed into seven decent paragraphs. The largely unreadable Graphics & Art section could have been chopped from seventeen to about two pages with little loss. A little (well, okay, a lot of) ruthless editing could have turned this monster production into something manageable and useful. The most common comment I've heard so far has been, "Looks great, and if I ever finish reading it...." Over two hundred pages of tiny type does not make for easy reading! And what good is a "handbook" (presumably for reference?) if it isn't read?

The overall tone of the early articles is too negative, almost universally encouraging prospects *not* to publish. Ronald Brown goes so far as to suggest that you have to have a fairly good idea what you'll be doing five years in the future before beginning a zeen. Honestly now, I don't even know what I'm having for lunch tomorrow...five years! The only people who know what they'll be doing that far in advance are either already dead, or so busy climbing the corporate ladder that they don't have time for a zeen anyway. Go ahead, take the plunge! If you can be sure of six months, that's plenty to get started. If it turns out you like it, keep pubbing. If it's not for you, then just fold honorably. No big deal, and you'll have learned something in the process.

A few of the articles are quite good. Alan Stewart and Scott Hanson donate several interesting bits each, and JR Baker, Dave Kleiman and Judy Winsome add one article each that I felt were worth reading. The rest...well, let's just say that for each gem, you have to sift through a bucket of gravel.

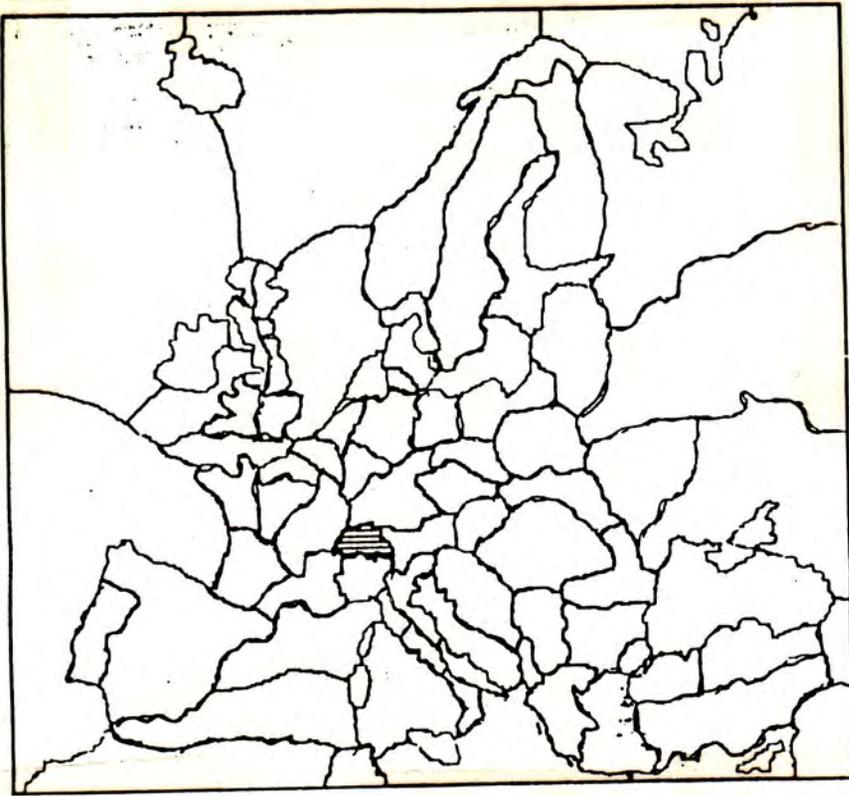
Not much more to say about OUAD. It's quite a production, and probably worth the three bucks it costs. Hey, at least you get to see how I wouldn't do a publisher's handbook! OUAD is just not my cup of tea, being more product than process oriented.

ONCE UPON A DEADLINE is available from Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot St, Apt 3, Dalton, MA 01226 for \$3.00 US.

((Any further comments on the pubbers handbook are, of course, warmly welcomed.
((Well, that wraps up this issue. See you again in about a month!))

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

A



B



C

D

B = ARMY
b = fleet



E



F