

The Scribblerist

Issue #7 -- "As Promises Turn To Hard Copy ..."
6 March 1989

Opening Shot -- Urbane Scrawl Part I

This is a Wigadoo Publication. Don't ask me what that means. I figure that if it's good enough for Don Williams then it's good enough for me.

Note to Audi Jaxon : Yeah, I'm still on the market. And get this, we share some of the same interests, and I'm not talking about reading or role-playing [nudge, nudge, wink, wink]!

Like the new format? How about my very first COLOPHON!:

This is the seventh, slightly delayed [cough, cough], issue of THE SCRIBBLERIST, which, in turn, is an amateur publication devoted to editorial mumblings, a letter column kept alive by a vibrant readership, numerous other submissions of varying quality and relevance, and, to a limited extent, the play of the game of Diplomacy [invented by Alan Calhamer and copyrighted by Avalon Hill]. Subscriptions to this rag can be had for the low, low, LOW price of ten issues for \$6.00. Don't want to pay that much? Well, start publishing and we'll trade. Game openings are a debatable subject; you'll have to dig around inside this issue for pertinent information. What? Oh, an address. I'm Mark Lilleleht and I can be reached at PO Box 3166, Charlottesville, VA 22903-0166. My phone number is (804) 971-8294. Feel free to call anytime, day or night, and if I'm not in just leave a message.

Well, there may be questions as to why this issue is soooooo delayed. Gulp. I don't know. There probably aren't sufficient reasons to placate many of you who have written me off. I'm not dead yet; in fact, I hope to be coming back stronger than ever. What happened? I got bogged down in an emotional quagmire of a personal life. My interest in the hobby never flagged, nor did my desire to publish; the world that I had known up till December '88 started to break up and it took me a while to jump back. By that time school had started, work began pouring in, and I was trying to start anew. It may all sound too melodramatic and sickening but it's true. Looking back on it I wish I had just kicked myself into gear to get this thing going, but I didn't. Hi Ho. We're back, though. Life's in order; everything's formatted nicely on a new computer which makes things infinitely simpler; and for once I'm planning ahead well enough to virtually guarantee on-time production [we've heard that song sung before, haven't we!]. Enough excuses. Let's just kiss and make up and forget this ugly little incident ever happened.

As per Cal white's guidelines as expressed in his excellent zine, *Northern Flame*, I hereby declare this zine a Feud Free Zone. Ain't it exciting?!?! Here are the rules we must now abide by:

- 1) I will, at all times, remember that this is a hobby, and that there will be NO life and death issues at stake.
- 2) I will attempt to retain personal objectivity, preferring to remember that there are two sides to every story.
- 3) I will never make any claim or accusation for which I cannot present material proof.
- 4) I will not allow any dispute to drag on in these pages if it threatens to become a detriment to the hobby.
- 5) If someone objects to anything written in this zine, he/she will always have right of response (subject to point 4).
- 6) I will neither allow, nor resort to, name calling in my zine.

Overall, I think these guidelines are very well thought out and reasonable. Many publishers and individuals would do well to pay at least some heed to the above suggestions. I do, however, reserve for myself one exception: I may heap as much abuse as I wish on the editor of that subzine thingy that I carry. I reserve the right to call him whatever names I deem fitting as well as suspension of any right of response that he may desire to foist upon me. Forget it Tom, I'm God, and I can malign to my hearts content. Hee hee.

It's been an amazing time here at the University these past few weeks. Unbelievable as it may seem, our men's basketball team, picked to finish seventh in the ACC this year has ended the regular season tied for second place in the league with Duke and North Carolina. Incredible. Go 'Hoos! Just found out today that second year student Paul Ereng broke the world indoor record for the 800 meter run. If you will remember, Ereng also captured the gold in that same event in Seoul. I'm not exactly sure what's happening, probably something in the water. Well, we'll talk later; right now the computer's telling me we're almost done with this page which means I have to wrap this up. Inside this issue you'll find plenty of letters, a hefty zine column, and plenty of chatter. Enjoy.

Catcalls From The Cheap Seats

Another packed mailbag this time around. I know, I brought it on myself by waiting so long to put out this issue. Hah hah. Very funny. Things are looking great for this issue and hopefully for issues to come, as much of what's in this issue should elicit at least some response. One thing to keep in mind when reading my responses: Though 95% of the time I'll be supporting what I believe there are those times when I will play devil's advocate simply to get things jumping. It's up to you guys (and gals) to judge when I play such mind games. I'm fairly wierd so you never know. I just love teasing you guys. Oh, new format. Letters are in regular print except for opening [this] and closing notes, while my responses are in italics. It should be pretty easy to pick up. Here we go ...

Pete Gaughan:

You have far too much to do in the hobby. It's quite simple, and no, you can't say, "Oh, shutup, you don't know me and you can't assume I won't handle it." Yes, I can. I have seen every new publisher (and some returning old ones) over the last seven or eight years, and the rate you're advancing means burnout. If it were just the zine, no problem. If it were just reading 43 zines, maybe. But if you try to contribute to even half of those, AND publish, AND go to school, you WILL quit doing one of those three. Guess which I would recommend? (And if it would mean improve your grades or keep TS alive, I'd even ask you to resign from my zine. You're now officially off my standby list -- I don't need people so badly that it rides my conscience!)

MLL You're right, I do have far too much to do. However, it is not too much in the traditional sense in that it has not and will not harm my studies or any other aspect of my 'real life.' I'm comfortable with the amount of work I do in regards to the hobby. True, there are times when I'm swamped with work and as such the publishing suffers, usually in terms of timeliness. It is ridiculous to believe that I will allow a hobby to stand in the way of my studies or anything else that I place a great emphasis on. I do have more sense than that, believe it or not.

An aspect that I don't think is brought up enough when discussing the question of hobby v. 'real life' is that of responsibility. When I started publishing I took upon myself the responsibility of providing a product to those who sent money or agreed to a trade. It is a hobby, true; but it is also a commitment I made to everyone who's reading this. You send money; I produce. This is a part of my 'real life.' When I type up TS or write a letter to someone in the hobby I am not doing so in a vacuum. I'm perfectly aware of my other responsibilities and yet I make the conscious choice of writing a letter over reading a selection out of Political Realism and the Crisis of World Politics. I make no apologies for it and am happy to write that letter rather than read that book. That's part of life; that's part of growing up. I'll never let my hobby dictate what is best for me. Dipdom is an entertaining sidelight to my life in which I enjoy participating, period. As in any other aspect of my life I've taken on certain responsibilities that I feel need to be fulfilled. Things will get done; I'll be happy; my readers will [hopefully] be happy; we'll be fine.

As for burnout, I doubt if I ever will. One day I may tire of it, but that's a long way off. I enjoy writing too much to burnout. Some aspects of the hobby I may tire of sooner than others but I think that publishing is fairly well insulated from that creeping malaise. I'm addicted to my soapbox.

David Orne:

DONT'T BE SO FUCKING LATE WITH TS #6! Not that I'm pissed off, mind you. It's just that the entertainment possibilities in Lakeland are rather limited, and I was looking forward to getting it. So straighten up, and don't let little things like exams get in your way. Publish or perish, remember?

My response to Chris Hurley's rocket scientist questions in TS #4:

1. Cold water freezes faster, because hot water cannot freeze ... it becomes cold first.
2. It's a moot point to either driver, but I believe they strike as one car hitting a wall at 120 mph. I don't know what difference its thickness makes.
3. One vehicle would appear to the other to be going awfully fucking fast.

A question now for "Chris Hurley, Rocket Scientist" ... what is the speed of dark?

Answer: -186,000 miles per second (as stolen from "Ask Dr. Science" on NPR)

MLL Gee, I'm sorry that you live in such a backwater town. I'll try to be better, I promise! And if I can't get the zine out on time I'll photocopy a few pages of my texts and send them to you to read while I type up the zine. Howza that?

That question you pose is a tricky one. Who am I to question NPR's Dr. Science, but one thing bothers me. I always thought of dark not as the wave/particle that 'light' is thought to be. To me, dark always denoted the absence of light; in essence, but one aspect of the perfect vacuum. If this were true then the speed of dark would be non-existent for the sole reason that 'dark' is non-existent. Assigning a numerical value to a non-existent entity seems rather paradoxical.

Randy Grisby:

As the new MNC, I noticed that you haven't requested a Miller number. Your Miller number for your gunboat game "BaNgwana" is 1988GGrb32.

MLL Um, ah, we don't take Miller Numbers. You see, I really can't explain it; I just don't want the hassle. When/If BaNgwana ever ends I'll try my damndest to send you the endgame info complete with MN, but for the time I just play the game

without it. Oh, and Julie, if you want to give me a MNUC I'll go ahead and print it as I did this one and will extend you the same courtesy as Randy, though I won't run either number with the seasonal game reports.

Francois Cuerrier:

I'm afraid that your reasoning on coast designations is weak. The Rulebook clearly states that "An order which admits to two meanings is not followed. A badly written order, which nevertheless can have only one meaning, must be followed." It thus follows that F BLA-BUL would succeed whereby F CON-BUL would not.

The Rulebook further states "If a fleet is ordered to one of these provinces and it is possible for the fleet to move to either coast, the order must specify which coast or the fleet does not move." Therefore, the Rulebook does NOT always require that coasts be specified, only when it's possible for the fleet to move to both coasts. So you needn't worry about rebuking Calhmer.

Yes, mislabeling is sometimes used by a player as a tool of diplomacy. But as a GM you needn't concern yourself with his intentions, only with his orders; and if they can have only one meaning, then they should succeed. If the player is so desperate for a failed move, he can write F BLA-SER and claim that he made a mistake.

P.S. The Scribblerist is shaping up great, though I had felt concerned over its schedule. I just love the nuclear war discussion in spite of your own lib left bleeding heart views. My own feeling is that Star Wars, if an effective system, will be allowed by the Soviets only if they themselves possess similar technology. If placed before a "fire them or lose them" scenario, they <<the Soviets??>> would probably unleash a "pre-emptive" strike a few hours before the system was deployed and fully operational. Any other policy would amount to surrender, and no Great Power has ever peacefully acquiesced to that before.

MLL Regarding the question of coastal designations we could play tricks with logic from now till the end of the world and both of us would be right, as well as both being wrong. If I got a set of orders that read F Aeg-Bul it would be easy for me to say, "Oh, he obviously meant to include (sc) with that order." But as soon as I say that am I not immediately guilty of just what you so dislike, passing judgement as regards his intentions? In my mind it is an ambiguous order. I refuse to be a party to thinking of his intentions. As such, I look at what is written and determine whether it succeeds or fails, period. F Aeg-Bul does not specify clearly enough what it is that the player wishes to do. Consequently, it fails.

You're one hundred percent right when you point out that the Soviets would never allow an "effective" Star Wars system to be deployed if they lacked a similar system. However, there are two lib left bleeding heart points that I think you fail to understand. First, a truly effective space defense system is years away and trillions of dollars down the road, and will almost assuredly never be "effective" in the optimum sense [this is all very debatable, read your old issues!]. Secondly, and I think more importantly, is the fact that regardless of the posturing and rhetoric neither power is stupid enough to launch a full-scale nuclear strike for fear of a retaliatory strike as well as the disastrous climatic and environmental consequences of such an attack.

P.S. Thanks for the compliment and the nice review of TS in the latest Passchendaele.

Jim Diehl:

Individuals who believe "future historians will be shocked by the barbarity of our time" are naive, have an unrealistic appraisal of human nature and certainly are not historians. Even a semi-historian could relate details in ancient history which would cause goosebumps on those desensitized by the so-called "barbarity of our time." And why believe love and sweetness will prevade the land or be pandemic in the "future." From Czarist times the quite shocking Gulag was the "future." Ancient history of China demonstrated nothing so shocking as Mao's mass murder of tens of millions of Chinese. To ancient Chinese it would be a peek into the future of China under Mao's rule that would be "shocking." The point here is that from the first recorded history to the present there has been plenty of shocking barbarity to go around.

Only one with a sophomoric interpretation of human nature would or could believe that most people will rise to sainthood in the "future." Such an upward evolution has definately not been the case for over 6000 years of recorded history.

Re: "(You) object to the concept that one set of beliefs is better than the other."

What about those who believe in cannibalism. Or does it depend on which side of the stewpot you're on?

Ancient Greece had institutionalized slavery and believed it right and necessary. Or do you dream you'd be Plato's pal and not inconvenienced by such beliefs.

In the USA today welfare recipients believe it is a "right" and an "entitlement" to have the government rob the productive portion of the population for their benefit. It is their belief that involuntary charity is not theft merely because the government is a well-paid middle-man in the heist.

To appear proper some malignant beliefs employ subtly deceptive reasoning or claim to produce some "good" for some end purpose. Some beliefs are more just, humane, and right than others. Philosophers have struggled with these matters for millennia. Only a moral relativist or moron would not object to some "beliefs." At least the moron has a good excuse.

MLL I agree with a lot of what you're saying in your first two paragraphs but I also think you misunderstood to a large extent exactly what I was trying to say. I will not and can not argue with the fact that throughout history and up through the present there is no end to the horrors that are committed by man upon man [when I speak of 'man' I refer to the human race in general]. what changes, however, is our perception of ourselves and our society as we progress through the ages. Right now, looking back through history, Americans almost inevitably see the world of today as much more 'civilized' and 'kind' than, say, the middle ages. And as medieval man looked back upon the preceding centuries, he too must have thought how lucky he was to be living in his world, rather than the world of a few hundred years previous. Whether or not man actually 'evolves upwards' is very debatable. What does change, and evolve 'upward' is our own opinions of ourselves. The Inquisition was fully justifiable to the men who turned the screws as well as the Church hierarchy. We look back on it in disgust and are revolted that such atrocities could be committed in the name of God. Most of us living today are trapped

in a Hegelian vision of mankind; that as we progress horizontally through time we ascend vertically through the upper reaches of 'civilization.' Right or wrong we are, almost to the man, tainted somewhat by that belief. Every time one hears, "That couldn't happen in this day and age," one is hearing a regurgitating of Hegelian belief that is subtly fed us from birth to death. My point of last issue was that future societies will almost assuredly fall prey to the same such belief. Right or wrong, future historians are bound to look back on our age and condemn us for the subtle forms of subjugation and repression and discrimination that is practiced today.

You condemn moral relativism without thinking about your own situation. It is deceptively simple to accept that which we are told is correct and see all else as wrong. That kind of closed-minded view of the world is what leads to all kinds of malignant and destructive beliefs. For years the white man was told of the inherent inferiority of the black man. Very easy to accept such a belief when it is taught from childhood. After all, why question it, as long as you're white that is. Oh, it's so nice and safe in our little ivory towers of moral primacy. We accept our beliefs whole-heartedly and without question and all others are wrong, demented, and somehow inferior. Being a white, middle-class, college educated male it certainly does matter to me whether or not I become someone's meal; but I can't close my mind to the fact that for that particular society cannibalism may very well serve a constructive purpose. I won't be a party to blind condemnation. Such breeds bigotry as well as makes one look like a fool. I object to no beliefs. I find many repugnant and morally unacceptable in this day and age and society. I will gladly fight the KKK, neo-Nazis, Renamo, or countless others. I will assuredly place myself on higher moral ground than members of such organizations. I will not, however, grant you the inherent superiority of some beliefs over others. The only reason we find cannibalism morally reprehensible is because society dictates to us that it is unacceptable. Transplant the brain of a newborn infant into the body of a New Guinean infant who will grow up in a cannibalistic society. If you tell me that that child will grow into a good Christian, abhor cannibalism, subscribe to the Protestant work ethic, and move to the US to become a stock broker I'll call you a damned liar. Beliefs are "more just, humane, and right" only as long as the collective society deems them so. When things change you become the minority, a victim of the same persecution you so happily and self-assuredly doled out in your time.

John Erb:

I would like to say a few things about religion and morality. For one, it is not necessary to be religious to be moral. Religion has had a monopoly on morality for centuries but only because people let it. Morality literally means, "A system of conduct based on principles of right and wrong," as defined by The American Heritage Dictionary. If your principles of right and wrong, therefore, tell you that it is bad to do something simply because other people think you should and you find yourself bowing to the wishes of others even though it conflicts with your own interests and desires you are being immoral. Every person has their own moral code which they must follow or be miserable as they contradict their personal values.

Accepting someone else's moral code blindly and without question is one of the worst things you can do to yourself. This is one of the reasons why Christianity and other religions have caused so much misery throughout history. They impose their moral code on people and it is impossible to follow it. This causes guilt in the believer when he 'fails' and gives the religious a handle with which he can control the 'sheep' of his 'flock.' One of the more odious aspects of the Christian morality is its intrusion into the very thoughts of the believer. We are told that to hate someone is to be guilty of murder and to lust after someone is to be guilty of adultery. This violates the very definition of morality. Morality is a system of CONDUCT not of THOUGHT. If you hate someone you cannot be guilty of murdering him if he is still alive. Until you put your thoughts into action you have done nothing wrong.

Unearned guilt is the result of accepting moral principles which conflict with your own. If you are an atheist, like I am, and you refuse to go to church on Sunday, don't let anyone make you feel guilty about not going. The only reason to feel guilty about not going to church is if you genuinely believe you should go.

For anyone who is interested in learning more about the moral philosophy which I have given a sketchy introduction to I would recommend the book, The Virtue of Selfishness, by Ayn Rand. For anyone interested in atheism I would recommend, Atheism: The Case Against God, by George Smith.

MLL Much of what you say is grounded in Freudian thought as regards the ego, repression of the aggressive instinct, and the consequent development of the superego, the repository of all of our guilt feelings bred by repression. Much of what you say is correct but I think you also miss a broader point as concerns morality, and that is the notion of the collective. It is important to keep in mind that though we all may vary in belief there exist, though largely unwritten, a set of certain basic beliefs to which society believes all should subscribe. Many of these basic tenants are good and profit society as a whole. Problems begin to arise when fringe groups or over-zealous individuals attempt to imprint their own peripheral beliefs on the collective morality. The collective morality is that which all are expected to adhere to and is, in a sense, the judge of each individual's actions. Consequently, when certain radical notions are allowed to adhere to the collective the just is transformed, in the minds of many, into the unjust.

One final note: I would hesitate, based solely on the title, to pay much heed to the Smith book. In no way do I wish to make a case against God. God cannot be argued against in any logical manner, for such arguments fail when one tries to apply rationalism to a question of faith. What's more, I wouldn't want to deprive a believer of his or her faith. I wish to do the opposite; allow both faith and rationality, God and nature to peacefully coexist, with neither claiming an overarching superiority over the other.

Dave Palmer:

You put considerable thought into your statement of belief. There are many similarities between your thoughts on the unification of nature and my own. One needs only to observe nature to discover that it is the essence of perfection and good. The universe can be likened to having an order comparable to fractal geometry. Who knows at what level the human spirit resides: molecular, solar system, galaxy, _____? These are the levels currently observable by humans. Cannot there be others at scales greater or smaller than these? The philosophical difference between you and I is that you "believe" in the natural laws, whereas I profess only to observe them and accept what is observed.

The one thing that unites religions and at the same time condemns them to hypocrisy is the word "belief." Whether

in their mind, their church doctrine, or their bible, "believe" is their all-encompassing solution. It is also their downfall, because it comes down to the fact that one believes whatever he wants to believe. One can believe in the teachings of Christ, yet also believe it is okay to cheat on your wife, lie, steal, or covet your neighbor's BMW 325i. Do you believe that Christ's word can be honored while breaking one (or more) of the Ten Commandments? Believe what you want, for all the good it will do you. I simply observe. We can find concrete, scientific proof for the phenomena we observe in nature. There is no scientific proof for a belief, else it would not be a belief.

In deference to society's prejudices, I choose not to use the word atheist to describe myself, because I can do without all the negative connotations it bears. I have decided on the word "naturalist," which I define as "an observer of nature." I am not a "believer" in anything. I am an observer. I observe that animals squish and emit red blood when run over by a car. The Homo sapiens animal also does this. So, what is it that a religious person observes in a squished human that makes him believe the squished human's "soul" (a vast array of electrochemical impulses whose plug has just been pulled by a steel-belted radial) is going to meet God? Well, of course, if that squished human was your brother you would grieve and wish you could have him back again. I know I would. Religion promises that such a reunion is possible in the afterlife. What a comfort that is to someone who cannot accept death for what it is observed to be - the end. My devoutly religious sister (wanna see her playlist?) is already grieving for me because I will not be with her in heaven. Is she comforted?

As an observer of nature I have seen 400 million-year-old animal body parts, as well as rocks age-dated at 3.2 billion years. I observed a dead animal that lived 400 million years ago. Which is harder to conceive of, the fossil's past existence or its death? For me, both are there for the viewing in the rock. What right have human animals to "believe" their own species has an afterlife when all other animals do not? The belief is founded in the teachings, writings, or in a "divine guidance," all as elicited from the minds of other humans. That these thoughts came from the minds of humans is a fact. The idea that these thoughts were inspired by a God is just a belief. Death is but an observable fact of the termination of life.

MLL A couple clarifications of my own comments as you perceived them are required before I go on. I do not "believe" as such in the natural laws. Rather, I recognize that they exist and that they are the definers of the universe. If such is belief than I guess I'd be more aptly termed a 'Druid' than an atheist. It is, however, my contention that the recognition of observable and measurable phenomena and the subsequent arranging of those observations into 'laws' is not belief.

Your comment on the "human spirit" is perplexing. The "spirit" is a seemingly religious concept. Shame, and I thought you were a good atheist!

It's a sad comment on society that you feel uncomfortable in declaring yourself an atheist. When the topic of religion comes up in conversation no one should feel threatened or uneasy in expressing their thoughts/beliefs. This simply illustrates the destructive hierarchy of belief systems [or non-belief systems] that has been set up and perpetuated. I try to avoid that. I don't 'flaunt' my atheistic opinion but I no longer hesitate in expressing my feelings. It's funny because now it seems as though other people are more uncomfortable than I ever was in hearing what I have to say.

Your pure "observer" status is convenient to defend but it seems hard to justify. Simple observation is all fine and good but if the great learned men and women of the past did not 'believe' in some aspects of life, some hypotheses, or what-have-you, then where would academia be today, and at what level would our technology be today? Observation without conclusion condemns man to stasis and there would consequently be little chance of technological or cultural 'advancement.' A hypothesis has limited supporting evidence; it is, however, the basic foundation on which further knowledge is built. If one chooses to observe, sans supposition, then hypotheses will never be forwarded and mankind will never progress in any intellectual realm.

Vince Shouba:

I'd like to comment on some points of your religion article in issue five.

First, "a belief in a diety and an afterlife" is very comforting, as you say. But I fail to see in this an argument against them. It is comforting to me to have a loving family; should I therefore cut myself off from my parents and brothers? And belief in a God who judges, while consoling, can be terrifying as well.

It is not my understanding that God decides how to answer prayers based on how "good" the petitioner has been lately.

That the "frightening legacy of the Christian faith" is the disappearance of "the unity of man" seems an almost inexplicably harsh contention. Were there no wars before 1 AD? No religious or philosophical differences? Combat does take place which involves religious disputes, but I expect economic, national, and strategic problems are more often the causes. Some few may fight wars for religious conquest; personally, I feel greater sympathy with Hinduism and Islam (which recognizes Jesus as the Messiah) than with atheism. The tradition of nonviolent resistance, by the way, takes root in religion and particularly Christianity.

The personification of God as a "wise old man" may be taking the metaphor too far, but Christians believe in a personal God having a will and plans and values favoring some human actions, thoughts, and lifestyles over others. You may disagree with us, but your objection "to the concept that one set of beliefs is better than another" appears absurd. Either God has a will, and I am right, or He does not, and you are. It is possible that various religions and atheistic philosophies may each have truths to offer, but on this single issue there's a correct answer and a wrong one. Similarly, we Christians do not think man's belief systems create God, but that he creates them, and everything, giving (culturally unfair as it may seem) to Israel a light brightest of all.

MLL I feel like I must emphasize again that my article in issue five was not meant to be an attack on those who believe in God. Nor was I trying to dissuade anyone from belief. I was merely trying to expound my own views and feelings. The comfort that a belief in God offers was not and can not be used as an argument against religion. Some people choose to believe because of that security. I don't believe so I am not drawn by the security offered; if others feel comforted then I fully support their choice of faith as a part of their life.

Are you saying that God will grant the prayer of a sinner [i.e. Ted Bundy, Adolph Hitler] as well as the saint? If there is one thing that my anthropology courses have taught me it is that there exists an almost unlimited

diversity in beliefs and belief systems. These systems are bound to erupt into conflict, whether it be religious, economic, or political. Christianity has only expanded and exasperated these conflicts by stressing its superiority. Look at Islam, a religion that has historically allowed other religions to exist within a traditional Muslim state. Was Christianity ever that tolerant? Until the modern era, when Christendom was forced to acknowledge that it was but a part of the global community of many disparate beliefs, Christians have been notoriously intolerant of other belief systems. Look to the European "colonization" of the globe. Tolerance in abundance, no?

It perplexes me that you should think so little of atheists. Read Dave Palmer's letter printed below, he sums up the misperceptions pretty well. The majority aren't out to kill the Christian or Jewish or Islamic God. I recognize that that god is very much alive in innumerable people. God is not alive for me; God is not dead; for me God does not exist. Period. I don't want to deny you your God nor do I want to have a god forced upon me. Live and let live; is that so hard? There is no correct answer, no definitive yes or no. When we talk of the existence of God the arguments for and against exist on two separate and almost exclusive levels. Rationality and faith are two distinct functions of the mind. You can not "rationally" explain all that occurs in the Bible, many parts must be taken on faith. That's fine. But if faith is lacking in a person than there is no purely rational way to explain God. You say either God exists or he doesn't; whatever happened to the "personal God."

Dave Palmer:

Atheism as a "belief system" is not so uncommon that one fails to find a member in a large (?) crowd. The word "atheist," however, receives reluctant usage by most atheists because it has been endowed with negative social meaning. You can tell an acquaintance that you are unreligious or a nonbeliever and they can readily accept that, and a congenial discussion may even follow. However, tell them you are an atheist and they appear startled, immediately become defensive (or offensive) and argumentative. The problem is not with the atheist but with the believer's concept of an atheist as one who is out to eliminate their church and religion. The great majority of atheists can be accurately described by the dictionary definition. It is the few "militant" atheists who give the rest of the nonbelievers bad press. To a "normal" atheist, the word means just that, and it is an accurate description of their belief system. To a believer, the word atheist means Madeline Murray O'Hare and no Christmas trees on the steps of the capitol building. A few words to all believers: reevaluate your concept of an atheist and perhaps the next time you discover one your tolerance level and understanding will be greater. Few atheists are out to deprive you of the icons of your Christian culture.

You may classify me as an atheist because if you asked me if I believe in God I would say no, although I don't believe in anything. Yet my family and I observe the main Christian holidays. My wife and children attend church regularly, and with my blessing the children are receiving a basic Christian education. Why do I, a nonbeliever, condone this? Well, one of the many things that have made our country successful is the First Amendment. My wife has the right to worship as she chooses. Religion aids my wife in her pursuit of happiness. I do not see the impact of religious thinking on our society as detrimental. As was discussed in the previous issue, moral values are often based in religious teachings, and the odds are that a proper religious upbringing will often improve the moral values of humans. Second, the prevalence of Christianity in our society would make it difficult to deny the social activities to one's family (i.e. Easter, Christmas). As for the children, it is my wish that they be exposed to the concept of religion. There will soon come a time when I shall discuss with them the full concept of religions in general, and educate them on the offerings of the other main religions. This will put the entire message of Christianity into its proper context as well as give them the opportunity to examine other choices. For now, they can receive the basic message (indoctrination, if you will) from the neighborhood church. My wife is not too excited about me providing our children with alternatives when they are old enough to decide for themselves. I wonder what she is afraid of?

MLL I think you do well to speak of the "militant" atheists as opposed to "traditional" atheists. Tolerance and understanding is the key to all human relations and is probably even more important when it concerns an issue as emotionally charged as religion. Atheists are not out to change the world or to destroy beliefs. We can all live together. True, it won't be a saintly, harmonious world, but if we all make an effort to comprehend rather than judge others' beliefs than we will all be better off.

Your choice of the word "indoctrination" is apt.

Bill Salvatore:

You're certainly not an atheist in the traditional sense if you believe in some force in the universe which "guides things." Being schizo by nature, I'm a practicing Roman Catholic by conditioning who reasons as follows: There cannot be two uncreated things. Hence, either there is one God, and that God created the universe; or the universe is uncreated. The latest that I know about physics suggests that the universe could have come into being as a spontaneous fluctuation of the vacuum energy - this is no harder to believe than an uncreated God, but provides no guide for moral action. In this case we clearly have no immortal component. Suppose instead that God created the universe but chooses not to affect it. If we have no immortal component, then again there is no guide for moral action. If we do have an immortal component, then either our actions in this life do not affect its destiny - in which case we have no guide to moral action - or our actions in this life do affect its destiny - in which case the purpose of this life is to discover what constitutes moral action. [Aside: This last case implies to me that God is a Lover - that is, created an immortal component in us either for the purpose of loving us or for the purpose of being loved by us. There are other possibilities - God the Joker and God the Hunter are all that I'm aware of so far. A Joker probably wouldn't let my actions in this life affect the destiny of my immortal component (if any); a Hunter might; a Lover almost certainly would. Hence, by Bayesian <<?>> analysis, a Lover.] Finally, suppose that God created the universe and affects it. If we have no immortal component (personal or racial) then God is a Joker and there is no guide to moral action. If we do have an immortal component, but our actions in this life do not affect its destiny, then God is a Joker (and a sadistic one, at that). If our actions in this life do affect the destiny of our immortal component in a universe which a God created and affects in an ongoing fashion (the traditional Christian position), then our purpose in this life is to discover what constitutes moral action, and practice it. All in all, perhaps, not a very comforting chain of reasoning, but my conclusion is that if there is any purpose in this life, it is to discover what

constitutes action which will favorably affect the destiny of my (or humanity's) immortal component. Then I have to estimate the probability that my life does have such a purpose, so that when what I see as my immediate self-interest conflicts with what I have decided is my moral duty, I will have a basis for choosing which action to take (For the sake of simplicity I have ignored the fact that such decisions array themselves on a continuum of difficulty; taking that into account makes the argument wordier, but does not change my conclusion]. My life is easy and comfortable, so I would have to estimate the probability of purposefulness as extremely low - much lower than I actually do - in order to decide in favor of self-interest.

MLL Wow! For a schizo you sure do pose some interesting philosophical questions. Let me mull this one over.

Nick Sebrell:

As I spoke to a citizen of West Germany who has lived both in the U.S. and in the Federal Republic of Germany I was quite suprised to discover that on a percentage basis, citizens in the U.S. pay the same amount in taxes as citizens of West Germany. This is amazing, because while here in the U.S. we have incredibly huge deficits, shortages of low income housing, welfare problems, no tax paid universities, no tax paid public health program, etc., West Germany has an education system paid through taxes including university level studies, a public health system paid through taxes, no astronomically high deficits, and a higher standard of living. So, where the hell is all the money going?! The money goes to Israel, it goes to pay for NATO forces, it goes to pay for the defense of Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries, it is eaten up by the unbelievably wasteful welfare system where less than half of the money appropriated to the poor actually gets to the poor. Our government is incredibly inefficient..... We cannot pay for <<any new social programs including socialized medicine and support for the elderly>> unless we limit expenditures in other areas AND streamline existing social programs. We cannot continue to use over 50% of money allocated to poor people for paying bureaucratic paper pushers and we cannot continue to pay \$700 to Israel for every man in the country. We must stop subsidizing Europe's defense force. We must stop all payments to other countries. If we want to become a welfare state then we MUST discontinue foreign policies that necessitate monetary aid to 3rd world countries and allis. We cannot continue to be everything to everybody. It's either become a welfare state and discontinue our role as a leading nation, or let our economy become a free market economy where people pay for their own health care and provide for their own retirements and we can continue providing funds for and subsidizing foreign countries. We can only spend our money once, we have to decide which way to spend it.

MLL You're right that we can't be everything to everybody, especially with the national deficit the size it is now. However, is necessary to choose one route over the other? Being the perenial fence-sitter that I am, the middle ground is always most appealing. The government must tighten its belt and streamline an overwieldy bureaucracy. Negating our overseas commitments would be political suicide. Here too there is room for improvement: allocate funds for specific projects and make sure the money gets to where it is supposed to be going. Cut out both domestic and overseas pork-barrel projects. Maybe it's time some of those austerity measures that the IMF and World Bank drop on lesser developed countries were applied to the United States. What the United States needs is a president and legislative branch that is more concerned about the health of the nation rather than whether or not they'll be re-elected. Where have all the good men gone? Killed by the PACs and various special interest groups. The bleeding heart liberal in me hates to say this but some of the blame must also be levied on the media. Protests and discontent make such good stories. What we need is about ten years of a benevolent dictatorship to straighten things out. If my country calls I'll quit school and gladly serve. I'm a nice guy, you can trust me.

David Hood:

Having a "national primary" would basically defeat the whole purpose of state primaries/causauses in general - that being exposing the canidates to scrutiny on a state rather than national arena. This makes the would-be presidents go out to the individual towns/voters more than a national campaign would. However, I see David Orne's point that by the time we reach big states like California, many of the hopefuls are gone. One possible way to alter that result would be to rotate the dates of each state's primaries from year to year. This might not have much impact in the short-term; but in the long-term I think both parties would benefit by loosening the grip that Iowa and New Hampshire have over the process. Iowa continues to favor essentially unelectable people on the Dem side (les so far the GOP). As far as this year itself goes, however, I think Bush and Dukakis were the pre-Iowa favorites of most pundits anyway, so I don't think the outcome would have been any different although the process could have been better were we to move towards a more compact primary season with rotating dates for individual states.

MLL One problem I see with the idea of rotating states is a question of financing the campaigns. One of the main benefits of Iowa and New Hampshire is that both are relatively small states. This allows the canidates to get out and meet the people without being overly concerned with presenting a specific 'image' across the television airwaves which requires substantial funding. Campaigning in Iowa and New Hampshire allows the lesser known canidates to make an impression on the voters and maybe make a name for themselves which would allow them to pick up funding for the media blitzes in the large states. What would happen if the primaries started in New York or California? Both are very large states [population wise] and to reach the voters requires access to the mass media. MONEY. The canidates with the greatest name recognition would get the most money which would allow them to advertise which would give them greater exposure, etc. Those canidates of little name but great ideas would very likely fall by the wayside. The reality is that good ideas won't get you elected these days. Today it's packaging over substance.

Audrey SF Jaxon:

← letter starts
on pg. 8

David Orne's suggestion for the primary process (held nation wide on the same day) certainly is feasible in this day of mass media and electronic communication. Although I don't think the major parties will go for it. It doesn't give them time to rally their party followers around a single candidate. Don't get me wrong, I'm for some type of reform, only I would like to see it occur in the open election first.

What I would like to see in a Presidential election is all the polling places across the nation opening at the same time, simultaneously (i.e. Greenwich Mean Time), and stay open 24 hours. That should give everyone, no matter their schedule, time enough to vote and would not penalize the "late states" if a reasonable daylight starting time was chosen. I would also like to see the elimination of the long outdated electoral college. It was a great idea in its day, but our technology is such that we can act like a true democracy (as opposed to the republic which we are more like) with each vote having an equal weight. Heavens, if we can call in from our homes to vote on who Jack the Ripper really was, we should be able to set up a polling situation capable of handling a national election.

One last thought: why do we still have to wait to install a new President? It doesn't take a month plus to reach the capitol anymore.

MLL I like your 24 hour polling idea. It always pains me to see the networks projecting winners in the eastern states when the polls in the west aren't even closed yet. No matter how much the network execs protest, I fear that it still taints the results of the later states.

I've always felt that the electoral college was rather superfluous in this day and age. If a president was ever elected by the electoral college but lost the popular vote there would be quite a ruckus raised. I realize that it has happened in the past and been forgotten but I don't think the American people would let it slip by with impunity.

Conrad von Metzke:

One quick query for Brad Wilson concerning his first five CDs: Beethoven Symphonies, Karajan/BPO? Which symphonies? Some - I think most notably the Seventh - are superb; others are, well, er, not quite as glorious as all that. His older versions are much superior, notwithstanding the sonic qualifications; especially the Vienna discs if the late 'fifties. Too bad I don't have a CD player, I might offer an alternative; but if someone wants to buy me one, I'll do a good job!

MLL Oh, sure Conrad, let me get out my checkbook here. What's that Mr. Salesman, the CD player I want costs \$517.98. That's no problem, let me just write you a check. Boy, that wipes me out, but it's worth it. Now we'll get some real reviews! How much to ship it to San Diego? \$22.14, you say? Damn, I've only got \$19.31! No, I don't want a lower model CD player, it wouldn't be fair to Conrad. How am I going to explain this one. I so wanted to suprise him. Hi Ho.

Bill Salvatore:

Game Table: 24" x 60", leg at each corner; 1/8" deep depression, 22" x 28" in center to accomodate standard TAHGC mapboard (to Tom Nash: Hi from a geek!).

MLL Any other suggestions from you people? I would have expected as much from a <<hoch, spit>> hex gamer. What about all the normal people I know who read this rag? Or does anybody really read this stuff? You do read this, don't you? I put so much work into this thing and you people are spending your hard earned pennies on this so you might as well read it. Hello?

Conrad von Metzke:

Tom Nash's feuding spiel strikes a very sour note with me. He is more than welcome to get his jollies from the discomfiture of others but I think I speak for a large segment of the hobby in saying that I do not thrill to watching people hurt each other. It's true that if one participates in a feud, one needs to be prepared to take it as well as one can dish it out. But when feuds start roping in people who don't want to be there, and are included only because they happen to be an example of something that somebody wants to get viscious about, then we're not talking about well-moderated discussions in 'zines anymore, we're talking pure brutality. And that is not something that can be charmingly moderated so that both sides participate; that's something that should simply not happen.

Tom's right about protecting novices, though; that's absurd. We who have no use for this feud stuff aren't protecting anybody; we're protecting The Hobby. Over the years (and remember, I've been around for 23 of them) we've run forums, conducted surveys, asked innumerable questions, and the answers are always the same: Most hobby members want to play games and maybe share a few unrelated comments now and again, but very few of them have any use for "hobby politics." Further, most declare themselves to be strongly put off by 'zines that indulge in such things. Now, Lord knows I'm no angel, even recently; but I hope I've grown up enough to set myself apart from this kind of garbage.

This is not to say that I intend to stick my head in the sand. On occasion, one of these feuds will actually touch on something worth hashing out. The 'feud' over the Miller Numbers is one example; this is a real issue to those who care about variant development and maintenance.....But most of the fighting goes on about things that can only be described as personality clashes, usually involving a couple germane participants and any number of busybody hangers-on who really ought to mind their own business. Jesus Christ, Tom, I can do better than that sticking my head out the door and listening to the neighbors! But even that gets dull; voyeurism never was my thing.

So for my money, the "pure-feud" (as opposed to "substantive-feud") types can just go away....I send [novices] to proven 'zines (e.g. REBEL and THE CANADIAN DIPLOMAT and HAGALIL HAMAARVI) where 'offensive' material is limited or absent altogether. From there, if they wish, they can move on - once forewarned - and get into the arena if they so desire. Many do so desire; Tom Nash, for instance. But if they do not so desire, they are not going to be put off, possibly driven back out of PBM play, because of all the crud they find littering their gaming.

And fer crissake, Mark, don't you fall into the same trap! Believe me, if Tom's letter had been written by anybody

else, I wouldn't have read it; if its subject begins to loom large (this will be my last mention), I'll lose interest and go my own way. I would much rather read about atheism and why your reasons are different than mine.

MLL First off, let me say that I will not introduce feuding into TS. If there is one thing I want to avoid it is turning the letter column into a forum for vindictive personal attacks. What I wish to do is to organize the dynamics of feuding into a definable order so that I can begin to try to understand why grown adults wish to act in such a childish manner. Oh, in a joking relationship it can be a barrel of laughs. Take for instance my current difference of opinion with that fetid bag of horse manure, Tom something ... I think it's Tom Nashty, or maybe it's just plain Putrid. Who knows. We both realize that what's going on is just a bit of good fun shared between two people. What I don't understand, and wish I did, is how people can take all of it so seriously. That's what I want to figure out.

I agree with you and find feuding to be very destructive and mean-spirited. Feuds have a nasty habit of pulling any number of 'innocent' third parties into the fray which only makes for a messy situation. The Hobby won't be enjoyable for those parties anymore if he or she finds his or her person under constant attack from people he or she couldn't care less about. A pleasant diversion from the "real world" is spoiled for that person. If I was suddenly embroiled in a feud I wouldn't want to pull out of the Hobby; I enjoy publishing, playing games, and corresponding with you guys too much to just drop out because somebody is maligning me. But what should I do? Ignore him or her? Sure, but the jibes are bound to take their toll. People are going to begin to question me, novices could be turned off to TS simply because unrefuted lies are being spread. It's a tough question and it's one that would effect my involvement as a whole. That's what's so damaging about feuding. The Hobby will survive in one incarnation or another as long as Diplomacy is still stocked on the shelves of gaming stores. What is jeopardized is the individual. We could all conform to one set of ideas as regards the hobby and the world and play our games in a mindless vacuum. Doesn't excite me. Yes, those divergent opinions that make the Hobby so vibrant are bound to clash, but why must they be violent clashes? Because we're all a bunch of kids who have yet to learn how to play together? Maybe.

Your opinions concerning novices are exactly what I've been trying to get across. I apologize if I wasn't clearer on the point earlier. Most novices come to play games. Refer them to interesting, game-playing zines where the danger of being drawn into a feud is slight. There is no way to limit what novices know, nor should there be any attempt to do that. As they become more involved in the hobby they'll learn of feuding and the ugliness that accompanies it. Fine. But give 'em a chance to discover the hobby on their own, at their own pace. Why the hell would we want to show the slimey underbelly of the Hobby before they get to see the main body of a rather playful beast.

End sermon. Well, maybe not yet....

David Orne:

After much internal debate, I believe it is time to blow my cover. As some of you may have suspected from my questions in past issues, I am a postal novice, and I find it high time that I speak up for my brethren and take part in "The Great Feuding Debate."

Tom Nash is correct. We are not children in need of moral protection. Some of us even drink or (I shudder to think) smoke. We have been stabbed so many times in face-to-face games that it will not cause emotional damage to be lied to from across state lines. In short, we realize that Diplomacy, whether face-to-face or postal, is merely a game, an activity to be enjoyed in our leisure time, and no more.

We understand this fact very well, but there is one thing that we are not very clear on: what are the issues involved here? From what I can tell, most of the feuding that is taking place is centered on whether public feuding has merits or not. There must be more to it than that.

From what I can tell, there are some people out there who do not agree precisely with what is going on in the game they are in or the zine to which they subscribe. Surprise, surprise. And they choose to voice their opinion. No surprise there, either. So far, so good. Where did things go wrong?

Are those disagreements so radical that there is no zine out there to which a dissenter may subscribe comfortably? Are none of the dissenters in a position to start a zine in accordance with their view of the issues? I suspect both have occurred. So where did things get out of hand? I suspect someone went beyond the realm of mere disagreement and insulted someone personally, and it was taken badly, and the whole thing just snowballed. At least, that's what I imagine.

What's the problem here y'all? Aren't most of us adults? Can't we discuss issues rationally rather than fall into "feuding." It seems we do a fairly decent job with much more important issues such as SDI and religion. Why do we become emotional when talking about a hobby?

As I said, I'm a novice, and I don't know all the facets of the situation. But as a novice, I don't think I need to be protected, I need to be informed. Rather, I want to be informed. After all, it's just a hobby. If I find it's no longer fun, I'll just play a little more racquetball, that's all. Ain't no big thang!

MLL Ain't nothing wrong with being a novice, nor is there anything wrong in asking questions; I'm more than happy to answer any questions people may have. I may not give a satisfactory answer but I'll try.

I fully realize that novices are not children in need of a protective big brother, but I do contend that publishers and GMs should do their utmost to keep virulent personal attacks out of their zines for the simple reason that these attacks are so superfluous to the hobby, yet so destructive, that it could give a bad impression of what is most certainly an enjoyable and amusing hobby. Protection? No. Accenuating the many fine points of the hobby while downplaying the immaturity that some people display? YES!!!

As for feuding itself, feuds extend far beyond games and/or zines. I've got two of the most active 'feuders' on my sub list but like to think that they both enjoy what is printed here. The disagreements that exist are almost solely of a personal nature manifested in the guise of 'hobby politics.' True, valid disagreements exist between both parties, yet their vision is so clouded by dislike and distrust that they simply can't seem to bring themselves to resolve their differences like adults. Once, long ago, tucked away in the annals of hobby history, someone did something or said something, or an imaginary slight was conceived of and, as you say, things snowballed. The sides lined up and they have yet to break ranks. Defections have occurred but the main antagonists seem to be fairly well entrenched. There are plenty of zines to which both 'sides' subscribe; yet, if one makes a comment it is almost guaranteed to elicit some sort of rebuttal. That, my friend, is

feuding. It ain't nice; it ain't pretty; it ain't even real life. Feuding is personalities exploded with self-importance which have grown blind to the notion of rationality. This doesn't mean that they [both sides] don't contribute greatly to the hobby, they do; however, it's almost always done with a forked tongue.

And yes, if the Hobby is no longer enjoyable it would be easy to pack up your things and leave. But what happens when you're drawn into a feud against your will and find yourself under assault for no apparent reason. What of the friends you've made? What of the games that you truly enjoy playing? What about the zines to which you love to contribute [cough, cough]? Why pitch all that out the window because some lunatic decides he wants to mount a jihad against you? It shouldn't happen.

Now, wasn't that fun. Yes, it is your friendly editor checking back in without italics. I really like the way things are turning out and continue to encourage any and every one to write in if you see something that piques your interest. The numerous topics that we're discussing span such a wide-ranging and thought-provoking array of subjects that I really can't ask for much more, nor do I intend to throw out anymore topics at this time. If, however, there is something that you just have to get off your chest, send it in and get relief. Consider me your fire hydrant. Nuff said; onward, ho!

Future Of The Zine -- Urbane Scrawl II

Obviously, many of you will have questions as to the health of the zine after such a long, drawn out delay between issues. As I have done before, I apologize. I'd also like it to be known that I fully intend to keep the zine afloat and flourishing, hopefully on the level of the current issue [just take a look at the current issue's letter column]. With the move from a fairly outdated and antiquated IBM PCjr [using Wordstar 2.0] to an IBM PS 2/25 [using bootleg WordPerfect 5.0] I'll be able to format the zine faster, sooner, and cleaner. Add to this the fact that I've been able to create individualized game report forms [all I have to do is type in the orders and press] and the zine should be **relatively** easy to put together. What does all this mean? Now that I've cut through innumerable personal problems, and once I settle into a comfortable niche with schoolwork we should be able to keep this rag on its appointed five week deadlines.

As some of you may have noticed, the subscription fee has gone up fifteen cents, to sixty cents an issue. Why? First off, I used to be able to get self-serve copies for three cents a side. No more. Some rough figuring shows that the cheapest I'll probably be able to get is four and a half cents a side, which, in turn, necessitates a price increase. Add to this the fact that we are getting bigger and bigger and I think that a sub hike is not all that unfair. Believe me, I'd like to keep the cost as low as possible, and I'm more than happy to suck up a large percentage of the costs, but at \$.45 an issue the subsidy that I'd be forced to provide would be a little too much.

And as if you haven't heard this enough already, I'll say it again: send me stuff. Strategy articles, personal life diatribes, letters of reaction, or what-have-you. All are appreciated and desired. This is, I hope, a reader's zine and as such I'd like to include as much material as possible from as many people as possible. Don't be shy. I got quite a few good suggestions on the returned polls [I'll be delving into those next issue] so if you made such a suggestion do not hesitate to act on it. This is your blank check. I'm sure I'll [cough, hack, wheeze] like it.

So, with a new sense of purpose and a sparked desire to do good by you people, we press on.....

View From The Bridge

For those of you who are getting the zine for the first time, this is the section that runs down what little hobby news I should come by over the course of a couple weeks. Quite a bit this time around, mainly due to the "vacation" I took but also because I've decided to give some brief reviews of zines that I receive [and that currently have game openings].

Probably the biggest news to come around this way is that one of the granddaddies of the hobby, Conrad von Metzke, has decided to fold up shop and send his publication, COSTAGUANA, to hobby heaven. Apparently he's done this before only to spring up a couple months/years later. This time, though, he seems serious about things. Recently, Costa was turning into a hit or miss proposition; each issue would tend to focus on one narrow topic of discussion which you either enjoyed reading or could care less about. So maybe it's all for the best; but before you go Conrad, thanks. Oh, he's threatening to actually write to the editors of the zines he receives which should spell trouble for many of us already overworked publishers. Think you could slip a few pages my way Conrad?

I've also gotten a couple announcements regarding upcoming cons. David Hood (15-F Estes Park, Carrboro, NC 27510) sent me a nice flyer announcing DixieCon III, to be held down at UNC, Chapel Hill on the weekend of May 27 and 28. Chances are that I'll probably end up attending this one unless an internship ties me up in DC. DixieCon is quickly turning into one of the best cons to attend and I'd highly recommend attending if you can get away. Another con was announced to me in the form of a massive packet of information from Larry Perry (PO Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102). The twenty-second DipCon will be held down San Diego way on 28-30 July. Probably the premier North American hobby gathering, if you've got the bucks or live on the west coast it would be a great event to attend. Unfortunately, I'm much too attached to what meager funds I have to shell out a couple hundred bucks worth of plane fare. Too bad as I'd like to meet all the hobby old farts that regularly attend this particular con. If your interested in either con, write to those who've been italicized above.

Well, what follows all of this is a listing of the zines I get which currently have game openings of one sort or another. And for all of you out there that have been asking, I've decided to give a very mini-review of each publication:

The Canadian Diplomat Bob Acheson, PO Box 4622, Station SE, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 2A0 One of the largest zines produced today, it is also one of the slowest. I'd hazard a guess that Bob runs almost as many games as Melinda Holley, and like Melinda, he has almost continual openings. Right now he has openings for regular, gunboat (variants), anarchy (variants), Stonehenge, Cline 9, Youngstown IV, plus a plea for standbys. Each issue will cost you a buck but you'll get not only the numerous game reports but also quite a bit of irreverant chatter, letters, and altered cartoons. A good bet for a liesurely game or two.



THE XYNS PEOPLE READ POLL

This poll is being run on alternative years to the "Games People Play" poll, which will be announced near the end of 1989. The poll is to gain an insight into the xyns people read and what people are looking for in a xyn. By "xyn", I refer to any amateur publication which has some gaming content. Please fill out all three sections, sign the bottom of the ballot and send it to me by April 1, 1989. Publishers are free to reprint this form.

1) IN PREFERENCE ORDER, LIST THE TEN XYNS WHICH YOU MOST ANXIOUSLY WAIT TO APPEAR IN YOUR MAILBOX. (Scoring: 1st = 4 pts, 2nd-3rd = 3 pts, 4th-6th = 2 pts, 7th-10th = 1 pt. For a xyn to be "qualified" (be 'statistically significant'), a minimum number of ballots for the publication must be received. This number will be calculated such that approximately 25% of all xyns will make the main listing. The other 75% will be reported in a separate listing.)

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1) | 6) |
| 2) | 7) |
| 3) | 8) |
| 4) | 9) |
| 5) | 10) |

2) ANSWER THE FOLLOWING FILL-IN QUESTIONS ON THE COSTS OF XYNS.

- 1) How much money (estimated) do you spend in a year on xyns? _____
- 2) How much should the average xyn cost? _____
- 3) How many xyns (estimated) do you subscribe to? _____
- 4) What would be the most you would be willing to pay for a xyn? _____
(Answer these two questions only if you publish a xyn)
- 5) How much money do you spend in a year publishing your xyn(s)? _____
- 6) What would be the least you would be willing to charge for your xyn(s)? _____

3) ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ON THE TIME SPENT READING XYNS. (Scoring will be based on averages and variance.)

- 1) Estimate the number of hours you spend a week reading xyns. _____
- 2) Estimate the number of hours you spend a week on games ran in xyns. _____

DUE BY APRIL 1, 1989. Send to: Tom Swider; 75 Maple Avenue Apt A; Collingswood, NJ 08108

Quotes Of The Year

"I don't want to be president of a country that thinks like Ronald Reagan."

Gary Hart, who needn't worry about it.

"But I was kinda hoping for someone smarter."

A farmer responding to the Dole campaign theme, "He's one of us."

"Jesus Christ alone knew answers to all the questions and knew how to feed 20,000 Jews with five loaves of bread. We don't possess that skill."

Official atheist Mikhail Gorbachev.

"We've been through one of the most devastating times of just about any public figures in history."

The modest Jim Bakker, forgetting about millions of other sufferers, including Jesus himself.

"Facts are stupid things."

Ronald Reagan.

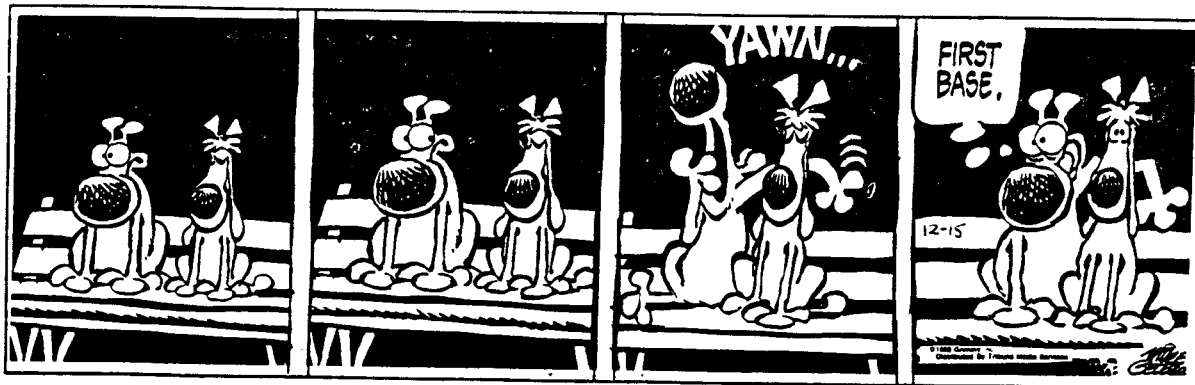
"Senator, I served with Jack Kennedy. I knew Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy was a friend of mine. Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy."

Lloyd Bentsen, nuking Dan Quayle with the best quote of the year.

"Anybody who knows Dan Quayle knows he would rather play golf than have sex any day."

Marilyn Quayle, nuking him with the second best quote.

Compiled by Bill Tammeus, Kansas City Star and Tribune.



Tom Swider, 75 Maple Ave Apt A, Collingswood, NJ 08108 I can't actually claim to have seen Tom's zine, though I'm hoping to con him into a trade, and if that doesn't work I'll just send him a few bucks. What I can talk about is a zine poll that he's running entitled, "The Xyns People Read Poll." I'll reproduce the "ballot" somewhere in this issue and encourage all of you to vote; it should prove interesting.

Dark Mirror Audrey SF Jaxon, 405 Fair Dr C101, Costa Mesa, CA 92626-6215 This is a new product coming out of California. Her first regular game has already started but she still has a few openings in the remaining regular and gunboat starts. There is quite a diversity of topics in the last issue and if she manages the various contributions well this could quickly turn into one of the larger and better balanced zines out there today. The zine is physically well put together and Audrey adds a clever wit to the commentary making this a good bet for the future.

Dipadeedoodah! Phil Reynolds, 2896 Oak St, Sarasota, FL 34237 Another new product, this time coming from the east coast (yeah!). Phil's got openings in gunboat, asian II, and character diplomacy, as well as openings in a PBM game of Illuminati. Not a lot of commentary in the past issue, though he does seem to be making a record review column a regular feature (to all of you who despise lists ... RUN!!). His main focus right now seems to be on getting his games (both new and orphans he's picked up) going.

Dipsomania G.A. 'Jef' Bryant, 121, Rue Jean Pauly, B-4300, ANS, Belgium I really couldn't recommend that my North American subscribers sign up to play here only because the time needed for a letter to cross the Atlantic would be prohibitive. Jef does have a gunboat opening which you might want to consider (as well as a game of bourse III which ought to be fun). As for reading material this is a first class product. This, too, is a new product, but the second issue shows great promise. Not only does Jef carry a subzine written by yours-truly, but he also is allowing for an extensive letter column which provides an entertaining read. If you've ever wondered what it is they did over "there" take a look.

Fiat Bellum! Don Williams, 1521 West Ave J-8 #163, Lancaster, CA 93534 Don will just have to put up with this for a while: FB! is quickly becoming my favorite zine. Even though Don has for some reason decided to allow Nash to play in his zine, I still find FB! to be very entertaining, and the players and contributors have a lot to do with it. There is usually a sprinkling of amusing and thought-provoking letters, a lot of entertaining press, and even a smattering of humorous drivelings from the editor himself. Oops, the game he advertised as open has already been filled. Ignore this. Still, FB! is a good bet for an entertaining read (and a bargain at 75 cents a pop!).

The Gamer's 'Zine Earl Whiskeyman Jr, 27 Mark St, Milford, CT 06460 TGZ has had a few problems recently and was even looking as if it might fold. It was saved from the fire, however, and is now out looking for an infusion of new blood. Right now, the only definite opening that they have is in the EN Garde game that is run in the zine. This is probably the sole remaining En Garde game being run in the States (there are many across the Atlantic) and if you're at all interested this is probably a very good bet. Diplomacy openings are dependent on the amount of interest expressed. Little or no chat, so if all you want to do is play a quiet game of Dip or En Garde, look into it, though the printing's been touch and go as of late.

Graustark John Boardman, 234 East 19th St, Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302 The grand pooh-bah of Dippy himself has openings in regular diplomacy at \$25 a shot. This will get you a game long sub to the granddaddy of zines, which is up to #561 at this writing. The game I'm playing has been GMed flawlessly and Boardman is highly recommended as a GM (hell, he's been doing it longer than anybody; he ought to be good at it by now!). His accompanying chatter is a little much for my taste; being what one might term a conservative radical liberal, Boardman lashes out viciously at anything he disagrees with and then seems to refuse to accept discussions to the contrary. But it's his zine, and if you can put up with his railings against the Vietnam War then this is a great place to play.

Life of Monty Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr, Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339 Don's got openings in Kingmaker, 1830, Kremlin, and Talisman. LoM is Don's soapbox from which he very quietly spreads his unheralded (some might say justly so) humor. Every issue there's a bit of hobby news and a few thoughts put to paper courtesy of the publishers. Also included occassionally is "Dip Warz," an amusing little hobby satire I just started actually paying attention to a few issues ago, and "Submarine Warfare," a subzine from Derwood Bowen. LoM doesn't cost that much so if you're interested in the aforementioned games it's probably a good place to play, even though Don complains about the quality of his GMing. P.S. He's also running the Lifers Poll; look into it.

Northern Flame Cal White, 26 Emerson Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6H 3S8 I can only say good about Cal, seeing as how he's a fairly large man who could probably beat the shit out of me; not to mention the fact that he's one of the few editors who actually prints my letters. Cal steers his zine clear of feuds, preferring to concentrate on the people who sub and his own life experiences of the moment. All in all, Cal is sure to inject quite a bit of humor and nonsense into each issue which means that there is bound to be something worthwhile even if he persists in including 4 pages of CDO News each issue. Hell, how can you not like a zine that includes this gem: "An empty bladder bladder is a happy bladder!" Check this one out. Oh, two games of regular diplomacy are being offered.

Rebel Melinda Ann Holley, PO Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727 Melinda runs an incredible number of games, and apparently runs them very well; though, like Don, she's allowed herself to be infected by that Nash character. I'm not exactly sure how she does it, but as of this writing she has openings for both regular and gunboat diplomacy. If the zine were purely warehouse it wouldn't be that much of a draw for me (though I do enjoy the little that Melinda does actually write); what makes the zine for non-players is the subzine, "High Inertia." Together they make for a nice package; now all we have to do is free up some of Melinda's time so that she can write more.

Son Of Flip 1701 NW 81st Way, Plantation, FL 33322 SoF is an interesting publication. As of yet there are no Diplomacy games running though George has openings in both regular and gunboat dip. The zine's main focus is on professional "wrestling." If I was more interested in pro-wrestling I'd probably love the zine as it provides quite a bit of late-breaking news and such. As things stand, I'm waiting for news of my wrestler's (Umbar deBeezlebaub) match against Dr. Jim-Bob the Boobarian; I anticipate that Umbar will rip that pathetic excuse for a PhD apart. Oh, did I mention that they run a

wrestling simulation in which you can participate? They do; 'tis fun. Hey Nash! Sign up a wrestler and we'll rumble! Into the NWA, WWF, AWA, etc, or just getting down and dirty? Sign up and we'll wrestle.

Upstart Garret Schenck, 40 Third Place Basement Apt, Brooklyn, NY 11231-3302 Upstart was originally a subzine to KK/W until Garret recently decided to go out on his own. Physical reproduction is excellent and the whole zine is put together very well. Right now, Garret has openings in regular, gunboat, and secret/spy diplomacy. He's also in sore need, as we all are, of standbys. The last issue I received has a number of letters on political matters (thank the lord, another liberal publisher emerges!), and naval trivia (interesting to a point, but if you're one of the uninitiated it wears thin soon), and a well thought out essay against capital punishment by Steve Emmert. Three cheers. Support sanity, sub to Upstart!

And our final entry ...

Vertigo PO Box 126, Wayne, PA 19087 Great zine. What, not enough? Okay, so the reproduction quality isn't the best and Brad does tend to run on and on about meaningless feuds, but the other side of the zine is Brad's sharp wit, sports commentary, a decent taste in music, an interesting if illegible letter column, and an unbeatable price, \$.30 an issue (that's no misprint!). Brad also prints my letters so he's alright by me. He's been talking about coming down for a visit but has yet to materialize on my doorstep; I suspect that he's afraid I drink him under the table. A decent guy and a great zine, plus openings in regular and gunboat dip as well as the variant, Balkan Wars V, and an ongoing game of Everybody Plays diplomacy. Give it a try; you'll like it if you can read it!

Told you they'd be very mini-reviews. Was I too nice? Tough. I like the zines I receive. It's a matter of personal opinion. Plus I don't see why I should drag a zine across the coals. This is a hobby, no? If someone was being abusive or had a reputation for swallowing subscribers money I'd yell and scream bloody murder. 'Tis not the case so you must content yourself with milk-toast reviews. Keep in mind a few things, though: all publishers, whether they have openings or not, can use standbys, and also remember that many of the new zines are as yet unproven and may fold up shop tomorrow (bet I had a few of you scared) or they may last till the next century. Give 'em your support and wish 'em the best of luck and just see how things turn out.

Before I go on I just have one hobby related question to ask: Just what is a novice? Is it someone who has never played the game? Never played it by mail? Has entered a few games but has yet to have more than one season pass in any of those games? Has played one full year but in one game only? I guess I'm asking as to where the line is drawn. I'm not trying to establish any sort of firm definition to insert into the secret bylaws of the society of diplomatists under the covenant or any such nonsense. Just curious. Write me.

Pencils Down And Papers In, Class!

The last of the trivia quizzes went out in #6A so the competition has officially been completed. Participation was iffy throughout the whole series of five quizzes. Many complained that the questions were too hard; I'm not running a charity here, folks! Answers to last "month's" quiz are as follows:

- 1) The rock group Traffic was made up of: Steve Winwood, Jim Capaldi, Chris Wood, and Dave Mason.
- 2) The eastern European leader who pulled the "switch" of positions within the communist party and leadership structure of his country was Karoly Grosz of Hungary.
- 3) "Creepy" Carpis got his nickname not only because he was amazingly ugly but also because plastic surgery that was meant to alter his appearance was botched. Ugh.
- 4) My surname, "Lilleleht" is Estonian in origin. It means "flower of the lily." I had people guess Dutch (that's my mom, "Van Doren"), Czech, and Polish Jew.

So ends my first quiz series. David Orne pulled out the "victory" with a total of nine answered correctly, while Charles Greger and Eric Walton were tied for a distant second with five correct answers apiece, with Dave Palmer ~~two~~ close behind with four, and Thomas Thorsen right behind Dave with three correct answers. There were many who had one or two correct answers; this group consisted mainly of people who tried the quiz once then gave up. So it goes. That's it of the quiz series for now, but for those of you clambering for free issues, howsa 'bout ...

... Guess How Many Games Melinda Ann Holley Has Completed Competition. To play you must be a subscriber in good standing (whatever the hell that means). Here's the deal: I'll be giving out a total of nine free issues. As of 15 January 1989, Melinda has completed a certain number of games. Guess how many. Then guess how many of those games have ended in elimination, survival, 6-way draws, 5-way draws, 4-way draws, 3-way draws, 2-way draws, and victories. If you guess that Melinda has had 17 6-way draws and she has then you'll win a free issue, no matter how far off your other guesses may be. If no one guesses correctly in a category than the closest guess will win. Ties will be broken by random drawing. Good luck.

The Year In Review And The Future -- Urbane Scrawl Part III

Boy, what a year it's been. I was just finishing up with my first year at the University when I decided to start publishing. Things were looking really good. I had gotten decent grades even though I blew off, literally, the majority of my classes (I'd estimate that I attended less than 40% of my classes first semester), I had a wonderful relationship with an incredible young lady, I was having lots of fun with my fraternity, and things just seemed to be going my way. Then it was over. The second year jinx hit, and hit with a vengeance. In October my bike was stolen and my girlfriend and I decided that maybe we should take some time to think things through (that's always trouble), and I started to take a lot of heat from a lot of people regarding any number of things. Then December rolled around. The Christmas season? Hah. The first thing to

happen was that I caught on fire. I was attending a party when, all of a sudden, the place was getting warm, then hot. Half my back ended up covered with 1st and 2nd degree burns. I've stilled got the shirt and the scars, wanna see? Then the bombshell was dropped and Heidi and I called it quits. No second year jinx, it was the second year steamroller. Regardless, I managed to pull off two A+s, one A-, and two B+s, and I came out of my third semester knowing that I was going to pick myself up and carry on.

That's what I did and have been doing. Lots of partying, lots of people, and little work. That last paragraph was pretty pathetic, wasn't it? Ignore it. Things are going great even though my class schedule is a little rough:

GFIR 581 - Africa In World Affairs
 GFIR 305 - Philosophy of International Relations
 ANTH 321 - Kinship and Social Organization
 ANTH 232 - Symbol and Ritual
 REL 357 - Existentialism

This makes for a lot of reading and quite a bit of writing in the form of papers. Hooooooo, Baby! The funny thing is that I'm probably having the best time of my life right now. Slowly but surely I'm pulling myself towards a very agreeable equilibrium between work and play; it's that groove that we all are looking for. The funny thing is that I know that as soon as I find it something, or someone, is going to throw my life out of balance, and being the personal optimist that I am, I'm almost certain it will throw the balance in favor of play.

So now you know the full story behind "The Delay of Issue Seven." Aren't you thrilled? Tell your friends, tell your neighbors, tell your hobby contacts that if they too would like to join in on this irreverant romp through the surrealistic landscape of my mind they can. What fun. Hi Ho.

All of the above seems a little rambling and aimless. Sorry. A lot of things that I wanted to get out are in the above even though it may be fairly disorganized and confusing. Sift through it for yourself; you'll probably make better sense of what's happened over the past few months than I've been able to. And if it all sounds a little too disgustingly whiney (you know, "wine-ee") than simply forget you ever read any of it. Hell, go reread the letter column. My zine, my cathartic exercise. Wee, onward lone atheistic coward!

Always The Bridesmaid...

Ye olde standby list. You get one free issue for telling me to put your name down and you get two more if you're lucky enough to pick up an abandoned situation. Games are still in their infancy so relax, positions are generally not all that bad... yet. I could always use more volunteers, so if you want on (or off) the list let me know. Those signed up are: Diehl, Salvatore, York, Hurley, Greger, Hawes, Shouba, Fargo, Orne, Holley, Heinowski, Grisby, McCrumb, Williams, Wilson, Bergmann, Noble, Mann, and Collingwood. Thanks to one and all.

Gamestart...Well, Almost!

Yes, believe it or not, we have seven signed up for the novice game. If I can get preference lists from all those involved in the next couple weeks we can kick this baby into gear. Here's a list of those signed up and what I need from each of them: Nick Sebrell (need gamefee), John Erb (need gamefee), Steve Mirra and Larry Garcia (OK), Stephan Weiss (need pref list), Erik Wingren (OK), R. Alan Collingwood (need pref list), and George Rifle (need pref list and subscription). As soon as I get the lists in I can match up the players with the powers and we can get the game started. To all of you who expressed interest in the game and are not included in the above, my apologies. I was thinking of opening another game as they really do not take much time for me to moderate. Maybe, we'll see in the next few issues how things work out. In the meantime. lets get those lists in, alright guys? This should be fun.

The People Who Are Receiving This Rag -- Subvertime

Heidi Brown	Jim Diehl	Jim Nickel	Bill Salvatore	Chuck Hanna
Andrew York	Charles Greger	Bruce Linsey	Eric Walton	Barry Hawes
Scott Beckett	Chris Hurley	Cal White	Thomas Thorsen	Pete Gaughan
Larry Perry	Jimmy Williams	David Hood	Ken Peel	David Orne
Fred Davis	Steve Heinowski	Julie Martin	Brad Wilson	Cathy Ozog
Charles Fargo	Don Del Grande	Vince Shouba	Randy Grisby	F. Cuerrier
mark lew	Simon Billenness	Michael Schnelker	Tom Nash	Rory Noble
Dave Palmer	David McCrumb	Conrad von Metzke	Melinda Ann Holley	G.A. Bryant
Pierre Touchette	George Mann	Don Williams	Nick Sebrell	Jason Bergmann
Audrey SF Jaxon	Richard Weiss	Phil Reynolds	John Erb	Stephan Weiss
Erik Wingren	Michael Lendon	Scott Fort	Paul Milewski	Susan Welter
Mona Martin	Bill LaFosse	Lee Kendter Jr	Chris Carrier	Chris Gabel
Michael Hopcroft	Garret Schenck	R. Alan Collingwood	Eric Klein	Tom Swider
	George Rifle	Steve Mirra and Larry Garcia	Jan Niechwiadowicz	

That makes sixty-eight people who will receive this issue. A lot of those are sample or requests for trades so by next issue we should have things fairly well settled. There is quite a cross-section of the hobby represented in the above list; people from the various "factions," people who couldn't care less, old farts and novices, even a couple Europeans thrown in for good luck (please, Jef and Jan, could you let people know I exist and that I'd like to have a contingent of European subscribers/traders). I'd like to think that everybody feels comfortable here because I'm providing an interesting product free from inane personal attacks that have no relevance to anything whatsoever. With that said, we turn to what is quick becoming the FEUD buster, BT,DT. If you read this and don't realize how ridiculous it all is then we need to talk.

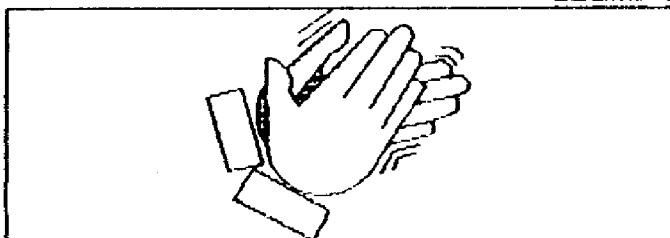
BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

Been There, Done That is a Diplomacy subzine to both Mark Lilleheht's The Scribblerist in hard copy and distributed through the U.S.P.S., and Ken Hill's The Armchair Diplomat in electronic format and distributed via download from Data Library 5 of the Gamer's Forum on the Compuserve Information Network. Players, standers by, a few traders, and anyone else whom the fancy strikes me will also receive it through the mail. Diplomacy is owned by the Avalon Hill Game Co., and was invented by Alan Calhmer. But you already knew that, didn't you?

Actually, this is no longer Been There, Done That. From here on out, this is Costaguana Under the Covenant, a Pentagram Publication. Seems Bob Sacks insisted Conrad not only become a Pentagram Pub, but sign, in blood, that any future Costaguana editors, publishers, their descendants, people their descendants might bump into in the supermarket, people who these people seen in supermarkets might pass on the highway, etc., all had to be Pentagram Publishers. Connie balked. So Bob offered me the job. I accepted gladly. Hey, anything to get one of those oh-so-high profile positions of REAL POWER in this hobby! Next, I want to talk to Mr. Sacks about maybe also turning this into The Scribblerist Under the Covenant, after all, that college punk made a death threat against me and deserves to be delisted. You all witnessed it, right?

By the way, how in the name of John Boardman does this Sacks guy have all the time to make sure all the hobby projects are being handled up to his exacting standards, now and generations into the future, and still have time to sign a major league contract with the Yankees to play second base?

STAND BY LIST



Still the watch dogs of democracy, bravely defending the hobby from the anarchy of Civil Disorder: Jason Bergmann, Tim Moore, Steve Helnowski, Mike Morris, Paul Milowski, Stephen Dorneman, Vince Lutterbie, Stan Johnson, John Crosby, George Mann, and Jimmy Williams. Pretty impressive group,

eh? I mean the publisher of Son of Elip! But still no Mark Lilleheht!!!

Status of next game of regular Dip: Signed up are - Karl Hoffman, Tim Moore (Paid), Vince Lutterbie, Bill Hunter (paid), and Jimmy Williams (I think). Need 2 more (I think... keep reading, I'll clear this up). Also willing to open one game of Gunboat (two signed up), and one game of Deviant Diplomacy (new rules voted in each season). Game fee is \$5.

No.3

January, 1989

Austria (Aube) : A SER-Bul(dislodged, retreat-Tri); F GRE S A Ser-Bul;
 A BOH S A Mun; A Tri-BUD; A VIE S A Tri-Bud.
 England (Hunter): F Lvp-IRI; F Eng S A Bel-Pic; A Bel-PIC; F Nth-
 Bel(NSU); F Nwy-NTH; F LON H (unordered).
 France (Morris) : A Pic-BUR; F MID-Eng; A Gas-MAR.
 Germany (Smith) : A RUH S BER-Mun; A BER-Mun; F HOL-Kie; A DEN-Kie.
 Italy (Welter) : F Tun-WES; F Nap-ION; A MUN H (and prays); A Pie-
 TYO; A VEN H.
 Russia (McKee) : A Mos-UKR; A War-GAL; A Gal-RUM; A Rum-SER; F SEV
 S A Gal-RUM; F SWE S F Nwy(OTM).
 Turkey (Tabor) : A BUL S Rum-Ser; A CON S BUL; F AEG-Gre; F SMY H.

Press:

<London> It is with great regret that the British Navy must continue the task set before her by the previous government of France. It is felt that even the change of French leadership will not be enough to control the aroused passions of the French populace and therefore it is necessary to our own survival that we continue.

Ger-Ita: May the fleas of a thousand camels infest your armpits.

Ger-Aus: May the fleas of a thousand Russians and Turks infest your lands.

Vie-Mos: If you did what you said you would, thanks; if not, I hope you die to regret it (grin).

Vie-Con: If you didn't reciprocate my stab, sorry, but my instincts told me you'd rather have an alliance with Russia than with me.

Vie-Rom: Here's to a long and prosperous alliance!

Vie-Lon: You've been awfully quiet! How are things going in your neck of the woods?

Vie-GM: Since you've had it so rough lately, especially with Steve's vicious betrayal which forced you to settle for a 14-center two-way draw, I thought I'd send you a care package to help you prepare for your next victim. Enclosed is a set of authentic "Steve Smith" knives, a bottle of "Mickey's" to put your neighbors to sleep at opportune times, a dozen apples laced with cyanide and a set of poisonous darts. Please use these gifts with great caution, because they're extremely dangerous.

GM-Vie: Since it looks like we're both in the next game in TAD, I may get to use them sooner than you'd wish!

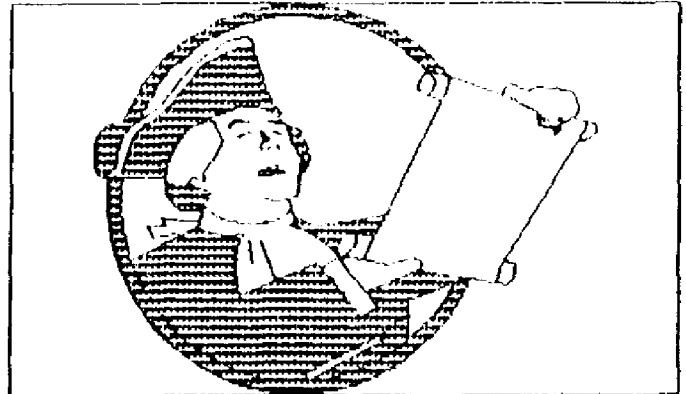
<Paris> The turmoil in France now seems to have ended with the landslide election of Michel Maurice as the new President. M. Maurice is reputed to have the solid backing of the French armed forces, altho during the election campaign he criticized them unmercifully for standing pat while all the other powers of Europe were on the march to consolidate gains and grow in power. "Altho we now appear weak, the potential of the French is yet mighty" the president proclaimed, "France has great glory in its future. Those foreign powers who have the foresight to see this and ally with France will benefit greatly, those who attempt to take advantage of our apparent weakness will greatly regret their foolishness!" The president also expressed his special thanks and gratitude to the leaders of the great Russian Empire, who provided much needed intelligence and background reports to the new French government.

Deadline for Fall/Winter 1902 is February 15, 1989. Mike Morris is playing France.

The Letter Column

Cathy Ozog: "Tom - I loved your subzine! Now - you'll write, yes? I'm glad to see you don't take any of this seriously, sadly there are a few people who think it's a life or death matter."

((OK, I confess. This wasn't really a letter per se; rather a note scrawled on my latest issue of Cathy's Ramblings. Feuds not life and death? Look out Cathy, or Chris Carrier will deem you a certifiable hobby feud wimp. Yes, I'll write. What, to whom, and when, are all I need to answer now.))



Ron Cameron: "Tom, Don't want to get involved in semantics, but "ad-jucate" isn't in Webster's, "adjudicate" is. Surprised the Dipdom Tattler didn't catch your mixup in ish #2., but after all Tom, who are you trying to fool? You are the Dipdom Tattler! Ripping Jim Boob is one thing, but reviving the long forgotten Linsey-Caruso feud or reporting the history of it may be dangerous. Both Caruso and Linsey are dangerous and they can chew you up and spit you out before you know it. Just ask Olsen or Don Williams."

((Criticize my spelling if you will, Mr. C, but what has happened in your writing to that quaint convention of English, the pronoun? I am not the Tattler, but he seems to realize he bit off more than he can chew... see this month's column. If I wanted an objective opinion on the Linsey-Caruso feud, believe me, I would not go to Olsen. Kind of like asking Arafat to critique Israeli-West Bank relations.))

"I don't sub to The Scribblerist nor do I care to. How Mark can begin to place himself on the same level as the Bad Boys is not only gratuitous but sadly lacking in the true style of Bad Boy humor. We know that humor is lacking blatantly in BT,DT; I sure hope it's not in TS. Could Chris cross reference those feud numbers?"
((If you saw the last MegaDiplomat you'll see Chris has done, essentially, just that. At least your taste in zines is appropriate... I wouldn't sub to that rag The Scrib...er, um.... I mean.... OK, moving on with Ron's letter....))

"And Tom, I certainly wasn't serious in my slam in ish #2. I wasn't even real. Are you real? Is Karel Alaric? The Dip world is not the real world. Define real. Define world. Unless these questions are answered, and answered soon, Mr. Nash. I will tell everyone in the hobby that you are a diehard Dodger fan. Also that you are the one who introduced my wife to Pedro Guerro, er Guerrero - oh hell, I can't even spell his name. Maybe Herb can help."

((Herb can help. He'll be glad to help you define what is real., and what is the world. Sure, any grown man who spends 8 hours a day playing with miniature tanks has a great handle on those issues, right?))

Vince Lutterbie: "Hello Tom Nash! What a zine, you've actually gotten your first nasty letter from Cameron. You'll have to excuse him,

counting other people's money all day makes him a bit testy (I've gotten a few of those from him myself). But he's actually a real nice guy. He plays "Acquire" so that puts him in a special elitist category which allows him to use a poison pen.

"What a crew you have in this zine (or whatever - subzine, etc) Dropping names like Geraldo Rivera, Morton Downey Jr (ought to be a Dipwit award there somewhere), Melinda Holley (a legend in her spare time) and even ME! So - what do you do for an encore? How about letting me in the M. Holley game as a standby, she's putty in my hands. If she gets me or Botimer upset, we NMR out, her standby list is shot, and her zine goes broke. She does what I say, what more can I say? ((I don't honestly know, but you certainly make an attempt to show us....)) You need to get Jimmy Williams in this zine ((looks like I have)). See CCC for an example.

"But as far as how I keep track of games, I write 7 different orders for each country, mix 'em up, throw them in the air, and randomly draw a set and use them in my games. I have 21 different form letters I use to send to allies, and 3 letters to enemies. An example - "Go to hell - you gravy sucking pig" ((very erudite, I must say)). I hope this proves useful to you and yours ((my what?)). Keep it up (oops - no dirty talk allowed - I'll bet). ((Vince.... I have one thing to say: where are those copies of "Floss Daily" you promised?))

Jimmy Williams: "I volunteer as a standby for all regular PBM Dip games in BT,DT. I was gonna send you \$5 and enroll in gamestart because I too, have a sex-thing for Vince Lutterble ((I swear folks, I just types 'em as they come. I guess this is why Vince said I need to get Jimmy in this zine. Fellas, this is a respectable family zine, not a cheap motel for dentists and their.... whatever, to meet on the sly! Why don't you try Fiat Bellum for that. Williams is a broad minded kind of guy. And quite hard up for interesting material.)). I am currently on good terms with Mark Lilleheht ((look, the fact is bad enough, talking about it as if it were something to be proud of... is he selling you his PCP?)), D. Hood, M. Holley, and Lee Kendter. I thought, though I have a C64 ((again, why burden us with your misfortune?)), but no modem yet, that your game was only for PBEM. Now I will send \$5 if you want to enroll me and the start is for PBM too ((It is)). I will serve you well my Lord ((Look, if Vince is into that, it's his business. Dentists are known for their psycho/sexual sadistic tendencies. The drill representing... well, this is a family zine. But me, I'm not interested. Not unless you can get Melinda involved)).

Mike Morris: "Choo Choo hit .250 in '62, but only played in 55 games. His big year was '63. He got in 106 games that year, but hit only .178. He only played another six games in the majors after that!

"Ello Chacon also had a short career. '60, '61 and '62. He hit .236 in '62, acceptable for a second baseman, except that he couldn't field. Yes, the Mets had some real interesting folks! But as I suggested to you earlier, you might also look to the early Angels teams for some colorful guys as well. My favorite is Bo Belinsky, the worst pitcher ever to plitch a no-hitter. Altho it didn't do his career much good, it did give him the celebrity that was probably resulted in his meeting Mamie Van Doren, a porno star with whom he had a well publicized affair. We have our priorities in the right place on the West Coast."

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Tim Moore: "As for Cameron, you have to forgive him((I most certainly do not)). He's going through a lot what with the Dodgers losing Sax ((learn to spell Bob's name, Tim, or he'll de-list you in K.G.O. and appoint me "France in 88CJ Under the Covenant" This joke's wearing a little thin, eh?)). Cam gets overly excited when someone messes with his beloved team ((well, as a Dodger fan, I can understand. I'm still trying to figure out what has Jimmy Williams so overly excited though)). You might throw this subtopic (perfect for a subzine) out to the sharks: When do you send in your moves? You mentioned NMRing and with the Post Office not always reliable what is the answer? I've read about sending duplicate orders, and with some GMs you can call in, but I'm more interested in when during the deadline crunch they are sent. ((I don't have a system. Sometimes I send "preliminary orders" right away, knowing I'll probably change them. Other times I don't. It basically depends on the free time I have available. I've called in orders a couple of times, mostly to Melinda (love the sound of her voice!), and actually faxed orders to Herb Barents once. What do the rest of y'all do?))

George Mann: "I personally have seen reviews of your zine in many newspapers as well as Hustler magazine. You should be honored." ((I thought about getting upset about this slander. Then I considered the source. I mean the guy publishes a dip and pro wrestling zine for Ghod's sake! So who can take him seriously?))

David Hood: "Keep up the good work. BT,DT is looking pretty good. Even better than that Scribblerist piece of ((censored)). And I can even spell your last name." ((Thanks David. Now the Hobby is waiting with baited breath... what exactly is it you do as "Hobby Events Coordinator?))

YOU WERE THE DIPLOMAT!

Here are the answers to last issue's "You Be the Diplomat" quiz. Let's review these tense and complex situations before getting to your responses.

SITUATION #1: You receive a new gamestart notice. You've drawn Italy. You look over the other players. Hmmm... Morton Downey Jr. has Austria. The Reverend Al Sharpton has Turkey, Roy Innis has France, Geraldo Rivera has England, Lee Atwater has Germany, and Russia is played by Robin Givens, assisted by her mother. You check the house rules: physical intimidation is not specifically prohibited.

What alliance structure do you pursue and why?

David Hood: "The East. There's no question what's going on here. Robin Givens/Mom will begin Winter '00

with wild accusations, lawsuits, etc., directed at Downey's Austria. Sharpton will take Robin under his wing, and give credence to her position - refusing to cite sources or provide real evidence unless the matter is resolved in a special session of the U.S. Congress (or at least the Diplomatic Congress)((hey, that's MY line!)). Thus Mort will be faced with an R/T right off the bat. Knowing me to be a Libertarian, he will naturally turn to me for help. Which of course I will give. It will be R/T vs. A/I - given that Sharpton's bark is worse than his

bite, I think we'd have a pretty good chance of Lepanto-ing him to death.

"The West. Rivera's England and Innis's France will likely not get along. As the chairs fly across the English Channel, Lee Atwater's Germany will refuse to side with either one, since Jack Kemp told him to reach out for both the black and hispanic vote. Atwater will be afraid to step on either of their toes and play a waiting game.

"This will give me a fair amount of latitude diplomatically. I would try to persuade Atwater that the black vote is less realistic given Bush's less-than-expected tally of black votes Nov. 7, so we can all attack Innis. Once France is gone I would try to point E/G in Givens's direction to give some relief to my pal Mort. Not a bad situation."

George Mann: "I would ally with Robins Givens and her mother against Austria. Everyone would turn against big-mouth Morton and he'd be easy to take out." ((now remember before taking this guy's advice next time you find yourself in a game with any of these folks... he puts out a dip and pro (sic) wrestling zine!!)).

Tim Moore: "This is too close to the truth for my tastes. Robin and I were close allies in a game back in '86. All you have to do with her is act like you are rich and she'll be all over you! Fortunately the game was orphaned before we got to meet face-to-face. Her mother was throwing the game into turmoil anyway, writing the parents of all the other players to put pressure on them. Of course, that would never happen nowadays...."

SITUATION #2: You get Italy again Melinda Holley has Austria. A bad sign. She's also got Turkey. Yow. It gets worse. She's playing all the other 6 positions. Irate, you dash off a letter of protest to the GM. A letter comes in re- sponse from the GM, Melinda Holley. She was

desperate to play in and GM more games, and yours was the only game request she had on file. So... Not satisfied you write in protest to the B.N.C. for a regularity ruling. To your horror, you receive a letter from Steve Heinowski's brand new successor... the lady from West Virginia, Melinda Holley. She rules the game regular. The hobby ombudsman? Worth a try, and your response comes from the new hobby ombudswoman... you got it. At this point you give in and decide to play the damned game. What alliance structure do you pursue and why?

Jeff McKee: "Obviously your alliance structure must include an alliance with Melinda Ann Holley, but how do you get that? First of all, if you are female, convince her that in order for women to continue to dominate Diplomacy, they must work together. A two-way will be in the bag.

"If you are male, however, things get more tricky. Pray that Melinda Ann Holley is not also President of the National Organization of Women. Tell her that without men, there wouldn't be any hockey on the radio, at least for a couple of years until women take the sport over. "If you eliminate me then there won't be any little Melinda Ann Holleys, just more clones of yourself at your own age, and you're not getting any younger. If you attack me your spaghetti will come with hog balls instead of meatballs."

"If the above doesn't work, perhaps Melinda will be schizo-phrenic and attack herself. Perhaps some common sense will work in your favor. Tell Melinda (France) that Melinda (England) can't possibly *not* attack her.

"If none of the above works, there's always 'and I suppose a blow job is out of the question.'

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Otherwise, getting screwed by the most prolific female in the hobby!"

George Mann: "I believe this to be an easy question as I know that Melinda Ann Holley is a code name for an experiment being run by the C.I.A. As Melinda only wants to use ally with you when she has the upper hand, I would ally with the strongest country."

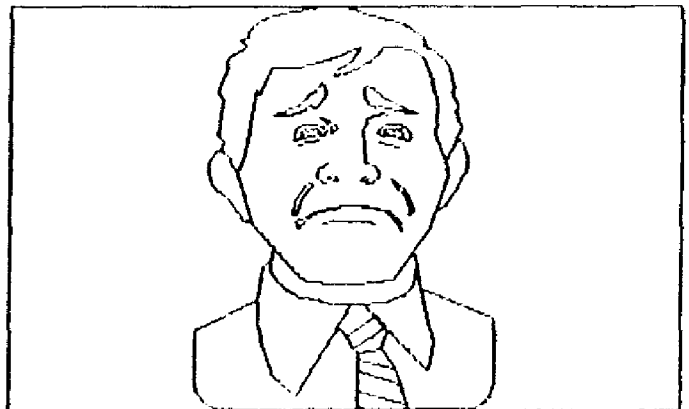
Tim Moore: "No great answer to this other than stick it out, and see how she does with herself. I wonder what the press would be like?"

David Hood: "This one is easy. As I have said since entering the hobby in 1986, 'Melinda Holley' is not one person. Clearly no one person could GM or be in that many games. No, my theory is that 'Melinda Holley' is simply a codename for a large group

of Huntington WV Dip players who want to save on sub fees. Since all these 'Melinda Holley's are different people, the only problem will be finding out which one is which. I will either hire a private eye to stake out their P.O. Box, or I'll go there myself and confront these people. Once I threaten to expose their fraud and misrepresentation to the rest of the hobby I should have no trouble winning the game in 1903 or so (although I will certainly put it off until 1905, so it can be scored by Steven Wilcox in the Dragonstooth Rating System. Oh, I forgot - Wilcox hasn't put that out in a while. Well, since 'Melinda Holley' will probably take it over, I won't have to worry about it being 'regular' any more."

The DipDom Tattler

Last issue I passed along the Tattler's promise to expose the origin of the Great Feud, the postal game replete with vicious stabs, broken alliances, and herd feelings that led to the current state of mass mailings, feudzines, and the amazing fact that someone like Chris Carrier has actually managed to find a niche for himself in the hobby! Supposedly, the intrepid Tattler, using the hazy web of contacts he maintains, had dug up what others only speculated about... the zine, the game, the boardman number, etc. to document the whole bloody mess. However, it is not to be. Instead, I received a tattered, stained letter, stating the following:



"Tom, for once, I come to you empty handed, and cowed. There are some things not meant to be known by the human race. Back in the late 60s I worked for Jim Garrison investigating the J.F.K. assassination and witnesses were dying right and left. That was nothing compared to the last 3 weeks.

"Every time I had someone on the phone with an extensive archives of rare dipzines, just as I asked if they had copies of the zine who's name I dare not speak, the one that ran the game that started the feud, there would be muffled moans, cries, and a dial tone. A redial told me that

the number was disconnected (it can't be done that quickly!). A quick call to directory assistance told me that person was not listed (they damned well were 10 minutes ago!). Birth certificates were disappearing. Social security was losing track of diplomacy editors, archivists, and old-time retired players who thought they remembered that game. How deep does the conspiracy run to keep this game hidden? Every time I was on the verge of blowing it open, 3 people would die of mysterious circumstances, 4 more would disappear, and 7 would suddenly seem to never HAVE existed!

"Did this scare me? Nah! Not me. I was more driven. I would find and publish the truth for all the hobby to know. I swore it! I mean, how high could this all go? And I had one more lead. About 5 weeks ago there was a meeting set up among a few obscure, forgotten retired PBM players and archivists. They were all to be carrying the evidence of the game, the answers to the riddle. In many cases they carried the only remaining copy of zines, letters, and other documents referring to the game that spawned the feud. We set the meeting in as remote part of the globe from the mainstream PBM community for security reasons. Surely the arms of the conspiracy to keep me silent would never reach there.

"I had last minute urgent business pertaining to another matter, and had to cancel my scheduled flight, thinking I'd fly out the next day to meet the others, who'd already assembled at the meeting place. I never caught that plane. The next day the meeting place was destroyed, utterly, with all the documents and people involved. We'd decided to meet in Soviet Armenia. I give up. Utterly and completely. In fact, I'm off to an un-named tropical site to rest, forget, and contemplate whether I even want to continue as the Tattler. Will let you know. Meanwhile, I strongly suggest you drop all so-called humorous references to the feud and the principals involved. Get out while you can, before it's too late!"

ODDS AND ENDS

The P.D.O. census is out, and available for a buck from Dick Martin at 17601 Lisa Drive, Rockville, MD 20855-1319. Names and addresses of 666 American dipsters (bad number if you're into the Book of Revelation, I would imagine), and 40 Canadians. Quite handy to find the address of the French player in that game you're in quickly. Maryland, with 60 players represented, is a solid second behind only California's 74. Virginia's 3rd with 53. A strong showing for the capitol area. There are 37 Steves, 34 Johns, and 6 Andersons.

And confidential to Susan Welter... no, cranberry juice won't flush turkey gravy from the fat cells. Highly acidic substances, like Ocean Spray help the body flush fat soluble chemicals like THC and PCP from the fat cells they store in, speeding the detoxification process. Sadly, it doesn't work with turkey gravy.

The "Draft Jeff McKee for B.N.C." movement is progressing nicely.

And, lest we forget, Been There, Done That is published by Tom Nash, 5512 Pilgrim Road, Blatimore, MD 21214. (301) 254-2836. CIS #74676,3310.

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MARK'S VERY OWN PAPER POLL OF OTHER PEOPLE

Welcome to the very first TS reader poll. Please, I'm begging, take the time to fill it out and send it back to me. All answers are confidential and you don't have to answer anything you don't want to.

Personal Information

Name: Mark Lillecht Age: 19
Married? Y / N
Self-described Political Alignment: liberal socialist but confused as hell!
Level of Education: Second year of college
Current Employment/Profession: student studying foreign affairs and anthropology

Hobby Involvement

Years in Hobby: almost 2 Do you Publish? Y / N What? The Thing You're Reading
of zines received: almost 50
Favorite Zine currently Published: Fint Bellum!
Favorite Zine ever Published [can be same as above]: ?
of games played: 2 # of games currently playing: 6
How good a player are you? [1-10, 1 meaning elimination Winter 1900!]
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Favorite Country to Play? Italy
Most Despised Country to Play? Germany

Opinions on Zine

Favorite Part of TS: the Letters and Urbane Scrawl
Least Favorite Part of the Zine: typing
Is there anything you'd like added to the zine? more READER input;
greater coherence and sense of purpose
Eliminated? _____

What would be a fair price for TS? at current size \$1

How much would you pay? too much
Would you like to see a nickname for subscribers? Y / N ← everybody will
If so, suggestions [i.e. VOICE OF DOOM had its 'Doomies']: get their own nickname

On a scale of 1 thru 10, with one being 'refund my money' rate TS:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why that score? What should I change/keep?
It depends on whether you consider timeliness. Of course, I'm a "high-rater" as things stand, but with the way TS is shaping up I do believe it to be one of the better zines out today.

General Info

Is your spouse involved in the hobby? Y / N N/A
To what age do you want to live? for as long as I can think and reason, preferably forever
What is your favorite beverage? 2% milk and Long Island Iced Tea
Most recent book[s] read for pleasure?
Other hobbies? List. reading, cycling, drinking, dating, sleeping, Vonnegut: Bluebeard, Palm Sunday Bradbury:
Best Xmas gift received? given? Percy: Love In The Ruins Fahrenheit 451
New Years Resolution[s]: none CD player, tapes to the ex The Vintage Mencken etc

Thanks to Dave Palmer for some of the general info questions! Need more room? Use back!

Backwash -- Urbane Scrawl IV

That's a wrap!

Boy, I never thought I'd get through this issue. The letters were typed up long ago but I simply couldn't kick myself out of that blue funk and get to work. But it's done, and it feels damn good. I'd really forgotten how much I enjoy publishing and I truly can not wait to hear what you all out there think of the new look. I just got a letter from Tom Nash today pointing out that after such a long delay, maybe I should begin to reevaluate where I stand. I have. I'm not standing anymore; I'm running just as fast as I can.

It's a good life.

There was a whole hell of a lot more that I wanted to write about: religion, the demise of the epistle, various political topics, etc--. I'll hold off till next issue with all that, however, as we're running a little long as things stand right now. If issues continue to be this large I may jack up sub prices yet again. This issue ought to cost me around sixty-five dollars just to reproduce; a little hefty if you ask me. We'll see.

The Scribblerist #8 will be in the mail on the 28 March 1989. This will allow me to get back on line with my games (which will still run by flyer to save cost, if you'd like to see a specific game report let me know) and will also allow me to get some of the expected reaction to this issue out of the way so that I'm not confronted with another monster issue.

All right, enough drivel. Hope you enjoyed this issue and I look forward to hearing from all of you (and if you'd like a copy of the reader poll, let me know and I'll send one out ASAP). Delay? What delay? Take care.



The Scribblerist

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