

ZINNA REGISTER

#20
Summer
1992

\$2.50

Published By: [REDACTED]

Garret Schenck [REDACTED]

40 3rd Pl., Bsmt. Apt. [REDACTED]

Brooklyn, NY 11231-3302 [REDACTED]

Phone/Fax/Data: (718) 852-6574 [REDACTED]

Welcome to *Zine Register*, the self-described "zine that helps the hobby look at itself." This is the 20th issue of *Zine Register* (sort of), and my second. I'm pretty sure this issue will be better than my first—more people have helped out this time with reviews of zines they receive, and we've added some "sidebars" on various topics of interest. Hopefully these will prove interesting to veteran and novice alike, and should help to "break up" the sometimes monotonous "tombstone" look of double-columned page after double-columned page (though I doubt it!).

This issue is coming out one month later than I had hoped. Completely and totally my fault, of course. When I took over this job I stated that I would try to maintain a five-month interval between issues, figuring that in practice this would work out to no more than once every six months—two issues per year (about right, I think, for a project of this scope). As it turned out Issue #19 hit the U.S. Mails last November 1st, and this issue will, barring calamities, be subjected to the tender mercies of everybody's favorite governmental service by June 1st. That's an interval of seven months—more than I'd planned for, definitely, but within experimental error. I'll probably shoot for a six months interval next time—giving us December 1st, 1992 as the publication date for Issue #21.

This issue is dated "Summer 1992"; next issue will be "Winter 1993," despite being published in 1992. I will probably send out Publisher Information Sheets sometime in October—look for them then. If you hear of any new zines starting up, please let me know ASAP. And if *you* start up a new zine, start sending it to me and I'll send you #21 when it comes out. *ZR* works best when it trades with as many zines as possible; *ZR* trades also help publishers because I distribute their zines through the NAZB (see "Hobby Services").

Bruce Reiff recently sent me a big box full of free copies of *Supernova*, the "novice packet" produced by Bruce Linsey about a decade ago. It's a little dated, but still covers the basics of the postal hobby—practically required reading for any hobby newcomer. I now have enough on hand to include with copies of *Zine Register* (and North American Zine Bank packets) that go out to novices. This is just great—a *Zine Register*/Novice Packet combo is how I was introduced to the hobby back in 1986, and I'm glad we'll be able to start doing that again. Thanks, Bruce!

The system that I set up last time to produce issue #19 has proven to be a tremendous help this time around, and has eased every part of the editorial/production process. In particular, sending out the two rounds of Info Sheet request letters (at the beginnings of April and May) was made much easier by the database that I already had in place from last time. On the other hand, it's not a real database, only a clumsy MS Word "mail-merge" kludge. If I was going to stick around with this job much longer it might have been worth it to acquire a real relational database and go to town. (Besides, that would be a good way to really get Macintosh databases under my belt!)

As it was I had to struggle for several hours to get the main zine listings "merge document" to work—I must not have saved quite the final version of the thing last October. Oh well. Those of you who work in the electronic environment might or might not be surprised at the number of different "ZR #20" files that are scoting

around my hard disk these days—it's a wonder, really, that I could even find that damn "merge" document!

One new development this time was using my data to produce "mail-merged" Publisher Information Sheets. Each pubber received sheets for their zines with most of the information already filled in—all they had to do was confirm that I still had the correct information, or scratch out what was there and put in new stuff. This idea was the suggestion of, if I remember correctly, Eric Klien, although it's possible that others urged this course as well (Bruce McIntyre maybe?). At any rate it seems to have helped me get info sheets back from more publishers than last time, and I think the data in these pages is about as good as we can hope for. Certainly there are very few zines that I've never seen or that have almost certainly folded listed herein. With very few exceptions all the zines in the main listing are either going concerns or have *just* started their death agonies—we don't have the large number of "dusty carcasses" hanging around like in #19.

In *ZR* #19's reviews, I generally covered a zine's physical appearance, the manner in which games were adjudicated, whether maps were used and how clear they were, speed, turnaround, and things like that. Some of this emphasis was not welcomed by some publishers; many suggestions were made, some more politely than others. One was that I specifically say how many issues of each zine have been published since the last issue of *ZR*—to use "hard data" instead of "impressions" and "anecdotes." Both Eric Brosius and Tom Swider urged this course of action on me, and as you'll see I have adopted this, when I had the necessary information.

Another idea, which I had wanted to do last time but never got around to, was providing an "average" game fee for each zine—how much it costs to play a game in each zine, by combining gamefees and sub fees. When Brad Wilson urged this course on me I knew I had another winner. What I've done is assume that the "average" game of Dip will take 9 or 10 game years (some will last far longer, but it seems that many finish more quickly), which means, generally, 20 issues for those zines that charge a sub fee rather than a "pay one price" policy. For all zines that run Diplomacy or Dip variants, I used the following formula to determine the "average" price: (sub fee per issue x 20) + (gamefee).

If there's a theme to this issue, then, it's those two factors: regularity/turnaround, and cost. In the main I have attempted to make the reviews more "friendly" and less "nasty" (although I feel this issue has been blown utterly out of proportion—go back and reread some of the Nash *ZRs* and you'll see that his stuff was hardly kittenish in comparison to my thoughts). That doesn't mean I've gone completely milk-toast, or any less "TurboPhreak." As you'll read through these reviews you are sure to get a sense of me, and the other reviewers, as thinking, feeling persons with strong opinions. Welcome to the postal Diplomacy hobby!

(This seems an appropriate place to interject this caveat—all reviews are the *opinions* of those who wrote them—use the "Acknowledgements" that follow as a key for the other reviewers. My initials are GS—anytime a review is followed by those two letters you know that it's me talking [invariably, I get the last word]. You can take it or leave it. I think I'm as fair as any human being can be. But there are some hobbyists who *have* attacked

me, sometimes for no other reason than because I'm editing this dumb publication! I think that's unfair, and vicious—and yes, it sometimes gets in the way of my objectivity. I may use a computer, but I'm not a machine. If you cut me, I will bleed...)

I had thought this issue would be smaller than last time. Oh well. I really got a tremendous amount of stuff from a huge number of people, but of course the plumped-up bulk is my fault, pure and simple—I just can't shut up.

I'm killing the page footers this time around. I can use the couple of extra lines per column, or four lines per page, or more than 300 lines in total that this economy achieves—the equivalent of more than two pages. Instead, the folio ("folio" is a fancy, jargon-y word that the publishing trade uses to mean "page numbers"—don't ask me why we just don't say "page numbers," but that's jargon for ya!) will be put in the running head. Before I regained my head I was almost going to do this thing without folios. Collation would have been fun!

For those of you who care, the "Zine Register" type on the front cover is Helvetica Black, stretched and manipulated in TypeStyler, a really nifty type manipu-

lation program. The image was saved in Adobe Illustrator format and placed in FreeHand, where the other stuff was added. The whole thing is sort of (by default, trust me) in a "Constructivist" mood, which was an artistic movement that came out of the USSR during the 1920s, I think. In case you haven't noticed, Constructivism is making a bit of a come-back—presumably because it's really simple to do on the computer (indeed, the trick with computer art is to *not* make it look Constructivist!). Hopefully you saw the subliminal message (sort of) on the front cover, but check it again if you didn't. And I suppose you could say that the "cow-catcher" bit at the bottom represents the "choo-choo" leg of our hobby, while the circle around the price is maybe symbolic of a soccer ball, for the United sub-hobby. You could say that, but like the best symbols, they were unconsciously developed (once I saw that that's what was happening I went back and tried to figure out a way to make the "Zine Register" section relate to Diplomacy, but trying, for instance, to have a Dip map appear inside the letters just made an ugly mess).

Otherwise, type specs for this issue are identical to issue #19 (if it ain't broke, don't fix it!): 8 pt. Times on

Acknowledgments

My sincere appreciation and heartfelt thanks go the following people. They helped out in a variety of ways to ensure that this issue would have the broadest possible participation, and therefore the greatest possible utility. In no particular order, except of course vaguely reverse alphabetically:

Lisa Gaughran My friend and mate, for being a ~~little~~ lot more understanding this time around.

Russell A. Wallace (RAW) For submitting brief reviews of several zines.

Pete Sullivan (PS) For sending me reviews of several English zines, plus a funny bit about internationalism which I'm using to lead off the "Overseas Zines" section.

John Schultz (JS) For submitting reviews of no less than 22 zines in the very month that his own zine, *Martha*, had to be postponed due to time pressures—what a champion great guy!

Phil Reynolds (PR) For submitting very comprehensive reviews of 15 zines beginning with A–D before running out of time.

Bruce Reiff For sending me a great huge box full of *Supernovas*. I'll be bundling these with issues of *Zine Register* that go out to newcomers to the hobby. This is a *big* help!

Conrad von Metzke (CVM) For writing up the "sidebar" for *Railway Rivals*.

Jim Meinel (JM) For sending reviews of several zines, and sending me a copy of *The Armchair Diplomat*.

Brent McKee (BMCK) For submitting reviews of several Canadian and one Swedish zine.

Dave McCrumb (DMcC) For submitting reviews of 18 current zines and 2 folded zines—and the 12K file arrived on floppy disk! What more could an editor want?

George Mann (GM) For submitting a review of *Niccolo*.

Michael P. Lowrey (MPL) For submitting reviews of several United zines.

Robert Lesco (RL) For submitting reviews of several zines, including an English zine and one that had folded.

Paul D. Kenny (PDK) For submitting reviews of a number of zines.

David Hood (DH) For sending me reviews of a great many zines (last fall), which I'm finally able to use this issue; recently he also sent me copies of *The Home Office* and *JGOL!*, which I hadn't seen.

Ken Hill (KH) For sending in brief mentions of several zines.

James K. Goode (JKG) For submitting brief snippets on just about every United and "choo-choo" zine.

Pete Gaughan (PG) For submitting reviews of 22 North American zines, and 8 overseas zines, and for sending me copies of *Suicide Squeeze* and *This Train Is Bound For Glory*.

Drew Franz (DF) For sending me several copies of *The Home Office*, and a description of Dip activities on Prodigy.

El Pico Coffee For the usual—without it's support this zine would not have been necessary.

Buz Eddy (BE) For sending in reviews of a number of zines.

Scott Cameron (SC) For submitting reviews of several United zines, several *Railway Rivals* zines, a couple of *Diplomacy* zines, and two zines that had folded.

Kevin Brown (KB) For submitting reviews of several United zines, and for writing up the "sidebar" on United.

Eric Brosius (EB) For submitting about 12 reviews of zines (mostly RR and United).

Claire Brosius (CJB) For submitting reviews of Bruce Linsey's two sports leagues/zines.

Jason Bergmann (JB) For sending me reviews of several zines.

And to the hobby generally, which, with a few notable exceptions, has provided a great deal of support and encouragement over the past seven months. □

8.5 pt. leading for body copy; zine name appears in 11.5 pt. Franklin Gothic Heavy; the information on each zine appears in Franklin Gothic Bold and Book; page headers are Bodoni Poster.

In an exciting development, the next issue, #21, will probably be my last. I am actively soliciting a replacement as of this moment (please see separate sidebar somewhere in this issue). I make no promises, I may hang on for more of this...uh...fun, but this is a killer job, no doubt about it. If I can find a solid replacement, someone motivated enough to do the kind of job this hobby deserves, then I'll gladly pass it along, and concentrate on *Upstart*.

Now before certain segments of the hobby break out in cheers, let me make one point perfectly clear: I am dumping this job solely for my own reasons. While this issue promises to go a lot more smoothly than Issue #19, it will still have taken up more of my time during April/May 1992 than is altogether healthy, either for me, my marriage, or my relationships with other people important to me. It has also consumed a not inconsiderable amount of money, though I knew this was part of the deal and was prepared for this. Actually I was prepared for the time hit as well, but I'm finding that as a process, doing *ZR* isn't all that much fun, I think, compared to adjudicating games, creating maps, and laying out a dipzine. 'Course when I'm doing *Upstart* I say it the other way round, but...

North American Zines

[[Okay, I think we're ready to get cracking on the zine listings. I hope you've taken out some insurance on your eyes. Assume a reclining position. Do not attempt to read this while operating heavy machinery.]]

NEW!NEW!NEW!NEW!NEW!NEW!

36 Miles of Trouble

Paul Gardner, 5 Timber Lane, Brattleboro, VT 05301

\$3.00/10 issues; open page; typed masters/xerox printed; 2 pages; freq.: 2 weeks; circ.: 14; first: Jan. 1992; last: Apr. 1992 (#6)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Railway Rivals (2), Acquire (1).

Openings: Railway Rivals (hopefully with map made by Paul), Acquire (\$3.00 fee, both games)

36MT is a zine for very fast postal games. I am open to other possibilities, e.g., Snowball Fighting, 1830, or any suggestions depending on interest. Expect to see some left-side political commentary, but only occasionally, and letters will be rare, if at all. A zine for people who want to play Acquire or Railway Rivals, mainly. PG

This is a new zine which carries Railway Rivals, Diplomacy, and Acquire. Paul is a good GM so if you'd like to get in on the ground floor of a new RR zine, this is a good place to do it. SC

I'm sure you've received plenty of information about *36 Miles of Trouble*, Paul Gardner's new zine. He's

running Diplomacy, Acquire, Railway Rivals, and maybe a few other games. The issues I've seen are typed in the Gardner fashion. Not much to look at, but Paul's always been a very reliable GM and publisher. KH

36 Miles of Trouble is fast and accurate. JKG

I think the idea behind this one was for Paul to finish up some leftover games from his now-defunct zine *Not New York* (reported as folded in *ZR* #19). But Paul is your typical publisher and couldn't resist opening up a few new games as well; *36 Miles of Trouble* was the result.

The "every two weeks" frequency appears to be pretty accurate, as the two issues I've received from Paul (#1 and #6) were just about twelve weeks apart. I'm not sure how Paul plans to do things—it looks like some of the games will actually be run on a two-week deadline cycle, which if he can keep it up will make this the absolute *fastest* place to play games in the hobby! Railway Rivals in half a year, who needs PBEM! On the other hand, several of the games listed in #6 indicated "orders on file from XXX and YYY" with the deadline listed as the next issue two weeks hence—maybe the idea here is to *try* to do things every two weeks, but if all the orders aren't in, wait for four. Or maybe the Railway Rivals games will be super-speedy, but Dip a little more relaxed? Request a sample and see for yourself!

As far as the price of an "average" 20-turn game of Diplomacy—it's hard to beat Paul's prices. You should expect to pay \$9.00, putting *36 Miles* near the bottom of the scale when it comes to game costs. *But...* there are no openings—always a cloud in every Eden, eh?

At this point the "zine" is little more than a flyer (both the issues I've seen were but a single page), but will probably flesh out a little as time goes by. Still, I wouldn't expect this to ever grow into a big, chatty zine—the focus is obviously going to be on games played wicked fast. GS

Absolutel

Paul Kenny, 75-A Maple Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108-1008

\$3.50/10 issues (50¢ for back issues); open page; (ancient) xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: monthly to 5 weeks; circ.: 35+; first: "Standard Deviation"—Aug. 1987/*Absolutel*—Apr. 1991; last: Apr. 1992 (#10)
Runs: Diplomacy (2), Gunboat (2), Northern Ireland Dip variant (1).

Openings: None.

Free opinions in an enslaved world—no subject is too loathsome... No, seriously, this is a gamers' zine. Now that Wilson's *Vertigo* has cleaned up its act, *Absolutel* is probably one of the ugliest zines in the hobby, but it gets the job done. Games do come first, but there have been some very interesting articles and essays that one will not likely see elsewhere.

As for the games, there are a lot of new players gracing these pages, so this is a good place for someone to play their first game of postal Dip.

And yeah, a big topic here is the situation in Ireland (your peace plan is always welcome here), but so is the freedom and liberation of the individual in general. I also would like to return to my other real love...computers

and electronics. Maybe I should explain what NMR really means... (BTW, it's "Nuclear Magnetic Resonance.") PDK

The Dipzine for those interested in Ireland. Paul runs a couple of games, standards and variants, and several pages of letters on politics, with all the latest news on "the Troubles." He has an extremely level head on the issue, and although he has opinions he does not rant and rave, and he lets readers get their say. PG

Absolute! is a reliable zine dabbling in Diplomacy, variants, and politics. Paul has a special interest in Northern Ireland, so it's not surprising that he features Northern Ireland Dip (his own design) and news updates from the Emerald Isle, including the latest clashes between the IRA and the British Army. Each issue averages a page of Paul's thoughts on politics home and abroad, as well as a page or two of readers' letters, with topics in recent issues ranging from the German Reich to abortion.

Paul is a good GM—he rarely makes mistakes, he keeps the games moving, and he encourages press, occasionally inserting his own. Sometimes maps are included in an issue, but this seems to be dependent on available space. Lately, *Absolute!* has been published regularly every five weeks. Each issue averages 10–12 pages and is photocopied from typewritten originals. Sometimes the copy quality isn't too good, but the final product is always readable—even if you have to squint a little. A small sacrifice, all things considered.

Obviously, *Absolute!* caters to active subbers, appealing to the gamer and the reader alike. Game openings come and go—it's hard to fill variants sometimes—so purchase a sub, enjoy the chat, and wait for the next opportunity. PR

Well, if you're not playing here now, you'll just have to wait for your chance to get into one of the genuine bargains in the hobby—with no game fees and 35 cent issues, how can you go wrong? A typical 20-turn game of Dip will cost you about \$7.00! Of course Paul has been hit by inflation like everybody else—last fall this thing was going for just 30 cents. Still, who's going to notice another nickel...

Absolute! is a little below the "average" when it comes to turnaround/regularity. I've received four issues since the last issue (I should have received five, but Paul must have forgotten to send me issue #8), which means we're a little bit off the stated "monthly" pace. I'd say about six weeks is Paul's usual speed.

Paul's been playing around with including maps, but threw them out in the last issue I received (#10). But since he used the space to run my "Zine Bank" advertisement, I'm not supposed to complain. Hey, who's complaining! For 35¢ you'd be lucky to get a postcard, really...

While the focus in *Absolute!* is on the games, there is quite a lot of reading material, usually on the situation in Northern Ireland. Dwight McMahon continues to hold high the banner of the Third Reich in the zine, though lately he's branched out into comparing "Abortionists" and "Slaveowners." Somehow this position comes as no surprise. At any rate there is usually some give and take in the letter column, which can be fairly lively.

In short, this is a good zine for playing some Dip or variants, for about as cheap as you can find. But you also get some chrome in the form of the letter column/com-

ments section, and in Paul's focus on things Irish (the March issue came enclosed in a fluorescent green cover!). Check it out, go on Paul's standby list, and be first in line when he opens up some more games. GS

The Abyssinian Prince

Jim-Bob Burgess, 100 Holden Street, Providence, RI 02908-5731

\$.50/issue or \$5.00/12 issues; open page; xerox printed; 16–24 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 50; first: March 1984; last: Oct. 1991 (#106)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat (1), Black Hole Dip (1).
Openings: None.

Jim-Boob Burgess' Music Zine. This guy puts everything in a zine that one would want, not too much extra, and is very timely. He is doing it right. He runs something like 6 or 7 games, which is about his stride. He loves to encourage press and one can have a lot of fun with the black press that Jim allows. *TAP* has got to be one of the best press zines I've seen. Also, his zine has hoards of letters on music, which seems to attract everyone's opinion at some point and never gets people pissed off. He will have 6 or 7 letters, printed on a nice copier, and with all that, *he gets TAP out like clockwork!* You want to play Dip? Play here! Highly recommended! PDK

By... "the Boob." What can you say about "the Boob"? Well... he loves to be verbally abusive and that in itself is a great reason to sub. But he runs a pretty good game. He separates *every* season so be ready to play awhile. His neon sign is the Music Review Section. Everyone seems to agree he's very knowledgeable in this area, and who am I to argue since I know absolutely nothing about music. Even so, I find it interesting. JS

Also known as, *Jim-Bob Wannabes In Space*. There is a cult of personality growing here, and I don't like it. Back when Jim was just our little secret it was fun to read about all kinds of esoteric music that I'd never experienced before; fun to play in games where the goal was to develop the most sly and slick insult-press you could; fun to bash the hobby's #1 masochist. But now everybody's in on the act!

Jim's got an unusual deadline system, separating all seasons but running them quickly so you get, in effect, a six-week span between Spring and Fall. In the early going this is a huge help to a game—just a smidge more negotiating time can mean the success of an alliance, and more accurate moves due to the elimination of conditionals. But into the midgame what you wind up with is a six-week deadline, and the chance to lose interest (also, some press gets disjointed as not everyone has to send orders every issue).

So it's a good thing the lettercol is fascinating, just in case your game is getting old. A great read (but thank god he doesn't handwrite his zine!). PG

I don't think of Jim as a Poll-basher. He has serious concerns about what he sees as the harm the poll does, but he deals with them in a constructive way by communicating with me, not by simple bashing. EB

The Abyssinian Prince is a very reliable zine, published every three weeks like clockwork—give or take a day. (Hey, you want to make something of it?) While

this should be very appealing to the game-playing speed-freak, it should be noted that Jim-Bob always separates Summer and Winter seasons. Thus, a game-year should be completed every 12 weeks. This isn't so bad when you consider that some zines take that long to publish two combined seasons. At least in *TAP* you know you won't have to write conditional orders. Maps are in every issue, as well as a lot of press from both Jim-Bob and his players. The operating rule for press writing is: "Abuse the GM at least as badly as any player!" *TAP* tends to

attract more veteran players, which usually produces very interesting games.

The other primary feature of *TAP* is a huge letter column on music, accounting for half of the zine's content sometimes. If you're really into music—and the more off-beat the better, it seems—then you'll want a sub to *TAP*. The games alone, however, have been enough to make this one of my favorite zines for the past few years. PR

Appearances to the contrary, this is *not* a "Turbo-Phreak" zine. Even though it looks terrific, uses maps,

The Game of Postal Diplomacy

One of the names for this pastime is "postal Diplomacy." With good reason. Diplomacy is the common denominator of our hobby—almost all players or publishers have played or gamesmastered Diplomacy at one time or another. Some people are involved in all three "legs" of our hobby: Diplomacy, rail games, or United leagues.

Diplomacy is supposedly set in *fin de siècle* Europe (though the political boundaries are those of 1914). The game starts in 1901. Each of the players takes control of one of the seven "Great Powers" of Europe: England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Turkey. Each country begins the game with three "dots" or "supply centers" (Russia gets four). Along with 12 "neutral" supply centers, including such small nations as Holland, Serbia, Portugal, etc., these 34 supply centers provide the economic structure of the game. To win, a single player/power must gain control of at least half (18) of the 34 supply centers.

Diplomacy was invented in the late 1950s by Alan Calhamer. At first it was distributed by Games Research, Inc. A gorgeous, oversize mapboard, quality wooden pieces painted a variety of pretty colors, and a simple rulebook that still allowed for much subtlety of play, combined to produce an immediate hit. The Avalon Hill Game Co. was also getting started during this period; during the 1960s the popularity of Diplomacy paralleled the rise of the "hex" wargame hobby.

Avalon Hill took over American rights to Diplomacy in the early 1970s and has published it since then; it remains one of their most popular titles, drawing buyers from outside the "hard core" hex gamers who seem to make up much of Avalon Hill's market these days. After ASL, the Diplomacy tourney had the most participants at last summer's Avaloncon, a very good sign for our hobby.

In 1963 John Boardman decided to try running a game of Diplomacy by mail. This proved to be *the* way to play it. Negotiations can take place in complete secrecy—indeed, it is impossible to know who is talking to whom. In face-to-face play you may not be able to hear what Germany is saying to Italy, but you probably know that they're talking to each other, and can draw your own conclusions. In postal Diplomacy, on the other hand, reality is just an illusion you help create.

John Boardman's pioneering game was played in a zine called *Graustark*. That immensely successful effort has spawned a host of imitators in the almost

three decades since then—incredibly, John Boardman continues to publish to this day and he recently put out his 600th issue! As many as 900 zines have run Diplomacy games—most have long since faded, but these pages demonstrate that many are still alive and strong. New zines appear on a regular basis; just as regularly, old, tired zines fade out and die.

One of the features of postal Diplomacy games is "press"—little articles and comments written by the players, generally about the game (though not always). Press items often poke fun at other players, at the gamesmaster, at other players' "bonthead" moves, etc. Before you know it everyone is joining in with puns, jokes, jabs, etc. Press is like the good-natured banter that surrounds face-to-face games; you *could* play quietly and seriously, but *why?*

Another feature of postal Diplomacy is negotiations. Simply put, to do well in Diplomacy, especially as a relative novice, you *must* write every player in the game, particularly those who are your neighbors. If you write frequently, intelligently, and *diplomatically*, you are almost guaranteed to at least survive till the end of the game. And somebody's got to win—might as well be you, eh? Since novices often have more time to devote to their game than "veterans" (who are probably playing in too many games, or publishing a zine, or otherwise not able to fully concentrate on the game), a novice who keeps his or her cool can do quite well at this game, if they can avoid the dreaded NMR (No Moves Received).

An ability to lie successfully, steal without remorse, ruthlessly stab your erstwhile ally—and solid tactical play—all are necessary to do well in this game. And a little luck never hurt anyone! (But note that there are no "random" events in Diplomacy—luck only enters into things when you try to "outguess" your opponents. If you're a "nail-biter" you may not end up with any fingers left!)

If you are new to the postal world, you should get your hands on one of the "novice packets." These discuss many facets of play-by-mail Diplomacy and are essentially required reading if you're thinking of giving PBM Dip a shot. *Masters of Deceit* is available from Tom Mainardi for \$1.50 and *Supernova* is available from Bruce Reiff for \$1.00; see "Hobby Services" toward the back of this zine for addresses and more details. (Thanks to Bruce Reiff's generosity, you *may* have received a free copy of *Supernova* with this issue of *Zine Register*.)

So give Diplomacy a try! After all, that's probably why you got this issue of *Zine Register* in the first place, eh? GS

puts final positions in capital letters, is "obsessively" timely and regular, and the editor holds strong opinions and is unafraid about expressing same, don't be fooled. This is *not* a "TurboPhreak" zine. Why? Because Cal White says so.

I've only seen one copy of this thing in the last half a year, and that one was just after ZR #19 came out. So I don't have anything new to say. I expect Jim is just as prompt and regular as ever—nothing I've heard would suggest otherwise. No game openings, apparently, but if you offer to standby Jim will probably let you on the sub list. At \$5.00 for 12 issues this is a real bargain, but since seasons are always separated, the price of playing a game here ends up being a lot closer to the hobby norm than you'd think: around \$15.00 for the sub and \$5.00 for the game for a total of \$20.00 for an "average" game of Diplomacy. When Jim has game openings, that is.

Unless Jim has shortened up his issues (doubtful) you get a tremendous amount of reading material (almost all of it about esoteric, beyond-the-fringe music), and some of the best press around. This is one of the better zines going, even if it *isn't* a "TurboPhreak" zine. GS

Acropolis

Karl Hoffman, 250 Harris St. D5, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

\$.75/issue; digest; "I'm back to typing"; 24 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 30; first: Oct. 1989; last: May 1992 (#27)

Runs: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Deviant variant.

Openings: None (I think).

Jim Green is *out* of *Acropolis*. Just me now. Small letter column. Not much talk other than games. KH

Acropolis has reached a fork in the road and will be travelling in a new direction. This was precipitated by the resignation of Jim Green as co-publisher/GM. Jim cited external pressures and a declining interest as reasons for the change, leaving Karl Hoffman as a one-man show. (Jim's games are being rehoused in other zines.) It is uncertain what the ultimate effect of this will be on *Acropolis*, but my guess is that we will see a more mainstream zine—well GMed games but less personality (i.e., the direct opposite of Jim's style). Karl has stated that he will continue the letter column, assuming subbers write to him. *Acropolis* probably will be published more frequently and more regularly than before. Game openings won't be available until some current games end, but when they are, they probably won't include the off-beat variants Jim offered. We'll just have to sit back for a while and see how the situation resolves itself, but potential players should keep an eye on *Acropolis*. PR

In the last issue of ZR I suggested that Karl "kick" Jim Green (his erstwhile co-publisher) "sideways" into a subzine, since it seemed that Jim was losing interest in publishing and was slowing down their combined effort. For one reason or another, something like this happened, though in the end Jim decided to take a powder altogether.

Karl is apparently unwilling to take over GMing Jim's games, and so Jim's games will be going to Eric Ozog, the orphan custodian. I'm not sure why Karl's Pub-

lisher Info Sheet listed "Deviant Dip" as a current game in *Acropolis*—that game was being run by Jim and presumably will be going to Eric along with Jim's other two. But maybe not, we'll see next issue, when we'll have a lot better idea what the "new" *Acropolis* will look like.

As far as I know Jim Green was the one responsible for the fairly sharp "look" of the "old" *Acropolis* (as well as most of the "writing"; Karl's "I'm back to typing" comment above suggests that a "downscaled" look will be the result of Jim's abandonment of the zine. However, if the price of getting *Acropolis* back on track is a slightly cruddier physical product, and less reading material, I'm all for it.

Acropolis used to be very prompt and reliable, but over the past year it has had some problems. I've received only four issues on my trade since the last ZR was published seven months ago. The "5 weeks" schedule reported above is not much more than wishful thinking, at this point. Hopefully once Karl gets used to doing the thing by himself he'll get it back up to the kind of speed that once characterized this zine. When there were openings in this zine, they were free; if that policy is continued in the future you could expect an "average" game of Diplomacy to go for \$15.00—slightly below the going rate for the hobby.

[Issue #27 just made it in under the deadline, so my guess is that with Jim gone, the speed will in fact pick up a little. The zine pretty much resembles Karl's half of the "old" *Acropolis*, although he's kept the "trademark" colored covers.

[All of Jim's three games will apparently be rehoused in Richard Weiss' brand new start-up *Zero Sum*, including the game of Deviant Dip. But Karl muttered something about maybe running a game of that in the "new" *Acropolis*, which explains why he kept it on the Pubber Info Sheet—but no official game opening was announced.] GS

Against The Odds

Craig A. Reges, 13 Cedar Lane, Succasunna, NJ 07876

\$3.50/10 issues; open page; xerox printed; 6 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 14; first: April 1989; last: Apr. 1992 (#17)

Runs: Diplomacy (1)

Openings: Diplomacy (free).

Wasn't running any games—I think Reges dropped out of the hobby. PDK

Fred Davis tells me *Against the Odds* is at #16 in March 1992. I've never seen a copy, but apparently Craig Reges is in Mensa so Fred is up on his whereabouts. JM

Okay, here's the straight poop—*Against The Odds* is still in business, and the latest issue is #17, which I received a couple of weeks ago (it's the only issue I've ever seen). In the last issue of *Zine Register* I reported that this zine was in "hiatus" awaiting a new Mensa Dip-SIG game. This seems to be relatively typical of Mensa zines which have not broken out into the wider world of Diplomacy fandom—if they're only running one game they suspend publication while waiting for

Mensa Dip-SIG Chair Fred Davis (see *Diplomag*) to fill another game for them. At any rate, Craig's new game has reached Fall 1901, so we should be seeing this one for at least another 10 or 15 issues or so.

Craig is now offering two gamestarts (you don't, apparently, need to belong to Mensa to play in these starts) so we can expect *ATO* to become more "mainstream," or at least to be a consistent presence in the hobby. Several other Mensa zines have picked up outside players and have become quite successful.

There is not much here besides the one game, which is surrounded by ample white space. It would appear that Craig is more than willing to make space for *your* game, should you decide to make this *your* zine. He provides a full-page map and the adjudications are clear and readable. At just 35¢ per issue and no gamefees it would be hard to find a cheaper place to play (just \$7.00 for an "average-length" game of *Diplomacy*). If you're looking for a game this could be the spot. Not much in the way of chat, though I suppose this could change as more people join the zine. **GS**

Alpha & Omega

Lee Kendter, Jr., 367A Willowbrook Dr., Jeffersonville, PA 19403

\$.75/issue; open page; xerox printed; page count varies; freq.: quarterly; circ.: 20; first: May 1983; last: Feb. 1992 (#26)

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

The official zine of the Miller Number Custodian (MNC). Game starts, ends, official notice of abandoned games, and other MNC related material. Also includes a listing of all changes to the NAVB. Future plans include the printing of ratings systems. If you have a ratings system for variants, please send it my way. I am always looking for end-game reports, and have a computer database that can show the status of any zine. **LAKJ**

The published report of the Miller Number Custodian. Everything you always wanted to know about *Diplomacy* variants but were afraid to ask, and nothing more. **JS**

Alpha & Omega has passed from father to son, with Lee Kendter, Jr., adding Miller Number Custodian to his hobby resume. I'm not sure what the new schedule will be, but *A&O* should be published at least quarterly, including Miller Numbers, variant gamestart rosters, and end-game stats. Additionally there is the North American Variant Bank news, since Lee manages the NAVB too. Essentially, *A&O* is a reference guide for variant GMs. There are no games played here, and there are none of the usual trappings of hobby zines. It is useful, however, to see what variants are being played and who is playing them. Lee should be a very capable MNC. **PR**

During the winter the "official" MNC changed hands, from Lee Kendter to Lee Kendter! Or rather from Sr. to Jr.—father to son (the only parent/child combo in the hobby, now that the Christies are history—?). Not that the title is hereditary or anything, I guess Lee Sr. just felt that Lee Jr. would do the best job. Besides, it makes a certain amount of sense because Lee Jr. is already handling the NAVB (see "Hobby Services" at the back of this

issue)—probably best to have all variant-related services under one roof.

Lee took no time in putting out his first issue as the new MNC, which means I've received no less than three issues of *Alpha & Omega* since the last issue of *ZR*—pretty damn good for a mere "service zine"!

From the look of things, Lee Jr. is doing a marginally more comprehensive job than his father (not that Lee Sr. was any slouch when it came to the MNC-ship, mind you). Very soon after Lee Jr. took over he sent me a letter asking about end-game stats for a game I must have forgotten to send in—I was very impressed by his willingness to follow things up and gather missing information.

There is not much here except gamestarts and end-game stats, so unless you're interested in that stuff, I can't think why you'd want this. **GS**

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW!

Angst United

Dan Stafford, 3284 Atlin Ave., Dublin, OH 43017

free to players/standbys; open page; xerox printed; 6–8 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 30; first: don't know; last: Apr. 1992 (#39)

Runs: United Soccer league (24 teams in 3 tiered divisions).

Openings: \$7.00 per season, ask Dan about openings.

AU is undoubtedly the most European of all the U.S. United leagues. Dan is a well-respected hobby burnout, and *AU* is usually quite timely (unlike many U.S. United zines). I like *Angst*, and if you like United then you will like this zine too. **KB**

Dan Stafford's United league has the reputation of being the most challenging in North America. A complex set of rules and as good a bunch of players as a GM could hope for makes *Angst* what it is. Also comes out regularly, which is somewhat rare for large leagues. **MPL**

Angst is a well-run, reliable United zine. Of all the major postal soccer zines, *AU* has the best feel of an actual European soccer league. The rules de-emphasize (but don't eliminate) the financial aspects of the game and add a fatigue/injury rule which requires players to be rested periodically. The zine is well-produced and each issue features an updated roster for your team—a useful item for managers who are lazy about keeping records. This league was originally known as K-League and was carried in *K-Zine*, published by Bill Becker. When Bill folded, Dan took over operation of the league. **SC**

Contains an occasional music subzine, a respectable press section, and an occasional lettercol. **EB**

Angst United is published by a friend of mine, Dan Stafford. It definitely exists and is active. It's a United Soccer zine that has one league running and usually about 2–3 pages of chat with the game reports. The last issue was #34 (I think) and, as far as I know, he doesn't have any game openings. **KH**

A well-run league with rules similar to the British leagues. It is *not* a new 'zine. It's been pubbed for a couple of years now by Dan Stafford. The league was actu-

ally begun by Bill Becker in *K-Zine*, and it is the oldest PBM "United Soccer" league in North America. JKG

Well, it's really not "NEW!" but it hasn't appeared in *Zine Register* recently, and if I could only find some of my really old back issues, I'd be able to confirm that it has *never* appeared in *ZR*. But I can't, so I won't. At any rate I've only seen one issue of the thing, so I'll have to assume that the "regularity" reported by Kevin and Michael above is accurate. Dan reports that he's using dBase IV (the first upgrade since Borland took over Ashton-Tate) to keep track of everything, with Word-Perfect to do final formatting. Presumably using the computer for record keeping helps Dan maintain both high speed and accuracy.

AU is an attractive product, with a very clear layout. From the outside it looks like it would be pretty easy to play here. The player roster is truly amazing—a collection of some of the oldest and funniest hobby members around! Even Bob Olsen (at least I *assume* that the "Olsen" Dan lists is the famous "Sludge" Olsen) can be found in these pages, along with another one-time hobby splash, Bruce Geryk. (And others too, of course.)

I don't know if the issue I saw was typical, but there was very little here other than the United report, and about a page of press. I suspect Dan will have some openings after the current "season" ends, but the way these things usually work is that open spots go to standbys first. Definitely worth a sample request if you're looking to give United a try. GS

The Appalachian General

David McCrumb, 3636 Oldtown Road, Shawsville, VA 24162

\$1.00/issue (free to players and standbys); open page; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 15; first: Aug. 1983; last: Sep. 1991 (#100)

Runs: 7 x 7 Gunboat (2), 1499 (1), United Soccer League.

Openings: United Soccer (gamefee of \$10.00 includes Season B sub).

United Soccer is the ultimate managers game. Not only do you create your own team, but you coach it and play it according to your own philosophy, be that offensively or defensively minded, or a combination of the two. *TAG*'s rules focus on the building of a whole team concept, though the rules do allow for superstars to be created and excel. There are several new rules added during Season B to expand the managership of the league. The tactical rules are very similar to many of the other United leagues at the moment, but once I have determined that the new rules work, there will be tactical rule additions for Season C.

United is a very enjoyable game. You can put as much or as little into it as you wish. I would be happy to help anybody learn how to play. If you are interested, why not try it for one season. If you hate it, fine. It takes about 15–30 minutes per month to fill out a lineup sheet. And if at the end of the season you decide you want to drop out, there will be no hard feelings. (However, I do not look favorably on people dropping out in the middle of a season.)

So give it a try. You may find out that United is your favorite postal game! DMCC

Timely and accurately GMed, *TAG* is excellent. Currently *TAG* has only 8 teams, however, and expansion (which is planned for the summer) often does harm to the accuracy and timeliness of a United zine. David should be able to handle it—after all *TAG* was a fair-sized dipzine for a while. Of all the United zines running now, *TAG* is the one that I think will be around the longest. Besides, expansion slots in established leagues are not to be looked upon lightly. Most often standbys are left with downright dreadful clubs. So get on David's standby list and grab a spot before they're all gone. KB

A couple of years ago Dave McCrumb was putting out a warehousey Dip-and-variants zine called *The Appalachian General*. Then the dread United bug struck. Dave is largely lost to Dipdom now as he runs his last few games down to an end. The main focus now is United (the United and Dip and whatever else Dave is running go out in separate issues of *TAG*, generally to players only). The *TAG* league is modelled after Kevin Brown's *Pilot Light*, but with some significant differences. Like Kevin, Dave is also timely and he is looking to expand in his second season, which could start shortly. Each issue also includes a write-up of a Civil War battle. MPL

This zine is one of three North American United zines that are currently in good health. The *Angst United* league is in Season 6, the *Pilot Light* league is in Season 4, and the *TAG* league is finishing up Season 1. The first season included only 8 teams as Dave eased into the job of Commissioner, but expansion is planned for Season 2.

Dave's rules are based on Kevin Brown's rules for *Pilot Light* (both zines break from United tradition by eschewing the use of team money) but they include many well-chosen variations—players of SL greater than 10, a unique college draft system, good play points, and a less effective longball option, to name just a few.

The *TAG* league doesn't yet have the sizzle to me of a mature United league—the rivalries are still young. But give me another season of staring up the league table at wunderkind Jason Bergmann and his Indonesian National Team and I'm sure I'll be frothing at the mouth! Sign up for an expansion team and get in on the fun.

(By the way, *TAG* is numbering all flyers in the same sequence. The United part is simply the biggest part, which is why Dave sent it to you last fall.) EB

Dave McCrumb's zine recently reached its 100th issue, amidst almost no fanfare. This is not a big surprise, since the zine is not nearly the must-see Diplomacy hobby pub that it once was. *TAG* was always a warehouse, but one of the most reliable places to play variants. What Dave has essentially done now is change the zine into a United Soccer league. There are still *TAG* issues going out to finish a 1499 Dip variant game, but that one will be over soon as well.

As a United zine, I can say that *TAG* has been tremendously successful. It is very timely, and the rules are well-designed. Since Dave will be expanding his league soon, this is highly recommended as a place to learn United as a novice. That's what I am doing.

As far as Diplomacy is concerned, we may not see any openings in *TAG* for a while. It was a great place to play while it lasted, though. DH

This new league is still trying to find its niche in the United hobby. Its experiments with the rules are turning

out to be quite enjoyable, and the kinks should be ironed out by the time the league is ready for expansion. David claims that he wants to expand the league by up to twelve teams from Season One to Two. At that point we shall see whether this league is here for the long haul. It is my initial impression that it will be. The league is now the quickest United league running, suggesting that expansion may occur sooner than I first thought. This league filled its current eight spots less than three days after Dave announced its startup. There are already about four people signed up as standbys awaiting next season's promised expansion. If the new places go as fast as the old ones, you'd better get your dibs in there quickly.

Team compositions have been included with every issue, including player statistics. David uses scouting reports as a means of evaluating the strengths of players in the "draft," but has altered what many have argued were the main problems with *Pilot Light's* scouting system. His solution has been quite effective and balanced. I'll be interested to see how the rules get finalized, but so far I like what I see. At this point I have a team with the best record in the league, so I can't really say anything that's too bad.

JB

The Appalachian General has narrowed its interests over the past year to focus on a United Soccer League. For those of you who are still clueless, United simulates a soccer season with player-created/managed clubs going head-to-head in competition. The owner (player) distributes points among his club's players which have different positions, and ages, drafts college players, and makes trades with other owners. Matches are resolved in a relatively simple way, comparing clubs' strengths at different positions. The season progresses, following a pre-determined schedule, until the playoffs are held to crown the league champion. Owners then look ahead to the next season with their teams.

Based on an issue I've seen recently *TAG* appears to be published every 4-5 weeks, consisting of match results, press, and Dave's writings on college soccer and the Civil War (the latter was always a consistent theme in earlier issues of *TAG*). The zine is laser printed and very reliable. David seems to be a good United GM. If United is your game, then you should check out *TAG*.

Simple rules, good for a novice

JKG

I haven't seen anything of this since last fall, when Dave sent me a couple of issues of *TAG*, so I can't real-

What Is Gunboat Diplomacy?

A popular variation on plain vanilla Diplomacy is *Gunboat*. When I started playing postal Diplomacy several years ago, I kept running across references to "Gunboat" in my copy of *Zine Register*, but nowhere did I find any explanation of what it was! So to spare you the embarrassment of trying to find out for yourself, Gunboat is, very simply, *anonymous* Diplomacy. The kind of direct, secret negotiations between players that is the hallmark of postal Diplomacy is not only impossible, but against the rules!

That's the only change between Regular Diplomacy and Gunboat But it does make a *big* difference. Generally Gunboat games are a little more "cut-throat"—"game-long alliance play" is less frequent, and people are more willing to stick the knives in. Gunboat games are more likely to end in solo victories than Regular Diplomacy. Coordination between players is a lot more difficult to achieve, but can be devastating to the other players if you can pull it off.

There are two major kinds of Gunboat—with and without press. Some Gunboat players like playing without any press—this way "negotiations" can only take place through the extremely limited venue of units' orders (and "impossible" moves—i.e. France orders "F MAO (S) RUSSIAN A. Mos-Ber"—but note that some GMs won't even allow these kind of "negotiation moves"). I'm no fan of so-called "No-Press Gunboat," but it does have its adherents.

A "richer" version of Gunboat allows press to flourish, but none that includes "direct negotiations." For instance if you urge "Russia—please move your Army Silesia to Munich in Fall 1903," some GMs would either cut it or alter it. But they might allow some long-winded piece about "the need for Russia to confront the Germanic horde in their home bases," that sort of thing. The game here becomes "see how much you can get away with!"

Finally, there's "no holds barred" press Gunboat—say whatever you want as long as it doesn't give away your secret identity (or help to reveal it). I much prefer this kind of Gunboat—it often leads to spectacular press games as the players go on and on about their plans and strategies (which often leads into the more interesting "Golden Age"-style press—i.e., press that has a fictional component and which only incidentally has any direct bearing on the game).

Why play Gunboat? There are several reasons. One reason is that it's a change from the routine—if you find you're getting a little bored with straight Diplomacy, give Gunboat a shot. Another very valid (and common) reason is time—Regular Diplomacy can eat up a lot of time, especially if you're a conscientious player and write a lot of letters. Gunboat allows you to write just one letter, to the GM. If you can't do hobby stuff right away upon receipt of the zine, no big deal, the GM can wait a week or two. Players in Regular Diplomacy, however, have to be "stroked" immediately, or they may go off the wire; any delay in getting your negotiation letters in the mail can be fatal. Finally, for those players who suspect that there is too much "cross-gaming" and "meta-gaming" in our "incestuous" little hobby, the anonymity of Gunboat provides the opportunity for the players to approach each game as if it was the *only* game, unencumbered with fallout from earlier games.

(No discussion of Gunboat would be complete without mentioning another "version" of the thing: the "Round-Robin Gunboat Tournament" or "RRGT." This involves seven players playing seven linked games of Gunboat [almost always "No-Press"]—in each game they play a different country. The winner of the tournament is the player who ends up with the highest overall score. RRGTs were very popular a couple of years ago, but there are fewer openings these days [if only because any one RRGT expends a lot of GMing resources on just seven players]. GS

ly add anything to the large number of "rave reviews" printed above. It does sound like a perfect place to try United; if I had a little more spare time, I'd probably do just that. If you are looking to play here, I'd contact Dave right away—I don't know when his second (expanded) season will start, but "real soon now" is a good bet. Hop to it! GS

ark.

Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St., Milford, MA 01757-3554

\$5.00/10 issues (will recalculate if price changes); open page; laser masters/xerox or laser printed; 8-10 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 23 (incl. 2 samples); first: Sep. 1989; last: Apr. 1992 (#47)
Runs: Empire Builder (1), Railway Rivals (3).
Openings: British Rails or EuroRails (\$10.00), Railway Rivals (\$4.00).

ark recently finished a game of British Rails and currently has openings for another. The "speed game" approach allows me to complete a game in two years or less (compared to four or more under the old system).

I have also taken over a pair of Railway Rivals orphans (but not from *Gonzo Rails*) and have opened a Rivals game of my own. The Rivals hobby has seen a lot of orphans recently, and I welcome standbys who are willing to help with abandoned positions. EB

This is the prettiest as well as the most reliable zine running Empire Builder type games. It also began running a few Railway Rivals games this past year. If you are not playing here, you are playing in a second rate zine. Empire Builder games take one hell of a long time to play, but if you keep up with what is happening the orders take about 15 minutes every three weeks (or less if you do like me and send orders for six months at a time). DMCC

ark is the choo-choo zine that stacks up best against Diplomacy zines. Most of the rail hobby is warehouse; although Eric runs a small zine that's mostly games, he makes a real effort to get play-of-the-game articles and personal features into his limited space. He's compulsive about quick and accurate GMing (his own and other people's!) so it's a great place to play, but don't sub unless you're in a game. PG

ark is about playing the Empire Builder series and Railway Rivals. Each issue typically contains the turn results of a few games, some press, a page of hobby news and other items of interest to Eric, and the occasional "choo-choo" strategy article. The zine is laser printed and includes a map for the EB game; it is published every 3-4 weeks. Eric is a good GM that makes occasional mistakes (who doesn't?), but then you know he must be trying hard if he's awarding free issues to readers who find errors! *ark* looks like a good place to begin for the novice PBM EB or RR player. As one myself, I have phoned Eric a couple of times, and he has always been friendly and patient. PR

Eric is speedy and accurate. JKG

This has to be one of the most dependable zines around. I've received no less than eight issues of this thing since the last ZR—and I should be getting the ninth before this thing gets mailed. [[Nope!]] Eight issues in

seven months—that's about as good as it gets! When Eric says "three weeks," he almost always means it! Another way of looking at this statistic is to realize that the zine is not even three years old—yet Eric has produced 47 issues! You won't be left wondering if the publisher forgot about you with this zine, that much is certain.

Moreover *ark* is one of the prettiest zines around—Eric has worked up some "macros" to simplify the printing of his Empire Builder game reports, and the results are spectacular to look at—I can only imagine how easy they must make playing here. The layout is clean and crisp and definitely invites the reader/player to check things out.

(Eric is supposedly working on a Pascal program that will generate PostScript code to produce his EB/BR/ER maps. I've suggested to him that once that project is completed, a full-blown computerized Diplomacy map generator program will be the logical next step. The question is, of course, will support for *color* maps be included? Perhaps not with the "shareware" version, eh Eric? Heh.)

While the focus is definitely on the games, Eric almost always includes at least a page of hobby news/gossip, sometimes more, space permitting. I suppose some would prefer to see more of Eric here, but as far as I'm concerned games are rightly Job One in this hobby; I applaud Eric's determination to keep his games front and center.

Eric is a very highly regarded GM, and if you're looking to give the postal "choo-choo" hobby a go, I think this would be one of your best bets. Don't let those gamestarts percolate too long, though—Eric wisely keeps a cap on gamestarts, so if you wait too long you may lose out—request a sample today! GS

The Armchair Diplomat

Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017, CompuServe UID: 70357,431

Free, except for on-line connect charges; electronic; N/A; 6-10 pages; freq.: weekly; circ.: 40-50; first: Feb. 1983; last: Oct. 1991 (#454)

Runs: Diplomacy (11), Gunboat (2), Get Them Dots Now (1), Fog of War (1), Perestroika (1), Woolworth (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, and other variants have continuous game openings; new RRGT is being formed now.

TAD (and its subzines "The Eccentric Diplomat" ["TED"] and "The Blind Wars" ["TBW"]) are the official publications of the Diplomacy hobby on the CompuServe Information Service computer network in the Play-by-Mail Games (PBMGAMES) Forum. Players can access CIS from practically anywhere in the world including the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia. Several British players are now active.

TAD is the oldest PBEM zine and has been the home of quality Dip play since 1983. Games are run on weekly or bi-weekly deadlines with a lively open message area that features some of the best chat and letters in the hobby. Since the esteemed publisher of ZR felt in ZR #19 that Tom Nash, Dick Martin, Jack McHugh, Douglas Kent, Tom Swider, Eric Brosius, et. al. were not hobby notables, I can't

with a clear conscience mention that they participate.

Bob Aube is now the official editor of *TAD* while Don Croyle has taken over the operation of "TED." Both of these guys (along with our stable of reliable GMs) do a great job of keeping the games moving along nicely.

Interested players must have a personal computer with a modem to access CIS. Players can offset their connect time charges by GMing games in *TAD*, "TED," or "TBW." Please contact the publisher for more information. KH

I have seen Issue #454, dated October 22, 1991. This issue was 8 digest pages, laser printed. Four games were reported on in this issue, and Bob Aube contributed an article on "Opening Strategies for Turkey." A "Deadlines" section listed 9 PBEM games with deadlines. Ken Hill is the editor. When I wrote asking about his zine, he sent me a sample and a free introductory Compu-Serve membership so he is obviously contributing a lot to getting people to play by electronic mail. JM

In ZR #19, Garret expressed his preferences for publishing on paper ("beauty, satisfaction of a job well-done, control of what the final product looks like"). Other publishers might express preferences for publishing on *white* paper ("beauty, clarity..."). Either way, publishing on paper is environmentally unsound, whether you use recycled paper or the white stuff. You not only use up paper; you also contribute to the pollution caused by postal vehicles.

E-mail publishing is not only faster and cheaper than publishing on paper, but it saves on resources. I'm not one to deny the joy one feels from using paper, but sometimes there's a better way! EB

Eric has a good point about the environmental effects of using paper, although I am sure that he is aware that substantial quantities of CFCs have, until recently, been required in the manufacture of circuit boards and integrated circuits—and that the electronics industry today continues to use large amounts of CFCs. I submit that use of recycled fiber (especially if not deinked or bleached) can minimize these environmental side effects, though it will never eliminate them. (A potentially bigger problem than the paper is the plastic-based toner that is used for the printing of almost all Diplomacy zines.)

Jim Meinel passed his copy of *TAD* along to me. I can confirm his comments about the thing, although I note that there is very little press. No maps, obviously. Still, the price is right, assuming you already have a computer.

Well, I *do* have a computer, and a modem, but I'm still going to stick to paper. To me a real zine is something that comes through the mail—I hesitate to call this "E-Mail" thing "publishing." I think it's something radically different. Not necessarily something inferior, just different. Still, I bet it makes for great games. GS

The Assassin's Blade

John David Galt, 701 Welch Rd #323, Palo Alto, CA 94304-1705

\$5.00/12 issues, will trade; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: 5-8 weeks; circ.: 25; first: Jan. 1989; last: Mar. 1992 (#31)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Character Dip II (1), Fog of War Dip (1).

Openings: None.

The Assassin's Blade has been struggling in recent times. What was once a reliable monthly zine has become, after a ten-week lapse, a slightly less regular publication that is trying to stay in operation. The cause of all this seems to be external problems, rather than, say, burnout. John has promised that if he can't keep publishing regularly, he will rehouse the games, but he is trying to hang in there.

TAB features a handful of games with lively press. John has an interest in off-beat variants, some of which he runs. John is a good GM, but he has made several mistakes in the early going of the complex Character Dip game. Large and clear maps are provided in issues copied from dot-matrix originals. Although I know John would like to have other features, *TAB* is a warehouse zine which makes no pretensions. John has considered opening other games, such as *Cannibalism II*, but at this time he just wants to assure that the current games keep running without distraction. An admirable attitude, all things considered. If *TAB* can rebound, join the fun. PR

As Phil notes, John is having trouble staying on his schedule. Almost three months separated issue #28 and #29 (John had been laid off along with 25 percent of his fellow workers—and I know how demoralizing that can be). John was then able to pump out two more issues within five weeks of each other, but since late-March—nothing. All told we've seen three issues of *TAB* since ZR #19, not exactly a stellar performance.

John never returned either of the Publisher Info Sheets I sent him in April and May, which is also not a very good sign. Consequently the information printed above is mostly from last time, with some additions by me from his zine.

John is apparently not going to open up any more games until he gets things under control. That sounds like a good idea. If you're interested you might try bugging him and ask to be put on the standby list or something, but no gamestarts for now. I do hope that John figures out how to get back on track—he had a good zine, which, while pretty much a warehouse, ran some interesting games. Besides, any zine's death diminishes me, for I am involved in zinekind...

With any luck I'll be able to come back here right before I go to print to let you know that I've received #32 of *TAB*. [[Nope...]] GS

NEWINNEWINNEWINNEWINNEW

Autumn Madness

Bruce Linsey, 170 Forts Ferry Road, Latham, NY 12110

check with Bruce for price—available only to league members; open page; laser printed; 4 pages; freq.: weekly during football season; circ.: 24; first: Sep. 1991; last: never seen

Runs: Gonzo Football (1 league).

Openings: Yes—info on joining is available in free starter packet.

Autumn Madness is the publication for the results of Gonzo Football, a game in which participants own teams consisting of NFL players. Game results are based on players' real-life performances. Team owners can trade, sign free agents, and juggle their lineups in an attempt to

reach the Gonzo Bowl championship game. Lots of fun! Ask for your free Gonzo Football starter packet. BL

This is a timely and efficient zine for the avid football games player. Since a weekly sport demands a weekly zine and a precise GM, Bruce really rises to the task and does a superb job. The format is easy to read and he is careful about details. Bruce uses his computer to download the stats from *USA Today* Online to guarantee the accuracy of the results. The Gonzo football leagues are fun and that's coming from a team that did not make the Gonzo playoffs. We'll get 'em next year, guys! CJB

I've never seen this zine; consequently I really have nothing to say about it, except that it sounds like it could be fun for football fans. Bruce has some free "starter packets" for you to take a look at, so if you want to try a sport other than United Soccer, why not give Bruce's effort a shot? I would guess that now is the correct time to join up, given that fall is when the real world starts playing football. GS

Batyville Gazette

Ralph Baty, 4551 Pauling Ave., San Diego, CA 92122

Free to players; open page; dot-matrix masters/xerox printed; 6 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 15; first: Oct. 1990; last: Nov. 1991 (#91)

Runs: None (?).

Openings: None (?); check with Ralph.

As far as I can determine, this zine is in hiatus. In the last issue of ZR I reported that it was running two Diplomacy games, and looking for players for several new games. In the Mensa Dip-SIG zine/newsletter *Diplomag* #104, Fred Davis reported that both games had ended; in #105, no mention was made of *Batyville Gazette* or Ralph. Ralph did not respond to my "repeated requests" for information. Soooo, I think the best bet is that Ralph never filled those games he had open, and upon conclusion of his two running games, decided to either fold or go into hiatus until receipt of another Mensa game from Fred Davis.

If anyone else has any information, please get in touch with me. If I have heard nothing from Ralph by the next issue of ZR, or from anybody else about this zine, I'll list it as a fold in ZR #21.

(On the other hand, it's possible that Ralph will be taking over a possibly orphaned Mensa game from *The Spindle*, which has now been AWOL for several months. Fred mentioned this in the most recent copy of *Diplomag*. Stay tuned for more details as they develop.) GS

Benzene

Mark D. Low, 5390 Broadway #2, Oakland, CA 94618

\$.80/issue to U.S., \$.90/issue to Canada, \$1.45/issue elsewhere; open page; xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: 2-6 weeks; circ.: 35 (approximately); first: Dec. 1981 (as subzine), July 1985 (as zine); last: Apr. 1992 (#87)

Runs: Scrabble (1) (open to kibitzers).

Openings: None.

This one ain't much in the way of gaming, but if you want some honestly interesting discussion on political views, this is a great place to read. It's got a fine letter col, so the political views you see aren't limited to the publisher. I recommend it for the read. JS

I continue to wish that Mark published more often, and I am less and less convinced that his schedule is any part of his charm. Now that Mark has dropped out of the work force, I hope he has time to devote to mailing pages of *Lewspeak* to his pleading audience. Among Dip editors, Mark has the most encyclopedic memory and one of the best senses for the logic of an argument, making his essays nearly always authoritative. If you argue here, you better be good at it! PG

Benzene is back...or so we're being told by Mark. After about a five-month lapse, *Benzene* was published this March, with Mark promising more time to devote to his zine this summer. After that, who knows, so maybe you should enjoy *Benzene* while you can. Just don't send a lot of money for an extended sub.

Editorials and letters on politics make up *Benzene*. Mark used to run games of Monopoly and Scrabble, but he seems to be wanting to get away from that and concentrate on that which interests him and his readers most. Mark's writings are very articulate and well-researched. If you're looking for a stimulating conversation-by-mail, get a sub and start writing. *Benzene's* March issue featured several pages of Mark's thoughts on the Democratic presidential candidates. The next issue should feature readers' responses and new topics.

Benzene isn't fancy. It is straightforward bi-column dot-matrix 9-point type—and lots of it. Hobbyists hung up on looks won't appreciate the job Mark does, but a lot of others will. *Benzene* is one of a dozen zines or so which features a significant letter column, and one of a few (at best) which runs no games—a dying breed of zine in our hobby today. I hope Mark can persevere. PR

It has been my view that fifty percent of all zines have the same fold policy: "All subscription money will be confiscated if and when the zine folds." At least Mark is up front about it. He is also up front about the fact that sometimes he takes some time off from publishing. At least he isn't running any games that are messed up by it.

I wholeheartedly disagree with Garret's assessment of *Benzene* (published in ZR #19). *Benzene* is only boring when he feels obliged to print mostly boring letters from subscribers. Under peer pressure from types like Garret, who absolutely *have* to see their own opinions in print, he prints issues with letters in them. Many of the letters are worth reading, but there are some which are not. When Mark refuses to edit those long discussions about insurance that subbers send in, then it gets boring. The best part of the zine is the random Lew babble that goes on for six or so pages before the letters even make their presence. While you may not enjoy reading what he has to say for himself, many of us do. We appreciate a page-long history lesson about the different cultures in the Horn of Africa or whatever else he writes. I have never been bored reading *Benzene*, unless I was reading Scrabble results or someone else's letters.

Does it not mean anything to you that his letter column is backed up as far as it is? It indicates to me that

many people have things to say about what he says. I find that to be the ultimate compliment: that his readers are willing to keep sending submissions.

Mark has just started publishing again and it has been a pleasure to start reading his zine again. JB

Gee, Jason, I must have rubbed a raw nerve or something! I would like to respond to just a few of your points: (1) Mark himself was responsible for most of the "boring" insurance discussion in *Benzene*; (2) Mark solicits letters (indeed, his "colophon" says *Benzene* "consists primarily of a dialogue between the editor and the readers") and as such bears some responsibility to publish them; (3) so if somebody tells you they're going to rob you up front, that makes it okay? (4) Mark can too be boring, all by his lonesome.

Happily, with Mark's recent abandonment of gainful employment, we should see more of *Benzene*, and less of the "boring" insurance discussions, which came out of Mark's previous job (he was a typesetter for an insurance industry organization, I think). I'm doing my bit to help out with the overload of "boring" letters by not writing any.

I think Jason has a point about where the appeal in *Benzene* is, at least for me. Mark is not at his best, I think, when responding to the readers. I really enjoyed issue #86, which had virtually *no* letters in it—it was just Mark doing his thing without having to argue with the readers. I have noticed that Mark is a skilled debater, which often means he *ignores* points he cannot dispute, and shifts the arguments to those areas where he can "win." This may fool some people, but it doesn't fool me—I'm pretty good at that tactic myself and I recognize it a mile away. I have always enjoyed Mark's little geography or history lessons, and given a choice I'd always prefer those over Mark demonstrating why he is the one true smart person left in the hobby.

Benzene has apparently returned from two back-to-back five-month hiatuses. Since the last issue of ZR there have been at least two issues of *Benzene*, perhaps more if Mark has produced issues that have come out after #87 that he did not send me. This seems to be an appropriate place to make "explicit" Mark's policy that all sub money will be confiscated in the event of a fold. As Jason points out, that often happens anyway when irresponsible publishers fold (and to tell you the truth, I think it's just Mark being Mark—I'd be willing to bet that in fact he *would* refund sub money!), but that "explicit policy" is the main reason I refuse to sub to *Benzene*—it's just plain wrong.

But if you're willing to take a (slight) risk, *Benzene* is one of the best reading zines in the hobby. Mark won't push your buttons each and every issue, but over time he is certain to both amaze and enrage you. He's definitely worth checking out. GS

Blade Wars

Chuck Lietz, 1825 SE 146th Court, Vancouver, WA 98684

\$8.00/season includes game fee, free to standbys; open page; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 12; first: Nov. 1989; last: never seen

Runs: United Hockey League.

Openings: Don't know.

An offshoot from the United Football hobby, this hockey league should be enjoyable for all those fans who know what "icing," the "penalty box," and "power play" mean. It is also enjoyable for those that don't know a thing about hockey. While the rules are a bit complicated (I still haven't figured them out completely), the players contending for the top spots (not me) are having a good time. There is a lot of press, but Chuck tends to run it all together, making it hard to determine where one statement ends and another begins. If Chuck could correct this problem and improve his turnaround time (seems to be getting worse and worse), this would be a great place to play. Besides, I can guarantee you a few wins next season since I didn't even know how many players there were on a hockey team until last summer. DMCC

United converted for Ice Hockey. Unfortunately, the conversion doesn't really work and you miss a lot playing this compared to a soccer league. Chuck has been attempting to fix the rules, but so far the basic construction difference between Ice Hockey and Soccer has proven incontrovertible. On the good side, the press is lively and Chuck's commentary is always humorous (if not always intentionally so). The zine has an up and down history as far as regularity goes. When it's coming, it's very prompt, but there are occasional hiatuses (hiati?) that make it seem a lot slower than it really is. KB

Chuck Lietz's zine takes United, a soccer management system, and applies it to (what's more natural when you live near the Canadian border)...hockey! The results are a complex but exciting rule system (and game). This is a fairly slow zine, though, so don't hold your breath waiting for results—the up side is that the league will be expanding soon. MPL

This is a United hockey league. This league was originally known as the Mist County Hockey Association and was run by Scott Hanson. The MCHA featured a simplistic and inferior set of rules and folded shortly after completing its first season. Chuck took over the league after the fold and, under his administration, the rules have been substantially changed and greatly improved. The emphasis in *BW* is on the tactical aspects of the game and there is an attempt to make the game system play as much like real hockey as is possible within the limits of a United-based system. Lately, *BW* has become somewhat irregular (I think the latest issue was sometime last year) but it is apparently still in business. SC

Having serious schedule problems (six issues in the past year). The most recent issue was #17 in November; I'm sure Chuck plans to continue. EB

Blade Wars isn't the prettiest looking United zine, and it's also not the fastest. It does, however, have quite a few things going for it. It is the only place to play United hockey. Those of us southerners who see snow only once a year and have never seen hockey have done just as well as those familiar with the sport, so there is no need to worry about inexperience with hockey.

Additionally, there are many "perks" which make *Blade Wars* a good place to play. Player statistics are printed in every zine, and every zine also includes a player roster. The league is about to expand (September?) and at that time there should be room for any new players. There are also some interesting rules additions slated for next season. JB

Claims to be an ice hockey league, but really United Soccer adapted to fit ice hockey terminology. Some of the

rules are a bit complex; published semi-regularly. JKG

I've never seen it. Chuck didn't bother to respond to my two requests for information last fall, and similarly ignored two requests this spring, so the information above is from Tom Nash's ZR #18 and getting moldier by the month. Maybe you'll have better luck if you ask about admittance to Chuck's league, but I sure wouldn't hold your breath. GS

Blind Ambition

Fred Hyatt, 60 Grandview Pl., Montclair, NJ 07043

Don't know price; don't know format; don't know how printed; don't know size; freq.: don't know; circ.: don't know; first: don't know; last: never seen

Runs: Don't know.

Openings: Don't know.

Blind Ambition is the collective name for three Fog of War Dip games being run. I'm in one of the games, but what I get every month are the results for just that game—no more. This consists of one laser-quality page of sightings and other info, and a map with color-coded units the player sees. That's it. My game has been running smoothly and Fred has done a competent job, so I have no complaints. This is all BA was meant to be. If you aren't playing, I assume you can't receive it, since you wouldn't have anything to see or follow! Watch for future game openings, though. PR

Fred's another sweetheart who figures no information is good information—I've neither seen this zine (or rather flyers, assuming Phil's information is correct), nor received *anything* from Fred despite "repeated requests" for information (twice last fall, and twice this spring). You think I mind? Naw...I'm just changing the name of this thing...to *Blind Register* (kind of appropriate when you think about it).

So anyway, if you want to try Fog of War Dip, which is a "hidden movement" variant that our very own Phil Reynolds invented, why not pester Fred and see what you get. Hey, it's worked for me, hasn't it?!? GS

Boast

Herb Barents, 17187 Wildemere, Detroit, MI 48221

\$12.00/17 issues; free to players; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 65; first: Sep. 1971; last: May 1992 (#335)

Runs: Diplomacy (6).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$15.00 for 1st game, \$10.00 subsequent games, includes sub).

Boast caters to speed-freaks and hobbyists interested in the latest gaming industry news. It has been published every three weeks, with a couple of insignificant exceptions, for the past 20 years. I think it's a safe bet that you'll be in and out of an average Dip game within two years if you are a *Boast* player. Few zines can make that claim. The games—all Regular Dip—only have a little press, but it isn't because Herb discourages it. I think it's

because the players are *so* focused on *playing* the game. While *Boast* isn't a social hothouse, it does have its hardcore supporters.

Herb isn't the best GM, but if you can tolerate general sloppiness, you won't mind much. Each game is on its own page with a fairly large map. A game's text is typed around this in a haphazard fashion, overlapping maps at times and laced with typos. Obviously, Herb doesn't pay much attention to form and appearance—he's just looking to get the job done fast.

The gaming news makes this a useful zine for non-players, though much of the info has to do with role-playing games, miniatures, and other things which will be of varying interest to members of the Dip hobby with narrower interests than Herb.

With over 300 issues to its credit, *Boast* is a zine that deserves attention. PR

Let's see, I've received eight issues of *Boast* since ZR #19 came out—and Herb must have forgotten about me for two other issues, which I don't seem to have received. Last time I reported that issue #325 was the last I'd seen; now, seven months later, fully *ten* issues of *Boast* have come and gone! That's really pretty incredible—I'm still on the "Bs," but I'm pretty sure that very few other zines come close to Herb's speed.

You might be concerned about playing Diplomacy in a zine with only three weeks between deadlines. Although Herb has really excellent turnaround (the zine is often postmarked the day after deadline), sometimes three or four days will pass before the issue gets mailed. This may not leave enough time for negotiations between the players—or may force players to resort to the telephone, either for their negotiations or for their orders, or both. Don't get me wrong, a one-to-four-day turnaround in a 4-weekly or monthly zine would be excellent, but given the present abysmal state of the U.S. Postal Service, I'll bet that three weeks is often too short a deadline interval to keep a well-fought game *strictly* postal. On the other hand if anyone can make this work, my guess is Herb Barents is the man for the job.

Herb recently raised his rates per game from \$12.00 to \$15.00 (though he cuts you a break on your second and subsequent games), meaning he joined the somewhat universal trend observed over this past winter toward higher prices in the hobby. Still, 15 clams is pretty cheap for an "all expenses paid" game—at this point you can drop \$50 for a game in the most expensive zine in the hobby, when all costs are considered.

Herb's zine almost seems to exist in a "vacuum." It is decidedly *not* a "fannish" zine, whatever the heck that means. Herb's "gimmick" is writing about the gaming industry. In each and every issue he discusses *all* the latest releases—I assume that he owns a hobby store or in some other way is involved with the industry as he sure sees an incredible amount of stuff. Herb's writing "style" can be a bit impenetrable, which is too bad; with better writing most of us would probably find what he has to say a little more interesting. Just about every new game is described as "really good, just really excellent quality all around," etc., etc.—after a while my eyes start to glaze over and I flip the page.

Boast has been accused of being "ugly" and "sloppy." Actually, I think it's neither. The maps are quite large and presumably useful to players, and the adjudications are no worse than many other zines—indeed, each unit is list-

ed on a separate line rather than "run-in," which should make figuring out what happened easier than in some zines. The spelling is pretty bad, yes, but unless you're a gaming industry nutcase, you're here to play games. My bet is you're having a pretty good time.

The hobby was founded, nurtured, and sustained on zines like *Boast*. It is on the solid bedrock foundation of zines like *Boast* that it continues to the present day. If you want to try playing in a real "hobby classic," a veteran of 20 years of postal play, then ask Herb for a sample and maybe sign up for a game. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW

Boris the Spider

Paul Bolduc, 203 Devon Ct, Ft Walton Beach, FL 32547-3110

\$6.00 for 12 issues via USPS; \$1.00 per 12 issues via E-mail; open page; dot matrix; 8 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: around 20; first: Mar. 1985; last: May 1992 (Vol. 4, #2)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Kremlin (1), Magic Realm (1), 1830 (2)

Openings: Diplomacy, 1835, Gunslinger (all free)

I've recently expanded *Boris* from a single Dip game 'zine. The page count and circulation have not yet stabilized. The issue that I sent you is only the second in the new series PB

A very promising new zine which is running Dip and a variety of other games. Paul is encouraging press in his games and each game has a section for white, grey, and black press. Worth a look if you'd like to try games such as Kremlin, Gunslinger, Magic Realm, etc. SC

Here I am trying to think of something to say about this new zine, but all I've got going through my brain is The Who singing "Boris the Spider." An occupational hazard, I guess.

This is an interesting experiment. About half of Paul's subscribers are getting the thing through various E-mail services (GEnie, Internet, CompuServe, etc.), while the rest use the good old slo-poke U.S. Mails. My guess is that the proportion of "snail mail" subbers will increase as the zine gains subbers, if only because E-mail hasn't really hit full force yet (another year or two, maybe), but I could be wrong. At any rate, if you're a "snail mail" subber you can expect to pay an average price of \$12.00 for a full game of Dip—a little less than the going rate these days, it seems.

Paul is running quite a variety of games already—either he was planning this zine for a while now, lining up players behind our backs as it were, or he has had tremendous luck filling his games right away. Many new publishers have to suffer through a slow start, sometimes going through two or three issues before their first game fills. But not this one—it's off and running at top speed with no looking back.

There are still some openings, but if the speed with which the initial games filled is any indication, these openings will not be around for very long. Paul is clearly aware of the danger of unchecked growth (a good thing, all things considered!), and once these openings

fill, that will be it until some games end or priorities get switched around. (Vacations? Paying job? Who needs 'em...I'll just open a couple more Dip games!) So if you want to play here, and you should (from the look of things Paul is a conscientious and determined GM, for instance he's willing to make collect calls in order to avoid NMRs), you'd better get on the stick and request those samples *today* (if not yesterday). GS

Buckeye Rail Gazette

Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017

Free (sub donations encouraged; \$5.00 gamestart donation requested); open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 8-10 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 25-30; first: Feb. 1990; last: May 1992 (#21)

Runs: Railway Rivals (13).

Openings: Opening new games very soon (June 1992); standby positions sometimes available.

Buckeye Rail Gazette is a zine dedicated to the pursuit of Railway Rivals and is the semi-official zine of Rostherne Games (publisher of RR) in the U.S. A standard issue includes a few pages of chat and news with the rest containing game reports.

Due to the volume, the games are split. Approximately half of the games will appear in any given issue. The zine has run much more smoothly since the last ZR averaging about one issue per month or so. A number of games are about to finish. My plan is to have BRG down to about 6-8 games running on 3-week deadlines by Fall '92. I will have a new game opening or two this summer. New blood (even if you've never played RR before) is encouraged and will be given preferential treatment. KH

My definition of "warehouse" is a zine that holds little or no interest if you're not playing in a game. This is a warehouse zine, and in dividing the games between this and *The Coach Express* Ken helped ease his own load by extending deadlines—not a step forward. PG

After a lengthy disappearing act over last summer, BRG has gotten back to a regular publishing schedule. This is the best looking of all the Railway Rivals zines and is currently carrying more games than any other RR zine (although Ken is trying to cut down to a more manageable number). Since Ken is also the official Rostherne Games representative in the U.S. (Rostherne is the publisher of RR), BRG is a good place to pick up the latest news on RR and other Rostherne products (not that there's been much RR news lately, but when there ever is any, BRG is the place to read about it first). The zine has a warehousey feel, but there is always a page or two of game news and other tidbits. Ken is a good and improving postal GM. SC

Ken is slow, but he is starting to learn how to GM RR games. JKG

I've only seen three issues of this zine since the last ZR, but, according to the issue numbers, Ken has put out seven issues in as many months. In other words he's about a week off his desired 3-week schedule. Obviously that's not too shabby, but note that because generally only half the games run in each issue, this often means two months separate turns in your games. Railway Rivals,

which can take as short a time as nine or ten months in a prompt zine like *ark* could drag on for two years here.

That said, in the latest issue of *BRG* all the games had the same June 5 deadline. I don't think Ken is going to try to do them all at once, this is probably just a coincidence.

Physically, *BRG*, like *Coach Express* is very nicely done. The layout is clear and open, with ample white space. I've never played here so I obviously cannot speak from experience about Ken's GMing, but he seems to have a pretty good reputation. There is little in the way of reading material, but the point of the zine is to run *Railway Rivals*, period.

The sole drawback may be the "speed thing." Ken seems to know that this stems from *too many games*, but judging from his Pubber Info Sheet he seems unwilling to do what needs to be done and actually cut back by not filling new ones when current games wrap up. Soooo, if you want to try some *Railway Rivals*, played relatively slowly, give it a shot. I bet you'll have a good time. GS

The Canadian Diplomat

Robert Acheson, #1510-10883 Saskatchewan Drive, Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T6E 4S6

\$1.00/issue; open page; xerox printed; 40-50 pages; freq.: quarterly; circ.: 100; first: Sep. 1987; last: Feb. 1992 (#37)

Runs: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Anarchy, Stonehenge, Colonia, Cline-9, Youngstown, Sea of Despair.

Openings: Diplomacy (\$4.00), Gunboat (\$4.00), Anarchy (\$1.00), Stonehenge (\$2.00), Cline-9 (\$2.00), African Dip (\$2.00).

TCD is a huge, sprawling 'zine with loads of games, fun-looking variants, and great filler. It's slow, so the games proceed at a leisurely pace. There isn't much of a letter column, possibly on account of the long turn-around. Issues tend to lose their urgency over time. It is fun, though, to read sports predictions as the playoff races are winding down. It's only a dollar an issue. I don't know how he does it at such a low price, but a lot of Dippers are glad he does, including me. RL

Bob Acheson produces a *big* zine. Bob Acheson also produces a relatively inexpensive zine. Bob Acheson also produces a zine where you can always find a gamestart. Coincidentally, they are all the same zine. At one dollar, issue #37's 44 pages is priced at less than 2-1/2¢ per page. Despite all of this, the thing that comes up most when *The Canadian Diplomat* is mentioned is the fact that there is usually a long time between issues. This may help to explain why the gamestarts haven't been filling as rapidly and why new starts haven't kept up with the number of games completed. Still, I think it is a fairly good place to play. Bob is a good, if not spectacular GM (and a better player) and the long period between issues means that there is plenty of time for negotiations. Still if you want rapid turnaround, maps, and all the rest, *The Canadian Diplomat* can be frustrating. The letter column has gotten awful sparse in the past little while, although at one time it used to be quite healthy. This may be a side effect of not publishing as swiftly as others. Bob does publish articles taken from newspapers

as well as cartoons that catch his eye. In the past he used to run brief absurd statements made by absurd celebrities. I miss those. BMcK

Bob Acheson's mammoth zine is in a class all by itself. Extremely lengthy delays between moves (like 4-5 months!) would seem to make this zine a players' nightmare; and yet there are lots of players filling up Bob's continual game openings. The answer to this is that the GM and players have an understanding, and expectation that the games will be over sometime after the year 2000. No one complains, because they know the deal going in. At any rate, the voluminous reading material makes this zine worth getting. In addition, the price of \$1.00 per issue is a bargain for what you get. If you are swamped with too many games, sign up for one in *TCD* anyway. If you are chomping at the bit to start a new game, don't do it here. DH

At one time this used to be the world's biggest zine. But no more (apparently); *Maniac's Paradise* has been putting out "whopping" issues lately, while the last issue of *TCD* weighed in at a relatively puny 42 pages (!). However, with the possible exception of *Vertigo*, it still remains one of the very *slowest* zines around.

You may take this as your official warning: Bob puts this thing out no faster than quarterly—just two issues have been produced since the last issue of *ZR*. If you're not bothered by the prospect of a five-year game, then by all means check it out. Bob has continual openings, so you'll always be able to find a game. While \$1.00 is pretty cheap for all the paper you get, an average game could end up costing around \$24.00—there *are* cheaper places to play. There is a fair amount of reading material in the zine, but much of the stuff that Bob is responsible for is cut out of newspapers and the like—there seems to be little in the way of original writing from the publisher. This lack is remedied, somewhat, by including a subzine or two.

I personally cannot understand the appeal of this zine. Even in speedy zines, Dip games take way too long as it is, and good, *well-fought* Dip games can last far into a second (or even a third!) decade. One of the best games going in *Upstart* has made it to 1917—35 turns! Start a game like that one here, and David Hood's slightly wry statement about games lasting till the year 2000 suddenly won't seem so funny anymore.

I guess I just don't get it. The "packaging" and "chrome" that is wrapped around these incredibly slow games just doesn't seem all that special to me, and not worth the expense or the molasses-like speed. But there seems to be plenty of people who think this zine is just dandy—different strokes and all that, I guess. Who knows, maybe this is the one is for you. Why not request a sample and see for yourself? GS

Canyon

Sean J. Brown, 520 South Verde Street Apt K, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

\$.75/issue; digest; laser masters/xerox printed; 20-24 pages; freq.: 5-6 weeks; circ.: N/A; first Sep. 1991; last: Feb. 1992 (#5)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat (both free).

Sean runs a pretty good game with neat little maps. His publication is as neat as his maps. Well put together. For comic relief he offers a subzine by Jonas Johnson. The irreverence here keeps things interesting for me. The small but vocal letter column heats things up pretty good too. JS

The Bad Boys are reincarnated as less smart, less sarcastic, and less hyperactive college students. This zine has the potential for a new clique, but has yet to really take off. These guys are too devoted to nothing yet! If they want to *really* take college, comic books, graveyard shifts, and beer seriously, they could be a great source of new blood in the hobby.

Sean and Co. talk about giving *Upstart* a run for its money, but friends, *Upstart* is spell-checked; *Upstart* is about real life; *Upstart* has Don Williams. Folks, *Canyon* is no *Upstart* (at least, not with a capital "u"). PG

Canyon is a good zine that could be in trouble. After five issues published every 4-5 weeks, this promising new zine has been MIA for three months. I don't want to write an obituary for a zine that isn't officially dead yet, but if the worst proves true, *Canyon* might have been a combined case of doing too much too soon, and bad timing. Sean quickly took on half a dozen games while still in college, and I understand very well how that situation can spell disaster. I hate to say it—and I hope I'm proven wrong—but I saw it coming.

When published, *Canyon* features regular and Gunboat Dip games (including a couple of orphans); the subzine "Sorcerers and Strategists" (by Jonas Johnson) which is responsible for the letter column, drinking games, and other ramblings; Greg Doyle's music review column; informative pieces on many Arizona locales; and more. Probably the best thing about *Canyon* is its sense of humor, best illustrated by the "revelation" that Sean Brown doesn't really exist, but is a persona created by Jonas Johnson and John Kakritz to wreak hobby havoc. (I got a *really* good laugh out of this! I began wishing it was true after hearing and reading how some people had reacted! Some hobbyists need to lighten up in a major way!)

Sean is a decent GM, but sometimes he's a little careless, like replacing a player but forgetting to mention why (after a turn has gone by, no less). His formatting style is somewhat haphazard, too. Articles start on one page, continue for a bit on another, and then another... Obviously Sean & Co. don't have a lot of the hang-ups that other hobbyists have. They're just here to have a good time. If you liked Jesse Severe's *When the Lights Went Out*... a couple of years ago, you'll get a kick out of *Canyon*—if it's ever published again. PR

This one does have the smell of *Diplomacy Downs*, doesn't it? The similarities are quite striking. In five quick issues, Sean opened up no less than six games, quickly plumping up his digest zine to its intended ultimate size of 24 pages. Then he goes and opens his own comic store business; it's a rousing success almost immediately. Finally, to top it all off, he buys a house (or condo, I'm not sure which). With all this it's no particular wonder that the last issue we've seen of this thing came out over three months ago.

On the other hand, Sean and subzine editor Jonas are now (if only temporarily) out of school, so they'll have a few months off to figure out what to do with this thing. I suggest that publishing something, *anything*, is

a place to start. The last time I talked to Sean was about a month ago—at that time he was still hoping to have an issue out in a couple of weeks. Obviously that didn't happen, but I don't think these guys have given up yet. I sure hope they haven't, they had a really fine zine going and it would be a damn shame if it folded now.

(If they do come back and keep on opening games, you could expect to pay \$15.00 for a game of Diplomacy of "average" length—just a touch below the average cost for the hobby.)

I'm willing to chalk all this delay up to a lot of craziness attended by the move and the utter distraction of house-hunting (some of which had been described in earlier issues of *Canyon*). I remain optimistic that they'll pull out of this, but also aware that many zines do end up folding before they reach the end of their first "decade." Let's keep our fingers crossed.

[Very, very late word: Just talked to Sean on the phone and he told me he just dropped *Canyon* #6 in the mail; those of you who sub to that zine will probably have received it a few days before you get this. Apparently no games are in it, just them touching base with their subscribers to let them know they're still out there. Sean said that he's still living out of boxes, so the move craziness isn't over yet, although he *did* manage to get the computer up and running...

[At any rate, while we may not be out of the dark yet with this one, it's very good to hear that something's happening. Hope you make it, Sean...] GS

Carolina Command and Commentary

Michael Lowrey, 3005 Kenninghall Court, Charlotte, NC 28269

\$1.00/issue; digest, with subzine "DIDOES" open face; laser masters/xerox printed; 20 digest pages (CCC), 2 open face pages ("DIDOES"); freq.: monthly; circ.: 70; first: Oct. 1987; last: Sep. 1991 (#42)
Runs: Diplomacy (6), Gunboat (1), Viking Dip II (1), Snowball Fighting (1).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00), International Regular Diplomacy (free), No-Press Gunboat (\$5.00). Coming soon: Smallish Dip variant, Dune, Destroyer Captain (fees on these 3 to be decided); Snowball Fighting (free).

Back many eons ago, David Hood had a zen concept for true hobby happiness. This became CCC and involves many rituals: 1) The playing of Diplomacy and its variants; 2) The playing of some other games to add fiber; 3) The use of the term "y'all" for little apparent reason; 4) The worship of David Hood for no apparent reason; 5) The publishing and discussion of politics and international relations material; 6) Much hobby news and such for absolutely no apparent reason; 7) There is no seventh ritual; 8) The reading of "DIDOES," Steve Moore's witty satirical fake-picture subzine. So it is and so it shall be. MPL

A very good zine. This is how a game report should be laid out. The only objection is that with Mike's dislike of press, there is very little. What there is is usual-y crap. This zine attracts a lot of Libertarians, who,

while having a wonderful philosophy, don't understand how life works. But they can usually be ignored if you concentrate on the articles. This is a perfect counter to *Upstart*. Receiving the two should help keep any reader on an even keel. DMcC

When will these guys figure out that what we really want is twelve pages of "Statecraft Shorts"? PG

I used to publish this zine, which Mike Lowrey now does much better. It is essentially a games rag with some political discussion, but since Garret and Mike get along so well I'll let Garret review this one. DH

So send me some samples, guys, how the hell am I supposed to review something I haven't seen in about eight months?!? (I presume Mike is still pubbing this thing, having no evidence that suggests otherwise.)

Oh, just in case you were wondering about this one, Cal White has issued a proclamation that Mike Lowrey is *not* a TurboPhreak and CCC is *not* a TurboPhreak zine. Whew! I was gettin' kinda nervous there! GS

Cheesecake

Andy Lischett, 2402 Ridgeland Ave., Berwyn, IL 60402

Free to players and standbys, generally unavailable otherwise; open page; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 60; first: Mar. 1979; last: Apr. 1992 (#135)

Runs: Diplomacy (9).

Openings: None.

No. AL

Andy is a good GM. Solid, predictable, accurate. And the page or two that's filled with stuff other than game reports is consistently fun. But some credit has to be given to the players (excluding yours truly). They take the game seriously, negotiating and playing to win. Along the way they manage to pound out a game or two with a good press war. PG

Cheesecake has the reputation of being a well-GMed and reliable warehouse zine—but it's more than that. True, the games are the primary focus—there's no mistaking that—but each issue does contain a page or two of Andy's thoughts on this and that, and the occasional strategy reprint or other feature. *Cheesecake* is published every 4–5 weeks, but because it is so regular it seems like a shorter span.

You'll find a lot of well-known veterans playing regular Dip in *Cheesecake*. You'd think this would make for a lot of great press games, but the truth is only a few games qualify as such. This might be due in a small way to the fact that Andy rarely interjects with his own press—a common practice by many other GMs. Of course Andy does a fine job with adjudication. He does not publish maps, however. *Cheesecake* is strictly text 95 percent of the time. Still, Andy keeps being voted as one of the best GMs around, so he is doing something right.

Cheesecake is a pleasant zine in which to play. If you're looking for a no-fuss game, this is the zine to get. Game openings come and fill up quickly, so play close attention. PR

Cheesecake is fairly dependable. The standard deadline interval is five weeks, although occasionally an

extra week is thrown in (for instance during the Christmas/New Years period this winter). I've received five issues of *Cheesecake* since the last issue of ZR came out, and I'll probably just miss getting a sixth, due to arrive here right at the start of June (and this is one zine that you can change your calendar by).

Turnaround is superb. Andy generally gets it in the mail a couple of days after the deadline. Granted there are no maps, letter columns, or other extraneous time sponges, but still two days to get nine games adjudicated, laid out, printed, collated, and out the door is pretty good. I'll bet that players negotiate with ease through the USPS—in fact they can probably send and receive several rounds of letters in the course of one turn.

For such a "warehouse"-looking zine, there is a surprising amount of press in many of the games. I attribute this mostly to the regularity of the zine, which keeps interest and excitement high, but also to the quality of the players; many hobby stalwarts play here.

Andy is one of the most respected GMs in the history of postal Diplomacy. He always scores high in the Runestone GM poll, and was ranked "first" two consecutive years back in the late 80s. So what's holding you back from playing a game here? Well, um, there are just no games available at this point. I don't know when Andy will have more openings, but my guess is sometime before the next ZR comes out. If you want to play here my advice would be to offer to standby—all GMs can use standbys—this way you'll be ready when the inevitable games open up.

As far as the cost of playing out an "average" game, I'm at a bit of a loss. As Andy had no openings, he didn't put down anything about gamefees, but note that under "sub price" he lists it as free to players. There was nothing in ZR #19, either. In Nash's last issue of ZR (#18) game openings are advertised at \$.50 (!), and the zine is still free to players. This sure sounds like a typo—I mean 50 cents for a life-of-position sub? Why bother?!? No mention of gamefee in ZR #16 (#17 was the "fake" issue), and if we go back to #15, Nash states pretty unequivocally that the thing is free all-round—no gamefees, no sub fees. Two of Ken Peel's ZR issues (#14 and #13) make no mention of game/sub fees, and if we go all the way back to Simon Billenness' issue #6 (the one I got in 1986 when I joined the hobby)—still no mention of gamefees or sub rates!

At the risk of making an error, I'll bet that games are free, and you do get it for as long as your game is running. Maybe Nash's \$.50 is a typo, and games are really \$5.00, but who knows. No matter what, this thing is one of the deals of the century! The problem will be getting your foot in the door... GS

The Coach Express

Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017

Free (but sub donations encouraged; \$5.00 per gamestart requested); open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 4–6 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 10–15; first: Sep. 1991; last: Apr. 1992 (#7)

Runs: Bus Boss (7).

Openings: None presently; new games will start in Fall '92.

The Coach Express is a spin-off zine from *Buckeye Rail Gazette* and is dedicated to the play of *Bus Boss*, a new game from the designer of *Railway Rivals*. *TCE* is strictly a warehouse zine, usually containing only game reports. Occasionally, game-related chat (rules questions, etc.) will appear.

Games will be run on strict 2-3 week deadlines. So far, I've been able to publish this about once a month. All games are running smoothly and most should be completed by the end of the year. Some new games will open once the early games have run to completion. KH

This is a *Bus Boss* zine which looks a lot like Ken's *RR* zine, *Buckeye Rail Gazette* (*Bus Boss* is a variant of *Railway Rivals* and is published by Rostherne Games, as is *RR*). *Coach Express* is purely a warehouse publication with little or no non-game material. It is very similar to *BRG* in appearance. SC

Scott's statement pretty much sums this one up. Its similarity to *BRG* is no accident; it essentially sprang from that zine. There is nothing here but games. Ken has managed to pump out six issues of this thing since the fall, and for all I know may have gotten a seventh out by now—issue #7 had a May 1st deadline. So he's about a week slower than his 3-week desired schedule, not too bad considering that unlike *BRG*, all the *Bus Boss* games are running together in this zine (i.e., the games are going about twice as fast). Funny, I always thought trains went faster than busses... GS

Comrades In Arms

Tom Swlder, 75 Maple Ave Apt A, Collingswood, NJ 08108

\$1.00/issue; open page/3-hole punched; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 43; first: Aug. 1986; last: May 1992 (#45)

Runs: *Final Conflict* (2), *Dune* (1), *Northern Ireland Dip* (1).

Openings: *Diplowinn*, *Blood & Iron*, *Contretemps* (all free!).

CIA makes a nice stocking stuffer. Unless you're a *Diplomacy*-only snob, or a *United* deadhead, you'll probably enjoy the mix of games and articles. If Tom Nash signed up for my recent *Final Conflict* game during his exodus, it puts it right up there with *Vertigo*. BTW: Brad and I plan on outlasting *Graustark*, so get in on the ground floor while you can and be "in" with the *New Order East Coast Clique*. TS

Anything but *Regular Dip*. Tom is games.

Tom will be Tom...his zine will be different, yet still conform to hobby norms. He likes to experiment and dick around with graphics stuff and his ink jet printer. Therefore, he puts out a pretty xny. But it will be within the hobby standards, fulfilling his need to conform differently.

How About Something Else?

Had enough of *Regular Diplomacy*? Thinking about trying something different? You've got a lot of choices! *Gunboat* is always a popular choice (see the "sidebar" on that *Diplomacy* variant). *Railway Rivals* and *United Soccer* leagues represent two distinct subhobbies that nonetheless maintain close ties to the *Diplomacy* hobby that to some extent they grew out of (see the "sidebars" for each of those games). But as a brief glance through these pages will reveal, there is a plethora of other games played in this postal gaming hobby.

The *Diplomacy* game system has proven to be quite adaptable. Almost one thousand so-called "variants" of the basic game have been designed since the 1960s, by almost as many different people. Lee Kendter, Jr., the current *North American Zine Bank* custodian (see "Hobby Services" at the end of this issue) has rules and maps for most of these variants on file and is happy to provide them to you at cost. Only a small fraction of these variants are in play in the hobby at any one time, but that's still quite a few different games!

Some variants are more "variable" than others. Some use the basic board but attach different rules, while some use the basic rules, but change the board in some way, or give you an entirely new board to fight over! Some decrease the number of players down to as few as two, while some increase the number of players to 15 or more! (The "Anarchy" variant can be played with as many as 34 players—one for each center on the board!)

Variants are definitely worth checking out. Even though *Diplomacy* is a tremendous game, and the six

other players provide a different experience each time you play, after a while you may want to try something a little bit new. At that point, it's time to look for a variant. Luckily, you won't have to look very far, since most zines in the hobby seem to run at least one variant (not counting *Gunboat*), and some run *only* variants. Happy hunting!

What if you don't want to play *Dip* (or its variants) at all? No problem! If you're willing to dig a little you can find a number of other commercial multi-player games offered for play. None of these games seem to have the staying power of *Diplomacy*, since in many ways their game systems are not as perfectly suited to postal play as our beloved *Dip*. In particular, games requiring a number of different "phases" or substantial amounts of player interaction are ill-suited to postal play. That doesn't mean that people don't try, but it usually means the hobby goes through a "craze" with many zines offering starts in a particular game, which then peters out somewhat. Die-hard publishers, however, will do their best to keep their favorite non-*Diplomacy* game alive. In my six years in the hobby I've see a *Titan* craze, a *Kremlin* craze, small crazes for *Civilization*, *Britannia*, and *Machiavelli*, plus any number of different "crazelets." Right now I would guess that the "hot non-*Dip* games" include *Snowball Fighting*, *1830/35*, and, if I might be so bold, *Merchant of Venus*. (Actually, that's just wishful thinking on my part—I've been beating the *Merchant of Venus* gong for a couple of years now!)

And if you can't find a game you'd like to play you can do two things. One is to bug your favorite GM into running a section of it; the other is to start your own zine or flyer and run one yourself! GS

A lot of subzines (oh, excuse me! subxyxyns!) are housed here: there's a "View from Japan," Mark Strouthes' "Reginald Maudling's Elbow" (Reginald Maudling was some stupid Brit), Jack McHugh's page, and my "Standard Deviation," the variant (and nicer) part of *Absolute!*

Tom publishes his zine when he gets around to it. It will either speed up to a regular schedule this summer, or it may fold. Tom will be Tom. PDK

For a while, *CIA* was the best variant zine around, with a wide selection of different games to play and an editor, Tom Swider, committed to putting out the zine in a timely way. Now, though, *CIA* has slowed down somewhat and has lost some of its sparkle. The zine is still probably a good place to see neat variants, but I don't think it is the superstar it was about two years ago. There is some reading material that is pretty good here and there, particularly about new games on the market and so forth. Right now I would give Tom a little more time to get back on a regular schedule before sending off for a sample. DH

Tom is perpetually on the edge of breaking out of his speed up/slow down cycle, but never quite seems to make it. Last fall I suggested that a "leisurely" cruise was likely with *CIA*. Tom bristled at this, and in a postcard to me suggested that I include information with each zine's writeup saying how many issues of the zine I've received since the last issue of *ZR*. I thought this was a great idea, and when Eric Brosius made essentially the same suggestion, I decided to institute this idea in this issue. Those of you who've gotten this far have probably noticed that I've been inserting that sort of information where appropriate. Therefore—I've received four issues of *CIA* since the last *ZR*, which means Tom publishes on more of a seven week deadline interval than his stated five weeks—which, of course, is exactly what I said in *ZR* #19! But I also said at that time, if the players don't mind, who cares. And I suspect that the players here *don't* mind—this has the feel of a basically good zine.

CIA runs some interesting variants. There is usually a fair amount of reading material too—some little short bits by Tom himself, and some longer pieces by his subzine editors. The zine is attractively laid out, and has gotten better, I think, over the last half a year or so.

The price of a buck an issue is about average these days—despite the lack of any game fees you can still find cheaper places to play, but you can definitely find more expensive places too—an average-length game of *Diplomacy* would cost you \$20.00. Tom provides maps for all his games, a thoughtful touch for variant players.

There's one thing I *don't* particularly like about *CIA* and that's Tom's policy that after issue #50 he will no longer provide sub refunds in the event of a fold. I *don't* like this here any more than I like it in Mark Lew's *Benzene*. I fail to understand why such a "policy" is necessary. Yes, many publishers just fall apart when they fold, but to *plan* to have a messy, ugly fold? What's the deal?

So if you don't mind a slightly slow playing experience, and also don't mind Tom's plan to abscond with all the funds when he (inevitably) folds, by all means ask him for a sample and maybe give one of his variant gamestarts a try. Just don't say I didn't warn you.

[Last minute note: *CIA* #45 just arrived here on May 23rd, meaning Tom managed to put out *five* issues since the last *ZR* was published, and is therefore publishing at more of a six-week pace than seven weeks.] GS

Concordia

Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown, PA 19401-3139

\$.45/issue; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: 6-7 weeks; circ.: don't know; first: May 1990; last: Apr. 1992 (#17)

Runs: *Diplomacy* (4), *No-Press Gunboat* (2), *Diplomacy Bourse* (1).

Openings: None (but check with Tom).

Tom Mainardi runs a tight zine. The biggest attraction is his *No-Press Gunboat Dip*. That is the way *Dip* should be played. PDK

Tom Mainardi's zine is about a year and a half old, and has gotten a reputation for timeliness and GM skill. He is running just *Dip* and *Gunboat*, along with a *Bourse* game tied to one of the regular *Dip* games. (Alright, so what that socialist Garret is kicking my capitalist ass in that game—it's probably some government conspiracy or something.) Tom has been looking for new players recently, so if you want to play *Dip* or *Gunboat*, drop him a line. The zine has little to offer the non-player, though, so if you want a reading or hobby news-type zine, then go elsewhere. DH

Concordia is essentially a warehouse zine that features half a dozen games (primarily *Dip* and *Gunboat Dip*), a bit of chat, and some pasted-up cartoons. Clearly, people get this zine to play or to enjoy Tom's remarks on this-or-that in the hobby. Tom is a hobby longtimer and he lets you know it, often relating what the hobby was like a decade ago. Other hobby veterans frequent the zine, too.

Tom puts together a nice-looking zine, though it's not flashy. Each game has its own computer-generated map, with moderate amounts of press spilling over from page to page. Tom adds his own occasional pieces of press, usually humorous one-liners. Lately, *Concordia* has been published every six weeks, if not longer. However, it is very regular and, seemingly, dependable. Just be a little patient in between issues.

Several months ago Tom gave me the impression that he would run another game of *Bourse* once the current one ends (along with some other games, perhaps), so keep an eye on *Concordia* if you're interested. PR

Tom never bothered to return my "Pubber Info Sheet," so the information above is gathered from his pages. I don't think there are any game openings, but maybe if you bother him he might consider it. Some of the current games seem to be winding down.

Tom has a bit of a slowness problem. He's fairly consistent, but, unfortunately, consistently late. Although his info sheet for last fall's issue of *ZR* claimed a five-week interval, he's been averaging more like seven weeks, with one nine or ten week lapse from December to February. (He's produced a total of four issues since the last *ZR*.) This sort of schedule is not "ideal" since you never know if it's the mail that screwed up, or Tom just being late again. For me this problem has been compounded because the mail actually *did* screw up once (in fact, for some reason, mail from the Norristown area takes far longer to get to Brooklyn than from just about anywhere else—I've had stuff arrive quicker from Germany!).

That said, I like *Concordia* a lot. I've definitely enjoyed playing in the Bourse game, and have laid in a good stock of champagne to celebrate my imminent victory over any number of capitalist swine-dogs who thought *they* knew how the free market worked. Ha! I say, and Ha! I say again! Of course the Bourse is not yet over and things are starting to close up; stay tuned.

Tom's product is definitely attractive and easy to use. There's not a whole lot of reading matter here, but Tom throws in the odd cartoon for filler. Unless you want to play, there is probably not too much reason to get this one. But if you do want to play, an average game will cost you just \$9.00, a really good deal. On the other hand it could take three years to finish, so... GS

The Continual Crisis (continued)

Tony Dousette, 530 A Bruton Bonds, Richardson, TX 75081

price variable (if I'm delirious, it's free. If I'm in a reasonably good mood, all I ask is a SASE. If you wish to subscribe, I suppose about \$6.00 a year is reasonable; I'm also willing to trade); open page; dot matrix originals/xerox printed; 4-6 pages; freq.: occasionally every 5 weeks, but usually later; circ.: 10; first: June 1988; last: Apr. 1992 (#31)

Runs: Diplomacy (1).

Openings: None.

Devoted to my ravings on any subject that captures my interest. So far I've entertained myself with my own political theories and opinions re: health care, and I hope I haven't bored my readers to any great extent. I see myself as a Paleo-Libertarian (don't ask me to define it; it just has such a nice ring that I gotta be one!) and, if I build up my courage a bit, I may take on the Politically Correct. Who knows? Maybe I'll rename this flyer "As Politically Incorrect as I Wanna Be..." with apologies, of course to 2 Live Crew. TD

Well...if he *wants* to be incorrect, I suppose that's his privilege. Luckily he'll be able to find plenty of company in this hobby...

Tony runs one Mensa Diplomacy-SIG game, so he's part of the whole Mensa "sub-hobby" (see *Diplomag*). As far as I know this is the second Mensa game that he's run, and probably his second postal game ever. Five issues of the zine have appeared since the last issue of ZR—nothing spectacular in the speed category (considering it's just one game), but certainly adequate.

Over the last six or eight months, *TCC(c)* has gone through at least three distinct formats; the one Tony seems to have finally settled on (for now) is apparently produced using Word for Windows on his ultra-high speed 50 Megahertz 486 system. (I'd be willing to drool, but this is a Mac I'm typing on, after all.) The zine is nicely put together, with ample white space and clear adjudications; a map is provided. It's presently running just one game of Diplomacy, and has no openings, but it somehow transcends being a simple game flyer—Tony included almost two pages of "ramblings" in the last issue, ranging from discussions about his new computer, to the impact of an H. Ross Perot candidacy.

He's devoting a considerable amount of time, energy,

and space to this one game. For instance issue #31 had a full-page table showing every S.C. center and who's owned it in each year, plus on the last page was a pretty fancy 3-D bar graph showing who's doing the best. Obviously he's completely enjoying his new toy!

Tony seems to have no interest in starting up another game. While it would appear that he's got the time to burn, maybe he just doesn't want to. In a hobby full of people who take on way more than they can realistically handle (ahem), perhaps he's found the true path to hobby happiness and enlightenment. Still, why not write him and bug him about opening up another game? GS

Costaguana

Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117

Free; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 21; first: Apr. 1965; last: Apr. 1992 (#218)

Runs: Diplomacy (3), Gunboat (2).

Openings: None; see below.

Costa has been around forever. It had its great days, and the old flame still flickers at times, but in the main it need not be amongst your top priorities. In any event, *Costa* now confines itself to finishing up games orphaned elsewhere; it does not start new games nor accept subs or trades. The Golden Age is done, and you missed it. For five bucks I'll send you a sympathy card... CVM

Conrad is constitutionally unable to *not* publish. He is *not* "running down to a fold." Rather, he has been *trying* not to publish. He's been doing so rather successfully for two or three years now; he's only putting out three hobby publications right now.

His problem is aggravated by the fact that he is more interesting when he types out an address list than I am on my best day! This means anything he publishes tends to have 100 subbers at the drop of a hat. In a way, your request for info for ZR is like asking an alcoholic if he wants a drink.

Playing in one of Conrad's games is a unique experience. You very quickly get to feeling the publisher is an old friend. It's not to be missed. However, novices should probably avoid these games, since there can be substantial delays while Conrad is trying not to publish. Once you've gotten to the point where you're happy to wait, sign up. EB

A good place to practice being nice. With no subfee, Conrad only sends it to people he feels "have a need," but usually if you ask (politely) you can be included. *Costaguana* has almost died lots of times and has had more formats than Word Perfect. Sometimes you read Conrad and wonder why he wasted the ink; sometimes he can be truly profound. BE

Costaguana seems to be on the rebound. My impression and recollection is that Conrad was winding matters down a short time ago, perhaps due to real-life constraints. However, with his April '92 issue, he has taken on a few orphan games, and more could follow. Already running are one game each of regular and Gunboat Dip. Conrad might be going to slightly longer deadlines (a month?) because of reported postal problems. Conrad has

been in the hobby a long time, both as a player and a publisher (over 200 issues of *Costaguana* to his credit, plus other zines), so I think it's a good bet that he'll be around for years to come.

The most recent issue includes a tirade on stupid houserules, which, it seems, were quite in vogue (unintentionally so, I'm sure) several years ago. Also, there is a letter from a British hobbyist on state churches, and a query to readers on how (not whether) the death penalty should be applied. Conrad makes a reference to a former trivia contest, too. *Costaguana*, therefore, seems to be a good blend of silliness and seriousness. Subs are free, so you can't lose! PR

Tom Nash called this one perfectly, when he said in *ZR* #18: "my prediction is that at least once in the 90s, *Costa* will make a full-fledged comeback as a 40 page zine and the sublist will zoom up to around 100, winning all sorts of awards and acclaim..." Last issue of *ZR* Conrad reported 6 subbers—now he's up to 21. Still got a couple more "doublings" until Nash's prediction is proved out, but it's pretty clear that there's life in this one yet.

Costaguana, the zine that refuses to die, lives on through vampire-like feeding off of old, tired games. Conrad has this "arrangement" with orphan custodian Eric Ozog—Eric sends him innocent orphan games; Conrad drains them of all life, and finally drops them, dead, into the evil clutches of BNC Gary Behmen. Not a pretty picture.

Conrad isn't starting up any new games, at least not yet. Hang around, though—for the triple-digit predictions of Nash/Trodamus to come true, Conrad will have to get around to it eventually. Besides, with Eric Ozog doing such a bang-up job on the orphan scene, Conrad may soon run out of lukewarm bodies and be forced to gather in his own unfortunates.

Costaguana is fun. I definitely agree with Eric that Conrad is not to be missed—though he raked me over the coals for what he felt was unsympathetic treatment of his several zines in *ZR* #19, we were quickly able to come to a respectful understanding. At least until he gets his hands on this issue... heh!

As Buz notes, Conrad is never content to repeat what he did the month before. Each issue of *Costaguana* is unique, and in spite of his "primitive" computer equipment, it seems to me that Conrad enjoys playing around with the printed page. The latest issue even showed up as a digest zine—but don't make the mistake of thinking this is anything permanent—the next issue is just as likely to show up printed on A4 (European) paper as anything else.

Conrad is not an "obsessive" publisher. There are occasional gaps in his publishing schedule, as happened with his last issue which bore a postmark 6 weeks after his deadline (but this is really not typical, usually he's a lot better; more often than not an issue goes in the mail within a few days of the deadline!). He has produced six issues since the last *ZR*.

The only way you'll be able to play here is if your orphaned game ends up here (you should be so lucky), or you volunteer to standby. I'm sure Conrad can use standbys, and as the price is better than right (i.e., **FREE!**), how can you go wrong. I guarantee that you will enjoy receiving this zine, and you'll also be helping the hobby clear up some messes left by irresponsible publishers. Check it out. GS

Countermeasures

Bill LaFosse, 65 Barbara Street, Trenton, Ontario, CANADA K8V 1Z6

Free to players, no trades, no samples, no non-players; open page; xerox printed; 6 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 15; first: don't know; last: never seen

Runs: Diplomacy (3).

Openings: Maybe.

Countermeasures is basically a big, friendly flyer. Work commitments have cut into Bill's ability to put out a 'zine so he responded by stripping down his already modest-sized 'zine to a players-only publication. This is a shame. Bill is a fine GM and his maps are large and clear (if not pretty). *CM* is populated to a large extent by the crowd you meet at CanCon. It's a functional 'zine that accomplishes exactly what it intends. Many hobbyists hope that Bill will be able to expand it some day. RL

To be honest, I don't know what I can say about this one. It is ugly as sin, comes out when publisher Bill LaFosse (an old timer at the zine publishing game) has the time to put it out, which currently isn't that often, and when it does come out it carries a little bit of writing by Bill and a couple of games. I think it currently features a couple of orphans. There is no information about sub rates or game fees. Bill never seems to send in any information to *Zine Register* so you probably won't be able to find out much more here. I just don't know what is going on with *Countermeasures* beyond the fact that an issue occasionally arrives in the mail. BMcK

Say, I actually have some updated information for this zine! Robert Lesco was kind enough to provide what appears above, which, since it does not come directly from the publisher, should be confirmed with Bill LaFosse before sending him any money.

At any rate, I've never seen the thing (one of only three zines listed in these pages that I *still* haven't managed to catch a glimpse of); I've nothing to say about it. Good luck getting a sample out of Bill; he does not appear to be looking for new subscribers. GS

Crimson Sky

Michael Gonsalves, 530 Treasure Lake, DuBois, PA 15801

\$.60/issue; open page; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 47; first: Feb. 1990; last: May 1992 (#26)

Runs: Diplomacy (6), Gunboat (1), British Rules Gunboat (1), 1499 (1).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$3.00), British Rules Diplomacy (free), Gunboat (\$3.00).

Crimson Sky is first and foremost a place to play Diplomacy. I strive for a fast, accurate turnaround. This is not a zine that will ever win the Poll. I have a good solid base of players so *Crimson Sky* is a very good place to play.

I also am one of the few North American zines which offer the British style of retreats and builds, as well as Regular Diplomacy. MG

Everybody knows about Michael's spelling problem, though I believe it has improved somewhat. He's been known to make an error or two on the games as well. It ain't the prettiest publication around, either. But I'll tell ya... I love *Crimson Sky*. Some of these things just have personality and *CS* is one of them. I wouldn't trade *CS* for anything. JS

Mike Gonsalves has developed this zine into a classic warehouse, with no frills but good games service. Given his popularity in the hobby, the games are filled with some of the top players. The competition looks to be rather fierce. Mike is also offering several variant games, including one of 1499 in which yours truly is wallerin'. The zine could use some help in the layout department, but trust me when I say that anything is better than trying to read Mike's handwriting. Mike is a tough competitor at tournaments and by post, and this same determination is exhibited in his zine. I recommend this as a good warehouse, with little to no danger of it folding out from under you as others have done over the past year. DH

Mike is a definite asset to the hobby. He plays in many zines, is a standby in about as many, and publishes a fine zine for playing Diplomacy. Oh sure, there's a few problems (the maps not being on the same page as the game was always my biggest gripe when I was playing here), but overall you could look far before finding a better place to play some Dip.

Mike is a very reliable publisher. He's put out seven issues since the last ZR, meaning he's just a tad off the "monthly" schedule he shoots for, but you'll never notice it unless like me you carefully track every issue. Mike's focus is very definitely on the games, but every now and then he lashes out at the U.S. Congress, and there's an ongoing debate in the pages about the relative merits of Union and Confederate commanders. I like to feel I sort of helped get that particular dispute going with my ground-breaking piece several years ago entitled "Stonewall Jackson's Feet of Clay." (Don't remember it? Oh well...). Mike also includes some cartoons and other little bits.

At 60¢/issue and \$3.00 gamefee, you can expect a complete game to cost roughly \$15.00—probably a little bit lower than normal. Remember, this one's for playing games. If you're interested in a "reader's zine," then look elsewhere. But if it's a game you want, send off that check right now! GS

The Curator

Jim Melnel, 2801 Pelican Drive, Anchorage, AK 99515-1364

Free; open page; laser printed; 6 pages; freq.: published on as-needed basis (about every 4-6 weeks); circ.: 28; first: May 1991; last: Mar. 1992 (#8)

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

The Curator is the service zine used to coordinate the plans for publication of the *Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy Zines (North American Edition)*. This will be a publication which will list, alphabetically in an encyclopedia format, every postal Diplomacy zine every published from the hobby's beginnings in 1963 to May 1992. It will

be over 100 pages long and contain more than 800 entries. Included in the *Encyclopedia* will be side articles on various hobby services and characteristics particular to postal play (subzines, fakes, etc.). The *Encyclopedia* will also have an index of individuals' names to assist in finding a person's publications (over 500 names indexed so far). It will be open faced, use laser printed masters, and be spiral bound with hard stock covers. The following is one of the shorter entries that will appear in the publication:

Black Frog

Jack H. Masters

October 1979

Valencia, CA

LKI: #60 October 16, 1982

A digest-size zine which quickly became immensely popular in the hobby as a literary zine, finishing first in the 1981 Runestone Poll. The publisher's fall from grace was just as precipitous; it was discovered he had plagiarized a famous author's work and passed it off as his own in the zine. Needless to say, the zine's days were numbered after that revelation. Jack ran his Diplomacy games in a separate publication, *East of Eden*.

The *Encyclopedia* will be available July 15, 1992 and will cost \$12.00 (first class postage paid). You may order copies at any time by contacting the editor at the above address. JM

Apparently Jim's plans call for this zine to fold when the *Encyclopedia* is published, which may mean that it will be too late for you to get this zine; I rather doubt that Jim, with his awesome July deadline beginning to stare him in the face, will be thinking about putting out any more issues of *The Curator*!

However, it is not too late to help out with the *Encyclopedia* project. Many submissions still need to be written, and Jim will be accepting them up until June 30, 1992. Me, I plan on taking a brief breather after getting this issue of ZR and the immediately following issue of *Upstart* out the door, then I'm going to send as much stuff to Jim as I can possibly manage. I urge everyone, especially those who've been in the hobby for a while, to help out. I'm tremendously excited by this effort of Jim's—I think the *Encyclopedia* will be a tremendously invigorating influence on the hobby.

Without a doubt the *Encyclopedia* will be the most exciting hobby publication of 1992. Make sure you reserve your copy today! GS

Dipadeedoodahl

Phil Reynolds, USF #4286, 4202 Fowler Av., Tampa, FL 33620, (May 2-July 17: USF #4270, 4202 Fowler Av., Tampa, FL, 33620; July 18-Aug. 15: 2896 Oak Street, Sarasota, FL 34237)

3.5¢/page + postage; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 24 pages; freq.: 4-5 weeks; circ.: 45; first: Jan. 1989; last: Apr. 1992 (#23)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Gunboat (1), African Dip (1), Fog of War Dip (1), Middle Eastern Dip (1), Character Dip IR (1), Deviant Dip (1), Gunboat Snowball Fighting (1).

Openings: Toxic Dip (\$1.00), Fictionary Dictionary (free).

I try to do a little bit of everything in my zine. Regular features: lively press-abundant games (with maps), especially variants that are difficult to find elsewhere; reprints of variant rules and maps; strategy articles; the Ms. Diplomacy Manners advice column for players; humorous pieces, such as comic strips (including the provocative "MR. MOON & Nub-Nub"); logic problems; contests; science fiction and horror excerpts; a brief letter column, sometimes directed by questions of my writers; the odd quote, statistic, or bit of trivia; hobby news—announcements, services, plugs, information, issues, etc.; editor's ramblings...uh, did I forget anything, Garret?

One new feature I'm promoting is hobbyists' original fiction and poetry. I'm sure there are other hobbyists, besides me, who dabble in creative writing. I would like to feature the best work the hobby has to offer, so send your original writings to me!

Also, I am looking for columnists with something interesting and unusual to say. If you have an idea for such a feature, and, more importantly, you are willing to do it yourself, please let me know.

Games I'm considering running once a few end: Junta, Family Business, Food Fight, MegaDip Kremlin, Cosmic Encounters, Mitotic Dip, and Downfall Dip. I'm open to other suggestions, too. I hope you'll find something above that will motivate you to subscribe to *Dipadeedoodah!*, the goals of which are to entertain, inform, and educate hobbyists. If you can't, then you might as well end your pathetic little life now! PR

I love this zine because it is full of *variants*, a vast improvement over all those lower class zines that run only Diplomacy (many try to pan off Gunboat as a variant, but I don't buy it since many games of Diplomacy are that way to start with). His politics, however, are something else. I can tolerate almost anybody's views (including Garret's), but Phil's go to such an extreme that there are some times that I cannot enjoy the rest of the zine. The past couple of issues have been more tolerable, and I enjoyed them. I hope that trend continues. Phil's turnaround time seems to be improving again now that he has decided on a course to follow in his life. If you like variants, give it a try. DMeC

Once upon a time I believed this was going to become the premier publication of the hobby. Then Phil sorta slipped away from the typewriter and everyone was ringing the death bells. Everyone assumed burnout and fold. I'm glad to say it wasn't so—Phil is back as good as ever. I've been with him from about the very beginning and I hope I'm still there at the end...a couple of hundred issues from now. JS

I can't understand why he's having a hard time filling games. Oh, sure, he was erratic for a while, and still isn't the fastest zine on the planet. And, yes, Phil can be a poor man's Larry Peery—hyperexcited over every project and zine and game while maybe half of them come to something. But here's a big zine with editorial content, a subzine that likes controversy, and variant openings you can't get elsewhere. Maybe Phil is so

Give Railway Rivals A Spin...

Diplomacy used to be the only postal game in town. No longer. The Number Two game these days (in England it's Number One) is "Railway Rivals," originally devised by a Welsh schoolteacher as an instructional aid, but long since refined to a fascinating and endlessly varied strategy adventure for 3 to 10 players. "Rivals" won the Game of the Year award in Germany (1984), and is about to be reissued there and in the U.S. by Laurier.

There are no moving parts and no batteries. You simply take a map—there are over 50 different ones to choose from—and build a railway line. Using simple rules, your job is to plan the best line you can to serve as many of the cities on the map as you can, with the shortest possible distances between them. Of course, your opponents are doing the same thing simultaneously. After a time, track-laying ends and a series of races, contracts, is offered; you then strive to fulfill these contracts before your opponents can. If in the course of racing you discover a few flaws in your track, you do have the opportunity to make adjustments—for a price, of course. Under certain conditions players may make deals to run races jointly, or to use one another's track in competition. In fact, if your own track isn't the best route, you can always use someone else's track for part of your race—again for a price, of course.

And if you goof, and build a rotten track and get creamed? Hey, it happens! And you can always play again, on the same map or one of the others. Games only last twelve rounds, after all; by mail, they nor-

mally take about a year, and on-line they can be over in a month. And if, despite all the different maps, you want to try something even more challenging, there are three or four variant rules that change the strategy completely without altering the basic game system.

If you want to play now, without waiting for Laurier's new release, you may be able to find the older release (from Games Workshop) remaindered at some shops—it's known to be available in New York and Baltimore for \$10.00. Or write to the designer's U.S. agent, Ken Hill (see *Buckeye Rail Gazette*); he can sell you a "tube" version of the game made in England, plus as many additional maps as you can stand.

Postal play: Look up the listings for these quality zines: *BRG*, *Encounter*, *ark*, *Rails By Mail*, and *Pedro in the Rain Forest*. (There are a few others, but these are where you start.) Electronic play: CompuServe is running games, as is Internet, and I am told (but cannot verify) that Prodigy is about to as well. *Electric Trains* will fill you in.

And when you've done all of that, guess what? Hey, we've got ratings and orphan games people and rules discussions and number custodians and all the rest, just like Big Brother Diplomacy! (See "Hobby Services" toward the end of this issue.) And this is no fly-by-night fad, either; "Rivals" has been played by mail since 1972 (in the U.S. since '86), and *Pedro in the Rain Forest* recently started the one-thousandth postal game on record.

Join us. The more new players, the better. More than that, the more new *friends*, the better; thus far, we have managed to stay feud-free, and we hope to keep it that way. Somehow, it's more fun. CVM

busy pushing the *hobby* (in *ZR* and *Pont*) that he hasn't had time to recruit for his own rag. PG

Of course he could have pushed just a little bit harder this time on *ZR* (he only got to about the "Ds" before he ran out of steam), but you think I'm going to complain? No way, Jackson, on a project like this I take anything I can get!

Dipadeedoodah! is one of the more interesting zines around. It's big, it's got a lot of stuff going on (and Phil is promising more), it includes a wide variety of interesting variants, the press is pretty good, though not spectacular (note: this is not due to "Brer Phil's" lack of effort; he responds to just about every release), there's some reader feedback in a nascent letter col, it's attractively done, and uses maps. I give it an enthusiastic thumbs up. (And if Jack McHugh wants to call that "toadyism of the worst sort," well, there's no shutting him up anyway; I'll just have to risk it.)

The one place where it falls down is on speed. Phil is obviously aware of this, indeed, he scratched out the "5-6 weeks" he had last time for frequency and put down "4-5 weeks" on his Pubber Info Sheet. This has to count as the most extreme kind of wishful thinking—Phil has actually managed to produce just four issues of *Dipadeedoodah!* since the last *ZR* came out, a frequency that's a lot closer to 6-8 weeks in my book. (He may manage to squeak another issue in under the wire, in which case I'll come back and correct this information, but I'm not holding my breath. [[*Nope—as expected, it didn't show.*]]) Phil is a full-time student, and given the staggering amount of effort that goes into *Dipadeedoodah!*, it's hardly any mystery why he has difficulty staying on his desired deadline. If over the past year he has been unable to approach a 5-6 week deadline interval, I figure there is *zero* chance of him making a 4-5 week schedule anytime soon.

To tell you the truth, I feel Phil should forget about trying to stay on *any* kind of schedule, opt for a majorly relaxed "Canadian Diplomat" style, and put the thing out when he damn well feels like it. Otherwise he's on a direct collision course with burnout. What's a little worrisome is that a year ago Phil had a close brush with zine death; he correctly warns other publishers of the dangers of trying to do too much. Yet he utterly disregards his own sage advice! Unless he focuses his effort there is no way he will be able to stay on schedule, unless it's by blowing off his classes—not a wise move.

To play a game here is not cheap—*Dipadeedoodah!* is one of the more expensive zines in the hobby (granted, you get a lot of bang for your buck). The last several issues have cost \$1.36; couple this with the standard \$5.00 gamefee (for Dip and variants) and you'll find that you are expected to cough up over \$30.00 for one game. (Admittedly there *are* more expensive places to play, but not many.) Given that Phil charges by the page, I personally could do without the reprinted columns from pundits such as George "I Am A Royalist" Will—I just sort of "blip" over them. I read enough stuff by "professional" pundits as it is—I'm a lot more interested in seeing what *hobby members* have to say about things. But I suppose some readers find this stuff interesting, which is all Phil can ask for.

This one is definitely worth checking out, especially if you're interested in variant Dip games, but don't expect super-speedy games service. GS

Diplodocus

Pierre AF Touchette, 74-1/2 Falardeau, Hull (Québec), , CANADA J8X 3E2

\$.75/issue to North America, \$1.00 to overseas; digest; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 5-6 weeks; circ.: 50; first: 1986; last: Jan. 1992 (#12)

Runs: Diplomacy (4).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$2.00), Gunboat (\$2.00); check with Pierre for latest information.

Diplodocus is the only bilingual zine published in a country which, nominally at least, is bilingual. Pierre doesn't do this from any illusion of promoting "National Unity" in Canada but from a hope of reaching a wider audience. One thing that you'll find if you subscribe to *Diplodocus* is that the audience that it does reach doesn't write a lot outside of the games, no matter how much Pierre would like them to. What reading material there is is provided primarily by the resident expert on almost everything, Agent Orange. Some people might be deterred from subscribing because *Diplodocus* is partially published in French and the articles aren't translated—you have to work at it. Still, many of the people who subscribe and play here aren't found anywhere else in the North American Diplomacy hobby and provide a window on the hobby populated by people who aren't what Garret has called "white, middle class, mostly conservative English speakers" without even going outside of North America. BMcK

North America's only bilingual zine was going strong in October 1991, with Pierre Touchette trying to bridge the gap between Canada's two language groups. (A few of us Americans are allowed in as well.) This is largely a warehouse, concentrating on cross-fertilizing the two groups through international games, etc., but there is also a series of interesting political columns done in both languages by someone with the pseudonym "Agent Orange." I like to get this as a window of sorts on the Quebec issue, since "Agent Orange" usually talks about something related to its relationship to Canada proper. Not a whole lot here, though, so probably not for anyone who isn't also looking for a game. DH

Diplodocus could be dead, from all indications. Only two issues have been published since last summer, to my knowledge; before that, however, *Diplodocus* was published quite regularly every month or two. If the zine hasn't folded, then at the very least it's lurching along in an unhealthy way.

The main gimmick of *Diplodocus* is that it is a bilingual zine, published in English and French (as one might expect, since Pierre hails from Quebec). Of the handful of games being run, only one is in English. However, there are letters and features in English (as well as French), so most of us can read some portion of *Diplodocus* without a French dictionary. My advice would be to inquire first before sending sub money to Pierre. If he can keep publishing, so much the better for our inbred hobby. PR

Well, I finally saw an issue of *Diplodocus*, but this time around I never received an updated Pubber Info Sheet from Pierre, so the information above is a little old. Phil's comments suggest that Pierre is having trouble getting his issues out (though *Diplodocus* #12 promised 9

issues in the coming year at a 5-6 week rate). Probably better to find out what the story is before you part with your hard-earned cash.

The one issue that I *did* see, #12, was a rather slim zine of 12 digest pages. More of the zine was in French than in English (including three of the four games). Maps were provided for some (but apparently not all) of the games. It was an attractive little effort, if just a little sparse. "Agent Orange" checked in with two pieces, one in French and one in English—which to this two-years-of-French-in-High-School-20-years-ago reader was a pretty impressive performance!

I suppose by the next issue we'll have a clearer picture of whether this zine is living or dying. GS

Diplomacy Digest

Mark Berch, 11713 Stonington Place, Silver Spring, MD 20902

\$5.50/10 issues; digest; offset printed; 12 pages; freq.: 5-6 year; circ.: 59; first: July 1977; last: Oct. 1991 (#130)

Runs: None.

Openings: I doubt it.

This is not a tired, boring zine—this is his every-issue style and he's over 100 issues! Oh, occasionally there's a real time article, but Mark's service is to do what many of us have failed at: theme issues. For most zines a theme issue on, say, Russian naval strategy is one, two-page piece; for Mark it's 12 or 24 pages. Variety of viewpoint, both horizontally and longitudinally in time, is better provided in his zine than anywhere else. *DD* specifically can't be judged by the same standards as other zines; there never will be witty press, a lively lettercol, or quizzes. PG

Pete's bit was written shortly after the last *ZR* came out, and responds in part to comments I made about *DD* in the last issue of *ZR*. Since that time I have seen no new issues of *DD*, and Mark never returned the two Pubber Info Sheets I sent him requesting information. Further, nobody offered up any recent comments or reviews on this zine. Consequently, I don't have any new information! I don't *think* that it's folded, because *DD* has been around long enough, and Mark has been a "big" enough hobby personality, that I assume I would have heard about a fold. Moreover, Mark is a player in the *Diplomacy World* demo game, and he hasn't dropped out of that or anything. So it's a safe bet to assume *DD* is still in operation.

However, before sending any money I would check with Mark to see if he is still in operation. And if anyone has any current information on *DD*, I'd appreciate hearing about it. GS

Diplomacy World

David Hood, 2905 20th St NE, Hickory, NC 28601

\$10.00/4 issues; open page; offset printed; 32 pages; freq.: quarterly; circ.: around 200; first: 1974; last: Winter 1992 (#65).

Runs: Diplomacy Demonstration Game (1).

Openings: None.

DW is dedicated to articles and features on the game and hobby that surrounds Diplomacy. Each issue will contain strategy and tactics material, variants, demonstration game reports, zine reviews, hobby news, hobby history, and any number of other things. The zine is intended to be a compliment to the games-oriented zine, i.e., read about Dip here and play it elsewhere. Everyone in the hobby who wants one will receive (or has already received) a free issue.

The winter trial schedule really put this zine off track, but I hope to go regular again through the summer. I have switched back to regular paper, but have kept the open-page format. Any of y'all who want to write for *DW* should contact me pronto. DH

The best source of reading material about the game of Diplomacy. Its major advantage is that everything is brought together here. The writing is not any better than in any other zine, but the focus is the main point. The layout is much better than under past editors, and while there is still some editorial comment, it is less intrusive. Definitely not a piece of junk mail. DMCC

This is the *Wall Street Journal* of the Diplomacy hobby which will be clear when you see it. There's a lot of participation from a lot of the hobby biggies. My only complaint and please note it is a personal thing of mine...when I read it, I don't *feel* anything. To me it lacks personality...but hey, no one has ever accused me of being bouncy and bubbly either. JS

I fear David will settle down too far. After the Peeryship, when everyone but me and two or three others complained about all the wild ideas and impractical projects, David is overreacting. The zine may become too milk-toast, rehashing old strategies and rehashing old arguments. Where are the ideas on recruiting? Where are the artists? At least the S&T pieces are still innovative and helpful. PG

As David notes, his "quarterly" zine has had some trouble staying on time recently—almost five months separated #64 from #65. In the last issue I've seen (#65), David revealed a plan to get back on track, which involved very quickly publishing #66 in "late April/early May," followed by #67 in July. Well, #66 hasn't shown yet.

Not that a zine like *Dip World*, which is almost entirely reading material (it also reports on a single "demonstration game," but that is being run outside the zine on flyer—and David is none too snappy with that either!), really needs to worry that much about quick turnaround and obsessive speed. Even if it only averaged three times a year that would probably be enough for most people. There's no particular benefit to rushing reading matter, especially if it's about the game of Diplomacy generally (political and/or hobby matters, however, *do* benefit from a regular and speedy schedule).

While many may have applauded when David switched back to regular white 8-1/2 by 11 paper and xerox printing (at least, I *think* it's xerox, although David let "offset printing" stand on his Pubber Info Sheet), I felt this was a step "backward" (though I certainly understand the economic considerations that forced the change). Before, it looked really professional, truly a "flagship" zine. Now, even though the design is identical, it feels a lot more like many other open page zines in the hobby. Personally, I'd prefer the thing printed on recycled paper—this would set a good example to the hobby as a whole. However, the chance of this happening with David at the helm is, unfortunately, nil.

Pete's point is somewhat valid, but I'm not sure what any "reading zine" editor can do about it. At least when you're running games, if you're having an off-month (or an off-year!) you can lay back on the reading content and just run the games, and get your enjoyment that way. But writer's block and "staleness" is an ever-present reality for those who make "reading" matter their thing. (And this, I am sure, is the reason that those who are whining about "TurboPhreakism" find so few successful "fannish" zines in the hobby: not because they get *hounded* out of the hobby as they claim—indeed, editors and publishers who can write and entertain us are properly cherished and supported by *everyone* in this hobby!—but because consistently entertaining and valuable writing is one of the hardest things hobby publishers do.)

I know that one of the reasons I'm willing to relinquish this particular "bully pulpit" is because even after two issues I'm discovering that I may have said all I need to say, though I'll drag myself through one more issue after this one. Meanwhile, David Hood has done a really fine job in one of the most visible spots in our hobby. If his recent issues have lost a little sparkle, well, I think that's probably inevitable.

In his demo game flyer "The Game," David has let us know that he is enjoying running the game, and is thinking about running more, maybe after he's done with *Diplomacy World*. If David's "real" job continues to cut inroads into his hobby time, my bet is that a changing of the guard at *Dip World* could come sooner than later. Whether David moves on in two issues or twenty, his successor will have a very difficult job matching his fine work.

If you still haven't seen this zine, request your free sample, and join the hobby! GS

Diplomag

Fred C. Davis, 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043

\$5.00/6 issues or \$9.00/12 issues (2 years); open page; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: bimonthly; circ.: 65; first: July 1976; last: May 1992 (#105) Runs: One demonstration game of the Atlantica IV variant; participation limited to Mensans and invitees.

Openings: None.

The service and genzine for the Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG. We set up games for Mensa members, and introduce them to the Postal hobby. (We also recruit people for Mensa. At least half the people in the hobby are eligible for Mensa membership, as the only requirement is an I.Q. of 130 or SAT of 1250. It provides news on various hobby services and publications for the benefit of novice readers. It also includes a running account on the progress of several all-Mensa games. Occasional articles on the hobby and postal procedures. Regular games are farmed out to various Mensa publishers. Anyone may subscribe, but only Mensans may vote on SIG business. FCD

Another not so pretty publication but what the hey...that's not what this one's all about. Fred is one of the elders of the hobby and he runs a great game. This

one is Mensa oriented and gives Battle Reports on other Mensa games being run in the hobby. Also full of hobby news. I wouldn't want to do without it. JS

This is primarily a report of the activities of the Mensa Diplomacy-SIG, whose members publish several warehouse zines and run games in them. Editor Fred Davis is a serious hobby veteran, and this is the last place you can get his writing given his fold of *Bushwacker*. If you are a Mensa member, write Fred for a sample. If not, then you should probably look elsewhere for a new zine. DH

A very regular and reliable zine, though its bimonthly schedule means you won't see it all that often. Still, four issues of *Diplomag* have arrived here since the last issue of ZR—that's as good as some so-called "monthly" zines.

The point of this zine is to report on the Mensa Diplomacy Special Interest Group (SIG); Fred Davis is the chairman of the SIG and it would appear that he is doing a super job in this function. The Mensa Dip-SIG is almost a sub-hobby within the larger hobby, and Fred provides good solid support for the zines that are associated with the SIG, acting sometimes as ombudsman or orphan custodian as the case requires. The last time I looked there were eight Mensa Dip-SIG zines, including: *Against The Odds*, *The Assassin's Blade*, *Batyville Gazette*, *The Continual Crisis (continued)*, *Rambling WAY*, *The Spindle*, *The Tactful Assassin*, and *War Fair*. See each of those individual zines for further information.

The way things seem to work is that Fred finds seven Mensans who want to play some Dip, and then assigns them to one of the above zines. There doesn't seem to be quite enough Mensa players for all the Mensa publishers (sound familiar?), so usually there's no more than one Mensa game running in each Mensa zine. This "game hunger" (surely felt by any publisher worth his or her salt who's running just one game!) leads these Mensa publishers to open up non-Mensa games; the whole hobby benefits.

Fred is to be commended for his tireless efforts at hobby promotion, and I'm glad that I've learned more about this "Mensa thing" over the past six or seven months. Many of the zines that have been born out of Mensa have proved to be very worthwhile, mainstream zines that have developed followings completely outside the Mensa Dip-SIG. (On the other hand, some are not much more than flyers that go into hiatus while waiting their next Mensa game.) It's hard to know whether Fred finds Mensa or postal Dip more "important," but my bet is that we here in the hobby derive greater benefit out of this "school for publishers" than does Mensa!

Fred's non-Mensa hobby news is first-rate; I plan on "fact-checking" my list of hobby services and custodianships against the list he provided a while back in *Diplomag* #102.

Do you need to see this zine? That depends, I guess. There are no game openings contemplated—this zine is just not for playing games in. So if that's what you want, go elsewhere. There's no fiction or political commentary or hobby feud material either. But if you are interested in the hobby as an institution, and need to be in touch with someone who is very much in contact with the hobby as a whole, then you'll find this zine very interesting. GS

Dippy

Jim Benes, 417 S Stough St., Hinsdale, IL 60521

\$.50/issue; open page; dot-matrix printed; 2 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 19 (*Dippy* is a supplement to the *Western Star-Post-Free Press*, which is a weekly newsletter); first: 1972; last: May 1992 (Vol. 21, No. 7)

Runs: Diplomacy (2).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00).

I read with interest and enjoyment your description of *Dippy* in *Zine Register* #19. I thought perhaps you'd appreciate an explanation:

Long, long ago the *Star* (that's the accepted shortening of the *Western Star-Post-Free Press* among its readership) began as a way of keeping tabletop sports league members up to date on league information. It gradually grew to include real news about people, and real reviews about books, movies, and the like, and also a vehicle for all sorts of silliness, whether seen in newspapers or on the newswires or what-have-you. As you can see in a recent issue, a number of *Star* bon vivants went out to dinner together, just to do it.

The "community" the *Star* serves is defined by its readership; you and anybody else is welcome to join: 50¢ per week plus an occasional contribution. Strangely enough, some of our sports game players began as *Dippy* players but now play only the sports games exclusively. JB

Surprise! *Dippy* no longer holds title as the ugliest publications in the hobby. Jim got himself a real computer and I still can't believe how neat this thing is. He still runs that *Western Star-Post-Free Press* thingie that I still don't understand, but for prompt, nearly errorless games that are cheap, you just can't beat this guy anywhere. JS

Jim Benes graciously put me on his sub list after I wrote him about my Encyclopedia project, and now I think I know what is going on with his publishing efforts. His main zine, *The Sunday Western Star-Post-Free Press* is a weekly 4-page newsletter that must go to a tight circle of his friends, as it is loaded with idiosyncratic and provincial material from his Midwest neighborhood. Every three weeks, *Dippy* appears with two Diplomacy games. Jim has obtained a dot-matrix printer of late; the zine's readability has increased tremendously. JM

When Jim Benes says "long, long ago," he means it! I guess I didn't realize it till now that this thing has been around for years, like 21 years! I assume he's been publishing pretty much at his 3-weekly rate (he managed to get 16 issues out in 1991) during most of that time, which puts him somewhere above 300 issues for his lifetime stat. Pretty solid work!

Meanwhile, nine issues have rolled in like clockwork during the rather brief period that I've been tracking him, which puts him in the same league as *Boast* or *ark*. Granted, *Dippy* is not much more than a flyer (it's never over two pages), but if anyone wants to question Jim's publishing "credentials," I suggest they check out that *Star* thingie, which came out no less than 45 times in 1991! I can think of no publication more "fannish" than the *Star*, come to think of it...

Turnaround, always critical to the success of a 3-week zine, is really pretty good—almost always just

one or two days. Jim might be just a little bit faster than *Boast* in this department.

Dippy is helped, marginally, by Jim's recent switch to dot-matrix printing from the old mimeo. I say "marginally" because I was never really bothered by the mimeo—ugly, sure, but it got the job done. But if John Schultz (who is playing here after all) appreciates the new print job, it probably aids the players and that's the important thing. There's never very much press in these games, big press games just don't seem to be the culture here.

At 50¢ per issue, and \$5.00 for gamefee, a typical game could cost you \$15.00—a little less than the average for the hobby these days. Two things are certain if you play here: (1) You'll be playing in one of the hobby's fastest efforts and can expect your game to finish up in a little over a year; (2) Jim will almost certainly not fold out from under you.

3-week games may not be for everyone (no matter how fast the publisher there may not be enough time to conduct fruitful negotiations exclusively through the mails), but if you want to try playing postal Dip as fast as humanly possible, this is one of your few options. Request a sample. GS

Disoriented Express

Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117

Free; open page; xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: "in due course"; circ.: 28; first: Oct. 1986 (in its original form as a flyer attached to *Costaguana*); last: May 1992 (#24)

Runs: Railway Rivals (8).

Openings: Railway Rivals (various maps) (free).

Caters strictly to Railway Rivals with an international (mainly British) flavour. There are no frills; frills cost money, and I need to stock up on fish food. In fact, the ink in my pen costs money, so I think I'll just let Garret tell you all about this neo-Cubist affirmation of senility. (Note: if he makes any snide remarks about layout or physical appearance, just remember what a fucking CAD/CAM elitist he is.) CVM

Conrad is North America's "old hand" and resident expert on RR. He adds entertaining comments between game reports. He also has the most British participation of any American RR GM. This is where RR players should start in order to learn the game. JKG

Damn! I was all set to crank out another "putrid" review of this horrid looking neo-Cubist affirmation of senility, but what the hell, Conrad has anticipated and deflected my little asides. As he points out, ink costs money, as does the paper and toner this thing is printed on, so I'll keep my comments to a minimum. (Um...just what is a "CAD/CAM elitist," anyway? Or a "neo-Cubist affirmation," for that matter. What the heck does Cuba have to do with Railway Rivals?)

I've seen a couple of issues of this thing since the last ZR came out—the last issue arrived in early February. I know this goes to an international audience, so it runs approximately twice as slowly as Conrad's other zines, but it's possible I've missed an issue somewhere along the line. I guess Conrad is still opening games here,

although in the latest issue of *Pedro in the Rain Forest*, Conrad's *other* Railway Rivals zine aimed at the domestic market; he was essentially pleading with his readers to ease up on him a little. He's been mopping up after a series of fairly messy folds in the Railway Rivals hobby, and is suddenly loaded down with orphan games—perhaps more than he was bargaining for. If you're interested in playing RR with some overseas players, this may be the only zine in the hobby for that.

And it's *FREE*, what more could you ask? (Conrad is going to hate me for that, I know!) (But at least I didn't mention the strong resemblance between his zine and cat litter box liners.)

[Issue #24 just rolled in under the deadline, and so I had missed an issue—the one I got in February was #22. Obviously Conrad is doing a pretty good job keeping to his schedule, despite the extra delays inherent in running "international" games.

[This is the third of Conrad's zines that have arrived in digest format, so it's beginning to look like he's decided to "go digest"—a move I heartily applaud! (Now watch—just for that the stubborn old fool will go and change back!)] GS

D.O.G.S. of War!

Kevin M. Kinsel, 21561 Oakbrook, Mission Viejo, CA 92692

\$1.25/issue; open page; xerox printed; 15 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 75; first: Nov. 1989; last: Apr. 1992 (#25)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Gunboat (2), Britannia (2); in subzine "Hounds of Hell": Machiavelli (3), Merchant of Venus (1).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$6.00), Britannia (\$7.50), Acquire (free—run on flyer); in "Hounds": Dune (\$10.00).

The D.O.G.S. of War! is a fast and loose gaming club with its own namesake zine in Southern California. Maintaining a diverse bent, Panzer Leader/Panzerblitz (blind), Machiavelli, Britannia, Merchant of Venus and other strategy games join Dip and variants in the D.O.G.S. domain. Led by El Coyote and other notables, the D.O.G.S. are howling...(woof).

Check into the *D.O.G.S. of War!* for the latest in Opponents Wanted, the DOW game club, and other gaming madness..... EC/KMK

And now a word from our subzine... Welcome to "The Hounds of Hell." I am Cerberus, your guide, we will first go through the Machiavelli section. Don't mind the bodies and take care not to slip on the blood, there's been a stabbing here recently. Now we stop off in the Merchant of Venus section. Watch out for those hazards, they can be costly. Now we go past these wrecked battleships to the Midway section. Ah, we arrived just in time to see the *Atagi* sink. Now, if you will just walk this way, we will go through the Stellar Conquest section. You say you can't see anything? Well, it is a blind game, after all. Finally, we direct you to the Dune section, which is still under construction. We hope you have enjoyed this tour of "The Hounds of Hell" subzine. We now take you back to your regularly scheduled review.

(By the way, I plan on running another MoV game as soon as "Capitalist Dogs" is over.) CH

D.O.G.S. stands for "Diplomats of the Great Stab." BTW, there was a previous (unrelated) *DOGS of War* put out by John Daly. EB

I like to think of this zine as an "infectious" zine—infectiously humorous! I always get a kick out of seeing what "El Coyote" has cooked up for us this month. In case you haven't figured it out, the "gimmick" here is dogs—everybody has a different dog name, ranging from "Doggosaurus" and "Wolfman Jack" to my own rather insipid "Baskerville" (what can I say, I was pressed for time). The "dogs" theme is played with throughout the zine.

Kevin Kinsel must enjoy putting this thing together. His covers are unique works of art (mostly)—the one for issue #22, which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor raid, was an especially dramatic drawing of Japanese torpedo bombers circling over the exploding U.S. battleships—and printed on bright cherry paper!

This zine is mostly about the games, and to help keep the DOW game club together and up to date on future meetings. But there is some reading material here—mostly Kevin's thoughts on the political process. He's one of the few publishers to actually pay much attention to the primaries, and to passionately plead the case of one candidate (Jerry Brown) over the others. Kevin also interlaces cartoons (both political and dog-related) with the game reports to help break up the pages.

The players all seem to have fun here, and Kevin and Chris Hassler ("Cerberus") run a nice mix of Diplomacy and non-Dip games. *D.O.G.S.* is the center of the Britannia hobby, and Chris's "The Hounds of Hell" subzine runs as much Machiavelli as the rest of the hobby put together (I think...).

These guys are *not* obsessive when it comes to timeliness. I've tracked four issues since the last issue of *ZR*—which is definitely off the stated "monthly" frequency. Kevin works as a landscape architect, so I imagine that a speed-up during the upcoming summer months isn't very likely.

At \$1.25 per issue, and \$6.00 and up for gamestarts, playing here is not cheap—you could drop \$30.00 playing a basic game of Dip. There are more expensive places to play, but not very many. Still, this zine has many positive aspects that more than outweigh any negatives, at least for me. Request a sample and see what you think. GS

Down At The Mouth

Vince Lutterbie, 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall, MO 65340-2837

Free to players; digest; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: every two months, games on flyer in between issues (and moving to 5 week deadlines); circ.: 55; first: Feb. 1989; last: Mar. 1992 (#28)

Runs: Diplomacy (3), 7 x 7 Gunboat Tournament (1), He-Man Titan (1), Gunboat Titan (1), Kremlin (1), Acquire (3).

Openings: Diplomacy (\$8.00).

This is a warehouse zine, sometimes with good press. I try to take on an orphan or two. I don't have much time for letters, but I'll run them and hobby news when they are presented.

The zine should get periodic facelifts as I become more used to my computer and learn to handle graphics programs. I'll always try to start a new game of Dip as others begin to wear down. VL

Regularity is improving, but errors in adjudications are increasing, too. I found eight errors in a recent game. It never was a pretty zine, and with the quality dropping even more, I'd pass it by. DMCC

DATM is a relatively infrequent slim digest zine (three issues, by my count, since the last *ZR*). Vince is very fond of Titan and Acquire, and both are featured in the zine, along with perennial favorite Diplomacy. *DATM* is not the prettiest zine out there—sometimes the reduction is extreme as Vince squeezes stuff in.

Vince doesn't charge for the zine, as he uses a "pay-one-price" approach. Diplomacy costs \$8.00, which means *DATM* is one of the cheaper places in the hobby to play. Most zines charge (in the end, when combined sub and gamefees are considered) more than this—sometimes a lot more.

DATM is strictly games. With the exception of the occasional bit of news about Dipcon (which Vince is helping host this year in Kansas City), and the odd flyer for this or that con or hobby activity (i.e., the Hobby Awards or Rumestone Poll), that's all there is. You do get maps for all the games that need maps.

The regularity *has* gotten better—the string of three issues I've recently received started at the end of last year, so just taking those into consideration, Vince isn't doing too badly. Indeed, just four weeks separated the given deadlines in issues #26 and #27! However, the last deadline was April 12th, and it's now May 23rd—no sign of *DATM*. My guess is that Vince is investing his presumably limited hobby time and resources in the upcoming Dipcon—either that or he's forgotten that we're trading.

At the risk of annoying Vince, I don't think this is one of the hobby's best efforts. Yes, the price is dirt cheap, but you don't get very much, either. I think a relative newcomer might be happier in one of the more "involved" zines, where one has a better chance of feeling one is a part of a larger hobby. But considering that the zine disappeared for nine months between last March and December, things *have* gotten better, a *lot* better. The trick for Vince will be to keep the momentum up and keep things moving in a positive direction. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW

Election Headquarters

Krissi Linsey, 170 Forts Ferry Rd., Latham, NY 12110

\$25.00 game fee includes sub to *EHQ* for the life of the game; open page; laser printed; 4 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: N/A—new zine; first: will start imminently; last: not yet published

Runs: None, yet...new zine

Openings: Campaign Trail—as many as I can start (\$25.00 includes life of game sub)

Election Headquarters (EHQ) is a zine dedicated to the play of postal Campaign Trail, an exciting game which represents a presidential election. You control Presidential and Vice-Presidential hopefuls in their campaigns throughout the United States, stopping in cities and towns from coast to coast as they try to drum up support for their bid for the White House. Along the way, influential people may show their support by endorsing your campaign or even by campaigning for you themselves! Use an air ticket to fly your candidate when you need to do some last-minute campaigning in a far-away state; acquire as many media shares as you can to aid in the frantic media campaigns on Election Day; you may even get to do a little mudslinging to cut into your opponent's support. It's up to *you* to decide what sort of campaign you'll run!

Each issue of *EHQ* will contain the results of your game: The movement of the campaigners, the number of popular votes gained in each state, and the results of the event options chosen during the round. Also, each player's popular vote totals, number of states, and electoral vote totals are listed. A map outlining the 50 states is also included with each issue so that you can tell at a glance which player is currently leading in every state. KL

This is a new start-up zine—as far as I know issue #1 hasn't been published yet. But unlike the *Ishkibble* "debacle" of last issue, I think this one is a pretty firm bet. Anyway, if its appearance here will help it get off the ground, so much the better.

These presidential campaign games always seem to be utterly devoid of "issues"; they focus solely on the mechanics of campaigning. In this they are like most of the election coverage you read in the newspapers, which almost totally avoids *why* you should prefer candidate A over proto-crypto-fascisto candidate B. On the other hand—wargames are that way too. Perhaps that's why players have often preferred playing the German side in WWII games—you get to move those nifty Panzer divisions around twice as fast as everybody else, but you don't need to concern yourself with what happens to the poor souls who inhabit the regions you've taken over, whose lives are now forfeit to the SS.

This is nothing more than a late-night side comment; I'm sure this will turn out to be a good zine. The flyer I received was attractively presented and laser printed. \$25.00 seems a little on the pricey side, but I don't know how long Campaign Trail runs—for all I know it could be a deal. If you're interested in trying out a presidential campaign game (and it *is* 1992, after all), why not request a sample? GS

Electric Trains

Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017, CompuServe UID: 70357,431

Free, except for on-line connect charges; electronic; N/A; 6–10 pages; freq.: weekly; circ.: 20–25; first: Oct. 1989; last: never seen

Runs: Railway Rivals (2), Bus Boss (1), 1830 (1), 1830 Reading Variant (1).

Openings: Continuous game openings in RR, BB, and 1830.

ET is the official publication of the Rail Gaming hobby on the CompuServe Information Service computer network in the Play-by-Mail Games (PBMGAMES) Forum. Players can access CIS from practically anywhere in the world including the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia.

ET features weekly deadlines in most games with a lively open message area. Dick Martin, Tom Swider, Eric Brosius, Craig Mills and the editor are the current GMs. Some very lively games of 1830 have been completed recently. Since the games are run on weekly or bi-weekly deadlines, they take a great deal less time than your average PBM game. The RR games have also become very competitive. If you've got access to a computer and a modem, please drop me a line. Players can also offset their connect time charges by GMing games in *ET*.

E-mail publication works well for Diplomacy, but it really *shines* when you're running Railway Rivals games! These games require minimal player interaction, removing one of the few drawbacks of E-mail play. Rivals games on 1-week deadlines take just 3 months to play, and one game was over in a month (running 3 rounds per week!).

The zine also runs 1830, 1830 variants, and Bus Boss; Chris Acreman is mulling over an Empire Builder game. EB

I've never seen this one, but if you're into E-mail "publishing" and "choo-choo" games, this one's a natural. I'd check it out if I were you.

I heard from some guy who was thinking about getting an E-mail version of Merchant of Venus going on CompuServe—any word on its fate? I suppose this "zine" would be the logical place for such a game. A "text-only" game of MoV would indeed be tricky, but if players were willing to do a lot of "record keeping" by themselves, I suppose it could be done. GS

Electronic Protocol

Eric Kilon, 8124 Bridlepath Way, Las Vegas, NV 89128

Free; electronic (on-line service); no printing; 40K characters; freq.: twice a week; circ.: 385; first: Oct. 1988; last: ? (#246)

Runs: 50 games, including Diplomacy games in German and French, Regular Diplomacy, Gunboat, Chaos games, No-Press Gunboat, Warp No-Press Gunboat, Round Robin Tournaments (7 x 7 RRGs), the 1914 variant, Youngstown Diplomacy, crowded rules, Eleven-player Diplomacy, and a few other variants.

Openings: All of the above.

I don't allow NMRs, but I do allow nonhuman GMs. I am currently even running a few No-Press Gunboat games where nonhumans are allowed to play. By the way, my nonhuman GM, Judge, has been dating Marge, Garret's mail-merge program. Wish them luck! EK

The best way to play Diplomacy. You can communicate with the other players several times between moves, the games progress at a much faster rate, and you don't have to spend 6-10 hours in one day to play it.

However, join new games only in the fall. Many players are college students who lose their accounts

when they go home for the summer, throwing many games into disarray with all the replacements. But during the school year, it is wonderful. Games usually proceed fast enough that they end before the next summer, so if you time it right, things should be okay. The articles are hard to read on the screen, but many are classic reprints and worth getting a hard copy to enjoy at your leisure. DMcC

So that's why I've been having trouble getting this fershlugginer mail-merge function to work. "Marge" always seems to be taking the weekend to buzz off somewhere over the net. I sure hope Eric's adjudications have been as screwed up as my recent merge trials have been!

I wonder how the "nonhuman players" do in their games of Gunboat. No-Press Gunboat is the first step, I suppose, in getting computers to play Dip. On the other hand, once that hurdle is passed, I could easily imagine that they'd do *better* in Regular Dip (even if they were unable to negotiate), since the tendency between players will be to go for each other's throats and ignore the "nonhuman"—at least that's my experience with the EMPIRE computer game which allows humans and the computer to play against each other simultaneously. Humans always seem to want to fight each other and ignore the machine.

As a side comment, I'm not especially fond of the term "nonhuman player." Computer programs are not "players." They are programs—their actions are completely dictated by the person who programmed them (perhaps filtered through random processes). To call such "nonhuman players" seems to me to elevate the mere passage of electrons through cascading silicon gateways to something close to humanness—and that I reject. Computer programs are just sophisticated machines; they are our tools. Period.

With my recent hookup to Internet E-mail, *Electronic Protocol* is the one E-mail "publication" that I should have full access to. Maybe over the summer I'll try to figure out how it all works, and maybe even try out playing against Eric's "nonhuman players" (presumably something different from the run-of-the-mill "inhumane" players you run across in every game of postal Dip!). GS

Empire

John Boardman, 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302

Free to players, \$10.00/9 issues for non-players, back issues as available for \$3.00/10 issues; open page; mimeo printed/covers occasionally xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: 4 weeks (occasional interim issues); circ.: 35; first: Nov. 1974; last: May 1992 (#340)

Runs: Pax Britannica (1), Britannia (1), En Garde (1). **Openings:** Britannia, possibly Pax Britannica (\$30.00 game fee for either).

At present *Empire* carries a postal En Garde campaign which will soon end. One postal game of Pax Britannica and one of Britannia, are in progress. New games of Britannia are begin organized, and a new game of Pax Britannica soon may be. The game fee for each is \$30.00, which covers the entire game and includes a subscription. JB

As you might expect with a John Boardman publication, *Empire* is one of the most regular publications in the hobby. Seven issues of *Empire* have arrived since the last issue of *ZR* went out, which means John is right on top of his 4-week schedule (even more on top than this statistic reveals—since his October 1991 issue [#333] was published right before *ZR* #19 went out, and he'll just miss getting #341 to me before this issue is finished).

No Dip or Dip variants here—for that you have to play in John's companion publication *Graustark*, which has a rather similar "look and feel." John recently purchased a (low speed/low quality—?) copier, so the cartoon "collage" covers which Lisa and I find immensely entertaining should be seen more frequently. The bulk of the zine is still printed by mimeo—with the recent conversion of *Dippy John* is perhaps the last North American publisher still using mimeo technology! This means *Empire* is sometimes a little messy and sloppy, but no worse than several other xeroxed zines.

Games here are a little on the pricey side—\$30.00 is more than you'll have to pay in most zines in the hobby. Still, who else is running Pax Britannica?

You probably get more of John's superb writing in *Graustark*, but as you might expect he lets the non-Dippers enjoy his comments on a variety of topics, but especially the attack of certain "Christian" fundamentalists on Dungeons and Dragons role-playing games (and by extension, all imaginative games, including Diplomacy). This goes under the general column called "Dungeons and Christians."

John is generally willing to send out samples, so if you're interested in checking out *Empire*, be sure to get in touch with him (or I can supply you with a copy through the auspices of the North American Zine Bank—see the "Hobby Services" section toward the back of this zine). GS

The Encounter

James K. Goode, 211 Maplemere, Clarksville, TN 37040-3558

Free to players; open page; xerox printed; 8–12 pages; freq.: 4–6 weeks; circ.: 18; first: Dec. 1990; last: May 1992 (#14)

Runs: Railway Rivals (9).

Openings: Railway Rivals.

The Encounter specializes in *Railway Rivals* games on maps developed by Americans. Discussion of PBM RR rules continues to attract attention. JKG

Another good place to play railroad games. RAW

Along with *Buckeye Rail Gazette*, *The Encounter* is one of the two main *Railway Rivals* zines. *The Encounter* features primarily American-designed maps and Jim is willing to include a number of different variant rules, if the players in each game agree to use them (*BRG* primarily uses British-designed maps and seldom, if ever, uses variant rules). Jim is a very good GM and the zine is about as punctual as any RR can be (one of the drawbacks of postal RR is that a single NMR by a single player can ruin the whole game for everyone. So a GM must normally wait for all players' moves to get in before doing the zine. SC

James has a reputation as an extremely punctual GM, but has had a terrible time recently. One possible cause for *The Encounter's* lateness is that when orders are missing for a RR game, he has been waiting for them to arrive rather than publish without them. This can lead to significant delays. EB

Hmmm... Scott mentions James Goode's "punctuality," but that has not been my experience—I've only received three issues of *The Encounter* since the fall, and nothing since February (i.e., over three months have now elapsed since the last issue arrived). We've been officially trading zines, so I don't think that James has just up and forgotten about me, although I suppose that could have happened. Scott's comment above arrived just a couple of weeks ago, though, and if he hadn't seen *The Encounter* in almost three months I doubt if he would have remarked on James' "punctuality" (if only because Scott runs two of the most persistently prompt zines in the hobby!).

Perhaps because I was sending them to an old address, James never returned the Pubber Info Sheets I sent him over the past two months. He's still living in Clarksville (the address given above is, I believe, the most recent—I got it from the back of his February issue), and presumably his mail was forwarded, or picked up by James—at any rate the Info Sheets never came back in the mail to me.

James recently passed his *Disease City* United league over to Don Del Grande (Don will run it in *G00000-lllll!*), but I've heard nothing about an incipient fold or anything like that with this zine. Still, I'd exercise a little caution, and try to find out what the situation is before sending him any money.

The Encounter is nicely put together, and James has a droll sense of humor. Big and little pictures of trains punctuate the layout and remind us what the whole thing is about, and help to break up the monotony of straight game reports. Assuming this thing is still operational, I bet it's a fine place to enjoy a little live steaming. Check it out (but *don't* send any money until you find out the story!).

[Scratch most of the above review, at least those parts that refer to massive delays! *The Encounter* #14 just showed up—I don't know what happened to #13, although I don't think it was my fault—so there's no more mystery. James has now "officially" published five issues of *The Encounter* since last fall—not a stellar performance, but certainly passable. At any rate, I'd say your sub money is safe now—no real risk of a fold. And he sent me the Pubber Info Sheet—what a guy!] GS

Excelsior

Bruce McIntyre, 6636 Dow Ave #203, Burnaby, BC, CANADA V5H 3C9

Postage (U.S. copies sometimes mailed from WA) plus \$.02/page (Canada) or \$.0175/page (U.S.), pages over 32 are free, overseas subbers charged \$1.00/issue, samples free; digest; xerox printed; page count varies—usually 28+, often large (40+); freq.: objective is 9/year but average is 6–7/year; circ.: 55 (many of whom I don't hear from too often); first: Feb. 1985; last: May. 1992 (#43)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), running questions on baseball rules, contests

Openings: Diplomacy, No-Press Gunboat, Seismic Diplomacy (\$3.00 NMR deposit for all games).

I'm slowly learning desktop publishing techniques, which means *XL* is changing its look in every issue—in #43 I used larger than ever type in a classic screwup and turned 32 pages into 44 at my own expense. Eventually the look will settle somewhere and I'll go back to concentrating on responding to letters and writing about what interests me, which is not necessarily hobby-relevant—but it's odds-on you'll enjoy it. Still looking for players—with many on my sub list no longer responding and three games open, this would be a good zine to check out if you like a bit of everything.

Now Garret, be gentle...

BMcI

It's big. A wide variety of topics are touched upon in McBruce's chat and his large lettercol. *XL* is a very personal 'zine. Bruce relates incidents in his life, opinions on current affairs (and solicits the same from his readers) in an engaging style. On the down side, it shows up sporadically. He's regular for a while and then no issues for months. The last issue I saw came shortly after DipCon. (Bruce has a habit of putting out an issue soon after someone's lament over *XL*'s hibernation sees print, so here's hoping.) I don't play here so I won't comment on the games except to say that I find his maps hard to follow. You don't have to play here to enjoy the 'zine. My hobby involvement confirms my wife's suspicions that I'm a nut, but she enjoys *XL* as much as I do and more than anything else I receive. I hope Bruce gets his 'zine off and running soon. It's missed. RL

I make no bones about the fact that this is the sort of zine that I like, one with plenty of reading material. It is a zine I would and do subscribe to even though I am not involved in a game here. The annoying thing about about *Excelsior* is that while some issues are produced right on schedule, there are times when the zine will not appear for three months or more. Many of the problems that Bruce has in filling his game openings probably stem from this. If he could find a schedule he felt comfortable with and could maintain it, the perception that the zine is not a good place in which to play might eventually disappear. Actually, Bruce is quite conscientious about trying to run the games on time by sending them out on flyers, even when the zine is on an extended vacation, as I think he has let you know, Garret. Still, the best thing about the zine is Bruce's writing. He follows the deceptively simple rule that faculty members of every writing school tries to drum into their students: write about what you know and are interested in. He is enthusiastic about the eclectic subjects he writes about and it shows. (By the way, Bruce, what happened to the LeCarré series?)

BMcK

I enjoy every issue of this zine. Over several days. The information is packed in so tight that it gives one a headache if you try and read too much at one time. But it is still enjoyable. This is one of the few zines I receive that I don't worry about the time schedule. I know that Bruce will send out the next issue, and that I will enjoy it.

DMcC

Garret be damned. *XL* is a zine I look forward to very much. It's entirely his business how often he publishes. Like so many great reading zines Bruce gets an

idea he'd like to talk about and tears into it—with little regard for how welcome it will be! His latest essay on Mandelbrot sets had me unable to put the zine down—and math was the only subject where I got a C in college!

Of course, it helps that McBruce is intelligent—i.e., a baseball fan. With his new equipment and skills improving, *XL* is ready to move into the Dipzine elite. PG

Hmmm... where did I say I *didn't* look forward to this zine? I enjoy *XL* as much as the next person. It is one of the *very best* "reading" zines in the hobby—it is truly packed with features. Bruce enjoys playing around with the look of his zine, and has recently purchased a 25 MHz 386 PC to help with the page layout. He reports having trouble with PC PageMaker, but I suspect the problem (as always) is with the Windows OS.

Bruce's interests range all over the map, and that is one of the main reasons for getting this zine. But I'm going to stick to my guns and repeat that if you are looking for a good, fast-moving game, there are better zines around. Bruce reacted somewhat strongly to my assertion in the last *ZR* that people would be "crazy" to play here due to the slow speed of Bruce's zine, and noted that, contrary to my suspicion, the games *were* being run on flyer between issues.

Okay, I'll grant that point, but I still insist that there are not too many GMs that run games slower than Bruce does. To avoid getting attacked again for paucity of data, this time I went back into my "dusty file drawers" (I've got to do that anyway, to prepare for writing up submissions to Jim Meinel's *Encyclopedia*) and dug up a couple more back issues of *XL*. The earliest issue with game reports that I could find was #38, published in November 1990. Going by the game dates in #38 and #42, 1989CE, now in Winter 1906, has advanced by exactly three game years, while 1986CC, now in Spring 1912, has advanced by exactly four game years. 18 months separated those two issues, meaning that turns are taking, on average, from two to three months to process. Bruce is *no* speed demon when it comes to GMing, that much is clear, although perhaps not as slow as my comments implied in the last issue of *ZR*.

Bruce's *XLent* writing is why most of us are getting this zine—if he can fill his games and crank them out to the satisfaction of game players, so much the better, but not if it will diminish his achievement in putting out one of the hobby's top reading zines.

[*XL* #43 (and Pubber Info Sheet—thanks, Bruce!) just arrived in time to be noted in this issue: the fastest turnaround I've ever seen Bruce pull off—bang on time! And it's obvious that he's doing his best to emphasize the games—he's putting them right in the centerfold so when the zine flops open, there they are, maps and all. As Bruce notes he had some copying problems with the maps this time, but give him another issue or two and they'll be as big and bold as you could want. I'd still like to see Bruce maintain this pace for another issue or two before committing myself, but for now I say that Bruce is making a real stab at being the next Canadian "TurboPhreak." (This is really going to piss some people off back east...)]

[It is a measure, I think, of how enjoyable this zine can be that, despite the crushing workload in the week ahead necessary to get this dumb *ZR* finished and out the door, as soon as I saw I'd received *XL* I kicked off my shoes and settled down on the couch (a reclining position, of course)]

and read it cover to cover. Some things are more important than finishing ZR on time; clearly, reading XL is one of them. (Cynics will point out, of course, that much of XL #43 was taken up with a lengthy letter I sent Bruce, possibly explaining my eagerness to read the thing. Yeah, but they're cynics, need I say more...) GS

Eyewitness News

John D. Kirk, P.O. Box 1284, Searcy, AR 72143-1284

Free to players, \$.75/issue to non-players, trades accepted; digest; xerox printed; 20 pages; freq.: 10 issues/year; circ.: 40; first: Aug. 1991; last: Nov. 1991 (#3)

Runs: Empire Builder Speed Game (1), Railway Rivals (4), Snowball Fighting (1), Acquire (1).

Openings: None, probably.

Probably folded. I have not seen an issue since #3 last fall. It's too bad, too—John was very imaginative. RAW

This hasn't been officially folded, so I still have hopes it will resurface with a little streamlining done. It like to broke my heart when *EN* quit showing up in the mail. I believe it had (has?) the potential to become one of the very best in the hobby. And John Kirk is one of the world's truly nice people. I miss him. JS

The last thing John said to me about his zine was, "It'll have to get smaller, and I'll have to get out of some of the games I'm in, but I really want to keep it going." About the time issue #4 was supposed to come out, a squad of workers at his software firm left, increasing his work load from 40 to 60 hours per week. Then a huge bug developed in their product, and because it's a tax program, the company has to fix up records for tons of customers who were stung—make that 70 or 80 hours.

Keep praying for him; we can't afford to lose this one.

(Later: Conrad von Metzke has started rehousing the rail games from *EN* [depressing story, ain't it?...] I've offered to take the Snowball Fight but I was in it and I may be the only player who wants to continue.) PG

Late word seems to be that this zine has folded. The latest *36 Miles of Trouble* reports that the Railway Rivals games John had been carrying are being re-housed. This was a very promising looking zine and it is very disappointing to be reporting it as a fold. Perhaps one day John will be able to get back into publishing on a scale he can manage.

(Later: It sounds pretty definite that *Eyewitness News* has folded. The Railway Rivals and Diplomacy games John had been carrying have already been re-housed. I presume the other games will just be dropped.) SC

Add *EN* to the list of folded zines. CVM

My last issue is #3, November 1991. John said he'd send me issues to help out on my project, so my guess is this was the last one??? A tremendous amount of creative energy put into his issues. JM

You should list *Eyewitness News* in the folded or missing category. Nobody in the RR hobby has heard from John Kirk in months and his RR games are being continued by volunteer GMs. It's a shame because the zine had promise but I'm afraid that John bit off more than he could chew. KH

Will John continue pubbing? I hope he will. JKG
Well, I'm allowed a few judgement calls in this ZR business, and so I'm keeping *Eyewitness News* here in the zine listings. I think it's about 98 percent certain that *Eyewitness News* is a goner, and after only three issues (sob), but there's still a tiny flicker of hope that somehow, someday, John may manage to struggle back. From the comments received above it is obvious that he is greatly missed.

Eyewitness News was perhaps the most creative zine started (or published, for that matter) in 1991. Obviously, many hours of effort went into making this zine a "seamless whole," rather than just a collection of game reports and letters/comments. John's "gimmick" was to model his zine after an evening's "entertainment" on your favorite TeeVee channel. Instead of page numbers, we got times running in the page footers (i.e., "9:17-9:19"). We even got the beginnings of a cartoon show featuring "Clyde" and "Nancy," since John discovered that the "Clyde" space on his Dip map he was rendering for the zine resembled a human head! (A side comment: does anyone else see the face sandwiched in between St. Petersburg, the Ural mountains, and the Barents Sea? Yeah, that's the ticket, it's defined by the dark green and light green "contour" colors!)

Unfortunately, this one's probably gone. I'm not even sure if it's worth wasting a stamp to bother John—he has not responded to my requests for information, and several other publishers likewise report coming up blank. Believe me, if John Kirk and *EN* ever return, you will be sure to hear about it. Come on back John!

But if nothing has happened by the next issue of ZR, this one will definitely be reported as a fold, although I imagine many of the comments printed here will suffice as post-mortems. GS

fast trax

Dick Martin, 17601 Lisa Drive, Rockville, MD 20855-1319

Free; open page; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 4-5 weeks; circ.: 60; first: Jan. 1990; last: Jan. 1992 (#23)

Runs: 1830 (4).

Openings: Probably not.

No "guest reviews" from anybody about *fast trax*, no Pubber Info Sheet from Dick Martin, no copy of the zine since January. Is this a fold?

I don't think so. I just took a quick glance through a couple of other 1830 zines (*Frueh's Folly* and *Loco Motives*) and there was no mention of anything out of the ordinary with Dick's zine. And Dick seems to be continuing to play out his games, at least in *Frueh's Folly*.

Since it's free for the asking, all you're risking is a stamp to ask Dick about any possible game openings, and who knows, maybe he'll even answer *your* query! Dick has finished his education (for now), so he has fewer excuses than ever for not staying on time. Um, I suppose there's always a final, debilitating, massive case of hobby burnout...

If *fast trax* is still a happening thing, you could get to be a part of a great game, if only as a standby (the Jan-

uary issue said no openings here for at least six months, though that would mean July if the zine has been running in the interim). Dick has been one of my favorite publishers, and while the focus of the two issues I've received since the last ZR has been on the games, you generally get at least a page of chat from Dick. There is nobody who does it better, in my humble opinion. Issue #23 also included two and a half pages of "Rail Mail" (letters). And while many other publishers have adopted desktop publishing software and laser printing, Dick was one of the earliest adopters and his zine still looks great. Indeed, I was thumbing through some old issues of *Retaliation* recently and I was reminded that Dicko was one of the first to use the "Copperplate" typeface—a broad, elegant face with delicate, almost unnoticeable serifs. Now, of course, open any magazine and there's Copperplate smacking you in the face, but I like to think Dick was there before anybody else. Perhaps he's figuring out what the next big non-Dip game will be and preparing to construct its bandwagon...

[After writing the above, I received the following helpful message from Eric Brosius via E-mail—the situation looks considerably grimmer than my optimism above seems to merit:]

Yes, I *am* playing in *fast trax*. Yes, there has been just the one issue this year. Dick put out about 16 issues in 1990, about 6 in 1991, and 1 so far in 1992. I don't know what the cause of the delays is.

GS

EB

Frueh's Folly

Mark Frueh, 1128 Olympus Drive, Naperville, IL 60540

Free; digest; xerox printed; 18–20 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 52; first: April 1991; last: May 1992 (#14)

Runs: Diplomacy (1), 1830 (3), 1830 Reading variant (1), Kremlin (2), Acquire (3); in subzine: 1830 (1), 1835 (1).

Openings: None.

Nothing special—just a game zine with an occasional editorial from guests and me. Unfortunately, I'm not really looking for any more subscribers at this time. MF

This is a fairly no-nonsense gameszine put out by Hobby Old-Fart Mark "Puppy" Frueh. The focus is on non-Diplomacy games like Acquire, 1830, and Kremlin. It is too early to tell how this zine will turn out, except to say that we will at least be kept up to date about Mark's job and travel plans... So far, the games service has been superb and timely in the two 1830 games I am playing here.

DH

This one is obviously a lot more regular and reliable than *fast trax*. Mark is utterly dependable, and with the exception of a five-week interval around the end of the year, he has managed to keep exactly to his four-week schedule. I've received seven issues of *Frueh's Folly* since the last ZR.

Up till the last issue, *FF* was put out in open page format, but #14 arrived as a digest, along with the usual apologies. As many of you know I'm a big fan of digest zines, and I'm not bothered one bit by seeing this thing in digest form. Mark uses 1830 maps provided by Dick

Martin (I'm a little unclear as to whether Dick actually produces the maps each issue, or has just provided masters for Mark to update). In general this is a good gamers' zine. Mark runs one Dip game, presumably to maintain some ties with the larger hobby, but the focus is very definitely on non-Dip games, especially 1830/1835. Mark shies away from reading matter, which in the main is provided by a subzine or two that appear somewhat irregularly. Definitely a zine for playing games in, and for that purpose, practically ideal.

The one hitch: no game openings. (I suppose that makes sense, eh—great playing zines have a tendency to fill up on games, so you often have to wait for a game to end before the GM will open another.) Apparently Mark isn't expecting any game openings for a while either—probably for the best as it will allow him to keep on track. If you want to play here, I'd try to sign up as a standby. (Since it's *FREE*, you really can't go wrong!) Then when a new game opens up you'll be right there, ready to go.

GS

The Gamer's Zine

Earl E. Whiskeyman, Jr., 27 Mark St., Milford, CT 06460

\$11.00/12 issues; open page; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 45; first: July 1981; last: May 1992 (#166)

Runs: Diplomacy (1), Gunboat (1), En Gardel (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Machiavelli (all games \$3.00).

Up until a month ago, this zine was very regular and reliable. Earl did a fine job of keeping to his "monthly" schedule—usually the deadline was four weeks apart, with occasional five-week deadlines to make up for the "ratcheting" effect due to the non-integral number of weeks in a month. But I haven't seen a copy of this since March—the deadline for the next issue was April 18th, so Earl is now about a month overdue. Further, he did not return either of the Pubber Info Sheets I sent him over the past month or two, also a little odd.

Perhaps he's forgotten about our trade, but I don't think so: Phil Reynolds' May issue of *Pontevedria* lists several "April" issues for various zines, but also shows Mar. '92 (#165) as the latest *he's* received of *TGZ*. Frankly, I've no idea what could be the problem, there was no indication of trouble on the horizon and right up to the March issue Earl had been about as timely as ever. I doubt a fold is involved here, more likely there has either been an error, or computer malfunction, something of that sort. Very few zines just up and disappear without giving some indications in the months (and in some cases, years) beforehand, with longer and longer delays between issues.

TGZ is a fairly small, dependable zine, focused almost exclusively on the games. There are some openings available (see above). At \$11.00 per 12 issues it isn't the cheapest thing out there, and as it rarely exceeds 10 pages in length, I don't think it's the best deal going. You could expect to pay over \$20.00 for a complete game of Diplomacy or Gunboat. Last issue I might have said that paying what amounts to a premium for a slightly dis-

appointing effort would be worth it, given Earl's "obsessive" regularity. Now, however, I'm not so sure. With any luck I'll get another issue of this zine before I go to press and be able to come back here and bang in some last minute corrections. The delay is quite odd and out of character.

[Late note: TGZ #166 just showed up, with Earl's announcement that his mother died in April, which of course delayed the zine. Our regrets and condolences go to Earl, that is a tough thing to happen to anybody.]

[I knew it had to be something like this—TGZ is one of the most regular zines around. In other news, the En Garde! campaign is *finally* restarting—the "guest" GM who runs that game has been involved in selling, buying, and moving into a new house, and that process has taken pretty much the entire time I've been running ZR! But now she's ready to go.] GS

Get Them Dots Now!

Lee A. Kendter, Jr., 376A Willowbrook Drive, Jeffersonville, PA 19403

\$6.00/10 issues (back issues: \$.50/issue); open page; laser masters/xerox printing; 8-10 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 35-40; first: Oct. 1988; last: May 1992 (#44)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat (1), Youngstown (1), Get Them Dots Now (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Land Bridge III Dip (\$5.00 NMR deposit for either).

GTDN is a zine with an emphasis on speed. The zine is published the first Friday of every month, and is usually in the mail on Sunday. Most issues include a variant, with about 75 percent of those reprints of popular variants. You will also find some reprinted cartoons, and news articles that I feel are humorous. Articles about variants, and game play in general are included from time to time.

LAKJ

Clear, concise, reliable. What better praise can you give to a warehouse zine? After all, that is what this hobby is based on. You have all these pretty wordy zines that most people like, but games, games, games is what it is really all about. And *GTDN!* is one of the two best at delivering just that.

DMcC

A streamlined publication with very well run games and a few cerebral cartoons thrown in to add a little humor. Some variant game rules are always included, so if you're looking for something new to try you might want to take a look.

JS

GTDN, the zine, is regular and reliable. Lee has been hitting his monthly schedule without fail since the last issue of *ZR*—since adjusting from his previous 4-week interval to monthly, Lee hasn't been late yet! I've seen six issues of *GTDN* since the fall—and because I just barely managed to see issue #38 before *ZR* #19 went out, and will just miss seeing issue #45 before this issue of *ZR* goes to print, he's really produced almost seven issues of the thing in the last seven months. Regularity is just not a problem here.

It's also pretty cheap to play in *GTDN*—if you never NMR you could play out an average game for about \$12.00. Considering the speed and general "user-friend-

liness" of the zine (but no maps, sadly), that's a real bargain, I think.

Don't sub to this one if you're already playing in enough games and you're looking for some good reading material. There just isn't very much of that here, although Lee always includes a few cartoons and some text filler bits here and there. (This also makes it an attractive and accessible product.) Do sub to this one if you want to play a good, swift, *cheap* game run by a competent and serious GM. At this point Lee has just two games open. My advice would be to jump on these. Lee will not let game overload slow him down, so once these fill you may have to wait for a while if you want to play here. Get them game openings now! GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW!

!GOOOOOOOOOOLLLLLLLLLLLL!

Don Del Grande, 142 Ellseo Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339

\$8.00/year; open page; xerox printed; — (?); freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: — (?); first: Jan. 1992; last: May 1992 (#3)

Runs: None, yet.

Openings: United league (\$8.00 season fee includes subscription)

!GOL! (the short name—Spanish for "goal"; the long name represents how your average Latin American announcer responds to a goal being scored) will be running the "Daily Sun" United league; rules available upon request. There may be a delay, as there is talk of my taking in the *Disease City* league from Jim Goode. DDG

Too early to tell much about it. I've seen the first two issues, both were dominated by rules (which is customary for beginning United zines). That makes them read as fairly dry, but there's no telling what it might be like when Don has more space to use. By the time anyone sees this it will probably be too late to get in the first season, but if Don is like most United GMs he'll expand between the first two seasons so write now to get in on the fun! KB

Comprehensive set of rules. *!GOL!* is taking the *Disease City* "United Soccer" league. JKG

This is the newest United zine in North America. The very latest word in *!GOL!* #3 is that Don is taking over James K. Goode's *Disease City* United league—lock, stock, and barrel. (So the newest United zine will end up running one of the oldest leagues!)

There were a few new players for *!GOL!* who were not playing in *Disease City*, and Don is apparently going to form a "mini-league" with these relative newcomers (along with some *DC* standbys). The upshot is that Don will probably have no standbys available once things get really rolling, and will therefore need a little new blood to help him get through the season with a complete roster. The way things generally work in these United zines is that expansion teams generally go to those who are willing to standby for the previous season (i.e., you gotta pay your dues). Why not see if Don needs any standbys?

Don't ask me how many "Os" and "Ls" are in this zine's name! Every time I see anything to do with

!GOL!, Don's got something different. If I remember I'll probably just add or subtract "Os" or "Ls" from the line of big bold type at the head of this review until it just fills the space provided. Come to think of it, I think that's how Don does it too! (Not that it matters; Don tells us that "*!GOL!*" is sufficient, especially for those who don't have the "upside-down exclamation point.")

Obviously, there's nothing here but United—probably no reason to get it unless you're looking to play that game. It's still too early to tell how Don is going to "spice up" this zine, but those who get *Lemon Curry*, Don's Diplomacy zine, are probably expecting something a little out of the ordinary. Consequently, *!GOL!* should provide a comfortable home to the *Disease City* league; that "infectious publication" was one of the more *bizarre* zines I reviewed in the last issue of ZR. GS

Gonzo Rails

Doug Brown, 2517 Indian Wells Rd., Placerville, CA 95667

\$100.00 per issue (Price rumored to have increased to \$500.00 per. Actually, though, that's the full-year savings package and it's still only \$100.00 per issue.); open page; xerox printed; 4-5 pages; freq.: God only knows! Mostly in non-hibernating summer months; circ.: 15; first: July 1985; last: never seen

Runs: Railway Rivals (3).

Openings: Are you kidding?! No way!

My 'zine has been underwater for several months and no air has reached it. Brain damage is a certainty—but the patient has yet to be pronounced dead. Hopefully new issues will be appearing during my non-teaching months and games will be completed.

(Some of my publishing wit was found in "ANALYSIS"—a sub-zine in *Eyewitness News*, but that 'zine has since folded. I've had offers to take on "analysis," in other 'zines, but as of now I've avoided that temptation.)

All players in my games play for free—if I could just get *one* paying subber I'd be sure to keep publishing, but some people have complained (certainly non-readers) that my sub prices are a bit steep. DB

I believe Doug is folding. I haven't seen an issue in several months and it's possible that it has already been folded. But I would expect that Doug will finish off the games he had been running. At least I hope so. SC

Doug continues to claim that he's going to quit publishing. I believe he'll stay with it. JKG

I've never seen this one, but apparently it soldiers on, desperately trying to finish up its few remaining games.

Personally, if a zine is good, I'm willing to pay *any* amount of money in order to see it. If *Gonzo Rails* has what you want, you'd gladly pay \$100.00 (or even \$500.00, if that's what it takes) to get a glimpse of the thing. Hell, I know that if I ever win the lottery the first thing I'll be doing is sending ol' Dougie five C-notes.

Seriously, there's no reason to bother Doug anymore. If you want to interact with him, check out just about any Railway Rivals zine in the hobby, where he is apparently one of the more prolific players. If someone could just inform me if/when he finally folds, that would be enough for me. GS

Graustark

John Boardman, 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226-5302

Sub is included in game fee, \$10.00/9 issues for non-players, back issues as available for \$3.00/10 issues; open page; mimeo printed/covers occasionally xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 70; first: May 1963; last: Apr. 1992 (#603)

Runs: Diplomacy (9).

Openings: Always a gamestart of Diplomacy (\$30.00, includes sub).

Game fee is \$30.00, which includes a subscription for as long as the game lasts. Players may send in preference lists on which countries they'd prefer to play. JB

Lots of people say exactly what they think. John Boardman is unusual 'cause he's *left*, not right, wing. EB

I disagree with your assessment (in ZR #19) of John's costs. Oh, sure, it's up front, so it looks big, but the average game there is going to last three years (39 issues—John almost always separates Winter, and DIAS does mean slightly longer games), by which time you will have paid less than \$1.00 per issue. Considering most zines charge a game fee, John's cost on a comparable basis will be about 65¢ an issue! What percentage of the hobby will run a game with a \$5.00 fee and 65¢ subscriptions for all you get in *Graustark*? PG

Professor John has always exhibited a certain proprietary feeling toward Postal Diplomacy—perhaps with certain legitimacy; he's the originator of the Boardman Numbers that has given this fragmented disarray of game players a sense of order, and has been publishing for nearly 30 consecutive years. His games are DIAS ("Draws Include All Survivors") and he says that per the rulebook if it isn't DIAS it isn't Diplomacy. I am reminded of Isaac Asimov watching a preview of the movie *2001*. Asimov, of course, wrote a whole series of stories based on the Three Laws of Robotics, while *2001* re-presented the "evil" robot. Asimov stalked up the aisle with his friend snorting "They're breaking the First Law of Robotics!!"

His friend smiled and said, "Well, strike them with lightning, Isaac!!"

But *Graustark* is worth the sub price because it is always a well-crafted literate composition. Boardman's command of the language and exercises in logic (sometimes sound, sometimes fallacious) make *Graustark* an exciting read. BE

John Boardman is the standard by which all other publishers must be measured when it comes to regularity. As expected, he has compiled a "perfect record" since last fall's ZR, without a single delayed issue. This means I have received seven issues on our trade through the beginning of this month—an eighth issue (#604) that had a May 9th deadline is probably in John's hands waiting to be mailed to me. Since I'm not playing here he generally bundles *Graustark* with *Empire*, *Dagon* (his monthly "APA-Q" zine), and *Anakreon* (his quarterly "APA-Filk" zine) and mails them all to me at the same time. Yes, the man is a publishing fiend!

Pete can say what he likes, but \$30.00 for a game of Dip puts John on the high end of the price spectrum—

right up there with Pete's zine *Perelandra* (And, um, due to my new, higher prices, with *Upstart*, too.) But if there was ever a guarantee of "never folding," it has to be *Graustark*—John recently published his 600th issue. This is a record that will never be matched by any publishing effort (excepting electronic so-called "zines")—indeed, as I pointed out last time, with John's incredible regularity and swift 4-week deadlines, he continues to *gain* on all but a handful of zines in the hobby.

John does make errors more frequently than you'd expect from such a long-lived GM, and in general the games service could be a little better (i.e., I'd prefer maps, and a commitment to run all press in the month it's received). But overall this is one of the top places to play Dip in the hobby, and you owe it to yourself to play here at least once in your Dip "career." Some of the players don't play anywhere else.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this is just a warehouse, though. John always includes some gab in his "Ministry of Miscellany" column, and often includes book reviews, political commentary, and the like. I enjoy his writing immensely—indeed, when I joined the hobby in 1986 it was exposure to John's publications that convinced me the hobby was *not* filled by a bunch of right-wing fascioids, and that space for a left-wing viewpoint had been partially secured through his efforts. In my own modest and likeable manner I have attempted to extend his gains.

John always has openings for Regular Diplomacy (indeed, he runs nothing else in *Graustark*), so if you want to see the stuff of which legends are properly made, request a sample. GS

Heroes of Olympus

Steve Nicewamer, 1310-11 Ephesus Church Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514

\$1.00/issue; open page; xerox printed; 10-18 pages; freq.: 6-10 weeks; circ.: 30 (?); first: Oct. 1989; last: May 1992 (#16)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Rail Baron (1), Empires of the Middle Ages (1).

Openings: Pax Britannica, 1830/1835, Empires of the Middle Ages (standbys), United (don't know gamefees for any games).

Heroes' main claim to fame is running the only Empires game in North America. If your taste tends toward being absolute ruler of all you survey (and getting the GM to do all the work), then *Heroes* is worth a look. I try to run a wide variety of games, and the turnaround problems should be over now that summer is here (no more homework, no more books, yeah!). Some different games, a little chat, and my neo-libertarian rantings—what more could you ask for? Subscribe now, and receive the second annual swimsuit issue! SN

Steve Nicewamer has begun this second CAD-controlled gameszine to go along with Mike Lowrey's CCC. Though the zine is still in its early stages, there is a great deal of promise. Steve began by offering lots of exotic games like Search for the Nile and Down with the King, but they did not fill as quickly as he had hoped. Now that he is offering things like Diplomacy,

United We Stand...

This brief article is intended to provide you with a little information on United, since most of you know little, if anything, about it. Before I get into it, I should caution you that each United league has slightly different rules. Thus the information here is very generalized. I would highly recommend that you send a couple of stamps to a few United publishers to get their rules to get a real feel for it.

United is a postal soccer management simulation designed by Alan Parr. Each player acts as manager of his own club, all the way from balancing the books to tactical match situations.

United works on two levels. First there is individual match management. Each turn (called a session), the manager submits lineups for each of his club's matches (generally 2-5 per session). The manager divides his players among the five areas: Goalkeeper, Sweeper, Defense, Midfield, Forwards. The three outfield areas (defense, midfield, and forwards) are compared to the opposite area on the opposing team (forward to defense and vice versa, midfield to midfield, etc.) to determine the number of shots on goal for each team. For example, if team A's forward area is 8 greater than team B's defense, then team A gains 8 shots on goal. For midfield, the difference is halved and for defense it is quartered. The shots are then tested against the opposing sweeper and goalkeeper to determine how many of them score. Outfield players can

play out of their normal position at a slightly reduced level, so the play is quite fluid. Some leagues also offer tactical options that alter the shot formulas, giving an advantage in one area but creating potentially devastating disadvantages in another.

United also operates on the general management level. This includes acquisition of new players through trades or free agent signing (hopefully without bankrupting the club!). The manager must also decide which players to coach. Coaching older, higher skill player can reap great benefits in the short term, but will be costly when the season ends and the players age (older players lose more levels than younger ones). In some leagues there is the option of purchasing additional home advantage, a better coaching staff, or even a minor league team, all while still operating from a limited income.

All in all, United is a lot of fun. The smallest leagues have at least 8 clubs, the largest U.S. league currently has 32; as you can imagine, the press volume is usually quite high. Even if you hate soccer, you can still enjoy United. I know several avowed soccer haters that play United and have a good time with it. Just think of all the people that dislike warfare but play Diplomacy, and you'll understand.

With the recent fold of *Disease City*, there are currently four U.S. zines running United. There should be some info these (*Angst United*, *The Appalachian General*, *jGOL!*, and *Pilot Light*) elsewhere in this issue of *Zine Register*. KB

I expect his mailing list will swell over the next year. There is already a great deal of international participation in its pages—are we looking at the next *Europa Express*, or something? At any rate, the cover art has been superb as of late, and the thing comes out regularly. *Heroes* does have the distinct accomplishment of being the only zine to be published from Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm...

David's assessment of this zine was written last fall (his stuff just failed to make it into ZR #19 by a matter of days); I wonder if he still feels this is a zine with such great promise. *Heroes* is definitely put together in an attractive manner, the covers are quite exciting (though I'd put my money on Kevin Kinsel's *D.O.G.S. of War* if it came to a "cover showdown"), and the game adjudications are clear with plenty of white space. A zine with lots of promise, but unfortunately, not much else. (Steve didn't bother to send back either of the Pubber Info Sheets I sent him—but he did update his "blurb"—so I've filled in the data as accurately as I can from the copies of *Heroes* that I've received in trade. I think Steve charges for his games, but I can't find that info.)

Heroes does have a timeliness problem. Over the last seven months I've received four issues of the zine, with intervals ranging from six to ten weeks. For all this slowness it's still relatively reliable; I don't think we're looking at a fold or anything, at least not during the upcoming summer months.

As far as unfulfilled "promises" go, issue #16 of this zine was somewhat typical: the cover had a dramatic picture of a sword-wielding Ninja bear, with the legend "Attack of the Turbo-Freaks!" Oh-kay, I thought, this looks like fun—Steve is going to say something interesting on the hobby "crisis" that's been manufactured by Tom Nash, Brad Wilson, and Cal White. But inside—nothing! Not a single word on "TurboPhreakism." What a bitter disappointment!

Well, I suppose *Heroes* is slow enough to qualify as "fannish," but there's just not an especially huge amount of reading material. A page or three in each issue is about all we get, then the rest of the space is taken up with game reports. If Steve truly wants a "fannish" zine he's going to have to put in a lot more quality time on this thing—which, barring a brief interlude during the summer months, he just may not have in requisite quantities.

Final analysis? I'll wait and see. The true test will come next fall when I believe Steve will be returning to his school books and teachers' dirty looks. If the zine is going to be mainly games, and it's mainly going to be late, then there are other, better, places to play (unless you want to play Pax Britannica or Empires of the Middle Ages, in which case your options in the hobby are pretty limited). If Steve starts putting more original writing in the zine, develops a letter col, gets some subzines, etc., then the "fans" won't much care if it only comes out five or six times a year (the games players might grumble, but screw 'em anyway—they don't count). I sincerely doubt this will ever become a zine that will satisfy both players and "fen" (whoever they are).

But what the heck, request a sample already (or ask for *Heroes* to be included in your NAZB packet). It may not be perfect, but it's got promise... GS

The Home Office

Fred G. Hyatt, 60 Grandview Place, Montclair, NJ 07043

\$9.00/12 issues; open page; xerox printed; 10–16 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 57 (?); first: Mar. 1986; last: Apr. 1992 (#66)

Runs: Diplomacy (3), Colonia VII (3), Eurasian Dip (1), 1499 Dip (?) (1), Landbridge III Dip (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat Colonia VII, African Diplomacy, Youngstown IV (no gamefees, I think, for all games).

The best playing zine in the hobby. It runs games, games, and games. It has a teaser each issue giving the biography of various people throughout history, but not to such an extent that it takes away from the main focus. The only fault with this zine is that the scope of variants is a little narrow. But for those who love monster variants, you couldn't ask for better. Fred has to be deranged to run these mega-games, but he has proven that he is not certifiably insane, so I guess he will be around for a while. He even offers Diplomacy for you sticks in the mud. DMcC

Fred Hyatt is a great GM. Anyone who runs as many Colonia VII games as well as he does deserves a medal. Fred Hyatt is also a great guy but you don't see much of him here. What you do see is a lot of well-run games and a mini-bio of a different historical personage every issue. Full of great little quotes tucked here and there as well. JS

Yet another good warehouse is this zine by Fred Hyatt. This one comes out like clockwork, with few GM errors, and because of that is every Dip player's dream. There is even some entertaining tidbits of reading material throughout the zine, including Fred's patented "Mini-Bio" features on famous military leaders. The focus here is on variants, with some regular Dip as well. You shouldn't sub to the zine without trying a game of Fred's monster variant Colonia VII (which was profiled in DW #62). With nine Powers and over 100 centers, it is definitely an experience. I have nothing negative to say about *THO* except that it is not attractively laid-out, and there are no maps. (In other words, Garret would hate it.) DH

Excuse me, if you don't mind, I think I'd like to speak for myself here. Harumph! Alright, here goes: I hate it!

Naw, that's just a joke, of course. Mind you, considering how much attention Fred "I will ignore you forever" Hyatt has lavished on me since I took over ZR, I'd be man of marble, or steel, or something, if I didn't approach this review with less than completely positive impressions. But I'll do my best. (Thanks, by the way, to those of you who sent me, collectively, no less than five back issues of *THO*—a big help!)

As everybody says, this one runs games—a lot of games—a lot of big world-busting variants like Colonia VII. The zine presents the games clearly and, as far as I know, accurately. There is not very much here besides the games. Every issue, apparently, Fred writes up some military guy in a "mini-bio"—in the issues I saw this included Sam Houston, Sgt. Alvin York, and others, all

American. I don't know if he's ever covered Major General Robert C. Schenck, who just happened to command a brigade at First Bull Run and was soundly beaten by "Stonewall" Jackson at Cross Keys/Port Republic—but he should! (Just an idea, of course...)

In addition to the "mini-bios," other material, generally on a military, diplomatic, or historical theme, apparently runs from time to time. All this stuff is interesting, and undoubtedly adds to the the players' enjoyment of their games, but the essential point of the zine is to play some Dip variants (and some Regular Dip, too) and have a good time. Judging by the comments from some of the players above (and from end-game statements that have appeared in the zine), they've been doing just that.

Since I haven't been receiving this thing every month, I can't speak to Fred's turnaround or regularity. No, wait, that's wrong—somebody sent me issue #57, which bears a July 1991 date. #66 bears a date of April 1992. Assuming these dates are each as accurate as the other, this suggests that Fred has managed to put out nine issues in nine months—pretty damn good! And games come fairly cheap here, an average 20-turn game of Dip will cost you about \$15.00—maybe a little below the going rate. My one worry would be that many of the same names seem to appear in every game—this could mean that cross-gaming may figure into alliance structures. Someone in their end-game statement did complain of a lack of a "kill" mentality among the players (i.e., a willingness to accept large draws).

Worth checking out if you're looking for a game, especially of Colonia, Youngstown, or other variants. I just hope Fred will respond to your inquiries... GS

Hoodwink

Stven Carlberg, 1939 Windemere Drive, Atlanta, GA 30324

\$.70/issue; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 12-14 pages; freq.: 4-5 weeks; circ.: 45; first: Sep. 1990; last: Apr. 1992 (#20)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat with Press (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat with Press (\$5.00 fee for either, include preference list).

"A Dip Zine for Purists," my motto. Prompt as clockwork, great maps, clear and accurate game reporting (using double-underlining for dislodged units instead of *Zine Register*-recommended all-caps method), lots of game-oriented press, and lots of good players involved in some very interesting contests. SC

I think this is probably the cleanest little publication in the hobby. I guess if Stven stapled the thing I'd have to call it damn near perfect. It continues to climb the ladder of personal favorites. Well-run games. Good maps. Good editorials. Very small but thoughtful letter column and wonderful press. JS

Pretty, regular, and well GMed. Best of all, he doesn't conform to the "ZR-approved" final position crap. Stven tries to make his players think about their game rather than coast through it gunboat style. Unfortunately, many people have complained about this and he has given in to a few of the lazy bastards' demands. *Hoodwink* has a

very good anonymous discussion about each power. His own comments don't say a whole lot, but this may be a ploy to elicit further responses. Regardless, this is a good zine to play in and to learn from. Unless you are prone to seasickness, that is. DMCC

(Damn, which side of bed did David roll out of, anyway? Cheesh! To think that I, as a *player* in this otherwise *excellent* zine, am out of line when suggesting, as I did in ZR #19, that Stven should tell the players, explicitly, which powers have to build and which have to disband... As the French would say, "Phfphouou" [i.e., that sound they make when they purse their lips and blow out with a slightly explosive sound indicating disdain and ridicule]. Happily Stven appears to agree with me, David; he's started to include that information with the game reports.

(I suppose we could just dispense with the adjudication altogether—sure, let's have the GM just publish all the moves and let everybody figure out what happened, all by their lonesome! If David is interested in having the players "think about their game rather than coast through it gunboat style," why stop half-way? Let's make the players really *work* for their fun. Yeah, that's the ticket... Besides, David should make up his mind. Is it "many people" or just a "few lazy bastards"?!?

(Whew, glad I got that off my chest. Sorry about that Stven, just had to pistol-whip this arrogant cus once or twice. He should be okay from now on.)

This remains one of my favorite zines, and if anything, it's gotten better. Happily it is not a "TurboPhreak" zine—I can't remember if it was Brad or Cal who anointed Stven—but let me tell you, I sure am glad. I know I wouldn't want to play in a zine that put too great a premium on timely turnaround, "obsessive" regularity, appearance, accurate GMing, and all the rest of those pesky Turbo "sins." I'm enjoying myself too much here to think about quitting or anything. I'll have to keep my eyes open from now on, though: any hint of "TurboPhreakism" and I'm outta here!

The basic purpose of this zine is to play Regular and Gunboat Diplomacy (and along the way some "Scattergories," a word-matching game, though for some reason Stven left that off his Pubber-Info Sheet). Sure, Stven includes some reading matter in the form of this and that—little hobby outtakes, *Hoodwink* surveys, and strategy discussions. But the focus is most definitely on the games.

Actually, it's been several issues since we've had any good strategy rhubarbs, which is too bad; I always thought they were some of the most interesting writing in the zine, other than the press. (Oh, I forgot to mention the press, which is threatening to overwhelm even Stven's "rubberized" type specs.)

A recent addition to the zine is Stven reprinting his "Yer Blues" a one-sheet submission to "ALPS," which is apparently a music-oriented APA (amateur press association). Here it's running as a kind of subzine. Unfortunately, much of it is Stven's replies to other publishers' submissions to ALPS, and the effect is a little like listening in on a phone conversation where you can only hear one side. My *guess* is that Stven, feeling some heat from the bullshit "TurboPhreak" controversy currently brewing in several of the hobby's so-called "fannish" zines, decided to bring in some "fannish" material from outside, and prove to those who are busily

attacking dependable and conscientious GMs that, see, I am "fannish" too. Lose it, Stven, it doesn't work. Bring back the S&T stuff.

Let's see, statistics time: before the turn of the year this zine was out on a four-week basis more often than not. But since January or so, five weeks has been more the norm. But either way Stven has been just as "maniacal" on his turnaround—this thing is usually in the mails within three days of deadline, which is pretty damn good in my book. At any rate, I've received six issues of this zine since the last ZR (which for some reason neglected to mention a late-arriving issue of *Hoodwink*, issue #14). I'll just miss getting a seventh, which has a deadline of June 1st. You could expect a typical game of Dip to cost you, all things considered, about \$19.00, pretty much the median level for the hobby.

I heartily recommend this zine to anybody interested in playing Dip—get your sub fee in *now*, before Stven decides he's had enough and closes down the game openings. GS

Kathy's Korner

Kathy Caruso, 636 Astor Street, Norristown, PA 19401

\$1.00/issue; digest; xerox printed; 24 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: don't know; first: Jan. 1979 (?); last: May 1992 (#180)

Runs: Diplomacy (7).

Openings: None.

You don't pick Kathy... she picks you. And I feel sorry for those left out in the cold. I believe Kathy has her finger on something about the hobby that a lot of others have forgotten. It's supposed to be *FUN*. I haven't received a *KK* yet that didn't have me rolling before I was done. Don't nobody tell her, but I'm in luv...even if she is a Mets fan. Don't get to thinking she's some delicate little sweet thing, though. She'll bite off your head and spit down your stupid open neck if you leave her an opening. Take a risk if she'll have you. JS

Required reading if you're going to do more than dabble in postal games. You won't get it at first—acclimation may take a year. But *KK* represents the longest continuous trend in *Dipdom*: the sport of verbal abuse.

The entire zine, letters, subzines, and games, is inbred. Everyone in the zine has an "us vs. them" mentality about something. But respect is given to anyone, on any side, who has the balls to stand up for themselves in public. (And even some people who lie down and play dead, right Bob?) Think of the "Ask *KK*" section as the ultimate DnD game—play any part you like.

I hate taped zines. Otherwise, I can't find any fault with *KK* other than the Mets psychosis. PG

My personal favorite of places to play. In the back pages we play postal Dip, in the front we play "abuse everybody unmercifully." Obviously this isn't all players idea of a great time. I guess my suggestion is that if you like Don Rickles and Howard Cosell you would enjoy all of *KK*. You can play here in excellently GMed games against some of the best players in the hobby (when there are openings), and some folks just flip past the first ten pages. BE

Kathy deliberately doesn't respond to your requests for information because she doesn't want more subscribers. EB

When I read the shocking news, my first impulse was: "*FAKE!*—and a damn good one, too!" But then I realized that inside the zine Kathy's husband John Caruso had included his orders for a game he's playing in my zine, and I realized, no, this is no fake, this is reality.

Yes, Kathy is planning on folding, not right away, not even necessarily soon, but in the future. For now she is chopping all the "gossipy silliness," the GMing questions, and the readers' contests out of the zine and is turning *KK* into a warehouse to finish up her seven Diplomacy games. Kathy, the penultimate (or ultimate, take your pick) standby is not about to orphan her charges—she will either polish off the games or find GMs to take them over—she says the orphan director won't have to worry about this one.

This has to be the saddest news I'm announcing in this issue of *ZR*. I personally feel a tremendous sense of loss. My own zine *Upstart* was born as a subzine in *Kathy's Korner*, and other zines have started there as well (at least *Acropolis*, to my knowledge). Anybody who has worked with Kathy in a game knows that yes, she can be abusive to those she decides are her enemies, but if she wants you as an ally there is nobody who can be more helpful, even if you're the greenest novice around.

Kathy says she wants to stay on in the hobby as a player and as a standby—it's the GMing and publishing that she wants to dump. Her stated reasons are the usual—no time and no energy. After 180 issues, she deserves a break today. Okay, it may take a year or two to finish up the games, but *Dipdom's* only grandma will get her break...eventually.

Okay, so that's that. No real need to bug Kathy about trying to get on her sublist now, although she'll probably continue to need the odd standby. I don't believe there will be any more gamestarts, unless the tumult from her legions of loyal fans proves more than even she can withstand and she agrees to return (and please, count this review as my contribution to a "tumult"). Actually, I don't think that will happen; her statement sounded pretty definitive and hardly spur-of-the-moment.

This is not the end of *KK*. We will continue to list the zine until the formal ending, for the sake of form, but as they say, this one is "winding down to a fold." Kathy, you will be very much missed, make no mistake about it. GS

Kempelen's Turk

Brent Farha, 3980 E. Central, #2, Wichita, KS 67208

Three stamps or one dollar; open page; xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: 6-8 weeks; circ.: 12; first: "I can't recall (believe it was Jan. 1989)"; last: Mar. 1992 (#12)

Runs: Gunboat Diplomacy (3), Russian Front Diplomacy variant (1).

Openings: None.

To answer two questions posed in the previous issue of *Zine Register*, I run a Diplomacy magazine because A) it's a good excuse to keep in touch with a handful of high school cronies, B) I am resigned to the likelihood that I'll never enjoy face-to-face board or war gaming again, C) I have a perverse ego, and D) I want to make my mark in the Diplomacy world. I run a Russian Front variant because A) the topic interests me, B) normal Russian Front games turn me off, and C) there is no way I could ever talk any of my friends into reading Russian Front game rules (even The Russian Campaign is too much for most of them). Russian Front Diplomacy involves a fraction of the regular units you'd find in any other Russian Front game, and it doesn't involve dice.

I wanted very badly to design both a Dune variant and a Roman Gaul variant, and while time restraints have prevented this, my original theory regarding such variants still stands: Diplomacy as a hobby needs to get away from cross-gaming and puppeteering. We need to merge (at least on an abstract level) with role-playing games; not so much in the way of rules or how a game is played, but rather, how a player can win. New Diplomacy variants need to provide for multiple winners (and not the so-called "draws" present in regular Diplomacy games).

The Diplomacy zine that influenced me the most would very definitely have to be Doug Kent's *Maniac's Paradise* (with Dick Martin's *Retal* coming in a close second. I compare *Maniac's Paradise* to Chevrolet Chevettes; laugh if you will, but I still see those suckers everywhere, and they continue to draw good used car prices. They get you from point A to point B—no hassles, no frills.

My two biggest influences as far as players go are Bruce Roberts and Bruce Reiff. Roberts is like the alien in *Alien*; he has no pretenses when going in for the kill, and doesn't whine when it's his turn to get stabbed. Reiff never quits a game he's in (I don't blame him for his *Diplomacy Downs* debacle; ten games was too many to start with), and he can think three or four turns ahead (90 percent of the people I meet think that Italy and Austria should attack each other the first turn). BF

So who's laughing at *Maniac's Paradise*?

No game openings here, so I'm not sure what to say. Brent has about said it all. I've only received issue #12 since last ZR (when I had only received #9), so I can't say very much about regularity, etc., except that going from the listed deadlines, Brent has cranked out three issues in about seven months, not exactly world-class pace. Still, that seems okay, as long as his players are happy with the zine.

This zine seems a little bit out of the mainstream and caters to a pretty select bunch of players—Brent's high school buddies. On the other hand, his sub list has increased by 50 percent over what he reported in the last ZR so maybe he's getting some subbers from his appearances here. Who knows? GS

Lemon Curry

Don Del Grande, 142 Ellseo Drive, Greenbrae, CA 94904-1339

\$.65/issue; digest; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 33; first: June 1980; last: May 1992 (#122)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Kingmaker (1), 1830 (1), Trivial Pursuit (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Kremlin, Kingmaker, Trivial Pursuit (all games free).

Okay, so *Lemon Curry* doesn't run as many games as *Rebel* or have as many letters from readers as *Kathy's Korner* or isn't as big as *Diplomacy World*, but there's a variety of games, the universally acclaimed (*ahem*) slightly popular "Dip Warz" saga, International Diplomacy Tournament Ratings, miscellaneous ranting and raving (which may or may not be hobby-related), and a free Holy Grail with every new subscription (subject to availability). DDG

Don is a satirist, with interests all over the games, sports, entertainment, and pop culture lot. If he'd just use a smaller font so we could get more of his humor, it'd be ideal. PG

Don Del Grande has been putting out this zine for many years, albeit not under the same name. Mostly this is a warehouse zine, featuring some Diplomacy as well as other games, from 1830 to Kingmaker to postal Trivial Pursuit. He also has some writing material in there, particularly in his subzine devoted to his International Diplomacy Tournament Ratings. (The IDTR has always been kind of a big deal abroad, but most Americans don't seem to know about it.) What Don needs more than anything else is some new players. I believe he has openings in Dip right now, with more games certain to follow. DH

Gee, I guess traders don't get the Grail thing, huh?

Lemon Curry is an attractive little digest zine that doesn't try to do too much, and consequently has managed to survive for 12 years and over 120 issues. That's the way to go for Dip longevity, folks!

As part of a general trend throughout the publishing industry (and not just in Dipdom, mind you), *Lemon Curry* is the first zine to include color photographs! Don Del Grande was one of the only U.S. participants at the recent World Dip Con held in Australia and came back with (at least) a couple of pictures, which he was kind enough to share with us. Color photogs! Hey, that's pretty cool...

Don recently traded in his Atari 1040ST for a "no-name" 486/33 PC compatible, and with no discernible delay has switched production over to the PC with his latest issue, #122. The zine looks pretty much the same as before, same nicely planned-out digest format; perhaps not quite as much "all-upper-case" type, which is easier on the eyes; a little bit more leading. He's also introduced some Dip maps, which look like they've been scanned in. Obviously, he's been fairly busy over the past five weeks!

Six issues of this thing have appeared since the fall, so Don is right on target as far as his "five week" schedule is concerned. Turnaround is often as short as three days, but sometimes can be as long as a week—still, that's pretty good. Couple this fairly swift turnaround with the dependable five-week schedule, and you're talking a zine where it is certainly possible to play by mail, and *only* by mail. Free games and a cheap sub price means an average Diplomacy game could cost you around \$13.00—definitely below average in this increasingly expensive hobby. But unlike some of the really cheap zines, you won't be disappointed by Don's performance.

And lucky you, he's got openings in all your favorite games! This is one of the few places you can play King-maker, so if you've been looking for that one, you need look no further. This is a fun zine; check it out. GS

NEW!NEW!NEW!NEW!NEW!

Loco Motives

Dan Huffman, 311 Mallard Court, Charles Town, WV 25414-9469

Free; open page; laser/paint jet masters/xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 48; first: Nov. 1991; last: Apr. 1992 (Vol. 1, No. 6)

Runs: 1830 (3), 1835 (1)

Openings: 1835 (free!)

This monthly to 6-week zine is dedicated to 1830 and 1835. I allow up to Grey Press, but unlike Diplomacy, press is not used very often. I give myself a week after the deadline to get everything in order. I'm still new to this, so there will be a few mistakes here and there, but I'm trying. The discussions have centered around rules issues so far, but I have started talking about strategies, and expect the discussions to follow. DH

This is one of the real deals of the hobby, at least for a while—Dan is giving this thing away. Oh sure, donations will be "graciously accepted," so pony something up, ya bums! No game fees, just "one game per customer." This is a fine idea, I like this zine already.

I don't know how long this "free" business will last. Dan has managed to put out six issues since starting up the zine in November—about one per month, just like he says. With a sub list of 48, and with the zine about as regular as it gets in the "choo-choo" world, he's dropping

Wanted—Zine Register Pubber

As announced elsewhere in this issue, I am actively seeking a replacement as editor/publisher of *Zine Register*, the "zine that helps the hobby look at itself." Three issues was enough for Tom Nash, and I think three will be enough for me, too. No sense burning out over this thing!

There are five important requirements for the job:

- 1) A thick skin. You will be criticized, often unfairly, for some of the things you say. Unless you can ignore (or can process) the hurt you may feel over this criticism, you won't last long. It is important to stand up for what you believe. *Don't* knuckle under to pressure from the hobby loudmouths. Your most important customers are new hobby members: they deserve to hear straight poop.
- 2) Deep pockets. You will lose money on *Zine Register*, there is just no way around it. Be prepared for that. Have at least a hundred bucks to blow on each issue. You might be able to get some money from PDORA, but you'd be crazy to count on it. Avalon Hill won't even bother to return your letters.
- 3) An attention to detail. *Zine Register* isn't all fun and games. (In fact there's *no* fun and games involved at all!) There's a lot of nit-picky details to follow up. You will get a lot of zines in trade—you'll need to figure out a way to keep track of them all. Your information will come in a variety of forms and on every conceivable scrap of paper! The best ZR publisher would read every zine as it comes in and respond to each new bit of information as it appears ("A new zine announced in this issue of *Orphan Son*, guess I should send that pubber an inducement to trade..."). I could have done a better job in this department, but then I've got another zine to attend to.
- 4) Lots of time. This "job" is a killer, don't fool yourself. If you're feeling even slightly overworked or burdened by your present hobby "work"-load, don't even think about it. The ideal replacement is someone with a fair amount of free time on their hands who's casting about for a way to soak up some of that time helping the hobby grow.

- 5) A willingness to do the North American Zine Bank (NAZB). This is pretty self-explanatory—it's the way you unload all the trade copies of zines you receive, and is quite a valuable service in itself. You owe it to your traders to make sure NAZB functions properly and efficiently.

On the other hand, don't get the wrong impression. It may not be fun and games, but I've still found ZR to be tremendously rewarding. There is perhaps no other position in the hobby with the "visibility" of ZR pubber—if that's what you're looking for, look no further. I've learned a lot, both about the hobby and about publishing databases. I've met a lot of fine people. You will too. Many publishers are eager to help out, and you will be pleasantly surprised by the support you receive as a matter of course. Moreover, the "loud-mouth" set will be so happy to see me go that no matter *what* you do will be praised to the stars! You will also find that many people will be happy to help you out with "guest reviews"—and I will be first in line!

And, I will be able to help out in at least two ways with the transition. First, I will ship at least one carton of NAZB sample zines to you, along with any copies of *Supernova* that I still have left over. And I will provide you with any and all ZR-related computer files (for Macintosh or IBM PC compatibles). These electronic data include a "Zine Catalog" file that I have maintained over the past year—this lists every copy of every zine I have received during that time (with such information as publication date, postmark, date received, and deadline for each issue). This has provided firm backup for any statements I have made in ZR regarding frequency or turnaround of particular zines.

So if you're at all interested, why not drop me a line and let me know. All inquiries will of course be kept strictly confidential. Assuming the "job search" is successful, I will announce my "successor" in the next issue, #21, and will ask publishers to switch their trades over *at that time*. Your first issue will be #22 (presumably Summer 1993).

I would appreciate hearing of your interest by September 1st, 1992. This will allow for a little back and forth to firm up the succession before my Dec. 1st pub date. GS

at least \$15.00 for postage each month, even if he's gets the copies for free from work (and he better *not* be, otherwise us taxpayers are going to have to call in *The F.B.I.* to investigate!). (Um, small joke there—Dan works for "the Bureau.")

As far as I know, Dan has just one more game open, and then, hopefully, that will be that. This zine has grown really fast, perhaps a little bit faster than Dan was planning on. Although he's done a fine job so far, and given no indication of any potential problems, I'd like to see him slow down the growth thing a little. It is really easy in this hobby to "bite off more than you can chew," *especially* if you're willing to let people play for free. Sure, grab this game start while you can (assuming you want to play 1835), it may not come again for awhile. But then let's let Dan percolate for awhile and see how much he really enjoys GMing. No sense having a big messy fold on our hands (not that this is what it looks like, but it's still early).

This isn't the prettiest zine I've ever seen, but it certainly gets the job done. Dan publishes letters; indeed, one of his requirements for a sub is an occasional letter, so a letter col (mainly on 1830/1835, I guess) is definitely part of his plans. He's also looking for articles, again on "choo-choo" matters, and I bet he wouldn't sneeze at a subzine, either.

All in all a most successful startup. If Dan stays on top of his growth I predict many, many years of happy "steamin'" with this one. GS

Maelstrom

Buz Eddy, 7500 212th St. S.W. #205, Edmonds, WA 98020

Free (I think); open page; xerox printed; 1-4 pages; freq.: don't know; circ.: don't know; first: July 1991; last: May 1992 (#5)

Runs: None (yet).

Openings: Invitational Diplomacy game (free?).

The original intent of *Maelstrom* was to provide archive service and to provide a vehicle for ratings which was my first attraction to Postal Diplomacy. Archives received a big ho-hum. I've pursued my ratings project and have it through *Everything* #49 (1979). The other item *Maelstrom* has been attempting is to run a \$100.00 prize Diplomacy game. Of the original seven invitees, five accepted—but Tom Nash dropped out of the hobby and Gary Behnen didn't reconfirm. So now I have three originals and two replacements. If I succeed in my quest to give away \$100.00, then *Maelstrom* will publish regularly, will probably be free, and will have archive notes, invitational games, and ratings. BE

Tax season may have caught up with Buz; either that or I never sent a sub fee in. JM

Naw, I'm pretty sure this one's in a kind of hiatus, sort of diddling around doing nothing while the publisher makes desultory efforts at filling his roster for that \$100.00 invitational game.

This "zine" has never been much more than a flyer, and it's hard to know if Buz is serious about this thing or not. I've received but a single four page issue of this thing since the last issue of ZR, and I'm pretty sure that's all she wrote. She? Gladys, that is ("Gladys" is, or

rather, was Buz's *nom de guerre/plume* in Kathy's *Korner*, but it looks like those days are over).

So what the heck, write Buz and request a sample. Tell him I sent you. Let's get this guy moving—the hobby could use another active zine at this point!

[Very late note: *Maelstrom* #5 just showed up, the first issue of this thing in about five months. That invitational game still hasn't filled, but Buz is apparently taking more definite steps to fill it, so with any luck that idea should get off the ground sooner than later.

[I strongly urge people to get their hands on this issue. It has a *hilarious* exchange of letters between Bruce Linsey, Matt McKibbin, and Al Rodriguez that occurred back in 1980. It's truly priceless stuff—I laughed all the way through it. As Buz points out, "playing Postal Diplomacy is only part of what gives this hobby its peculiar appeal. The opportunity exists to try to write creatively." How true this is. In my humble opinion, the best writing in the hobby is that which concerns what we all know best, and can relate to best, OUR GAMES. Get a copy of *Maelstrom* #5 and see if you don't agree with me.] GS

Maniac's Paradise

Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry St, #211, Rahway, NJ 07065

\$.75/issue; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 36 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 58; first: Mar. 1989; last: May

Runs: Diplomacy (10), Gunboat (4), African Diplomacy (2), Woolworth II-D (1), Asian Diplomacy II (1), Namia Wars (1), 7 x 7 Round Robin Gunboat Tournay (2, by flyer), Runestone Poll Bourse (1).

Openings: Gunboat (\$3.00), Diadochi V (\$3.00), Middle Eastern Dip (free), Kremlin (\$5.00).

What some very important and famous people have said about *Maniac's Paradise*:

Brad Wilson: "I would not recommend anyone play there who expects even the bare minimum of civility...the games are for surly creeps."

Mara Kent: "Doug, you always have time for that stupid zine and none for your wife."

Tom Swider: "A great zine. Doug is terrific. His movements, his dancing! I'm going to subscribe to it *twice more*."

Larry Cronin: "You're probably the best publisher in the whole hobby—probably the best there ever will be...Doug, you're so fantastic if this next child I'm expecting is a son, I think I'll name him Doug Kent Cronin."

Jack McHugh: "I don't like the typeface in my subzine."

Garret Schenck: "Not as good as *Upstart*."

Jonas Johnson: "When I confronted Doug with the possibility of taking his zine over, he told me the takeover would not be hostile. In fact he would help!"

Biff the Cat: "Meow!"

DK

This is one massive but fine piece of work. Lots of games. Lots of letters. Besides Doug's input, Mara Kent and Jack McHugh sling a lot of good-natured abuse at Doug which keeps a smile on my face for the

read...and it's a *long* read. There really is a lot of material. For promptness...Doug absolutely cannot be beat. It's also the only place other than *Martha* where you can play Enemy In Sight. What could I say bad about a guy like that. JS

Maniac's Paradise is the fastest, and lately the biggest, zine in the hobby. No other zine is as fast as this one. Doug often gets the thing in the mail on the day of the deadline, and "next day" service is as late as he gets. He has not skipped a beat since before I can remember (if then!), and since the last ZR he's published seven issues, right on time. His "first Monday of the month" deadline works, too—it's easy to remember when you have to get orders in.

Doug will probably raise his sub fee soon (the end of June, perhaps?!)—even with free copies he's losing his shirt on this thing. And if he's *not* getting free copies, he's losing his mind! (Issue #39 had 42 pages, and #38 had 48!) Going by the present 75¢/issue price, an "average" Dip game would cost about \$18.00 here—just about the hobby norm. For every quarter per issue that he raises the price (and I'm betting on at least \$.50), you can tack on another \$5.00 to this figure.

There's some reading matter here, including some great letters by a variety of hobbyists, as well as some subzines by...some other hobbyists. Still, my guess is that most everybody is here to play games—like any true "TurboPhreak" zine, the writing is just chrome, basic gift wrap for the games. (I'm sorry, what's that you say, Cal? Doug *isn't* a "TurboPhreak" either? Well then who the hell is? Besides me, of course...)

Doug is only average when it comes to GMing. I'm playing here, so I speak from experience—my game seems to have suffered more than its share of GM errors. These range from units being left off the map to countries building and moving units when they actually had no builds. It sure seems like Doug's excessive speed is making for sloppy work. I also have some trouble with Doug's No Vote Received = YES house rules—we recently witnessed a game end in 1903, long before its time. And Doug appears to make NMR calls only to those he considers his friends—hardly impartial GMing, I think.

Still, this zine is an impressive performance. If you think that speed is the only determinant of a successful Dipzine, then this is the zine for you. If other factors are of equal importance, the situation may not be so clear-cut. No Regular Diplomacy right now, apparently, but this might change in the future; why not request a sample from Doug? GS

The MetaDiplomat

Jeff McKee, 481 Westbrook St. Apt. 105G, South Portland, ME 04106-1939

\$.50/issue; digest; xerox printed; 20 pages; freq.: 5-6 weeks; circ.: 28; first: Apr. 1989; last: Apr. 1992 (#34)

Runs: Diplomacy (1), Gunboat (1), 7 x 7 RRG (1).
Openings: None.

Meta is not folded, yet, because the games I started aren't finished. When they finish, so will *Meta*. In the

meantime, I still have a few stories to tell and I'm still open to letters. *Meta* is not what it used to be, though. It's important to me to be remembered as a publisher who finished the job. JMCK

This is a great attitude. There's not much here for somebody who's not presently playing in one of Jeff's games, but who knows, maybe he could use a standby or two. Jeff was one of the only zines (if not the *only* zine to cut prices since last ZR—each issue now costs 50¢, as opposed to 75¢ previously. Given that *Meta* has gone on a pretty strict diet this was only fair, but still somewhat unexpected.

Despite Jeff's generally depressed mood concerning his zine and the hobby generally, he managed to fill almost nine full pages of his zine with a lengthy story about a recent trip he made to S.E. Asia. This is more reading material than you'll find in most fully-functioning zines!

Meta used to be one of the more exciting zines around. Now it's kind of settling down, getting its affairs in order, preparing for a peaceful death. While all of us probably wish Jeff would keep on keeping on, if you have to kill a zine, this is the way to do it. All publishers please take note. GS

Niccolo

Chris Hassler, 285 N. Holliston #2, Pasadena, CA 91106

\$1.00/issue (free to Judges and hobby officials); open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: quarterly; circ.: 10; first: Oct. 1989; last: Oct. 1991 (#9)

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

Okay, okay. So Machiavelli isn't such a big part of the hobby. So what? It is still a really fine game in its own right, and if you're one of those who claim it's just a Diplomacy variant I ask you: what other "Dip variant" was actually published as its own game by a major game company?

At any rate, I intend to keep more or less the same policies as George Mann, with a little more emphasis on questions and answers and articles (even if I have to write them myself!). As for the CMN (Custodian for Merchant [of Venus] Numbers), perhaps it would be better off combined with a CBN (Custodian for Britannia Numbers). In any case, find another sucker for that one! CH

I recently passed this zine on to Chris. I haven't seen a new issue, but am sure Chris will do an exceptional job. If you have any questions on Machiavelli, or want to know who else plays the game, this is your zine. All Machiavelli players and Judges need to sub to this zine. GM

Uh, no way, Chris. Look, you're without a doubt Numero Uno when it comes to Machiavelli—you're running more games than everybody else combined—and if you persist in your plans to keep on opening Merchant of Venus you'll soon be top dog (if I may be so bold) in that field too. I think a combination of the CMN and the NCM would be just the ticket—and you're

obviously the sucker, er, I mean, *man* for the job! Don't be bashful! Seize the opportunity! Hobby stardom is yours! Brad Wilson will commence bombing in five minutes!

So far, Chris hasn't put out his first issue of *Niccolo*—apparently we can expect that in June sometime. My guess is Chris will do a fine job—anybody who's interested in Machiavelli, either as a player or a gamesmaster should contact Chris and let him know you're out there. GS

Northern Flame

Cal White, 1 Tumberry Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M6N 1P6

\$.03/page + postage; digest; laser masters/xerox printed; 36-48 pages; freq.: 6 weeks; circ.: 80+; first: Dec. 1987; last: Apr. 1992 (#36)

Runs: Diplomacy (5), Gunboat (1), Facts in Five (2).

Openings: Flintlock II (\$5.00).

This is getting predictable—it's Canadian, it's big and it's a little bit slow. It's also top notch—Cal has a big, lively letter column, a variety of interesting subzines, including Mike Agnew's first rate "Notes From The Bunker," strategy reprints, CDO news, quizzes, and more. Truly, something for everyone. It's feud-free, but you can still get stung if you get up Cal's nose (right, Garret?), but, to quote the man, "it just doesn't get out of hand." Cal has responded to the wishes of his readers and put the games back in the 'zine where they used to be. Cal gives a lot to the hobby, but he has a lot of other things going on in his life (though, unlike *XL*, they're not brought up in the 'zine as often as I would like), so *NF* comes out roughly every second month. It also looks great. It's easy to see why *NF* is so well-liked by so many. RL

If I ever start a full-fledged zine of my own, I want it to be just like *Northern Flame*. Well almost. The one thing that I would do differently is to write more myself, but then I'm a glutton for punishment. Cal isn't. He has two or three subzines written by others that run on a fairly regular basis. The heart of *Northern Flame*, however, is the letter column. Some people like it. Others think it is dominated by the same long-winded and limited writers beating the same dead horses of topics. I am one of the former, although some will say that's because I'm one of those described by the latter. The discussion, although not necessarily "important," can get lively. Cal is willing to take constructive criticism; after the reviews in the last *Zine Register* he started running the games inside the zine again. Furthermore he is rather inventive, running Facts in Five by mail is a pretty interesting idea. There is a lot of sports here, especially baseball, but there is plenty of material on other subjects too. Physically, the zine is beautifully presented. In fact the worst thing I can say about Cal is that he isn't a Wendell Clark fan. But hey, nobody's perfect. Garret, for example, probably doesn't know what sport Wendell Clark plays! He probably doesn't care, either! BMcK

The top rank this zine has received in the Rune-stone Poll is no accident. Cal White is publishing what

is certainly one of the best in the hobby today, if not of all time. The hallmark is the lettercol, which features discussions by the best and brightest of topics ranging from DipCon to Baseball to Politics. (The Canadian material has been invaluable to me in understanding events up North. Our media down here in Dixie rarely mentions Canada at all.) In addition to the lettercol, there have been very interesting travelogues from subzine editor Mike Agnew, Scruples-type questions and answers for the readership, and reams of hobby news. All-in-all this is the best zine today for reading material. There are games too, of course. The Facts in Five games at the back of the zine are a nice diversion for us Dip-types, and have hooked my wife completely. I can't recommend *NF* too highly for both novices and old hands. DH

Even though I think my zine is better, I believe *NF* is the one zine that can beat it. His devoted letter-writers make sure that, even when Cal isn't loquacious, there is lots to mull over, disagree with, or laugh at. Everybody ragged on Cal for not having his games within the zine (with some justification, and the zine is better for having reports each issue now). But before *and* after the game-report flap *NF* is the type of zine, historically, that Dipsters want: large, regular, and wide open.

What is it about the Canadians that they can publish these huge periodicals without going broke. Is toner made from some Arctic minerals? PG

It's simple, Pete—they charge an arm and a leg for it! Cal's most recent issue, while admittedly larger than most at 48 pages, cost U.S. subbers no less than \$2.52 (it's a little cheaper for Canadians). A more usual-sized 36-pager goes for \$2.16 (note that Cal's sub fee varies according to the size of the zine). As the games are now running in the zine proper, and as Cal charges five dollars for a gamestart, *Northern Flame* gets the booby prize for most expensive game in the hobby—that typical, "average" game that I keep mentioning will cost players in *Northern Flame* as much as \$50.00—twice as much as the boxed set from Avalon Hill! Granted, the overall prices of postal games have gone up steadily this year, but this still seems way out of line. (I wonder what Cal's friend Brad Wilson thinks of this; Brad *had* gone on record as saying "fannishness equals cheapness." At least I think that's what he said.)

Given the games service Cal delivers (having deep-sixed the game maps Cal has now squeezed each game report into just a half-digest paged slot), you're just not going to be getting very much for your \$50.00. Over the 20 issue life of your "average" game, you can expect Cal to deliver maybe 10 digest sheets worth of game matter to your door. That's five sides of 8-1/2 by 11 paper, by the way, or roughly \$10.00 for each side of xeroxed copy, delivered. Seems kinda high priced to me.

So don't bother to get this zine if you're *just* interested in playing Dip or variants—there are many, *many* other zines that do a far more interesting job with their games, that take the gaming seriously, that don't treat their games like filler to be draped around the letter col, that *encourage* rather than *discourage* press. (Silly me, I always thought press was an essential part of a "fannish" hobby, but as in all matters "fannish" I will of course defer to Cal's greater knowledge and experience. He is quite properly not a big fan of press; in the future I will

do all I can to adapt myself to *his* concept of "fannishness.") Most zines will deliver far more "bang for your buck," and do it faster, too.

Cal has recently joined the "hellish chorus" against "Turbo-Phreakism" started by Tom Nash several issues ago in *Zine Register*. (Note: it was, of course, acceptable for Tom to rail against TurboPhreaks in *ZR* then, but entirely unacceptable for me to raise my raspy little voice in defense of those publishers who actually manage to let you know whether or not your A Mar-Bur succeeded, in something approaching a timely and regular fashion.)

Cal has proven to be profoundly ignorant of many facets of the hobby—he admits that he doesn't get very many zines, yet he feels empowered to make sweeping generalities about how the hobby has become more "nasty" and less "fannish." He blames the fold of *Been There, Done That* on pressure from unnamed "TurboPhreaks" instead of accepting the far simpler explanation offered by every one of his letter writers—simple, massive burnout of an overworked and overreaching publisher who never figured out his own limit. He blames nasty feuding behavior that occurred in the mid-80s on the current crop of "TurboPhreak" publishers, most of whom were not even hobby members at the time! (Ironically, Brad Wilson, Cal's current ally in this ridiculous affair, was publishing at the time—and was one of the major contributors to that past episode of hobby ugliness—very much part of the clique who were dumping all over Bruce Linsey, one of Cal's "fannish" heroes of the 1980s period. Am I the only one who finds this mildly amusing? Which hole has Cal had his head buried in, anyway?) Cal brushes aside a drastic decline in the Canadian hobby over the last two years, a decline that has taken place while he has been very much a central figure in the Canadian Diplomacy Organization. As a "Canada Firster" he supports the idea that the Canadian hobby is more "fannish" than that of the U.S.—yet he blames the decline in the Canadian hobby on "TurboPhreakism." Meanwhile, the "TurboPhreak-ridden" U.S. hobby has grown during the same period. Is it not possible that "fannish" Canadian zines have neglected to provide a stable and dependable gaming platform? And that *this* is the cause of a decline in a hobby that is now, and has *always* been, and likely will continue to be, primarily for playing Diplomacy and other games through the mails?

Does the reader suspect I'm a little pissed off by all this crap? Well I am. I feel the Brad Wilsons and the Cal Whites of the hobby are doing all publishers who strive to keep their publications on track (and that includes most of those listed within these pages) an utter disservice. Yes, hobby writing is important, and helps keep the hobby a *hobby*. But it is utterly absurd to maintain that slow, drawn-out games run by laggard publishers are the proper way to introduce novices to the wonders of postal Diplomacy. Everybody who has responded to their self-serving "editorials" has tried to put them right on this point—that promptness and dependability count in this hobby—but both have refused to accept what everybody else knows to be true. Both of them are relatively "old farts" by now—they seem to have forgotten what it means to be truly *excited* by a game, and to be waiting by your postbox for the mail carrier to arrive.

Don't get me wrong. There is a place for big "reading" zines like *Northern Flame* and *Vertigo* (and others too, of course) in this hobby. Most hobbyists will find these sorts of zines in good time, maybe after they've been playing for a year in a dependable games zine and they're looking for something new and different, maybe something with a bit more reading and editorial matter than the usual Dipzine carries (even though most zines do feature something to interest even the most die-hard "just the games" player). But we will not be helping the hobby out if we attempt to convince "gullible" novices of the singular beauty of playing Dip at a snail's pace. They just won't buy it. They may be novices, but they aren't fools.

Um, as far as statistics go, since the last issue of *ZR* came out, Cal has done a fine job (almost phrighteningly "TurboPhreakish"!) of sticking to his stated 6-week schedule. I've actually received five issues of *NF* since last fall. All things considered Cal is doing a pretty good job of combining both "fannish" material, and a limited games service.

Bottom line, though: if I was looking for a game, I'd definitely check out other zines first, where games are cheaper and where the GM strives to make the game something special rather than just filler. If I was looking for a reading zine, and I didn't much mind paying top buck, then I'd definitely sub to this one. Cal packs in a lot of stuff.

GS

Orphan Son of the Podunk News

Robert Hartwig, 6612 W. 113th Ave., Westminster, CO 80020

\$.50/issue, \$.60/issue to Canada, \$1.00/issue to overseas (air mail); digest; xerox printed; 15 pages; freq.: 10 issues per year; circ.: 30; first: Dec. 1990; last: Mar. 1992 (#13)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat (1).

Openings: Gunboat with Press (\$5.00 refundable NMR fee), Civilization (free).

Orphan Son will generally run 3-5 orphans at a time (Diplomacy and Gunboat), picked up from defunct publishers/GMs. In addition, it will run 1-3 other games (any type), run by guest GMs. The zine is family oriented with a monthly editorial on life experiences (vacations, what the wife and kids are doing, etc.). Letter column on issues of reader interest (gun control and constitutional law are the current subjects), an occasional puzzle, ramblings re: my old zine (*The Podunk News*—circa 1970's), and news about what's going on in the hobby are also included. Andy York's subzine "Way Out of It!" is currently discussing police brutality (and criminal brutality of police officers!). No swearing, feuding, etc. As Cal White says—"Feud Free Zine/Feud Free Zone." Pretty average, but a good home for orphans and guest GMs. We try to do a great job GMing for our orphaned waifs!

RH

In my opinion, the most underrated publication in the hobby. There isn't anything fancy here but Bob runs great games and keeps games going which might otherwise die, and does it all for next to nothing. I highly recommend you spend 50¢ an issue for this one and offer

to standby. Bob performs a hobby service which shouldn't be lost. JS

I definitely agree with that sentiment! Your preconceived notion of this zine might be that it would be pretty warehousey—just a sort of glorified flyer finishing off the 3–5 orphan games that Bob Hartwig has taken on. But nothing would be further from the truth!

There's easily as much reading matter in these pages as game reports—probably more! Issue #13, the last one I've seen, had a four page ramble from the editor, a six page article comparing *Star Trek* with *ST: The Next Generation* (this was entitled "The Practice of Law Eighty Years Ago," since Bob had requested that the author of the article, Dan Hanson [who is a lawyer], write something up on that subject, but Dan decided to write on something with which he was more familiar: *Star Trek*). There was another page on *ST: TNG* by Ron Newmaster, a one-page subzine by Andy York, plus another couple of pages by Dan Hanson on "bloody lyrics" in national anthems. And the thing looks nice, too, did I mention that? Bob breaks up the text "tombstones" with Larson "Far Side" cartoons—they do the job nicely.

All in all, a wealth of reading matter, and all of it quite good, too. As far as frequency goes, I'm not receiving this thing regularly, but going by the apparent 14 week interval between issues #11 and #13 (dated Dec. 18 and Mar. 24, respectively), I suspect that "10 issues a year" is a trifle optimistic. Either that or Bob just had a bad period. For what you get, this thing is dirt cheap. Bob reports 15 pages as his average size, and for all I know that may be more true than not, but issue #11 was 10 full-size pages (with digest-sized type), while #13 was 24 digest pages. You're getting a real deal here. Should you sign up for Bob's open game of Press Gunboat, you can expect your hypothetical game to cost you around \$15.00, a little less than average for the hobby these days.

Other than the open game of Press Gunboat, and Civilization, the other way to play here is for your orphaned game to land here through the vagaries of Eric Ozog's random processes. You can always hope, I suppose... Having to suffer through a messy fold is always a traumatic experience, but it's nice to know that zines like *Orphan Son* stand ready to ease the pain. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW

Painful Rectal Itch

Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry St. #211, Rahway, NJ 07065

\$1.00/issue; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 14 pages; freq.: 4–6 times per year; circ.: 135; first: Apr. 1992; last: Apr. 1992 (#1)

Runs: none.

Openings: none.

A new zine, dedicated to the open discussion of topics related to the Play-By-Mail Diplomacy hobby. Clearly modeled after the folded *House of Lords*. Issue #1 was really just a flyer that announced the creation of the zine. As an added bonus, I included a real "blast from

the past"—unpublished letters Dick Martin received after he published his final issue of *House of Lords*. I probably should have stolen an idea from the comic book industry and called it *Painful Rectal Itch* #0, but no matter. Two weeks after the initial issue's publication, the next *PRI* is already shaping up to be a great issue. I have high hopes for this zine. Drop me a line if you want a sample. DK

No games. Just wide open discussion relative to Diplomacy and the hobby. Doug Kent is a very busy hobby participant and if his other efforts are any signal, this will work well. I've only seen the first issue, so we'll reserve judgment for a while. JS

Was it Marx who stated the proposition that history *does* repeat itself? The first time through as authentic human action, the second time through as farce? Something like that.

At any rate, here we go again. Somehow historical reality has thrust me onto the world's stage (er, okay, the hobby's stage), not as Louis Napoleon, but as a redo of Bruce Linsey. I'm not sure which role Doug will be playing, but you can bet it will be in opposition to whatever I do. Okay, no problem, I guess that's the way it's going to be. (Alright, alright, maybe my role *isn't* Louis Napoleon or Bruce Linsey—sometimes it feels an awful lot like "Piggy" in *Lord of the Flies*. Hey, it's a dirty job, but somebody has to provide a target for those who get a kick out of throwing tomatoes, if not bottles and rocks.)

At any rate, you don't have to be a genius to figure out who's going to be the main target for *this* zine. I sure wish Phil Reynolds had managed to forestall the emergence of this thing by actually publishing his *Ishtibible*—Phil may be an "easily manipulated toady," but at least he *tries* to keep a lid on the feuding.

I think it's a very good bet that the publication of this zine marks the "official" acknowledgement of a second, farcical, "Great Feud," a blood-lust that will only be sated when certain hobbyists have been driven from the fold. Great going, guys, just great. GS

Pedro in the Rain Forest

Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117

Free; open page; xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: monthly (actually 4-weekly, but that's close); circ.: 19; first: Oct. 1986 (in its original form as a flyer attached to *Costaguana*; last: May 1992 (#73)

Runs: Railway Rivals (9).

Openings: Railway Rivals (various maps) (free).

If you like Railway Rivals, you'll like this. If you don't like Rivals, you won't. If you're not sure, please see the listings for *ark* or *Buckeye Rails*, as those are the best places to start.

Pedro tries to be efficient, but makes no pretense. It is the Honda Civic, the studio loft, the house-brand mushroom soup, of Rivals' zines. If you are still unsure of the product, Garret will now elucidate... CVM

This is the place to play railroad games. Conrad is dependable and *Pedro* is priced right. RAW

Same as *Disoriented Express*, but a bit quicker turnaround without British players. JKG

A tip—once you've gotten over your "new gamer" stage (where the game is the most important thing in your world), sign up for a game run by Uncle Connie. Any game will do; doesn't matter which. Conrad does a fine job running games (and he's running a bunch of them—I seem to get two envelopes a week from him) but it's clear that he has a warm and fascinating personality aside from the games.

Conrad's game reports are riddled with comments, anecdotes, and little essays about anything and everything. I chuckle an awful lot as I read this supposed "warehouse" zine. He has also taken on the job of placing a number of orphan Rivals games; it's a thankless but worthwhile task.

Conrad has recently even bought a new ribbon for his printer (a new printer ribbon and new guitar strings are two of life's little joys). What more can one ask for? **EB**

Before I get started on my "putrid review" of this zine, I just have to reprint something out of issue #71 of *Pedro*, which for me captures some of the essence of all of Conrad's publishing efforts:

"HUNGARY. Okay, well...I have to confess I can't stand it. Any time somebody sends me a new map, I just can't resist. And guess what I got, folks? A *new map*! Yep, brand, spanking, never-seen-in-USA-before map of Hungary!

"Er, you are saying, 'isn't it perhaps slightly possible that you've, er, you interject, 'missed something? The Hungary map is OLD now; why Conrad, you've even won two games on it!' 'But aha!', I interpostulate, 'perhaps I have failed to remark one salient facet of this. We're not talking about THAT map of Hungary, we're talking about THIS' (as I wave aloft a map of Hungary) 'map of Hungary...'"

Obviously, this guy can write. And write well. That adds a tremendous amount to the bare bones nature of Railway Rivals reportage. (RR does not seem to be a tremendous generator of press, although there is usually an ongoing discussion of rules/house rules—something that is mostly missing in the larger Diplomacy hobby, where after 29 years of play GMs have mostly figured out how to run their games. Also, discussion of new maps, which appear regularly, as seen above, is also an important discussant in RR zines.)

Conrad was apologizing for delays in his most recent issue. (True to form, this one appeared as a digest, while every other issue I've seen of this thing has been open page—but Conrad *refuses* to be tied down to any one particular style and we're just as likely as not to see this thing back in open page format next issue. This variability definitely does not allow Conrad to become stale, ever.) Considering that I've tracked no fewer than seven issues of this thing since the last ZR appeared, I'd say he doesn't have too much to worry about. Granted, *Pedro* doesn't set any speed records—turnaround is somewhat on the leisurely side—but my understanding of Railway Rivals is that there is generally not much player interaction and so turnaround is not of the same critical importance (assuming you want to keep to a monthly [or so] schedule) as in, say, a Dip zine. Regularity *is* important, and I say Conrad has no troubles there.

As far price goes...what price?!? This thing's *FREE!* I probably shouldn't have said that, in his latest issue

Conrad was mumbling something about getting too loaded down with a bunch of orphaned RR games he's picked up recently, but what the heck. Real deals are sometimes a little hard to come by in this hobby, and free is as good as it gets.

Hey, no pushing! Stop shoving! Everybody will get their turn! (Sorry, Conrad, I had to tell 'em...) **GS**

Penguin Dip

Stephen H. Domeman, 99 Pond Avenue, #200, Brookline, MA 02146

\$15.00/10 issues; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 110; first: Feb. 1987; last: Mar. 1992 (#52)

Runs: Diplomacy (5).

Openings: Diplomacy; (\$6.00).

PD is an SF fanzine as well as a Dipzine, with reviews, artwork, letters of comment and articles by all sorts of people you've never heard of, plus the usual Dip games (sorry, no maps, though). **SD**

PD has been the most successful among us at getting readers to submit articles and, obviously, artwork. That's because he advertises himself as a bridge between Dipdom and SF fandom. You can argue with his claim, but it has nonetheless created an aura which produces great speculative pieces on what the future will be like, and reviews of games not seen elsewhere in the hobby. Like all of SF fandom, there's not that much in the way of fiction or actual reviews (Garret, could it be you didn't *know* that fandom is not about SF—it's about fandom!). The only *real* drawback is the price, but I can be tarred with that same brush so I'll just recommend you get a couple of issues to see if it's your thing. **PG**

Stephen does a wonderful job of trying to bring a touch of elegance to this hobby. The variety of topics and the splendid artwork make this an outstanding publication. **BE**

PD is perhaps the most attractive zine in the business; it also runs quite a lot of reading material. Stephen Domeman is an excellent editor who generally gives us at least a page of "editor's rambles" in each issue, and often provides reviews of "fanzines" from different sources. In the most recent issue I've seen, #52, this included science fiction "perzines," "genzines" (whatever the heck they are), and a wargame collectors' zine. Stephen is obviously in touch with the larger "samizdat" hobby (if you will)—in case you've never noticed there are many distinct groups of people who are using the new "personal publishing" technologies to communicate directly with each other rather than through the corporately-owned media. You may not realize this, but the postal games hobby is one part of this larger trend—and *Penguin Dip* acts somewhat as a window, a bridge if you will, between our hobby and that larger trend. (And I'll bet you didn't know that playing wargames by mail was a subversive act—look for restrictions to be imposed real soon now! Or at least higher mail prices. Note that while 1st Class Mail rates continue to skyrocket, 3rd Class Bulk Mail [i.e., corporate junk mail] was the *only* class of mail that saw

a price reduction last time around. Ever-increasing mail rates will, and should, become a First Amendment issue—they are a tax on publishers.)

Issue #52 also included a well-written reader-submitted review of two books of interest to Diplomacy players: *Dreadnought*, and *The German High Command at War*. A three page letter column rounded out the zine, with topics ranging all over the place, though Stephen didn't make any replies (at least this time—usually he does, I think). Finally, the custom artwork you see in *PD* is unmatched by any other zine in the hobby. Yeah, most zines cut and paste in cartoons from here and there, but Stephen goes out of the way to gather in *original* artwork, generally of penguins (pays for it too, in the coin of his realm, sub credits). This *really* adds to the whole effect, I think.

Oh, and the games, too—in my experience Stephen is a pretty good GM and manages to get through whole issues of the zine without making errors—*NOT!* Whad'ya know, I just spotted one, pretty glaring, too—in the EMPEROR REDUX game report in #52 Stephen allowed as how "Italy's attack on Trieste would have succeeded if not for his own attempted move of A Tus-Ven [[A Ven was ordered to support A Tyo-Tri —GS]]. Although self-dislodgement is expressly forbidden in the rules, there is no prohibition against cutting your own support..." I don't know, maybe Avalon Hill has gone and changed the rules on us, but my copy of the ©1976 rulebook says: "A player may not, by an attack, cut support being given by one of his own units" (IX.6 HOLDING AND RECEIVING SUPPORT). Granted Avalon Hill/Games Research did a pretty good job of hiding this one (you won't find it where it belongs, under "X. CUTTING SUPPORT," for instance), but I should have thought that after 52 issues Stephen would have run across this one before.

But this is a quibble; for the most part Stephen is a good GM. For the price of *PD* games (\$36.00 for an "average" game of Diplomacy) I still think maps should be provided, but since I no longer play here, I guess that's not my problem, eh? Stephen has compiled an impressive track record in the regularity field and usually stays on top of his five-week schedule. It's possible that there's been some slippage lately, as it appears 24 weeks separated issues #48 and #52 (the two issues of *PD* that I've seen lately)—that's more like every six weeks than every five. Still, I think *PD* is here for the long haul and with any luck the hobby will still be getting this one five years from now as Stephen publishes his "century" issue.

You'll definitely want to get this one if you're interested in the larger field of "fanzine publishing" or if you want to read Stephen's interesting writing or that of his correspondents. The picture is not so cut and dried if you're mostly just interested in games—I think you might be able to find "better" or cheaper places to play. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW

Pennant Madness

Bruce Linsey, 170 Forts Ferry Road, Latham, NY 12110

check with Bruce for price—available only to league members; open page; laser printed; 4 pages; freq.: biweekly during the baseball season; circ.: 12; first: April 1992; last: never seen,

Runs: onzo Baseball (1 league)."

Openings: Not till after the '92 baseball season ends; info on joining available in free starter packet.

Pennant Madness is the publication for the results of Gonzo Baseball, a game in which participants own teams consisting of Major League Baseball players. Game results are based on players' real-life performances. Team owners can trade, sign free agents, and juggle their lineups in an attempt to reach the Gonzo World Series. Lots of fun! Ask for your free Gonzo Baseball starter packet.

Like *Autumn Madness*, this zine runs Gonzo Baseball in a careful, efficient manner. Bruce Linsey consults his readership when he wishes to make changes and the players' opinions are thoughtfully considered. With Online stats from *USA Today*, this zine is produced with great accuracy. Games are run in two-week sets and players have many options to manipulate their Gonzo team to victory. I sure hope my baseball team does better than my football team! CJB

I've never seen this one, so what, really, can I say about it. Not much, I guess. (Well, then shut up already!) It does sound like it could be fun, so if you're interested playing in a postal baseball league, request Bruce's "starter packet" and see if this is the one for you. GS

Perelandra

Pete Gaughan, 1521 S. Novato Blvd. #46, Novato, CA 94947-4147

\$1.50/issue; open page; laser masters/xerox printing; 20 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 75; first: May 1982; last: May 1992 (#97)

Runs: Diplomacy (5), Downfall of the Lord of the Rings (1), British Rails (1), Merchant of Venus (1), Titan (2), Monopoly (3), Metropolis (1), Snowball Fighting (1), Broitserie League (1), Literary Quiz (1).
Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00), Deviant Diplomacy (\$5.00), Railway Rivals (\$5.00), Snowball Fighting (free).

Disclaimer: what follows is the completely biased and self-aggrandizing review of my all-time favorite public activity. Take with a pound of salt.

Perelandra is a large, old, somewhat stuffy zine that still manages to change with the times and maintain a friendly, "everyone's welcome" tone. I try to run as much reading matter as I can—some months we have four pages of letters, some months you get three obscure-but-excellent classics of literature. The only rules for what sees print are: No feuding; Fantasy, SF, Irish lit and nature writing preferred; and Worship of the Princess D'aph is required.

As for the games, it's anything goes. Snowball fights, hobbit quests, WWI, DnD—the only reason we don't have a game about birdwatching is because I spend too much time outdoors birding to design one! I'm committing to keep a game of Dip open and ready at all times

now, even if it means running more pages than I can afford. I've been at this for ten years (our issue #100 this summer will be a huge celebration) so I'm reliable as a GM and as an editor.

Send for a free sample, or better yet get the North American Zine Bank to include one in your order. And now all the much wiser and more impartial talking heads of the hobby will tell you all about what's wrong with *Pere*... PB

If there's anything bad that can be said about *Pere* I'll leave it to someone else cuz I can't find it. This got one of the two "10's" I handed out for the Runestone this year and I'll be surprised if it doesn't win. Very professionally done but without the loss of personality that sometimes brings. It's got *everything*, but mostly it's got Snowball Fighting, which has me solidly addicted. JS

While many would argue, the main draw here is the games. Sure, the basic Dip that you can find anyplace does appear, but Pete also runs many other games from Snowball Fighting, to Titan, to Literary competitions. Many of his literary excerpts make very little impression, but a few are interesting. I read a larger percentage of this zine than any other I receive. I even read all of the game information (except Dip and Titan). While it is expensive (but worth it), you can earn free issues without much trouble. There is going to be a slight change in focus after he reaches issue #100, but it sounds like I will enjoy that even more. Probably the best zine in the hobby for overall quality of games and articles. DMcC

This is easily one of the top five zines on anyone's list. Why? A great assortment of games, from traditional Dip to things like Titan and Railway Rivals, attracts a wide variety of players. In addition, the thing comes out like clockwork and is therefore a pleasure to play in. Pete Gaughan also does a really good job with the layout, publishing great game maps and making the adjudications easy on the eye. And if all this isn't enough, Pete also gives us quality reading material and a sometimes outstanding lettercol. At \$1.50 per issue, you can tell the market has priced this zine up where it is worth. Everyone should see at least one copy. DH

Ah, it's the *market* that has set this price at a buck fifty! I guess Pete, the poor fellow, had nothing to do with it! Must be that invisible finger of fate thing...

Perelandra is truly *la creme de la creme*, and we're not talking Twinkie or Devil Dog "creme" here either. This thing has substance! Pete somehow gets this often massive effort out the door on a turnaround of just four days (I don't always catch the postmark when tracking zines, but five days between deadline and postmark is the *longest* I've seen in the last seven months)—one long weekend. Don't ask me how he manages this incredible feat. And lately, when Pete says "monthly," he means just that—like a contented clock Pete's been pushing *Perelandra* out on time and on schedule—I've seen seven issues in as many months since the last ZR.

I would agree with most observers that the games are indeed the focus here, though Pete keeps his eyes on other matters as well. No other zine runs quite the variety of games that Pete does—and he's finally earned a "distasteful display of toadyism" from yours truly by starting up a section of Merchant of Venus. Most of the

zine is taken up with game reports—what's left is devoted to several different areas of reading matter.

In every issue Pete devotes a page or two to a "literary selection," one of his trademark touches. Unfortunately I tend to agree with Dave McCrumb that this is perhaps the weakest part of the zine, and I often skip over it. My guess is that many of the readers/players do the same—it is rare that Pete publishes any letters or comments on the literary stuff. But hey, it's his zine. My feeling about these literary selections is similar to the way I feel about zines that republish columns clipped from newspapers or magazines—say, that's nice, but what do *you* think...

Pete's wife Cathy usually runs a column called "It's Me Again!" which covers this or that—sometimes it's observations on other hobbyists, conventions she's attended or hosted, or family matters. Whatever, it's her show and I always enjoy it. Pete has his own column, called "Among the Trees," which is often a bit of personal stuff about places Pete has been recently, generally outdoors; it also provides Pete his platform to expound upon hobby matters. The letter column could be better—certainly bigger—but Pete is apparently going to try to remedy this with the changes he anticipates with issue #100. Personally I think the only way to run a big exciting letter col is to say exactly what you think in a forceful and not necessarily diplomatic manner (this gets people's blood roiling and the letters start flooding in). Pete's one problem in this area is that he tends to be a little milk-toast-ey, and tries to be everyone's best friend. This may very well win him the Runestone, if not this year then eventually, but it sometimes makes for a less than exciting zine.

Perelandra really shines in games service. Maps are provided, where applicable (i.e., no maps for Monopoly), and Pete's laser printed layouts are clear and helpful. Very few zines are as prompt and regular. But, naturally, you don't get something for nothing. In fact, that typical game of Diplomacy will cost you \$35.00, which puts *Perelandra* pretty much in third place (behind *Northern Flame* and *Penguin Dip*) in the category of "most expensive game" (to be fair, just *ahead* of several other high-priced zines, including my own *Upstart*). Whether it's worth this much to play in what many consider to be one of the "best" gaming zines in the hobby I leave to your discretion—I'll only note that I just forked over \$10.00 for my Merchant of Venus gamestart (I'm already trading with Pete).

At any rate, as Pete is willing to give out free samples, what have you got to lose? Send him that postcard today! GS

Perestroika

Lawrence Cronin, P.O. Box 40090, Tucson, AZ 85717-0090

\$1.50/issue or \$15.00/year (12 issues); digest; xerox printed; 32 pages; freq.: monthly—entirely reliable; circ.: 40; first: Oct. 1989; last: May 1992 (#32) **Runs:** Diplomacy (2), Perestroika Diplomacy (all types, including Gunboat and Anarchy versions) (8). **Openings:** Will open more games as demanded (game fees are \$5.00, with \$34 redistributed as winnings to players).

A faithful zine devoted to jazzing up the regular Dip game by providing more economic measures such as economic investment, trade, and political proposals. For those tired of the tedium of routine Dip. The variant has been continuously improved—it's simple to learn the additional rules. LC

This Larry Cronin product is a little hard to put your finger on. It is basically a gameszine featuring Larry's Perestroika variant. Some people I know think the zine and variant are just first-rate, while others can't stand either one. My own view is that the variant seems too unwieldy for all but those committed to working out its bugs, but that comes from someone who is only an observer. Variant lovers should get an issue or two to check out the variant (the rules to which were published in *DW* #63). *Perestroika* is not the best thing since sliced bread, but it's not as bad as detractors have painted it. DH

Larry is another publisher who has racked up an impressive number of on-time, regular issues. As far as I know, he has *never* missed a single beat on his "monthly" schedule, certainly not as long as I've been tracking the zine, which has been since issue #11. Turnaround has never been superb here, though passable—Larry generally takes a week to get the zine out the door—and for a "monthly" zine that means negotiations can get a little cramped. Larry should take justifiable pride in his performance, which few GMs in this hobby can match over this long a timespan. He has produced seven issues in the last seven months.

There used to be a "commentary" section that was included with the zine; then for several months it went out under separate cover just to those who wanted it, either alone or in tandem with the games section; then, briefly, the "commentary" went quarterly; and then, belly up. Now *Perestroika* is just the games. But Larry keeps his trademark touches from earlier, larger issues of *Perestroika*—the little snippets of headlines from here and there, cartoons, etc. These are used to break up the pages, and often provide a clue into Larry's thinking about the game in question. He must have a bulging file folder of these little bits and pieces—he often finds just the right thing that someone else has written, and uses it for his own purposes. This part of the zine really works.

As far as the oft-noted errors that plague this zine, we have two choices, it seems to me. Either Larry's Perestroika Dip variant, as designed by Larry, is too complex for the average GM to handle without making errors virtually every turn, or Larry can't hack it. I suspect the latter. I suppose it is a sign of my not-so-incipient "TurboPhreak" nature that I expect generally error-free adjudication from my GMs, but so sorry, I do.

Larry recently joined the hobby-wide trend toward more expensive games and raised the price of his zine to \$1.50 per issue. (I figure his gamefee balances out, since he essentially "rewards" the players with their gamefee money.) So a game of Perestroika Dip that lasts 10 game years (the "typical" game) could cost \$30.00—putting *Perestroika* near the top of the heap when it comes to the average cost of a game. (And while this is obviously a value judgement, of all the "\$1.50 zines," *Perestroika* gives you the least.)

Perestroika is an attractive zine, nicely designed and smartly executed. If you want to give this inter-

esting variant a try, and want to play it under its inventor, then by all means get in touch with Larry and request a sample—alternatively, get yours from the Zine Bank. GS

Pilot Light

Kevin Brown, 6703 St Augustine Road #209, Jacksonville, FL 32217

\$10.00/12 issues (free to United standbys); open page; laser printed; 12–14 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 40; first: Oct. 1988; last: May 1992 (#42)

Runs: United Soccer League, Candy Land (1).

Openings: None, but standbys needed for United Soccer League.

Always on time and usually well-GM'ed. With 32 teams, *PL* is the largest of the U.S. leagues which has slowed it down a bit (I'm getting it in the mail 4 or 5 days after deadline instead of 2 or 3 days). This has also put a strain on the standby list, as there is only one person remaining on it. Still, *PL* is lots of fun on the publishing end and, if the top 20 1991 Runestone showing is any indication, is well-liked by the readership. In addition to the United action, there is a single game of Candy Land (no more Candy Land openings are planned), as well as tons of press and some chat from me. Also, *Pilot Light* features the occasionally appearing subzine "Poll Talk," by Eric Brosius, which is all about the Runestone Poll. KB

The second most reliable United zine in North America, this is an interesting place to play. With *PL* now getting into full stride as it begins its fourth season, Kevin has collected a group of reliable, interesting, and cut-throat players that would shame any Diplomacy zine. While there are currently no openings, I know Kevin is looking (read that as desperate) for standby players. This is the best way to get into any United zine since new leagues start very infrequently and new teams are rarely added to existing ones. *PL* has an excellent press section, probably the best in the United hobby. Kevin has done away with the financial accounting with his rules, yet retained the interest and planning that goes along with coaching and molding a team into its owners ideals. A great game, and a great zine. DMCC

I hate to say this, given how bad my "Wine & Cheeses" are doing these days (though that's all Nick Sasso's fault...), but this is without a doubt the best United league in North America right now. While the rule system isn't as complex as some other leagues, *PL*'s very quick turnaround (three days for the last issue—pretty good for such a big league) and the sheer terror of the draft give it that extra special something which propelled *PL* to #20 in last year's Runestone Poll. Add to these qualities the fact that standbys could get a team soon makes Kevin the first person to write to if you want to try United. MPL

This is perhaps the most timely, well-run United soccer league currently up and running in the U.S. Kevin Brown puts out a good zine for his players, with rules that are somewhat more simplified than those used in European zines. There is little reading material other than the

excellent press put out by some of the players, but the focus here has always been on the games. If you have wanted to check out United to see what it is about, and you want to play against teams with names like "Large Lovers" and "Biohazards," then try this one out. Also, Kevin is currently the only GM running postal Candyland, a true GMing feat.

Simple rules, good for a novice.

DH
JKG

PL is currently the largest United league. If I were to choose one United zine that would be the best place for a novice to play United, it would be *PL*. The rules are the simplest of the major United zines (major United zines are any that I subscribe to), its turnaround time is the quickest, Kevin is an enthusiastic GM, and the zine features a large and entertaining press section. The *PL* rules do away with the financial aspect of the game entirely, replacing it with a system in which managers scout college teams and draft college seniors at the end of each season.

Kevin's rules are somewhat controversial, with some people saying that they don't accomplish everything Kevin claims they accomplish. But the rules are the same for everyone and *PL* remains a fun place to play postal soccer.

SC

Kevin's boundless energy is an asset to the hobby—he pours it not only into putting *Pilot Light* out on time, but also into the zines of others. He has published 42 issues in the last 3-1/2 years despite moving around more often than George Bush's domestic policy. He also writes more press than any other North American United hobbyist, and consequently provokes an equal amount from others.

When Kevin started his league he introduced many startling innovations. His rules use no team money, new players are acquired primarily through a college draft, and he awards no CPs for draws. Kevin takes a lot of criticism from the United "establishment" for his thinking, but *Pilot Light* is very popular, especially among novices.

The main drawback to *Pilot Light* is that you'll have to standby if you want to play—Kevin recently expanded to 32 teams and won't be adding more in the near future. But you could do worse than to sign on as a standby and get free issues while you wait!

EB

Whew! When a review has gone oversize and I haven't even opened my trap, you *know* this is a zine that is well-received. (Or, apparently, one that offered to bribe the readers with "coin of the realm" [United "CPs"—"command points," I think] to write up reviews for *Zine Register*—hey, I don't mind, I can't afford to pay for these "guest reviews" so I'm pretty happy when somebody else is willing to!)

I don't play United, so I obviously can't speak from personal experience, but judging by the comments printed above, Kevin is obviously doing a lot more than just "something" right! Speaking as an outsider, I would agree with those who say this is probably as good a place as any to try United. I do know that Kevin has a nice sense of humor, the press is great, and while the layout is none too fancy (one of Kevin's press writers in *PL* #42 "cruelly" likened it to a "1987 Disease City," whatever that means, though it doesn't sound good!), Kevin is even now sniffing around for some cheap DTP software that can run on an XT clone. Hmm, although I'll probably lose my

"#1 Joe Stalin TurboPhreak" label for saying this, Kevin's somewhat "downscale" look doesn't bother me all that much, and I know from experience that cheapo DTP software and dot-matrix printers often make for pretty, but virtually illegible, type specs (if you ever saw the now officially declared dead *Megalomaniac*, you know what I mean). Moreover, DTP software can eat time, especially on slow 8088 machines.

The one true bitter disappointment, of course, is the lack of Candy Land maps. If I remember correctly, at one time Kevin was promising *color* maps of everybody's favorite "first game." The story is that he ran into trouble with his local copy shop copyright cops, but still, it's too bad, sorta, given that color copies would have only added maybe a buck to the cost of the zine...

PL is one of the few United zines that bothers to trade with *ZR*, so if you're interested in checking out this United hobby, be sure to request it if you avail yourself of the Zine Bank service. Otherwise I may hold onto my limited selection to give out to those who are specifically looking for United/sports gaming zines. Since Diplomacy isn't played here, the usual "average" game cost comment makes no sense, but as far as frequency I have received seven issues in seven months—or monthly, just as Kevin proclaims.

GS

Pirate

Chuck Lietz, 1825 SE 146th Court, Vancouver, WA 98684

\$6/12 issues; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 20; first: Oct. 1989; last: never seen

Runs: Don't know.

Openings: Don't know.

Has folded. Chuck is gradually finishing off the Railway Rivals games he had been carrying, but the other games have been orphaned.

SC

I can tell you for sure that *Pirate* has folded. Chuck Lietz hasn't published an issue for quite some time and he's attempting to run the remaining games by flyer. Some of the RR games are also being taken over by other GMs.

KH

Pirate may or may not be dead. Chuck Lietz mailed some game reports from *Pirate* a couple of months ago.

JKG

Don't fold it yet! I received an issue in February of 1992. Just put it in the extremely slow category.

RAW
I've never seen this one, and Chuck never bothered to return a Pubber Info Sheet (for this zine or his other, *Blade Wars*). I guess I will keep it here in the "Zine Listings" for at least this issue, since there seems to be a little confusion about what's going on. Apparently, in Monty Pythonesque fashion, this one's "not dead yet."

But it's surely on its very last legs. I can't think of a reason why anyone would be interested in this one, which is either in fact dead, or winding its way, slowly, but inevitably, to a fold. Maybe next time we'll finally get to drop its dry and exceedingly dusty carcass into the "Folded Zines" section. Keep me informed—and stay tuned.

GS

Pontevedria

Phil Reynolds, USF #4286, 4202 Fowler Av., Tampa, FL 33620, (to July 17: USF #4270, 4202 Fowler Av., Tampa, FL, 33620; July 18-Aug. 15: 2896 Oak Street, Sarasota, FL 34237)

SASE/issue or \$3.50/year; open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 2 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 30; first: Aug. 1990 (this is when Phil took it over); last: May 1992 (Vol. III, #20)

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

Pontevedria is a listing of North American zines and GMs with openings for Diplomacy, its variants, and other games. The most comprehensive and up-to-date source for current game openings, it is published at the end of each month. Each issue averages 50 entries, depending on available information. If I am receiving a zine already, its entry is updated automatically each issue. If I am not, I encourage a zine's publisher to keep in touch with me by letter or sample issues. Trades are welcome to promote a better hobby service. PR

Brief and useful.

PDK

The most comprehensive and up-to-date source for current game openings, *except* twice a year, when *Zine Register* hits the local newsstand. In fact, looking over Phil's latest issue, some of the data are from several months ago. This is hardly his fault, of course—it's definitely the publisher's responsibility to provide him with updated information—and from the look of things some of those "don't-bother-me-I'm-way-too-busy" chaps have been a little remiss of late (um...of course that includes me too—Phil lists *Upstart's* last issue as Jan. 1992!).

Pontevedria is a good, solid, useful service. It's cheap, too, just a SASE gets you a listing of openings in over 50 zines—about a half cent per zine, when you come right down to it! Between issues of *ZR*, it is truly the first place to go if you're looking for a gamestart and your "local" zine isn't offering what you want. GS

The Prince

Jim Meinel, 2801 Pelican Drive, Anchorage, AK 99515-1364

\$10.00/20 issues; open page; laser printed; 8 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 33; first: Sep. 1982; last: May 1992 (#113)

Runs: Diplomacy (5).

Openings: None.

The Prince can best be described as a warehouse zine running regular Diplomacy games for a small group of players, many of whom were subscribers when the zine started. Adjudication turnaround is almost always Friday deadline, at the airport post office Sunday evening. The biggest development of late is the editor's acquisition of a 486 personal computer with a laser printer, which has transformed the appearance of the zine from a rough dot-matrix and xerox appearance to a slick rag,

leaving the older subscribers wondering where the good old days went.

Being the only Alaska zine in the hobby gives its subbers a chance to ask what life is really like in the Great White North. Alas, they don't ask that question enough; the material pertinent to Alaska appears infrequently in the zine. Suffice to say, we *don't* live in igloos, the snow *does* melt in the summer, and postal service *is* only a day or two slower than the rest of the country. (But moose *do* eat the bushes in my backyard and I live in a city suburb.)

Every issue always starts out with a page or so of the editor's ramblings about what is going on in his personal life. The only time this section goes away is during tax season; the editor is a CPA in public practice. His wife is also expecting their first child this October so expect the stories to take a more domestic tone in future issues. JM

Sometimes warehousey, sometimes chatty, but always a good place to play. Jim's available time for the hobby varies greatly so the zine tends to undergo expansion and contraction. But the issues are always timely and his commentary is bright and entertaining when it appears. BE

I'm a big fan of this zine—it's timely, regular, provides super games service, and despite all that "TurboPhreak" stuff, editor Jim Meinel squeezes in a fair amount of writing on this and that. This is generally hobby news, including overflow material on the *Encyclopedia of Zines* project that didn't make it into *The Curator* (see that listing for more information), but also includes readers' letters and Jim's replies on publishing, computers, Jim's personal life, etc. Jim's personal life? Did I mention that he and his wife Jenae are going to have a baby? Naw, don't worry, there won't be the slightest impact on the incredible speed and regularity of this zine. Right, Jim? Jim? You there?

(One thing I ran across just now in the latest issue of *The Prince* was a listing of the 37 zines that have reached 100 total issues. I didn't realize this when I was writing reviews for either of these zines, but there is a hell of a horse race going on between Herb Barents' *Boast* and Jim Benes' *Dippy*. Both of these zines started in the early 70s (Herb reports *Boast* started in Sep. 1971; Jim gives 1972 as the start for *Dippy*). At this point Herb is *barely* ahead of Jim, 332 issues to 325 issues. Obviously neither of these guys has gained on the other in over 20 years, and neither has given anything away, either. Truly awesome! Clash of the publishing titans! I wonder if these guys are aware of how close they are to each other, and also how close they are (less than three years at their current rates of publishing) to passing #2 John Leeder's *Runestone* (375 issues). I also wonder if a sense of competition, if any, drives them to keep on publishing, long after the bulk of their contemporaries have folded.)

Perhaps mindful of the changes in store for the Meinel household, Jim has no openings at the present time, although I'll bet he'd be willing to send *The Prince* your way if you volunteered to standby. This way if Jim ever does open up more games, you'll be first in line.

The Prince can sometimes be a little slim (recent issues have averaged 6-8 full size pages), but it's also one of the cheaper zines around—just \$.50 an issue. When Jim does have openings he generally charges five dollars—so that hypothetical "average" game of Diplomacy that you've all gotten sick and tired of playing would cost you about \$15.00—a little less than the "going rate." As I mentioned before, Jim is a very regular publisher: since the

last ZR he's pumped out seven issues, and with the exception of one "special tax season" issue that was delayed by a week (Jim's an accountant), these have come out like clockwork every four weeks. Turnaround averages 2-3 days (except for that one delay).

My guess is that Jim is going to have fun playing the proud father for his audience. I'm looking forward to it, even if the kid ends up hurting Jim's schedule. And if he has to put the zine on hiatus, or, horrors, fold *The Prince*, well, there *are* more important things than this hobby after all. But I don't think that will happen. This is a nice effort. Request a sample. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW

"Prodigy"

(Information provided by Drew Franz, 195 Arrowwood Dr., Groton, CT 06340) On-line "Service", Access through computer/modem

Don't know; computer screen; freq.: N/A; circ.: Don't know; first: Don't know; last: never seen

Runs: Diplomacy (about 6).

Openings: Don't know.

Currently we have one subject area under the Hobbies topic on the Homelife Bulletin Board on Prodigy where we post game announcements and generally make fun of each other. Other than that, Prodigy's strict editing and censorship forces us to use private E-mail (which runs 25¢ per message over 30 messages per month, and is limited to six short "pages" each) for all the games and results (so the GM pays more than the players if very little negotiating occurs). Over the past year and a half, there have been about 18 games started (12 or so have since finished), and these were all GMed by volunteers, usually those who played in other games. The closest thing to a Dip-zine is the current Tournament, a 28-player, 4-round Tourney, thought up and spearheaded by myself and Andy Marshall, though Andy keeps most of the records (I help GM), as I am away at sea so much (he has access to my account as well as his own). I once thought about registering all the games with the BNC, as well, but didn't have the heart to shell out the bucks when interest in that was only expressed by less than half of the participants in the games. Most of the players on Prodigy know nothing of PBM, and only happened on our little group while on Prodigy for some other reason. I have recently been backing out of that forum, and will eventually stick strictly with GENIE, which has a larger base of Dip players, including some rather established, almost zine-like, groups of players.

Anyway, if you are still interested, contact Andy Marshall (775 Quince Orchard Blvd., Apt. 32, Gaithersburg, MD 20878). I believe he regrets starting this Tournament, due to the amount of work he is forced to put into it, and the length of time it is taking (even with weekly turns, it will probably go until the end of this year—which I predicted), and because he wants to move over to GENIE as well. Still, it is fun, though I'm not sure we could really call it anything close enough to a zine to register it in ZR.

(Update: Andy mentioned he was considering starting a pub. Perhaps I'll co-produce or run a subzine.) DF

Hmmm, my one month of exposure to Prodigy (the only "online service" that I've any real experience with), suggested that it was a major loser. The "pages" you refer to are what, 40 columns wide by about 12 or 15 rows—500-600 characters per "page" or maybe 3-4K per letter, if that. Damn, when I'm writing diplomatic messages, I can barely get started in a piddly amount of space like that (um, as might be imagined by the positive torrent of verbiage spilling off these pages and leaking all over your shoe). I'm sure GENIE or CompuServe are far better bets—and I plan on checking out Internet, but slowly, no sense rushing things.

(By the way, the latest word I have from Andy Marshall is that he is *definitely* starting a zine—in fact he claims to have asked orphan boss Eric Ozog to give him some raw material to work with, and my bet is some new games of his own will follow close behind. Andy claimed to want to do just a "warehouse" zine, but having been the recipient now of several full-blown correspondences from Andy, it's clear he likes to write and can put them sentences together in a pleasing fashion. At the risk of embarrassing myself with another *Ishk-ibibble* thing, I'd say check out Mr. Andy Marshall at the address given above and see what he's up to.)

And except for the postal hobby recruiting possibilities (and Drew Franz has done a superb job in this department), I'd advise staying away from Prodigy. It's awful. GS

Protocol

Eric Klien, 8124 Bridlepath Way, Las Vegas, NV 89128

\$.75/issue; open page; laser printed; 10 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 25; first: Feb. 1989; last: Sep. 1991 (#35)

Runs: Diplomacy (3).

Openings: None, but standby positions are available (free).

I don't allow NMRs. This zine is running down to a fold.

Formal announcement! I liked John Schultz's review last time so much that I'm having him cloned. He's sent me a hair sample and has requested that his first unit be sent to the Bahamas for a vacation. EK

Slow! Boring! No-NMR rules don't work postally. This one deserves to be chucked. Fortunately, Eric agrees. DMCC

A couple of years ago Eric proclaimed he was going to fold in favor of PBEM which he said was going to make PBM obsolete. Well...he's still going strong...and I'm glad. My most exciting games have been played here. This is a really great place to simply *play*. I used to have a problem with reading his game reports, but that has been improved. JS

Hold on, buddy...are you the clone or the real thing?!? You sure *sound* like John, but I don't know. Tell me...have you ever been to CloneCon? (Urf, urf...)

I've only seen one copy of this thing—and that was back before the last issue of ZR. So I just don't have anything new and exciting to say. Or even new and boring. So shut up already!

This one is running down to a fold, but due to Eric's no-NMR policy, I believe he'll always be able use a

standby or two. Maybe if you're polite he'll send you a sample copy—or maybe he'll send you to the Bahamas, too. GS

Protozoan

Scott Cameron, 4 Meadow Lane, Hicksville, NY 11801-5304

\$.29/issue for players (\$.50/issue for non-players); open page/legal size; xerox printed; 3-4 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 15; first: Aug. 1984; last: May 1992 (#107)

Runs: 1830 (1), Britannia (2), New World (1).

Openings: Republic of Rome, Brittanla, Kingmaker (all gamefees \$3.00, I think).

You'll like *Protozoan*,
It'll be your favorite zine,
You'll want to read it every day,
You'll think it's really keen,
You'll read it in the bath tub,
You'll read it till you're blind,
It's the nicest little game zine,
That you will ever find.

SC

Scott sometimes describes this thing as an "unzine," meaning it runs just about anything *except* Diplomacy! Over the years Scott has often been the first GM to figure out how to apply boardgames to postal play, although after playing a few times he moves on to the next multi-player release. (Obviously there's no point in figuring out how much a hypothetical game of Dip will cost here—it could never happen—but \$.29 per issue makes this the cheapest zine of those that actually charge money!)

10 issues of *Protozoan* have been seen since the last issue of *ZR*—with the exception of an extra week thrown in over the Christmas holidays, the three-week schedule has been maintained throughout. Scott takes his deadlines seriously.

Scott recently published his 100th issue—a real accomplishment in this hobby of "here today, gone tomorrow" zines. He shows no signs of slowing down, or boredom, which has to be partly because he's always trying something new. There seems to be less of the "exploding breasts or heads" stories that I mentioned in the last issue of *ZR*, but perhaps that's due to slightly less space in the zine. Usually, though, Scott fills every inch of leftover space on his legal-size pages with humorous photos, or stuff clipped from the back pages of "super-market tabloids," so if you find your eyes are starting to water from his "densepack" game reports, there's something for you to take a brief break with. Still, the whole point of this thing is to play multi-player games—that don't require too much in the way of negotiation—just as fast as humanly possible.

At this point, Scott is looking for one more player for Republic of Rome; if you've been intrigued by the recent focus on that game in the Avalon Hill *General*, Scott is *only* GM willing to give that game a try, so I'd jump on it if I were you.

Proto is a good, dependable zine that accomplishes exactly what its pubber wants it to. Hats off!

[And as might be expected, yet *another* issue of *Protozoan* just wandered in here, one day before I go to lay-

out. This means we've seen 11 issues of this thing—more than any other zine. In fact Scott has beaten Doug Kent at his own game—the deadline for this issue, #107, was May 30th, but he had all the orders in ahead of time so he went ahead and mailed it three days early! This is the first time I've ever *received* a zine *before* the deadline!

[The Republic of Rome game was still open, but if you want in you'd better move fast—it'll start soon...] GS

Quest For Power

Russell A. Wallace, Post Office Box 256, West Lynn, MA 01905

Free to players/traders; open page; dot matrix printed; 12 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 18; first: Aug. 1991; last: May 1992 (#10)

Runs: Campaign Trail (4).

Openings: Elfengold (\$5.00), Fishy (\$5.00), Bus Boss (\$10.00) (game fees include sub for life of game; Russell prefers to trade zines and gamestarts).

QFP exists because I ran out of people who would sit still long enough to listen to one of my war stories for the 40th time. Probably no one reads them, but it's good therapy for me. In order for me to justify sending people this stuff, I called my stories a zine and I GM some games to keep them coming back for more. I encourage press in the games, some of which is very creative. I have begun a letter column and an editorial page. I have also decided to add a few other games.

Campaign Trail is an out of print election game. Currently there are no openings in Campaign Trail. I will not start another one until one of the four currently running wrap up. The rules will be reviewed and rewritten following player input and end-game statements. If you are interested in playing, you may put your name on a waiting list; I will send out the rules and maps when they become available.

Elfengold and Fishy are Whitewind games designed, published, and distributed in North America by Alan Moon. Bus Boss is a race game similar to Railway Rivals, but with the routes already built. This game is easier to play than Railway Rivals and deserves a shot. RAW

Hey, at least I'm reading those stories. Kind of interesting, really.

This is one of those "unzine" things; *QFP* runs no Diplomacy or Dip variants. The zine usually includes a page or two of war stories, another page or so of editorial rambles, and lately, the beginnings of a letter column. In order to get things going Russell is trying to be deliberately provocative, suggesting in issue #10 that *television* might be bad for Americans' mental health. Imagine! The nerve of the guy! Look, for some people the passage of Johnny Carson from the late night scene is a bigger deal than whether a Demo or a 'Pub gets elected to the White House.

Um, speaking of which, that's why this zine, fundamentally, exists. Russell is doing what appears to be a bang-up job running four games of Campaign Trail, including color maps (!). The opportunities for fun press games are obvious with this game, and it looks like some of the players have the spirit.

Russell promises "monthly" issues, and that's what the players are getting in this zine—I've tracked seven issues in as many months. Turnaround is nothing to write to the ZR about (either way, you understand), but probably sufficient for a game that I don't believe needs much in the way of direct player interaction. To play here is fairly cheap, since Russell uses a "pay-one-price" policy.

This is a fairly small, unassuming zine; I suspect it will become more popular as time goes by. Now's the time to jump in here while the zine is still young. GS

Rails By Mail

Scott Cameron, 4 Meadow Lane, Hicksville, NY 11801-5304

Free for players (\$.50/issue for non-players); open page/legal size; xerox printed; 2-3 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 12; first: Mar. 1990; last: May 1992 (#36)

Runs: Railway Rivals (3), Bus Boss (2).

Openings: None, currently.

Rails By Mail is a zine dedicated to rails, which are small marsh birds of the genus *Rallidae*. Interesting facts about rails are published, as are useful bird silhouettes which help readers to identify the many different kinds of rails. Games of Railway Rivals and Bus Boss also appear in *RBM*. SC

Not pretty, but you can set your calendar by it. RAW
Fast and accurate—but difficult to read. JKG

RBM is the *second* fastest forum for the play of postal Railway Rivals. (Heh.) Scott has run games in *Protozoan* for almost 8 years, but branched out some time back into the "choo-choo" hobby. His games are notable for two qualities: they run on time and they stick to the house rules.

You see, it often happens that a Rivals GM wishes he had done things a bit differently. In my second game in *RBM* the die rolls were extremely small for the map—some would say *too* small. Most Rivals GMs would change the rules mid-game to increase the die rolls, but not Scott—he stuck to what he had announced at the start. This awarded James Goode, who had chosen a strategy well-suited to the low rolls. I personally was left with a lot of track going nowhere.

I fully support Scott's GMing style; a player who adapts to the rules as written deserves to benefit, and should not be sideswiped by a well-meaning GM who's trying to "balance" the game. The best player is likely to win in *Rails By Mail*. EB

Gee, Eric, who do you think's running Railway Rivals faster than Scott? Let's see, according to my reckoning Scott's put out nine issues of *RBM* since the last ZR appeared. That's faster than everybody else, I think, faster even than that super-fast zine from up near the front of *Zine Register*, you know, the one that begins with ASCII 97, which has "only" managed to squeeze out eight in the same period. Well might you say "Heh!" Heh!

So this is a very fast and reliable zine for playing RR. As James Goode suggests, it's sometimes a bit hard to read because of the way Scott packs in the type on his legal-size pages (the same problem is sometimes found in Scott's "unzine" *Protozoan*), but I'll bet that most play-

ers would rather put up with a somewhat ugly presentation in order to play in this super-fast games zine.

Other than the games (and there's unfortunately no openings) there is even less here than in *Protozoan*—and contrary to Scott's promises, rails are seen infrequently in these pages! In fact last issue may have been the first time that rails were spotted in "a bunch" of issues, if I'm not mistaken.

If you play Railway Rivals, you probably already know about this zine, and quite likely already receive it. If you don't play RR, you probably won't be interested. If you're thinking about *trying* RR, this might be a good place to start. Check it out. GS

Rambling WAY

W. Andrew York, P.O. Box 2307, Universal City, TX 78148-1307, CIS: 73210,3053; GEnie: W.YORK1

\$1.00/issue (\$1.25 Canadian, overseas as necessary); open page; xerox printed; 18-24 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 60; first: Oct. 1990; last: May 1992 (#18)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, International Diplomacy, Gunboat (all require \$5.00 NMR deposit only).

RW has grown in all the ways I want it to—and without any serious problems. It has three subzines, one each from Japan (written by one of our diplomats assigned to Tokyo), Italy (from a student spending a year in study there) and Great Britain (*RW*'s newest). The international flavor continues with readers and contributors from many other countries.

Other features include a monthly Poll Question, a series of strategy articles by staff writer Joe Brooks and an irregular Commentary column. Two new, regular additions are a Hobby News column and a listing of various gaming (not just Dip) conventions. However, it is the readers' contributions that make *Rambling Way* interesting.

Of course, games are the primary focus of the 'zine. I always have openings in Regular and Gunboat Dip. I also have openings in an International game for those who'd like to meet others across the ocean. For those interested in standby positions, I will carry two Orphan games until the backlog of abandoned games is reduced. Other Dip variants (Nuclear Destruction has openings) and GM services (double-blind games, for instance) are available for the asking.

If you're interested in a sample, they're free (though \$.52 in stamps is appreciated). I can also be contacted (and orders/press submitted) via E-mail. To reach me on CIS, write to 73210,3053; on GEnie it's W.YORK1. WAY

This zine as been expanding and has been punctual. There are a couple of one-page commentaries (subzines) which are quite interesting. I look forward to getting this one. RAW

Other than well-run games I like this publication for its monthly "Poll Question" and its subzine "Internazionale" by Charles Green. The title is self-explanatory. Interesting and well-written by someone with an insider's view. Be prepared for a conservative (maybe even a bit right-wing) bent, but not offensively so. JS

I can't tell whether Andrew himself is fascinated by international politics, but he has the subzines for it. I wish he'd speak up for himself more often—his contributions are usually limited to a couple of paragraphs in the lettercol. Too much white space, but for a small zine early in life it has a fine sense of perspective. PG

This is a fairly new zine put out by Andy York, one of the Mensa Dip-SIG crowd. Last fall I'd have said it was sorta bare bones, with just a couple of Dip games and some political chat. However, Andy has added some contributors who promise to make the zine a little stronger in the content department. I think this one is a zine on its way up, but even now looks like a decent place to play. (Don't forget that some of the "great" zines in the hobby today do not fall into that category.) DH

(Cal, did you catch this? Brad?!? Here's all the evidence you'll ever need of David Hood's "Turbo" proclivities. Imagine having the gall to suggest that some of the "great" zines [and we sure know which particular "great" zines he's talking about, don't we] are downright lousy places to actually *play* games. Make sure you remember these statements when you get around to holding your "Hobby Anti-TurboPhreak Committee" hearings.)

Andy's zine has seen steady, but controlled growth—from reporting 40 subbers back in ZR #19, he's up to 60 today. All this without maps, with only a limited word processor. Like many of those above who submitted "guest reviews," I like this zine—it combines good, dependable games service with solid reading material. I especially enjoyed the "Poll Question" responses in issue #18 concerning whether or not maps are useful—while Andy neither uses nor *wants* to use them, his subbers seemed to be split about 50/50, though just about everybody agreed that whatever he wants to do is the right thing to do. Can't argue with that sentiment.

RW used to be a Mensa Dip-SIG zine. I say "used to" because to my mind it has really grown out of being a solely Mensa zine to being a full-fledged zine in its own right. Oh sure, Andy will maintain his ties with other Mensa publishers, and will continue to take Mensa games from Fred Davis, but to my way of thinking *RW* illustrates perfectly the benefits we in the hobby derive from our association with Mensa (as developed and maintained by Fred Davis). Thanks to the Mensa Dip-SIG, we now have one more "first-class" zine to play games in, to write letters to, and to read others thoughts in. Just great!

Andy promises an issue every month, and sure enough we've received seven issues since the last ZR. Turn-around is very quick—on the order of three or four days. If you're the type who never NMRs, I salute you, but more importantly you can play our increasingly boring "average" game of Diplomacy here for \$20.00—a touch more than the "average" price for the hobby.

Odds are that you'll enjoy playing a game here. GS

Ramblings By Moonlight

Eric Ozog, 9509 209th Avenue East, Bonney Lake, WA 98390

\$10.00/10 issues (\$15.00/10 issues to Canada, \$20.00/10 issues overseas); digest; xerox printed; 20–24 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 61; first: Jan. 1991; last: May 1992 (#17)

Runs: Diplomacy (6)

Openings: Diplomacy (\$10.00—applied to subscription).

RBM is the product of the union between *Diplomacy By Moonlight* and *Cathy's Ramblings*—two classic defunct zines. Good ramblings by me and occasionally others, and Cathy promises a resurgence once her nefarious game *Darklands* (a *Downfall* variant) ends. An enhanced warehouse zine. A place where fursofts and space aliens are welcome. The zine that promises to fold on December 31, 1999 or the end of the world—whichever comes first. Monthly U.S. Orphan Service report on games resurrected from the Graveyard of Folded Zines. Occasional letters, music and zine reviews, and miscellaneous filler on the state of the Forests and Ranger Eric. EO

The only place in the hobby where you can currently read John Michalski, and worth twice the price for that alone. The greenest of the current green press—I mean, Garret and I talk a good game on the environment, but Eric is a forest ranger, and an Elf to boot! Eric and Cathy give the Best Coast a good name, as both are too cute to live—if you want arguments and insults you'll have to go east to *KK* or the MadLads.

Cathy is running a game of *Downfall* and I hope she'll keep that variant alive with another gamestart (besides, I'd hate to see her drop any further outta sight once the Elflet arrives). PG

This zine is the fairly new creation of Eric and Cathy Ozog, who each have published wildly successful zines before. Eric is primarily responsible this time around. There are essentially two niches for this zine: a discussion of forestry and the environment (Eric is a park ranger), and a discussion of the U.S. Orphan Service (which Eric is now in charge of). The latter point is important because all of the games in *RBM*, I believe, are orphans from folded zines. While there are some other zines out there that specialized to one degree or another in taking orphans games (*CCC* and *Orphan Son* come to mind immediately), it is good to see such a worthwhile endeavor being conducted by a GM with Eric's skill and experience. The reading material in the zine is sometimes thin, but always enjoyable. Even if you are a corporate "raid the environment at every turn" type guy like me, Eric's report on things-forest-y is still fun. DH

Eric and Cathy are the nicest people you would ever want to meet. The zine reflects the personal warmth of their house in the big woods. Even the stress of trying to provide orphan rescue in a perpetually disintegrating hobby is reflected gently and warmly as the business of finding new homes is carried out. *Ramblings* was described to me as "special" by Andy Lischett and "precious" by Conrad von Metzke before I ever saw an issue. They were right on. BE

I somehow forgot about *RBM* when I was handing out "awards" for beautiful covers sometime earlier in this thing, but just so there's no mistake, Eric's covers are really nice, too. In fact the whole zine is really nice; from the maps, to the way Eric has designed the pages to fully utilize the digest format, to the occasional cartoon that he throws in for levity. I like this zine and I like that it always seems so well-planned (for instance it is almost exactly always 24 digest pages long—the perfect size).

There are many reasons to get this zine. The reason I find this thing invaluable is because Eric, in his capacity

as U.S. Orphan Service Custodian, reports on the current status of folding zines—whether they've truly folded, what he's heard back from disappeared publishers, that sort of thing. Since I have to pay some attention to this data in my role as the official *Zine Register* "TurboPhreak" hit squad (no sense wasting my rhetorical silver bullets on zines that are already dead, if you know what I mean), this is always the first page I turn to when I get the zine.

Happily, in the very latest issue of *RBM*, Eric reports that not a single zine has folded in the past month, and he speculates that perhaps the "hobby depression" is winding down somewhat. That's my impression, too. While I'll again be announcing more folds than new startups in this issue of *ZR* (I think, still haven't made the final count), most of those dead zines had died before I took over as *ZR* publisher and it was only because of my caution that I didn't list them as kaput last time. Meanwhile, with the exception of *Angst United* and *Where's Kevin Tighe*, every "NEW!" zine I'm listing here has actually started up in the past seven months or so.

As I've been repeating to anybody who will listen to me, Eric is doing a tremendous job as the Orphan boss. He is the consummate "professional" in the way he handles his "charges" and is very persistent—just the quality necessary to get folded publishers to cough one last time. The hobby was very lucky to have someone as dedicated as Eric in place as the folds of 1991 came raining down. (If you're interested in more details on this orphan thing, check out the note on that "hobby service" toward the end of this zine.)

But unless you're as interested in this orphan stuff as I am, the number one reason you're here is to play some games, and Eric's got 'em. The Elf is a traditionalist, strange as that may seem, and he runs only *Diplomacy*. (His wife Cathy runs a game of *Middle Earth Dip*.) Some of these he picks up as orphans (naturally!) and some he starts from scratch. He's looking to open a game soon.

I believe that games are essentially free, as long as you maintain your sub at a buck per issue (I'm pretty sure that's what the slightly confusing "\$10.00—applied to subscription" bit under "Openings:" means). This means that your "average" *Dip* game goes for \$20.00 in this zine—maybe a buck or two more than the hobby median. But I don't think you'll be in for an average experience here—Eric is a solid GM with years of practice (he published another zine before *RBM*); one thing is certain—your game will *not* be orphaned!

Eric says this thing comes out monthly; sure enough we've seen seven issues in the last seven months. Turnaround is snappy—generally just three or four days. So what are you waiting for, sign up for a game already! I'll bet you'll have a great time. GS

Rebel

Melinda Ann Holley, PO Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727

\$1.00/issue; digest; xerox printed; 24–32 pages; freq.: 6 weeks; circ.: 70; first: Nov. 1984; last: Apr. 1992 (#71)

Runs: *Diplomacy* (12), *Gunboat* (4).

Openings: None at present; players requesting games will be put on a waiting list (\$5.00 game fee).

Subzine "Foxfire" included with *Rebel* has trivia contests, Scruples questions, etc. MAH

The warehouse of warehouses. *Dip* and *Gunboat* only. The dot matrix printing is frequently hard to read. Since I only play standby positions, I don't pay close attention to the turnaround time, but for the number of games I believe it is fairly good. Luckily, Melinda killed her maps, but she also lost the best sub-zine in the hobby at about the same time. (I'm sure they were unrelated occurrences.) Melinda has tried to liven *Rebel* up some by doing her own subzine. The results are far from spectacular, yet much better than most new subzines. While "Foxfire" hasn't caught on yet, its popularity seems to be increasing with each issue. DMcC

How does she do it? PDK

At one point this monster zine was running over forty games of *Diplomacy* and *Gunboat*. Melinda has cut back some recently, so that now she is down to *only* twentysomething games. All the big names have played in *Rebel* over the past several years, so it has been a popular games vehicle. However, its large size and numbers of novice players has led to some poor play and many GM errors. I haven't seen much of the latter in the last few issues, so maybe the relatively lighter workload has helped Melinda out.

At one point, this zine hosted the most popular chat subzine "High Inertia." Then, when that folded, the zine was devoid of reading material for some time. Now, Melinda has begun to add some contests and a fledgling letter column. Time will tell whether *Rebel* will become one of the must-see zines. Right now it is an okay place to play *Dip*, and good vehicle for meeting and playing against great numbers of novices and players on the edge of the hobby. DH

Melinda is really starting to cut back. She's down to just 16 games now, still more than just about everybody else in the hobby, but far fewer than she's run in years. I'm not sure what has prompted her to do this (other than the usual time/energy/money constraints—although those never seemed an issue before), but the effect is undeniable. In the last issue of *ZR* I reported 22 games running in *Rebel*, so she's shed 6 games in 7 months.

Rebel was never a speedy zine, and still isn't. Although Melinda hasn't been sending me the zine regularly, just about six months elapsed between issues #67 and #71, suggesting a rate of about eight issues per year—close enough to her stated "6-week" schedule to make no difference.

If and when Melinda decides to open some new games, you can expect to pay \$25.00 for a "typical" game of *Diplomacy*. That's getting toward the high end of the price spectrum, and I personally think it's more than is merited by the service provided (no maps, slightly slow schedule, a "warehouse" zine, etc.). But Melinda has plenty of satisfied players (obviously!) and many of them keep coming back for more, so check it out yourself. GS

So I Lied!

Marc Peters, 370 North St., Sun Prairie, WI 53590
\$.50/issue; digest; xerox printed; 16 pages; freq.: 10 issues per year; circ.: 46; first: don't know; last: (Vol. 3, #37)

Runs: Diplomacy (6), Gunboat (3), WW IIIb (Global, 15-player variant) (1).

Openings: None, until two current games end.

SIL is essentially warehouse, with occasional guest sports columns. Good mix of players, but the publishing schedule is erratic. I'm trying to improve that, but if timeliness is next to Godliness for you, there are far better zines to invest in.

MP

It seems I have been trying forever to conquer the world in this zine. While the games are well run, you have no idea when the next issue will arrive. I enjoy every issue, but the delays tend to hurt long term planning in your games. This is one zine that deserves to die, yet I will miss it when it goes.

DMcC

This is one of the last refuges of the MadLads, a maniacal bunch of Wisconsinites who have preyed upon the hobby for far too long. Seriously, editor Marc Peters has turned this warehouse into, well, a little slower warehouse. The games are still coming out, but not like clockwork. There is no danger of a fold, but novices should be advised that there are faster places to play out there. On the other hand, subbing is a good way to keep up with Marc, easily one of the nicest but toughest competitors in the hobby. And where else in today's hobby can you find a running game of the 15-person variant WWIII? That game is a real zoo, but I guess I'll keep that to myself.

DH

I sub and play here. Last issue: #37, April 23, 1992. I think Mark tries awful hard, but the issues for the last year or so have been late and filled with errors. The game reports are clear and easy to read, however, much like *Upstart's!*

JM

Uh, thanks, Jim, you'll be generously rewarded for that comment! I would point out, of course, that the game reports resemble those found in *The Prince* as much as they do those in *Upstart!* (Heh.)

Truth to say, I like the look of this zine. It's a nicely designed digest zine that's not just photo-reduced full-page (i.e., Mark is someone who *loves* and *cherishes* the digest format, not some sleazoid cheapskate out to save a buck and fry subscribers' eyeballs). Mark has been playing around with a program called "Express Publisher" and he's been turning out attractive pages, though not without certain cost—here's his comment in #37: "Whatever you do, do not purchase Express Publisher. It is the single most user-hostile piece of software it's ever been my misfortune to work with." This indicates a certain level of frustration, wouldn't you say?

Obviously, Mark is having trouble getting his zine out in a timely fashion (and it's quite possible that his wrestling with Express Publisher isn't helping). As he warns you, if turnaround is next to Godliness for you, stay away. I have no real idea how frequently this thing comes out, or what the turnaround is—Marc has sent me some sample copies of his zine, but there are no dates so I can't tell anything about timing or frequency. "Not that often" is probably as accurate as we can get. On the other hand he doesn't charge you your first-born to get the thing either. Oddly enough, it says right there on the cover of the two recent copies I've received that subs go for \$6.00/10 issues, yet Marc claimed \$.50/issue on his Pubber Info Sheet. I'm also unsure how the gamefees work. So I'll duck on calculating a precise "average Dip game" price for this zine, except to say that it's somewhere between

\$10.00 and no more than \$19.00—in other words, average or maybe a little less. (But note that Mark won't have any openings until a couple of current games end.)

So why should you be interested in this thing? Well, I, for one, enjoy Marc's sense of humor and irony! #37 arrived bearing the headline "SO I'M LATE!" in place of the usual "SO I LIED!" Express Publisher may be frying his brain, but at least Marc isn't losing his sense of humor. I also really enjoy the "Blusterdom" column by Tom "Four Train" Johnston—this was especially good in issue #36, which in a breathless, non-stop manner told the story of a recent MadLad housecon. This piece should be required reading for those who are forced to put up with us obsessive game players! (They may not discover any way to put a stop to our practically criminal behavior, but at least they'll know they aren't alone in their suffering...)

For Marc's sake, and for the sake of his players, I hope he figures out how to use the fershluugginer Express Publisher and cranks the speed back up to "warehouse" levels. In all ways except for irregularity this is a fine zine. GS

Son of Flip

George Mann, 5308 Tower Hill Court, Williamsburg, VA 23188, or Eric Shaffer, Box 144 Smith Hall, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA 17745

\$1.00/issue; open page; xerox printed; 12 pages; freq.: 6-8 weeks; circ.: 15; first: Aug. 1988; last: Mar. 1992 (#28)

Runs: Machiavelli (1).

Openings: None.

The flagship Machiavelli/Pro Wrestling zine. If you want to know everything about the world's greatest sport, sub to *SOF*. We have trivia, inside information, and prediction contests. Pro wrestling fanatics are welcome. If you know some poor soul who likes pro wrestling, send them our way.

GM

If *Penguin Dip* is a window between our world and the larger science fiction "fanzine" hobby, then *Son of Flip* is the window that links the postal games, Machiavelli, and the *Pro Wrestling* universes!

This has to be one of the oddest zines out there, and as such I always find it a little bit interesting. I rarely finish reading all (or even most) of the wrestling material, but every time I see it I marvel at the persistence of vision of these two nuts (merely the polite term for "completely wacked crazoids")! Don't get me wrong, I like that they're in the hobby, I wouldn't give them up for the world. *All* of us who inhabit this postal games hobby are wacked crazoids, and anybody who thinks otherwise is itching for a fight. If you look at *SOF* and say to yourself, "damn, these guys are really in space, I mean, Machiavelli *and* pro-wrestling, what a bunch of wierdos"...well, it might mean you're beginning to lack that certain self-deprecating self-knowledge necessary to fit in 'round these parts; it might be time to choose a new, "sane" hobby more in keeping with our "sane" society. Like model railroading or something. (And let's be frank, George and Eric are not kidding about this pro-wrestling thing—they're as serious about the "El Matador vs. DiBiase feud" as we are about whether A Mar-Bur succeeded or not.)

The zine is one of the slower ones around, as it comes out about every two months or so—I've received three issues on my trade since the last ZR. Presently there are no game openings, and Machiavelli is the only game they run—no point in calculating an "average Dip game" fee, though at a buck a pop they're comfortably in the mid-range of sub fees.

If you have any interest in pro-wrestling, get in touch with these guys immediately, if not sooner. Even if you could care less about pro-wrestling, or about Machiavelli for that matter, you should at least see a sample of this thing to see what is allowed in our delightful hobby of wacked crazoids. GS

The Spindle

Dennis R. Klein, 2438 S. 56th Court, Cicero, IL 60650-2720

\$5.00/year (at least 12 issues); open page; xerox printed; 4 pages; freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 12; first: May 1991; last: Feb. 1992 (#7)

Runs: Regular Diplomacy (Mensa #37) (1).

Openings: Don't know.

As far as I know, the February issue is the last anybody's seen of this zine—and apparently people are having trouble getting through to Dennis Klein. Fred Davis reported in *Diplomag* #105 that there had been a flap over a standby called in at the last minute to fill in for an NMRing player. I've no idea whether this has had anything to do with the possible disappearance of Dennis—Fred throws out a couple of other plausible explanations including overload around tax time (Dennis is a C.P.A.), and flooding in the Chicago "Loop," where Dennis apparently works.

Fred also reported that he was going to try to rehouse the one Mensa Dip-SIG game that Dennis was running in Ralph Baty's *Batyville Gazette*. So it's possible that we may end up "trading" zines—*The Spindle* for the hiatus-ized *Batyville Gazette*. If anyone has any information about this one, let me know.

For now, I would try to get something back from Dennis before sending any money—it's possible this one's a fold, though I think everybody remains hopeful that the difficulties can be ironed out. *The Spindle* seemed like a pretty good publication until the sudden disappearance. GS

Starwood

Melinda Ann Holley, PO Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727

Sub included with gamefee; open page; xerox printed; 10-12 pages; freq.: 3-4 weeks; circ.: 16; first: Oct. 1987; last: May 1992 (#66)

Runs: 7 x 7 Round Robin Gunboat Tournaments (maximum of 4).

Openings: 7 x 7 RRGT tournament open (\$15.00 tournament fee); waiting list for future tournaments.

Just in case you don't get enough of Melinda in *Rebel*, she puts out *Starwood*, which runs even *more* games than her

"monster warehouse"—but twice as fast! I know her Pubber Info Sheet says "maximum of 4," but remember that's 4 "Round Robin Gunboat Tournaments"! For the uninitiated, each "tournament" is seven distinct, linked games of No-Press Gunboat, with each player playing a different power in each game. So 4 RRGTs = up to 28 games!

Melinda is spot-on when she says her frequency is 3-4 weeks—half the time the deadlines are three weeks apart and half the time they're four—never more. Turnaround is not spectacular, and sometimes the postmark of the last issue beats the new deadline by as little as ten or twelve days—by the time the zine arrives in the mail you can have not much more than a week to get your orders in (usually, though, you'll have up to two weeks). The upshot is clear—don't try to play here unless you're the type who can pretty much respond immediately. Since the games are Gunboat, you don't need to do any negotiating with the other players, but you can't do much "putting off till tomorrow" if you play in *Starwood*—well, maybe tomorrow, but certainly not next week! I've seen nine issues of this thing since the last *Zine Register*, so games move along pretty fast; at \$15.00 for seven complete games of Gunboat, RRGTs in *Starwood* must be the absolutely cheapest gaming experience you can find (except for those *FREE!* zines).

RRGTs were quite popular a year or two ago, but interest in them seems to have slackened considerably. Melinda is one of the few stalwarts left, so if you are interested in pitting your wits against six other players in seven games, this is the place for you. Luckily, as of her last issue she had one remaining place open in what may be the last RRGT she'll open in some time, so if you want to give this "super-game" a try, don't wait, but get your check off today. Melinda is utterly dependable and your sub money is safe with her. GS

Suicide Squeeze

John Caruso, 636 Astor Street, Norristown, PA 19401

Free to players; "reduced" (digest?); xerox printed; 4 pages (up to 8 during the season); freq.: 2 weeks during baseball season, 3-4 weeks off-season; circ.: 26+; first: Jan. 1991; last: Mar. 1992 (#24)

Runs: 26 team, 162 game schedule Baseball League. Real major league players do their best to win the pennant for you, their owner.

Openings: Inquire about getting on a waiting list.

Not much of a zine—more like the information flyer that accompanies the box scores and stat sheets. It contains listings of all team actions, any press releases, and occasionally, just chatter. JC

Keep him in ZR. Maybe it'll turn up the pressure for expansion. John's doing an enormous amount of work to keep 26 baseball nuts happy, and he deserves a truckload of thanks. PG

Hmmm, not much to say about this one. I finally saw a copy of *Suicide Squeeze*, and as John says, it's mostly stats, although there was some press. From the last ZR this thing is apparently adjudicated by, or run on, a Strat-O-Matic computer baseball game. It does sound like a lot of work, but you players will have to drive those

truckloads of thanks to John, since I'm left speechless. Sports, you know. GS

The Tactful Assassin

Eric Young, 4784 Stepeny Road, RR #2, Armstrong, BC, CANADA V0E 1B0

\$7.50 (Canadian or U.S.) per year (approx. 10 issues); open page; laser masters/xerox printed; 10 pages; freq.: approx. 5 weeks; circ.: 40 (14 Canada, 26 U.S.); first: 1991 (?); last: May 1992 (Vol. 3, #20)

Runs: Diplomacy (4), Gunboat (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Asian Diplomacy (all free).

Briefly: Editorial—any topic of my fancy, including politics, environment, social issues; Letter column—all letters printed; Puzzle column; Seasonal contests; Cartoons—Political and other. EY

The Tactful Assassin is probably the fastest, and certainly the most deadline conscious of the Canadian zines, which on the whole are slower than zines in most other parts of the world. This is largely due to the large size of the country and the "relaxed" pace of Canada Post. For those of you worried about postage, Eric makes a concerted effort to keep the weight of the zine down to get a lower mailing rate while at the same time increasing the number of games that he runs. Eric started the zine as a Mensa Dip-SIG effort. It still runs a Mensa game (and the possibility exists that another will come on line), but for the most part it has grown beyond its Mensa origins. Eric generally produces two or three pages of either his own or his subscribers writings. I wish he'd do more of that, but given his desire to keep the weight down and run a number of games I can see why he doesn't. The maps aren't as big, or as impressive as they once were, and that may be a loss. Eric might want to lose the cross-hatching (or whatever it is) that he uses for the sea spaces. They really aren't needed and tend to clutter things up. BMcK

TTA is a good, solid, dependable zine. As Brent notes, it has definitely grown beyond its Mensa Dip-SIG beginnings—and along with *Rambling WAY* it is probably the most successful of the Mensa zines, if success be measured by "bigness" and number of games running (and in part I think it is).

I've seen five issues of *TTA* since last fall—the deadline interval was usually five or six weeks. Turnaround was acceptable given this kind of schedule, with the exception of the last issue, which was several weeks late. At \$7.50 per 10 issues (if that's what you get in a year's time) that "average" Dip game will cost you roughly \$15.00, perhaps more if Eric slows down but still keeps the "per year" sub fee. That puts *TTA* at about the hobby median as far as price is concerned; for what you get I think it's a pretty good deal.

The maps *are* a bit of a disappointment—Brent's idea about losing the cross-hatching is a good one as it just muddies things up. Eric also runs them sideways, which doesn't help the effect. But when Brent says "they really aren't needed and tend to clutter things up," I presume he's talking about the cross-hatching, not the maps themselves. Though they may not be perfect, they're still a lot better than no maps at all. But then, as

per my "TurboPhreak" nature, I come down firmly on the "negative" side of the "Resolved: That maps are the hellish work of the devil" mini-debate that seems to arise from time to time in the hobby.

Eric has quite a lot of reading matter, and we are granted the opportunity to see him as a person—a nice touch. There's usually two or three pages of copy, from Eric's thoughts on stuff happening in his life, to a letter column which includes his responses, though not a great number of letters. Eric admits that it's these "other" parts of the zine that interest him most, and so he will keep a cap on gamestarts so that he has time left for his writing. That seems like an entirely sensible idea to me.

With Eric at 20 issues, I think this one has passed through some of the potential problems that confront any publisher (boredom, mostly). To my eye, Eric has found a nice mix in this zine between the games *and* the writing. I hope he manages to keep both "legs" of this zine fully operational. Since he won't be allowing himself to get overloaded with games (and as he's already got six going!), you'd better jump fast if you want to play in one of Canada's best zines. GS

Ter-ran

Steve Holnowski, 860 Colorado Ave 2A, Lorain, OH 44052

Free to players; open page; xerox printed; 3 pages; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 30; first: June 1976; last: May 1992 (#192)

Runs: Diplomacy (4)

Openings: Diplomacy (\$5.00?); occasionally WS&IM.

Still here after all these years—now it's readable. SH

As Steve notes—still crazy after all these years. No, wait, he didn't say that at all! My mistake...

Actually, 192 issues is a damn long time to be cranking these little pups out. Of course some things *do* change as time goes by. Kathy Caruso decides to fold her zine; a "certain Air Force captain" makes a play for his general's secretary, only to discover that his wife is standing nearby; *Ter-ran* ditches the ditto and adopts xerox technology. To the very best of my knowledge, this was the last ditto zine in North America.

Do you remember ditto (also called "spirit master")? When I was growing up it was that purple printed stuff the teacher would bring to class (on the gallup, they were always running late when bringing ditto copies—a caution, I should think, to anyone who ever wanted to publish on ditto in the future!), and distribute to all the students. Generally it was a pop-quiz, that sort of thing. We'd all hold it to our noses and sniff deeply. This *was* the sixties, after all.

Anyway, it's gone. *Ter-ran* looks much the same, but now it's in xeroxed black and white, like virtually every other zine out there. Still running three or four games, still incredibly reliable and regular, and Steve's page or so of "Slime Shorts" is still just as funny as ever. Since by the time *Ter-ran* arrived the ditto smell had long since worn off, I guess the xerox is an improvement. It is easier to read, but this was never much of a problem, at least for me.

Somewhat *like* a ditto machine (ah yes, that old "cah-lunkety-schlunk, cah-lunkety-schlunk" that you used to

hear all the time down near the principal's office...), Steve has put out seven issues of *Ter-ran* in the last seven months. His interval is generally every four weeks, although some of the issues around Christmas came out on 5-week schedules. But trust me, with this zine timeliness and regularity are not a problem. With a price of \$5.00 for gamestarts (sub included for life of position), this is about as cheap as it gets without being free.

As befits something this cheap, there are no extras or any other "chrome" such as maps. But no matter what, it's still a great deal to be able to play in a zine this dependable for this cheap. GS

This Train Is Bound For Glory

Craig Mills, 3024 Pascal St. North, Roseville, MN 55113

Free to game players, free samples; open page; laser master/xerox printed; 14-20 pages; freq.: monthly/bimonthly (terribly irregular); circ.: 14; first: July 1989; last: May 1992 (#24)

Runs: Railway Rivals (4).

Openings: Railway Rivals, Bus Boss.

Rail game 'zine with C.S. Lewis as the literary theme. 4-page column discussing religious topics is included under the title of "The Grand Aside." Also home of "Almost Everything..."—the American Railway Rivals Rating service. CM

This is the slowest of the regularly appearing RR zines and Craig is the most mistake-prone GM, but there are some things to be said in its favor. Craig is very good about correcting his errors (many GMs aren't) and, though slow, the zine does get published. In addition to the RR games, *TBG* also carries a Christian-oriented letter column (which so far has consisted of a dialogue between Craig and Russ Wallace), and a section in which Craig reports on PBM and PBEM RR game completions. A novice to RR should probably at least look at a sample of *TBG* so he can get an idea of who the top players in the hobby are (i.e., Jim Goode, Eric Brosius, and Doug Brown) so they can be avoided/destroyed if he/she ever gets into a game against those masters. SC

Craig maintains stats on RR game finishes and GMs a few games. Nice, clear layout—sometimes slow. JKG

I've seen just one issue of this thing, so I can't comment specifically on the timeliness question, though I note that if Craig's start date of July 1989 is correct, 24 issues in less than three years isn't all that shabby. Probably what has happened is that he really cranked in his first year or so, and since then has been quite a bit slower. After all, a two-month average schedule can seem a lot more onerous if you've gotten spoiled by quick monthly turnaround.

Apparently the way this thing works is that to keep costs down Craig only sends you the report(s) for the game(s) you're in, and includes a page or two common to all the "flyers." This includes some religious instruction/discussion, at least in the issue I've seen—as heavy a dose as any in the hobby. If you like that sort of thing, this is the zine to find it in.

There's also a RR sub-hobby service component—which lists RR game finishes, and also includes a list of all players in the sub-hobby and how they've done over-

all in Railway Rivals. And yes, a certain Mr. Eric Brosius does seem to be the Number One player! Avoidance/destruction would appear to be the prudent course...

Craig promises to start just one new game for every two that finish up—he recognizes the turnaround problem stems from trying to run too many games (coupled with trying to maintain a normal home life). So things may get faster here as time goes by. If you're a novice to the Railway Rivals hobby you might want to try someplace that has more regular gamestarts, and which will come out in a more timely fashion—but you might as well request a sample of this one, too. As Scott mentions, you'll get a chance to see where your opponents stack up! GS

Touché

Ramon Lazaro, 1120 Cordova Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134

\$8.00/year; open page; xerox printed; 14 pages; freq.: 8 weeks; circ.: 40; first: Jan. 1979; last: Sep. 1991 (#92)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), Source of the Nile (1), WS&IM (5), 1776 (2).

Openings: Dune, Campaign Trail (GDW) (all free!)

Presently *Touché* is closed to new members save for anyone interested in Dune and/or Campaign Trail. RL

The listing for *Touché* in the last issue of ZR took up almost two pages. This time it's considerably shorter, as nobody has bothered to write in about *Touché*.

I haven't received an issue of this thing since last fall, but Ramon did update his Pubber Info Sheet, so I'm pretty sure this one is still running. Last issue we kicked *Touché* all over the place as a couple of reviewers took very strong exception to several of Ramon's policies (and I agreed that they did not sound like good ideas). Specifically, Ramon allows draws to succeed even if a surviving country is voting NO, and he did not call a standby to replace a four-center England after that country went into CD. The "guest reviewers" also pointed out that *Touché* was pretty slow—and consequently expensive, given the "per year" payment system.

Obviously I have no information that would lead me to change these negative assessments. At the same time, I said then that the non-Diplomacy games that Ramon was running, specifically a big multi-player game of WS&IM, looked very interesting. If you're looking for WS&IM there really is no other places in the hobby to play. Unfortunately, Ramon seems to be full-up with WS&IM; I don't know when he might have another opening.

If you're interested in Dune or Campaign Trail, I'd say request a sample and see if you like what you get. GS

Twains

David McCrumb, 3636 Oldtown Road, Shawsville, VA 24162

\$.40-\$.50/issue (depending on the number of games you're playing); open page; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: 3 weeks; circ.: 16; first: Nov. 1990; last: Sep. 1991 (#9)

Runs: British Rails (1), EuroRails (1).

Openings: None.

Rather bland, but the players are having a ball. I need two or three standby players. DMcC

Another zine I haven't seen since last fall. If I remember correctly, the thing was hand-written, though Eric Brosius' impressive playing aids were used to keep track of things (I think). I've no idea if he's staying on schedule or not, though since there are no complaining players, I suppose no news is good news.

These "Empire Builder"-type games apparently take quite a while to play out, even if Eric's "speed" rules are used. If you want to see how the third most popular "choo-choo" game system works, check out *ark*, er, I mean check out *Twains!* (The other two "choo-choo" games? Why, *Railway Rivals* and *1830/1835*, of course!)

Maybe Dave will send you a sample if you ask politely. He is looking for a few good standbys. GS

Upstart

**Garret Schenck, 40 3rd Place, Basement Apt.,
Brooklyn, NY 11231-3302**

\$1.50/issue (\$2.00/Canada, \$3.00/overseas);
digest; laser printed; 24-36 pages; freq.: 5 weeks;
circ.: 95; first: Jan. 1988; last: Apr. 1992 (#52)

Runs: Diplomacy (10), Gunboat (3), Capitalist
Diplomacy (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat (all free).

Now the first zine in the hobby to sport computer generated *full color* maps, *Upstart* is the Josef Stalin tank of the "TurboPhreak" hobby, which is the modern, up-to-date term for what we naively used to call "postal Diplomacy." Happily we've left those halcyon days far, far behind us (well...some of us have...I mean our President seems to have left his particular Halcion daze all over his shoes, but perhaps I digress, in more ways than one).

With this issue of *ZR* I'm announcing a price increase—doubling the sub rate, but doing away with gamefees. I'm also abandoning my long-standing reluctance to go over the one-ounce limit (24 digest pages) and from now on will "fill 'er up." We're going all out! Who knows, maybe I'll even let people play in more than one game at a time...**NOT!**

As an unusually solicitous hobbyist "feared" last summer, this "biting off more nose than I can chew in order to spite my face" will surely cause my once delicate "publisher-friendly" zine to crash in a huge, messy, ugly, flaming burnout.

So climb on aboard and help take me down... GS

Garret's zine has a way of attracting great differences of opinion among hobby reviewers. I find some of the writing, by both the editor and contributors, to be moronic at times, but still enjoy getting this zine. The games also seem to be running quite well, with decent game reports and great maps. Others find Garret's writing style to be offensive and close-minded. Oh well. If you are looking for a timely game, there is no better place to go. And if the political discussions go far afield at times, do what I know others are doing: read your game report only. The rest of us will take care of the lettercol. DH

Upstart is the class publication of the hobby. It is so very much better than any other I've seen that comparison is meaningless. BE

This piece of work received one of the two "10's" I gave in the Runestone Poll this year. I've always wished a 1st place finish for *Upstart*. This publication is just absolutely loaded with personality, but a recent lack of responses by the publisher in his fantastic letter column doesn't let it show through as well as in the past. For a great overall place to read and play and become involved, you can't miss with *Upstart*. JS

The most liberal zine that I receive, it is also one of my favorites. I find myself agreeing with a lot more in this zine than I thought I would. I guess I have not swung as far towards the conservative side as I had originally thought. (Probably not old enough yet.) Unfortunately, *Upstart* runs Dip, Dip, and Gunboat. Plus some silly economic game based on Dip. But I'll forgive Garret as I do enjoy everything else. Besides, the press is usually very good, and that is the one thing that will keep me interested in a Dip game. The one improvement would be if Garret could put more of his own comments into the letter column. It is vastly improved when he does this. DMcC

Ahhhh. At last.

Nice to see that Garret is now publishing less often than I am. Maybe soon we'll be producing the same amount of verbiage per month, on average.

It's a great zine, third-best in North America. *Upstart* is opinionated, pretty, and packed with games. But it relies on the press to entertain. Some zines (vid: *Excelsior*) are fun with no press. Some are helped by press (e.g., *Dipadee-doodah!*) but can be enjoyed without. If you don't read the press in *Upstart* you're only getting half the value.

And the main reason for this is also the zine's biggest drawback: press is 3/4 of Garret's voice in the zine. The usual rambling, State-of-the-Zine editorial that we all do is fine, but when the editor sits silent in the letter column you're being cheated. Space is a problem? Either get a bigger zine, or knock something else out to make room (that's called "editing"). The Roast is okay, but is certainly lower priority than dialogue with readers! PG

[Oops, forgot to mention my "statistics": *Upstart* has appeared six times since the last issue of *ZR*, meaning I've been hitting my "five-week" schedule pretty much on the nose, except for a one week delay attributed to *ZR* #19 (and this issue of *ZR* will also cause one week of delay—it seems to be unavoidable; *ZR* is a *huge* job). Turnaround averages nine to ten days after deadline to get an issue in the mail; many zines that don't even remotely consider themselves "TurboPhreak" do better than that. Finally, with the price increase, *Upstart* has moved into the ranks of the "expensive" zines; an "average" game of Dip will set you back \$30.00. It's still worth it, just not quite as good a deal as before. GS

Vertigo

Brad Wilson, PO Box 126, Wayne, PA 19087

\$4.50/10 issues, \$9.00/10 issues outside North America; open page; laser printed/xerox printed; 12-32 pages; freq.: about 7 weeks, games run on flyer (usually); circ.: 72; first: Aug. 1982; last: Apr. 1992 (#109)

Runs: Diplomacy (5), Gunboat (2), Colonia VI (1), Balkan Wars VI (1), Everybody Plays! (1).

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Philadelphia Dip, Balkan Wars VI (all games free—need standbys).

Once upon a time, in a hobby far, far away, there was this concept called "Fannishness," and... (Naw, don't do that. It'd be funny but then Garret would be pissed off. Try something else.)

HEY!!! ALL YOU APPEARANCE TURBOFREAKS OUT THE... (No, no, no! What are you trying to do here, annoy Garret with every line? Come on now, play nice.)

Why bother? After what I've said about Garret and ZR of late you know I'm going to get trashed in this thing. Might as well have fun while I'm at it. Hear the one about the two TurboPhreaks, the aardvark, and the petroleum je... (AGGHHH! Not that joke, not in ZR! Give Garret a chance, now, be fair!)

Okay, if you insist... Limping toward our 10th anniversary (August) *Vertigo* continues to offer casual Dip, incisive hobby commentary, a feisty lettercol, contests, and ramblings on music, sports, drinking (with Alcohol Consultant Ted "Swizzle" Stick) and politics. For years hideously ugly and proud of it, we're now quasi-pretty and not all that proud of it, but we're readable now and I suppose that makes a difference. Definitely *not* Feud-Free, *Vertigo* continues to offer the hobby a feisty, independent, trenchant voice on matters large and small. Dirt cheap (some would say a very appropriate term), *Vertigo* welcomes novices looking for more than just games—although you'll enjoy the games! Standbys needed, too. **BW**

Brassy, but not militant. A lot of college basketball stuff, enough to almost make you a B-Ball fan. Games come out on a flyer called "Meet George Jetson." Zine comes out so seldomly that Brad may elect to drop the month and just put the year on it.

Vertigo has a lot of hobby history: its publisher, Brad Wilson, is the hobby old fart that he accuses others of being. But he is far from being burned out. Rather, Brad is a very energetic personality who will be exerting his presence in this hobby for a while to come. He has an attitude of two cities—Philadelphia and Chicago—both blended together. And this attitude is conveyed through the pages of *Vertigo*. *Vertigo* will be slow, but it is not leaving us yet. Technology has caught up to Brad (he has bought one of those altars of evil, a computer), hence the nicer output that you can actually read. But no matter how pretty it gets, it will still be *Vertigo*. **PDK**

Yes, I wish Brad would clean up the cross-outs and typos and spacing, but if the price of keeping *Vertigo* alive is an ugly format, then ugly is for me.

Lots of pages, mostly on sports, politics, and hobby doings. Like most journalists, Brad can get carried away with "fighting for the little guy" and class warfare and other things which are true but far less relevant than he thinks. But his emotion drives his opinions and also encourages others to get in on the act, so his following is truly local. I sense he's getting disillusioned with Dipdom—I hope it's not so severe as to drive him away. We need him. **PG**

This zine is a little hard to explain. Brad Wilson is a somewhat combative sort, and that attitude pervades the zine. (He cringes when I call *Vertigo* a feud zine, but I do think it is in some ways.) The lettercol is often the

most interesting in Dipdom, however, so if you are willing to put up with Brad's sometimes infuriating knee-jerk reactions to things, I recommend it. On the other hand, the thing is not very timely, so don't sign up if that's what you want. The zine is also extremely ugly, with bad photocopying and layout. But at forty-five cents an issue, it's a serious bargain. Sports fans should also note that, since Brad is a sportswriter, there is often a lot of good content on sports topics. **DH**

It's "feisty." "Feisty" is what it is. Real "feisty."

Brad recently purchased a computer and in true toady fashion he's now engaged in a lame attempt to curry favor with the "TurboPhreak" faction that now completely dominates Dipdom.

First indication of Brad's capitulation came when his zine arrived without the classic Wilsonian touch of black magic marker "whiteout" (which always made the thing look like it had been obtained from the F.B.I. under the Freedom of Information Act). A second sign of Brad's surrender to "TurboPhreakism" was that issue #109, the most recent issue, was actually in the mail not three months after #108. I know this won't sound very "Turbo" to most people, but consider that it took our Brad well over *five months* to get #108 in the mail and you'll see this is a vast speed improvement. (He's actually managed to produce three issues since last May!) As if this wasn't enough, Brad has even done away with his NVR = YES house rules, though as recently as issue #108, he took me to task for suggesting that NVR = YES was a "bad idea"!

But it's important in surrender arrangements that more than just signals be sent—there has to be an actual document acknowledging the capitulation. Sure enough, I have here in my possession a piece of paper from our Brad, dated "5-5," that says: "Garret—Here's a sample of my "game flyer" *Meet George Jetson*. The deadline for the games herein was April 30. I've been on a schedule like that since February." Good boy, Brad, keep it up! We're pulling for ya, guy!

Personally, I've recently found *Vertigo* to be highly disappointing. His last two issues have been filled with some of the nastiest writing ever seen in this hobby. He's even called on me to "go" as ZR publisher! I suppose Brad "Mr. Civility" Wilson thinks he could do a better job, huh? (Considering that it's been two and a half years that the hobby's been waiting for him to publish a silly little Miller Number service zine, I guess I'll hold on, for now. But he's welcome to apply for the position...)

In a recent letter to me, Brad was crowing about the "influence" he has in the hobby—pointing out that it was *he* who started this silly "TurboPhreak" feud. A couple of points on this matter. One is that Tom Nash was the one who coined and popularized the phrase "TurboPhreak"—well over a year ago! Brad's just picked up Tom's ball and run with it. Secondly, *I* was the one who published ZR #19, the "abomination" that Brad has convinced himself is destroying the hobby. Who's the actor, and who's the reactionary here, I wonder? Besides, I think it's pretty pathetic that the one achievement Brad points to as his contribution to the hobby is the starting of a destructive and costly feud (even though he didn't really start it!).

Brad is truly the *anus* of the hobby. You heard it here (if not elsewhere). On the other hand his zine is one of the cheaper ones around—a typical game of Diplomacy could cost you just \$9.00, putting *Vertigo* comfortably

in the cheap seats—just *how* cheap, you'll have to request a sample and see for yourself... GS

War Fair

Stephen K. Glasgow, 32009 Pendley, Willowick, OH 44095

\$3.00/year; open page; xerox printed; 6 pages (planning 8); freq.: 5 weeks; circ.: 22; first: Nov. 1989; last: May 1992 (#24)

Runs: Mensa Diplomacy (1), Middle Earth II variant (1), Small Earth II-R variant (1), Bourse (with the Mensa Dip game) (1).

Openings: Bourse always has openings (free).

In the beginning, *War Fair* was a Mensa Dip-SIG flyer. This year I expanded beyond that microcosm and became a full-featured zine by starting variants open to the public. Let me say that I personally like maps, all kinds of maps. I use several PC software packages to replicate the original maps for each game, and draw each player's moves on the maps for a visual summary of the turn. I hope *War Fair* earns a reputation for great maps, as well as no NMRs. Read my lips, "No NMRs!" If I can't reach a player on the phone, I use a member of my local gaming club to fill in for a season. I welcome trades with other pubbers so I can see more of what's going on in the hobby. SKG

The last time I saw this zine, it was really just a flyer running one game (in fact the game was just finishing up, and *War Fair* was waiting for its next Mensa Dip-SIG game). Now it's much more of a full-fledged zine, and it's clear that Stephen Glasgow has either gotten better software, or a better printer, or both—the zine looks really first-rate.

While I can understand why Stephen is so proud of his maps (and there's a lot to like about them—for starters they're pretty big, and he also puts arrows and other symbols on the maps to indicate what happened), I personally wish he would use something other than rectangles to draw the maps. The way it is now, the map for Small Earth Dip bears only a tenuous relationship to the round world we live on! This is a nit-pick, obviously, but I've never been fond of "geomorphic"-style maps (for more examples of this sort of thing, see the recent issues of *Diplomacy World*, where similar "magic" has been applied to the Diplomacy map by several correspondents).

Stephen is going to run a Bourse game in conjunction with his new startup of Mensa Diplomacy—and these are always fun, I think. Who knows, I might even play! I guess I get a certain perverse pleasure out of buying and selling securities on the open market...

I haven't received enough issues of this thing to comment on Stephen's schedule or turnaround over a long period of time, but I will note that exactly five weeks separated the two issues I have received recently. As far as price goes, if Stephen sticks to his \$3.00/year schedule and puts out 10 issues per year, you could play out an average game of Diplomacy in about two years, and only be \$6.00 poorer—a real deal. I recommend this zine—it's still young, but it seems to know what it wants to do. Request a sample. GS

Well Martha, It Kinda' Sorta' Looks Like A Dip Rag...Don't It?

John Schultz, 19390 I-308, In. St. Prison POB 41, Michigan City, IN 46360

Free (voluntary postage donations requested); open page; xerox printed; 8 pages; freq.: monthly (sorta); circ.: 52; first: March 1991; last: May 1992 (#13)
Runs: Diplomacy (5), Gunboat (2), Winter 1898 Dip variant (1), Enemy In Sight (1), Snowball Fighting (1).

Openings: Solo Anonymous Dip variant (free), Snowball Fighting (free).

Mostly about the games...but I always like a little discussion about something...anything...as I've always got an opinion about everything. Player press is my pet. I get really depressed when my players don't banter so I can make some stupidly ridiculous response.

I like to think of *Martha* as the girl next door. Not beautiful to look at but earthy and comfortable to be with. No perfection there but you can count on her in the long run. The type of girl your mother wants you to marry. I've loosened up on my timeliness thing some and I've had some fairly serious personal problems which have affected *Martha* a little of late. Recently, I even had to scrap an issue and just adjudicate the games. My apologies for that but I never claimed perfection and I want to reassure everyone...

Any minor problems with *Martha* have nothing to do with burnout. Consider both *Martha* and myself as two rocks lapped by the ocean spray. Eventually, time and the elements will wash us away. 'Til then we'll both stand solid as symbols of tenacity versus those elements. Oooh! Deep stuff!

Classy kinda' guy, ain't I? How 'bout that, Garret? Words roll off my tongue like snot off a doorknob. JS

A nice rag, and all the better because it supports Snowball Fighting (world's best postal game). John is cool, a detached and unflappable observer of life—in fact, I've wondered whether he had that attitude *before* prison. He had the good sense not to start too fast or try too much, and I hope he makes the most of the games and readers he has before he tries to expand. A great bargain. PG

There are some zines that it's difficult to be objective about. *Vertigo* is one of them (for me, obviously!), and *Martha* is another. That's because I have so much affection and respect for its publisher, John Schultz.

Objectively speaking, this isn't *that* good a zine—it's not the prettiest thing out there, the layout can sometimes be a little funky, John sometimes slips up on the adjudications, and us *Martha* junkies just suffered through a month without it! (And to add insult to injury, John blames his cat on the mysterious disappearance of the game I'm playing here—Enemy in Sight—obviously a plot by the "impartial" GM to eliminate my press from contention in his "best press" contest!) Moreover, John is pulling a "Mark Lew" and deep-sixing some back letters in order to get back on track after the delay, and I'm supposed to be opposed to such shenanigans.

But where John (and *Martha*) really shines is in how he *cares*—about his zine and about his players. Yes, he had some trouble and had to suspend publication of his

zine for a month or so—but John made damn sure that everybody got their game on flyer that month. He always finds something nice to say, but at the same time you know where he stands. A nice mix. If you haven't figured it out by now, John is in the Indiana state pen, doing some pretty hard time. I haven't the faintest idea how he manages to publish this thing from the inside. I'll bet *Martha* complicates things enormously for him—it's something he needs and wants; needs and wants can be big trouble for you when you're under the thumb of a prison administration. Happily, John seems to have an inner power that keeps him going through the ups and downs.

John advertises this thing as free, so theoretically you could be a swine and play that "average" game here and not have it cost you a cent. But theory aside, John has to pay for his supplies and what not just like everybody else, but he can't take cash. Please send him stamps—that's the coin of his realm. Whatever you feel good about, apparently, but figure that his zine costs at least a 29¢ stamp each month, plus 8 copies, and pony up accordingly (note, this is Garret speaking, not John—he is *far* more polite and circumspect than this; I bet if you *did* try to play for free he'd never once directly bring up the question of stamp donations.)

Despite the recent delay, John has still managed to crank out five issues of *Martha* since the last *ZR*, which considering his circumstances must be equivalent to doing *Boast*, *Graustark*, and *Maniac's Paradise*, all at once.

Martha is about as big as it can get at this point—John has to keep the size under one ounce. He probably doesn't need too many more players, but if you want to check out a sample or two, who's to stop you? (I have some samples to distribute through the Zine Bank, too.) GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW!

Where's Kevin Tighe

Mark Larzelere, 7607 Fountainbleau #2352, New Carrollton, MD 20784

don't know; open page; xerox printed; 3 pages; freq.: monthly; circ.: 11; first: Jan. 1990; last: never seen

Runs: 1830 (2), Intimate Dip (1).

Openings: None; none foreseen.

This is the same zine as *Massacre By Treachery*, I merely changed the name to *Where Is Kevin Tighe?* I'll probably fold when the currently running games end. ML

I've never seen either this zine or its predecessor. Obviously a pretty marginal effort, with a sub list of just 11 players—seems to be running down to a fold. GS

World Diplomacy

Larry Peery, Box 620399, San Diego, CA 92162

\$15.00/4 issues; digest; xerox printed; 48–52 pages; freq.: quarterly; circ.: 100 (?); first: Spring 1991; last: Spring 1992 (#5)

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

Yes, Dorothy, there is Dip beyond Kansas.

WD is a Dip zine for Dip players and hobbyists who want to expand their horizons to include, for instance: Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, Austria, Israel, Australia, New Zealand; and some of those other islands: Papua/New Guinea, Singapore, and the British Isles. Two-thirds of *WD*'s readership is from outside the States; a fact that gives the zine an international flavor to go with its worldly focus.

WD was established to provide a means of establishing an international hobby infrastructure (e.g., to foster the exchange of news, views, and ideas); and to promote initial contacts and the development of lasting friendships among the members of the international Diplomacy hobby.

To achieve its first goal in its first year *WD* began by using such means as the exchange of information and ideas by a variety of methods: surveys, questionnaires, ballots, polls, ads, editorials, news reports, and round table discussions among them.

WD focused heavily on international hobby news, especially the promotion and reporting of Dipcon type events. No other hobby publication, anywhere, devoted as much attention to these kinds of events as did *WD*. Both domestic and foreign cons in places as far apart as Birmingham and Canberra, Chapel Hill and Vienna, or Paris and Singapore were covered; an extensive roundtable discussion of the World Dipcon concept itself featured input from leading hobbyists worldwide.

Features in *WD* have ranged over an equally wide area and included a look back at the publisher's 25 years as a postal hobbyist, a discussion of France, variants as timely as the day's headlines, and a discussion of the current state of musical theater.

As we begin our second year our primary emphasis will be on establishing an international hobby personal relations network (e.g., an organization of disciples of Peeriblah), a natural outgrowth of our efforts to establish solid links between the various international hobbies.

We plan to do this by conducting the first worldwide hobby census—a real census asking real questions, not just the publication of a collection of out-of-date mailing lists. Preparations are already underway for the first worldwide postal Diplomacy championship. This multi-game team event has drawn interest from players in more than ten countries, including many of the best FTF and PBM players in the world. As part of our efforts to promote links between the Diplomacy hobby and the "real world" (which, if you've noticed, is more and more coming to resemble a Diplomacy game), we'll sponsor competitions on such subjects as the possibility of another World War I in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, or the comparative diplomatic abilities of Winston Churchill. "Was he, in fact, the greatest diplomat of the 20th Century?" One of our goals is to produce a multi-language, multi-faceted brochure for use by players everywhere to promote their local FTF and PBM hobbies, as well as the worldwide hobby. Finally, as always, the challenge of what to do with the Hobby Archives looms.

Every Diplomacy publication or project bears the imprint of its publisher or editor, but few have carried it, for better or worse, to the extreme that it has been given its own name, "PEERIBLAH" in my case. Some people like it. Some don't. Either way, it's difficult to ignore.

After 25 years in the hobby, and still going strong (aren't you sick of that damn rabbit?), my Peerispective reflects nothing more than my ability to enjoy the luxury of being able to do what I want the way I want and say it in the way that suits me. As always the focus is on recognizing the positive in the hobby. That's the basis on which my entire hobby philosophy rests.

Obviously, *WD* is not your typical Dip zine. You'll find little in the way of game openings, letter columns, feuding, non-Dip games, mindless chatter, etc. In fact you won't find much of what goes into most Dip zines today. What you will find, I hope, is a good read, some intellectual stimulation, and a vehicle to take you places in the Dip hobby that you didn't even know existed (and you thought I was going to say, where no one has gone before, didn't you).

WD isn't for every Dipper, but if you take your Dip seriously, it may be for you. The only way to find out is to try it, and to encourage you to do so, I'm offering you this opportunity. Subscribe. If you don't like the first issue you get, write me and tell me why, and I'll refund your sub fee in full.

Larry Peery launched this zine about a year after handing *Diplomacy World* over to me. (He didn't want to let go, obviously, hence the *WD* name...) This zine is fat and cuddly, like its editor, and full of pithy conversation about the Diplomacy hobby, and the international hobby in particular (also like its editor). I don't think this zine is for everyone, because Larry's grandiose writing is not for everyone. But if you are interested in the future of the hobby, DipCon, World DipCon, and other subjects, then *WD* is definitely worth its rather high price. I have noticed that the zine has received sorta rave reviews abroad, more so than here at home.

"World of Larry"? Sounds okay to me, the main reason most of us get it is because it's Peeriblah (if we continue to get it—I objected to the price so I don't think Larry will send it to me. I say again, \$3.75/issue is too much). But I'm puzzled by the animosity expressed by Garret in *ZR* #19. Most of us are not playing games which require negotiations overseas, so that's a red herring, leaving him with little to protest against, in my view.

Naw, it's too late at night, and too close to the end here to refight that battle. And anyway, Larry has taken up all the space that I have available for *World Diplomacy*. \$3.75 an issue still seems kind of steep, and I wish Larry could figure out a way to get more different voices in his zine (unfortunately I'm not one of those people who lives for the latest arrival of "Peeriblah"), but since he's willing to refund your sub fee in full if you don't like what you're getting, you can try out *WD* with little risk to your pocketbook. I say give him a shot and see what you think.

Your Zine of Zines

Jack McHugh, 280 Sanford Road, Upper Darby, PA 19082, or Doug Kent, 54 West Cherry St #211, Rahway, NJ 07065-3240

\$.50/issue; open page; laser master/xerox printed; 6-10 pages; freq.: 6-8 weeks; circ.: 40; first: Aug. 1991; last: Feb. 1992 (#7)

Runs: None.

Openings: None.

We are the in-depth complement to *ZR*. We cover a few zines every month—that is me, Jack McHugh and Doug Kent—in more detail and more up-to-date than a biannual *ZR*.

We accept guest reviews, just as *ZR* does and we trade. Additionally, if anyone wants to get a review they can trade with us or send us some samples. By the same token anyone who doesn't want a review merely has to say so and we won't review them. JM

An interesting little thingie which critiques a few publications each issue. Besides the critiques there's a small letter col. (mainly responses to earlier critiques). Jack McHugh's twisted irreverence and sense of humor as well as Doug Kent's Jack bashing (good naturedly, of course) make this more interesting than it would be otherwise. JS

The last issue I've seen of this thing was in February, bearing an April deadline date. I don't know if these guys have decided to stiff me on our trade copies, or if they are having trouble keeping on schedule, but I suspect the latter. Since Doug Kent is the publisher, a scheduling problem is the last thing you'd expect, but as Jack is doing more and more of the "writing" and "editing," anything is possible, I suppose. Doug can't publish what he doesn't have.

Not my favorite zine, but you might enjoy it. Send for a sample, or get it through the Zine Bank. GS

NEWNEWNEWNEWNEWNEW!

Zero Sum

Richard Weiss, 2 Bayside Village Pl. #409, San Francisco, CA 94107

\$1.00/issue; open page; dot matrix master/xerox printed; probably 12; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: probably 40 (issue #1 was sent across the cosmos); first: Apr. 1992; last: May 1992 (#0)

Runs: None.

Openings: Diplomacy, Gunboat, Fog of War, Land Bridge III, Chaos Dip (see below) (all free!)

Please notice that all *Zero Sum* games are variants where there is only one winner or all original players share in the draw. See list above for the games that I'm offering.

Black press is allowed unless voted out. One of my main goals is punctuality. Games and press will have precedence. There will be a contest every issue. Main topics of letters will probably be Dip, sports, and psychobabble. RW

I guess this is the newest zine going, although I've heard rumblings from a guy named Stuart Tucker (2315 Trehaven Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49008) about a possible zine to run Dune, and Andy Marshall is just about ready to start one up to play Diplomacy (see the "Prodigy" listing for his address). This hobby is really pulling out of its depression, all the signs are there, though the fold of an old-timer like *Kathy's Korner* can't be ignored. But I'm sure that most observers of the hobby scene would agree with me that the hobby has looked livelier in the past couple of months than it has during the entire preceding year (or longer).

I've only seen the one issue of this thing, but obviously it's off and running. I just heard from Karl Hoffman (*Acropolis*) that the three games that Jim Green was

running will be coming here, and I fully expect that Richard's innovative ideas on DIAP ("Draws Include All Players, of course!) will spring open at least a couple of games, probably more. Too, Richard noted on his Pubber Info Sheet that issue #0 was "sent around the cosmos," which I assume means he distributed samples to as many players as he could find—the way to really get a start-up zine rockin' and sockin' from the get-go.

I do have one question about this new "variant"—what about standbys? Do they get to share in the draw? Or is it just the original players? Seems to me you've got to give the standbys some sort of consideration, or they'll likely to go haywire. But what about an original player who is eliminated in 1904 versus someone who struggles through to 1911 before NMRing out with a two-center position, only to have the game end in a draw a year later. Who gets the credit—standby or original player? Some unanswered questions, I think, and presumably Richard's letter col will have a hot and heavy discussion on these and other points.

I'm sure that all hobbyists join me in wishing Richard the very best of luck with his new venture. One of these days I may come and join the fun.

[Yahoooo! That's it! Except for a lot of fairly small tasks (that will take far longer than they should), that's the bulk of the writing for this issue of ZR. Just think—I only have to do this one more time!] GS

Overseas Zines

[[As a sort of answer to my generally negative stance in the last issue of Zine Register concerning participation in the "international" hobby, here's an amusing little bit from Pete Sullivan:]]

As far as the concept of "internationalism" goes, the point isn't necessarily to experience different cultures—as you say, the vast majority of zeen editors in any country are nerdish, white, English speaking, middle-class games freaks. Perhaps the appeal is more the other way around—most of these Americans may be gun-carrying weirdoes who make crap T.V. series, but at least there's some of them who are harmless games nerds like us!

Those who are interested in international contacts should probably check out the "International Subscription Exchange" (ISE) listed under "Hobby Services." That said, on with the Overseas Zines!]]

Beautiful Losers

Clive Lane, 53 Pritchard St., Annandale, NSW 2038, AUSTRALIA

Now the premier Australian Dipzine, with the retreat of *Victoriana*. Recently I hit upon an analogy for *BL*: it's the *People* magazine of the Aussie Dip hobby. Player profiles, convention reports, insulting sarcastic abuse of key Dipsters...you cannot read *BL* and walk away without the feeling you've met these folks before. PG

C'est Magnifique

Pete Sullivan, 16 Nello Close, Romanby, North Yorks. DL7 8NN, ENGLAND

£0.45/issue or £6.00/14 issues; digest; xerox printed; 16; freq.: 4 weeks; circ.: 70; first: Mar. 1985; last: Apr. 1992 (#113)

Runs: Diplomacy (3), Downfall VII Dip (1), International Definitive Downfall (1), Railway Rivals (4)

Openings: Diplomacy (3 issues sub credit), International Downfall VII (free), Monopoly (1 issue credit), Railway Rivals (2 issues credit)

I'll let Garret describe this in detail, but note that there will be an International Railway Rivals opening by the time you read this. PS

One of two overseas zines I get. Pete's prices are the same whether you're in or out of country, indicating he's really pitching this at a foreign "market." Consequently you see some familiar names in here—among others, Pete Gaughan is signed up to play Monopoly, and David Hood is playing Diplomacy (and taking a fairly *nasty* beating in the press, although I suppose it's all in fun, maybe...).

Last fall the zine was coming out in open-page format, but since then Pete's squeezed it into the digest form (one of the major benefits, of course, of the A4 paper that Europeans use is that the "aspect ratio" of the paper is the same whether you use full-page or "digest"—consequently the zine looks nicely designed for the digest page). I guess it used to be done mimeo, too—it's now xeroxed. All the games are named after Beatles' songs, although other than that there's no discussion of the Beatles. Pete throws in the odd cartoon, but mostly it's text.

There's a letter col, featuring more Americans than you might think, and many of the English voices are the same ones you see over here. This lends a certain Middle-Atlantic feel to the zine, although I expect that's an inevitable consequence of Pete's international focus. Still, it seems a little strange to go all the way to England for a zine, only to run into the same old familiar letter writers!

One other nice touch is that Pete plugs/reviews many zines each issue—almost a listing of all the zines he's seen that month. As "our" Pete G. mentioned last issue, *C'est Magnifique* is an excellent window into the British hobby, and should be a starting point for those Americans who want to check out the British or European hobbies. GS

Damn the Consequences

Brendan Whyte, 96 Waiatarua Road, Remuera, Auckland 5, NEW ZEALAND

(Pete asked me to list this, even though he's never seen it. Okay, I'm easy. But since I've never seen it either, what more can I say? Clearly, not much, but as I have a couple of lines to fill here I'll just sort of babble away. Nobody will notice, I suspect.) GS

Diplomat

Thomas Franke, Haarenufer 12, D-2900 Oldenburg, GERMANY

DM 4.50 for overseas players, DM 3.50 for European players; open page (A4); xerox printed; 24 pages; freq.: 6-7 weekly; circ.: 55; first: Jan. 1990; last: Apr. 1992 (#15)

Runs: Diplomacy (2), International Diplomacy (4), International Woolworth II-D (1), International Capitalist Diplomacy (1), Barbarian, Kingdom & Empire (2).

Openings: Diplomacy, International Diplomacy, Civilization, Routemaster, and Barbarian, Kingdom & Empire

Diplomat is a German zine written in English which wants to promote the international character of the Dip Hobby. It comes out every 6-7 weeks in order to allow enough negotiation time for the games (national games are adjudicated every 3-4 weeks on a flyer basis). *D* always contains an editorial, a Dip article, a letter column, and another article of the publisher on actual policy topics besides the adjudications. *D* is also open to other good strategic or tactical games besides Diplomacy and Dip variants; each issue costs DM 4.50 for overseas players and DM 3.50 for European players. There are currently players from Germany, Belgium, Sweden, France, Switzerland, the U.K., the U.S., Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The zine is known for its reliable, hard-core players—some of them have been playing under the auspices of the publisher for nearly 10 years! TF

Diplomat is the only overseas zine that has truly maintained a trade with ZR, and it is easily the most "international" zine I've seen—most of its games include players from the States, and the thing is done almost wholly in English.

It's not the fastest zine I've ever received—I've seen just four issues since the last ZR. Still, that's not too shabby, considering that the international character of the thing is going to add extra time. You can easily find U.S. zines that do no better, without having the "excuse" of having to maintain on-going contact with players/writers from overseas. Apparently the "domestic" games (for Germans only, in German language) come out on flyer in between issues.

There's a fair amount of writing in the zine, in English—this includes some editor's ramblings, and a letter col which has lately seemed to focus on drawing a parallel between Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler. There are one or two readers who seem to dominate the col, and it would be better if more people were to write in, but Thomas has to go with what he's got, which is quite a lot of stuff from a certain Marcus K.

Thomas has been a little late recently, and he's already got quite a few games running in the zine, with more on the way. You might have reason to be a trifle concerned by these facts, as they are often a precursor to a fold. However, several of the games are GMed by "guests," and most of the new openings will also be run by persons other than Thomas. So hopefully he's thinking about shielding himself from burnout.

This is an interesting zine. I'd say give it a try. GS

Dipsomania

Jef Bryant, 121 rue Jean Pauly, B-4430 ANS, BELGIUM

Dipsomania runs an edition simultaneously in French and in English, so here's your chance to play in two "hobbies" at once (Jef will aid in translation where needed). Lots of games, nearly all variants, and each issue features the complete rules to another variant. Jef is now on a regular bimonthly schedule, which is long by U.S. standards, but just right for international play. PG

Dolchstoss

Richard Sharp, Norton House, Whielden Street, Amersham, Bucks HP7 0HU, ENGLAND

Sort of a British *Graustark*. To Richard, the world is divided into two kinds of people—those who enjoy Diplomacy, bridge, tobacco, alcohol and good food, and those whom he doesn't understand. Currently running 12 games of Dip with constant openings for more, his international correspondents keep trying to convert him to libertarianism (over monarchy), baseball (over cricket), and compound nouns (over hyphenization), without success. Good reading. PG

Draco Australis

Shane Beck, 14 Anglo Court, Mooroolbark, Victoria 3138, AUSTRALIA

(Okay Pete, I'll list this one too, even though again you've never seen it [and until five minutes ago, I never knew it existed!]. I suppose I *could* list every frickin' zine in the world, but...) GS

Europa 2000

Georg Fynas, Bahnhofstr. 42, Bunde D-4980, GERMANY

Doing a very good job of running a German zine in English. As most German zines, it's big on United and other non-negotiating games (imagine a U.S. zine that was entirely Monopoly and Nuclear War). Needs more articles or game openings before I can recommend a subscription. PG

Flying for a Quail

Ryk Downes, "Sharlc", 63 Hirst Wood Road, Saltale, Shipley, West Yorkshire BD18 4BV, ENGLAND

This is effectively a "Zeen Register" for United and other sports games zeens. It also features a United rules forum discussion and various statistical stuff. A useful starting point for U.S. United fans seeking to internationalize. PS

Greatest Hits

Pete Birks, 181 Friem Road, East Dulwich, London, SE22 0DB, UNITED KINGDOM

A perzine (personal zine): no games, just Pete's writing and a letter column. Letters take up six to ten pages, and Pete fills the other 30 or 40!!! British politics, cooking lessons, television, games (he reviews 'em, he doesn't GM 'em), legal wagering, ancient history—take your pick. PG

Interzine

Lukas Kausch, Selterichstr. 5, 7500 Karlsruhe 1, GERMANY

The German zine register and more. Lukas's system is not to summarize each zine over several issues. *Interzine* is monthly and consists largely of a section called "Frisch ausgepackt" (Recently received). Every zine Lukas gets is listed with a description of the contents, and evaluations on how well done each phase looks (games, editorials, letters, and so on). It's all in prose (it's not as mechanical as I make it sound) but it's also in German...if you can read German, *Interzine* will give you a great window on their hobby because it, too, is part *House of Lords*, with letters from zine editors all over the Continent and a list of game openings. PG

Lepanto 4-Ever

Per Westling, Rydsv. 246 c-16, S-582 51, Linköping, SWEDEN

The best way to describe *Lepanto 4-Ever* is as a Scandinavian *Northern Flame*. If you've read my review of *NF*, you'll understand why this is pretty high praise. BMCK

Per would love to have you. Few editors come across as *friendly* as he does—in fact, he needs to disagree more often in the letter column. Dip, a little bridge, a United league, an occasional variant—a nice basic platter of games to support the important stuff like letters and comments on Dip personalities. PG

Mission From God

Madelaine Smith and Andy Key, 144 Perrisfield, Venymore, Lechlade, Gloucestershire, GL7 3SE, ENGLAND

The U.K. zine register, but also a sort of mini-*House of Lords*. They are very open to discussions of what's new

in GMing, publishing, and playing; the reviews by Iain Bowen are terrifically incisive. PG

The British Zeen Register, and the best place to pick up details of British zeens if you don't trust the views of me or Pete Gaughan... PS

Mouth of Sauron

Mark Nelson, 21 Cecil Mount, Amkey, LEEDS, West Yorkshire LS12 2AP, ENGLAND

Mark Nelson is apparently a star of various North American lettercols, and this is a highly internationally-oriented zeen. Articles and a long lettercolumn discuss various topics, including rules and houserules, strategy and tactics, the Diplomacy hobby and science fiction fandom. The games are run by flyer or electronic mail (where Mark can be found on INTERNET "amt5man@cml.leeds.ac.uk," whatever that means), apart from the main zeen. PS

Nertz

William Whyte, 200 Iffley Road, Oxford, OX4 1SD, UNITED KINGDOM

Nertz is the only foreign 'zine I sub to. It's wild. William runs outlandish variants, reviews books you'll never hear of anywhere else (and have a devil of a time finding in stores or libraries), and never fails to entertain while relating personal experiences in his witty fashion. The large letter col covers everything from physics to the U.K. music scene. Several of his correspondents had their first political insight last week, which might irritate some, or it may add to your amusement. It's no oil painting but the seemingly haphazard layout adds to the overall random feel. It's reasonably frequent, considering how much time his studies must take up, and allowing for time delays for overseas mail. RL

Popular Cutlery

Adrian and Paul Appleyard, 254 Padstow Road, Eight Mile Plains, Queensland 4113, AUSTRALIA

Popular Cutlery #4 had a screaming headline: "FREE NELSON MANDELA!" Yes, it's an old joke, and that's much of what you're burdened with here, but the Appleyard brothers make you want to laugh at the old jokes. PC is just as adolescent as *Canyon*, thinner on games but has openings. Besides all this they're offering PBM Battletech, for that minority of you which doesn't get enough of it, and one of the Dip games is a prize-game Gunboat. PG

Queens Dagger

Michael Chau, 3/174 Prospect Hill Road, Canterbury, Victoria 3126, AUSTRALIA

(Another zine which Pete hasn't seen, but which I'm willing to list anyway, even though I've never seen it either. I'm just a pushover when it comes to these foreign zines; I'll do anything to please my unofficial "Foreign Zines Editor.") GS

Under the Wire

Wallace Nicoli, 48 Broughton Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4EE, SCOTLAND

Prisoners of War is gone. In its place is *Under the Wire*, which is a six-page flyer and very neatly running down to a fold. PG

Victoriana

John Cain, 76 Banool Road, Balwyn, 3103, AUSTRALIA

The former granddad of Australian Dip is now a players-only warehouse, which will be reviewed after a year (implication is at that time it will either fold or return to full-service zine). PG

Y ddraig Goch

Iain Bowen, 5 Wiggington Terrace, YORK, North Yorkshire YO3 7JD, ENGLAND

YDG ("The Red Dragon") is a very readable, witty zine, and I sincerely hope Iain finds the time to run his excellent letter column out to its former, obscene lengths. Right now he's preoccupied with the impending U.K. elections, on which he writes with great skill and a hot dagger. PG

Slowing, but still featuring a good mix of games and "fannish" chat, including sports and politics, and the occasional contribution from Arnold Xerses Lobster, the hobby's only 500-year-old crustacean. There is an international game of Railway Rivals, and Pete Gaughan is apparently just about to win a game of Snowball Fighting by trashing David Hood. It also features "Globetrotter," the occasional sub-zeen on World Dip Con and international convention-going generally, by Shaun Derrick. PS

Recently Folded Zines

California Acres, John W. Fisher, Jr. David Hood: "This is what *Ohio Acres* turned into after Bob Greier turned it over to John Fisher. There was a great deal of writing in every issue, but it was not of the quality of, say, *Northern Flame* or even *Diplomacy Downs*. Basically, John exuded a lot of enthusiasm, but said very little of lasting value. Nevertheless, there was a refreshingly nutty view of the hobby with the pages of this zine that was fun for some people to read. The games seemed to be going well right up until the fold. There was the added bonus of Bob

Greier's off-the-wall, thought-provoking commentary and fiction (without all his spelling mistakes...). It was definitely not for everyone; but for anyone into reading about hobby personalities, CA couldn't be beat." Garret Schenck: "It is easy, way too easy, to get in over your head in this hobby. This is not to discourage potential publishers—the hobby can always use more publishers, and more players, too. But *think small*. Think *long-term*. These games can take two or three years to play out, even in speedy zines. Don't make the mistake of feeling like you have to become the Number One hobby sensation overnight. There's *plenty* of time for you to produce the best zine in the hobby. And even if you never have a poll winner, be proud of what you *can* publish. Don't ever measure your work against anybody else's—what you produce is good enough. I don't think John Fisher ever realized these eternal Dipdom truths. Instead he charged the hobby, started producing the world's biggest zine, took on a million hobby chores (the PDO Auction, co-custodian of Orphan Services), and then got married. It would be easy his fold on this changed circumstance, but those who pay attention to potential burnout victims saw this coming a mile away. If it hadn't been the marriage, it would have been something else. If you ever get the publishing bug, *please* come back here and reread this section. You'll be a lot happier if you take things slowly, one step at a time, and make sure that you're completely comfortable before moving to the next level of hobby obsessive behavior. Trust me. And when I, inevitably, bum and crash, then *you* can smugly point to *me* as another object lesson for the next novice pubber. Think about it."

Communist Diner, O-X Press. Robert Lesco: "I purchased some old ZRs from a PDO auction, and #9 and #12 listed one *Communist Diner*, published by David Berk." Pete Gaughan: "I heard about it in the SF and gen-zine hobbies, but I've never seen one. I don't believe I ever heard it had games. It's not even listed in *Factsheet Five*." Garret Schenck: "I never saw it. Thank God it's finally been excised from *Zine Register*. At least I'll be able to hand this thing over to my successor minus all these dead dogs."

Diplomacy Downs, Bruce Reiff. Bruce: "It comes down to two simple things. The first is burnout. Too much, too long. The other is a realization that I'm a player, not a GM. This is not to say I can't GM, it's just that I don't enjoy it like I do playing. The GMing started carrying over into my games with letters noting my GMing and the like. Basically it took the fun out of everything." Dave McCrumb: "It is very annoying to have any Diplomacy game delayed, but when the GM is somebody who has criticized you in the past for being a week late... Bruce started out with a bang. And like most bangs, it seems to have peaked and ended, all before putting out a dozen issues. That is too bad as it had a different focus. I knew nothing about horse racing, but was enjoying learning." Melinda Ann Holley: "Folded." David Hood: "This zine's niche was horse racing. Of course there was much more material in here for those of us who couldn't tell a horse's butt from a hole in the ground. For awhile the letter column was the mainstay of the zine, but toward the end there was less interesting stuff. As a games service, *Dip Downs* did pretty well, concentrating on running Dip and Gunboat on a timely basis with a great variety of players. Indeed, there were a great many novices playing here, which, given the quality of Bruce's work, was probably a good

thing." Garret Schenck: "See my comments on *California Acres*, above. *Diplomacy Downs* was a classic case of a publisher who tried to do too much, too fast. I certainly enjoyed my game here, and it's too bad that Bruce is no longer running it—he did a pretty good job, I thought. Oh well, maybe someday he'll get back into it, but if he does, you can be sure he'll be a 'sadder but wiser man.'"

Diplomacy Today, Darrel Plant. Garret Schenck: "I never saw this one, and as nobody else bothered to grieve its passage, we'll bury it *sans* epitaph. It's probably been dead and gone for years, actually."

Diplomatic Immunity, Michael Legg. Garret Schenck: "Samie for this one."

The Dippy Doings, Matt Gallagher. Garret Schenck: "And this one, too."

Disease City, James K. Goode. James: "Folded. The league is being transferred to Don Del Grande's new 'zine *GOL!*" Dave McCrumb: "After recovering from a computer failure (always back up your disk, even if it's not important data), James was trying to get back on schedule. He does not appear to have succeeded very well. This United Football League had some of the best rules around, offering a wide range of options for managers to select from while building their teams. I had hoped *DC* would make it back to a reliable schedule as I looked forward to playing." Kevin Brown: "Two years ago, I would have said *DC* was the best zine in the Hobby. Not just the United subhobby, but the whole Hobby! Since then, James went Railway Rivals crazy and *DC* became extremely irregular and somewhat thinner. James had been looking for someone to take over as GM, as he had had enough of running United. The day he gives it over to someone new will be a sad day for the United world. Anyway, for those of you that have played United in European or British zines, *DC*'s rules were fairly radical. You'd have probably said to yourself 'That won't work!' Trust me, it worked." Scott Cameron: "*DC* had been my favorite United zine and for several years it could have been described as the flagship zine of the United hobby (a place now held by *Pilot Light*). The rules featured a heavy financial element with managers having to balance their team's expenditures on such things as minor league teams, superior coaching staffs, and 'advertising.' You can't afford to do everything you might want to do and it's quite possible that, if you fail to manage your money properly, you'll go bankrupt and will have to sell off players to stay solvent. *DC* had been dormant for the last 18 months or so and Jim had been actively seeking someone to take over the league. Late word is that Don Del Grande may be transferring the *DC* league to his new zine *GOL!*" Eric Brosius: "James had become bitten with the 'choo-choo' bug, and as such announced that *DC* will be handed over to a new GM. When it was running, this was almost universally considered the *best* United zine, so its disappearance has United fans worried." Don Del Grande: "If you're waiting for *Disease City*, you're going to have a very long wait. Jim Goode has folded the 'zine and transferred the league to me, its new GM." Garret Schenck: "This one I have seen. Along with the rest of the hobby, apparently! Well, I've nothing to add to the statements above, except that I always kind of enjoyed the mystifying experience that was getting this 'infectious publication' in the mail. Happily, James is continuing to publish his 'choo-choo' zine *The Encounter*, also known as the 'completely taped-up zine from Hell.'

Ground Zero, Timothy Raithel. Garret Schenck: "I never saw this one, and apparently, neither has anyone else. Not that surprising, this one was a goner before I picked up *ZR* a year ago from Tom Nash."

Ishkibibble, Phil Reynolds. Phil: "I've decided to scrap *Ishkibibble* (for now...), much to my regret. I still think we (the hobby) could use something like it (or *HOL*, without the feuding), a central forum, etc. I'm planning on returning to school this spring semester, and prefer to make sure *Dipadeedoodah!* doesn't suffer because of the addition of *Ishkibibble*, etc. (See, maybe I have learned my lesson after all!)" Garret Schenck: "What an embarrassment! As a favor to Phil (who had delivered an *extraordinary* number of zine reviews for *ZR* #19) I listed this one on 'spec' in the last issue, since he was promising it would be out inside of a month. Well, no sooner had *ZR* #19 hit the pavement than a letter arrived from Phil: sorry, no *Ishkibibble*. Several of my hobby 'friends' made sure I got good and splattered with egg on this one! Oh well, I haven't bothered to learn my lesson—if you look carefully in this issue you'll see several other 'speculative' zine startups listed herein. What the heck, the point of this thing is to help players and publishers find each other, so if that means I end up looking stupid occasionally, so what. But next time, Phil, I'll expect the zine *in hand* before I hand out the free publicity!"

Lord of Hosts, Brad Wilson. Brad: "I *guarantee* a *LoH* by July 1. I will pay five free issues or two 100-minute tapes full of music from my collection for articles or variants! The next issue will be decent—the one after it good!" Garret Schenck: "Sure Brad, whatever you say. Of course he was singing this song last issue too. Likely he'll bitch and moan about being stuck in here with a bunch of skeletons, but I'm sure he'll quickly realize there's just one way out of this particular coffin—*PUBLISHED!* (And just think, he can make me look foolish, too!) If Brad were *intelligent* he'd take this opportunity to fold and let the MNC(uc) pass quietly pass out of hobby history—and that's why I stuck him in here! Now his ego will *force* him to publish, making his life even more miserable than before. *Vertigo* will probably slow down to just two issues per year! Hyork, hyork! (Alternatively he *could* pass the service on to Doug Kent, who's probably sniffing around for something more to do—it's been over a month since the launch of *PRI*, after all...)"

Mad Dog, Bernard L. Beary, Jr. Kevin Brown: "If I were running the *ZR* (it could happen...*NOT*) I'd put *MD* in the folded section. If asked, Bernard will say it's coming soon. He's been saying that for a year. It's unfortunate, since *MD* was a very fine United zine." Dave McCrumb: "*Mad Dog*. Is it still alive? I keep hearing rumors that this United Football zine is coming out any day now, but I will believe it when I see it. (I would list it as folded.)" Garret Schenck: "I never heard this time around from Bernard, despite the two Pubber Info Sheets I recently sent him (he had returned the sheets for issue #19). He hasn't published since February 1991 (almost 16 months), so I think this is really where he belongs."

Massacre By Treachery, Mark Larzelere. Garret Schenck: "This zine did not fold, it merely changed its name to *Where's Kevin Tighe*, but I'll include this information here for the benefit of future archivists."

Megalomaniac, Rich McKey. Garret Schenck: "This one's too bad, I really enjoyed Rich's little zine. But he seems to have vanished without a trace. If I remember

correctly, he got married and almost immediately the zine started having trouble. The last issue I ever saw of this one came out almost 13 months ago, and the Orphan Custodian is now in the process of rehousing Rich's games. I always felt a bit of a bond with Rich because before he moved to Cape Cod he lived in Florence, Massachusetts, real close by my old stomping ground from 1974 through 1986. Rich enjoyed a good argument and made a letter column an integral part of his zine. Oh well..."

Mike's Mag, Mike Scott. Scott Cameron: "Hasn't been seen in a long time and has most likely folded. It's too bad because Mike is a pretty good GM and there aren't enough wargame zines around." Pete Gaughan: "*Mike's Mag* was publishing 30-40 page issues back in 1982, when I started. He had everything—postal hexgames, mostly, but lots of Dip and several guest GMs. I never played there but this is a real dinosaur, left over from the days of Larry McCloud and Mike Mazzer." Garret Schenck: "Well, this one was probably DOA when I picked up ZR from Tom Nash, but we had to go through the motions. Sorry I never saw it, it sounded like it was an important zine, in its time."

The Modern Patriot, Bill Highfield. Garret Schenck: "This was apparently an on-line zine on GEnie. There is still quite a bit of activity on GEnie (see the 'Prodigy' section for a brief mention of that online service), and of course the folks at Avalon Hill think GEnie is the next best thing to blind kriegspiel. I don't know if the Dip activities on GEnie are organized into actual 'zine-like' thingies (the way they are on Internet or CompuServe), but from Drew Franz's report on Progidy, I would guess not. This might change, however, especially once Drew gets back from the Med and back on the net."

White House Mania, Bruce Linsey. Bruce: "Games ended—no longer published—folded several months ago." Garret Schenck: "Never saw it—thanks, Bruce, for filling me in."

Delisted Zines

At the request of their respective publishers, the following zines are "delisted" for this issue; no information can be provided for either.

Caveat Emptor
Why Me?

Hobby Services

Boardman Number Custodian (BNC), Gary Behnen, 13101 S. Trenton, Olathe, KS 66062. The BNC issues unique identifying numbers for every Regular Diplomacy game in North America. If you're playing in a game without a Boardman Number, contact your GM or Gary to find out why. Gary publishes *Everything*, the official publication of the BNC, about twice a year. You can get it for a buck an issue if you want, though it's pretty dry and dusty—it reports on game openings and game closing, and includes the occasional item related to BNC affairs. **GS Encyclopedia of Zines**, will list every Diplomacy zine ever published, along with data and writeups on many. See *The Curator* in the zine listings for more details.

Institute for Diplomatic Studies (IDS), Larry Peery, Box 620399, San Diego, CA 92162. Founded in 1971 to promote the use of politico-military wargames as a vehicle for the study of international crisis management and conflict resolution (and you thought we sold bagels in Brooklyn), the IDS has always used Diplomacy as one of its teaching tools.

Today the IDS offers hobbyists a wide variety of hobby and game-related Diplomacy publications including books, monographs, magazines, and other publications related to Diplomacy as a hobby, and the game's strategy, tactics, and diplomacy for every level of player. In addition to these publications we offer a variety of esoteric items including the "official" Diplomacy Stabbing Gourmet Cookbook.

More importantly to some, perhaps, we also offer access to certain back issues of *Diplomacy World* (and *World Diplomacy*). These issues, and the four Anthologies of *Dip World* articles are the best sources of information available to the beginning Dipper.

For a complete listing of available materials send \$1.00 to the above address.

LP International Subscription Exchange (ISE), Pete Gaughan, 1521 S. Novato Blvd. #46, Novato, CA 94947-4147. A service for Dipsters who want to get zines from foreign countries but don't want to mess with foreign currency or post-office coupons. Send American dollars to me, and I'll arrange for you to get the postal game zines you request from the United Kingdom (and other countries). Just write and let me know you're interested.

Standard estimates: send \$1.00 for each zine you want a sample from, \$4.00 for a few issues as a trial sub, and more if you definitely want to subscribe. If you have an address for the zine, include that just in case.

I've taken this service over with little in the way of prior record-keeping—if you sent money to the ISE (Bruce Reiff) previously and have not seen your zines, write to me with as much detail on the matter as you can and I'll try to set things right.

PG Masters of Deceit, Tom Mainardi, 45 Zummo Way, Norristown, PA 19401. This is one of the two "novice packets" in the hobby—a little more up to date than *Supernova*. I believe you can get this thing for \$1.50 from Tom. **GS Miller Number Custodian (MNC)**, Lee Kendter, Jr., 376A Willowbrook Dr., Jeffersonville, PA 19403. Like the BNC, except the MNC issues unique numbers for all variant Diplomacy games (including Gunboat). Lee publishes *Alpha & Omega*; see zine listings for details. **GS Miller Number Custodian under the Covenant (MNC/uc)**, Brad Wilson, PO Box 126, Wayne, PA, 19087. This is an "alternative" Miller Number Service. Brad has been a non-performer as far as publishing the results of variant games (see *Lord of Hosts*, "Recently Folded Zines"), but he is still issuing Miller Numbers.

GS North American United Open, Chuck Lietz, 1825 SE 146th Court, Vancouver, WA 98684. This is a one-shot United tournament which is open to anyone who wants to play. The NAUO is open to everybody, even people who have never played United before; an excellent way for someone who has never played before to find out what United is like. Chuck did a very good job with the first NAUO and the second annual NAUO is currently in progress. There is no guarantee that there will be a third annual NAUO, but if Chuck doesn't want to do it, perhaps someone else will pick up the ball. SC

North American Variant Bank, Lee Kendter, Jr., 376A Willowbrook Dr., Jeffersonville, PA 19403. New variant designs can be registered with the NAVB, joining something like 900 others. *Most* of these can be purchased for a dime per page for rules and maps (where applicable), *plus postage*. Catalog available for \$5.00. GS



North American Zine Bank (NAZB), Garret Schenck, 40 3rd Place, Basement Apt., Brooklyn, NY 11231-3302. The NAZB is an ingenious scheme to "recycle" the trade copies that the ZR publisher receives in trade. Sends me \$3.00

and in return I'll stuff at least 20 different sample zines into a manila envelope and send it back. You can request particular zines, certain classes of zines (i.e., all RR zines, just Dip zines, etc.); I'll do my best to fill your request—though note, I do not have a very good selection of United or other "sports" zines. GS

Ombudsman Service System, John Caruso, 636 Astor Street, Norristown, PA 19401. I think John is still running this, but in the back of my mind I'm thinking he may have palmed it off on somebody else. If it's not him I'm sure he'll be glad to point you in the right direction.

What it does is provide impartial hobby members to help settle disputes, generally between players and gamesmasters. Probably a good idea. GS

Once Upon A Deadline, Mark Berch, 11713 Stonington Place, Silver Spring, MD 20902. I believe Mark is still handling distribution of this, but I haven't heard from him lately. It's a huge (300+ pages) compendium of articles for those interested in GMing or starting a zine. If you're thinking about it, \$3.00 is all it costs, and if you only get one idea out of it, you're ahead of the game. Mark also publishes *Lexicon of Diplomacy*, a sort of "glossary" of terms you may encounter in the hobby. GS

People's Diplomacy Organization Relief Auction (PDORA), Douglas Kent, 54 West Cherry Street, #211, Rahway, NJ 07065. PDORA was created to support some of the needy hobby services while having fun at the same time. Each year hobby members donate various items. These items are then auctioned off through a mail-bid auction. The money collected is then divided up by a committee of hobby veterans and donated to various hobby services. Anyone who has a hobby service and would like to request funding should get in touch with me. DK

Pontevedia, published by Phil Reynolds: a monthly listing of game openings. See zine listings for more details.

Railway Rivals Number Custodian, Paul Gardner, 5 Timber Lane, Brattleboro, VT 05301. Paul is in charge of giving out game numbers for PBM and PBEM RR games run in the United States. Anyone wishing to run a postal RR game should contact Paul for a game number. SC

(Paul is the U.S. designee of the International Custodian, Stuart Armstrong.) CVM

Railway Rivals Orphan Service, Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave., San Diego, CA 92117. Apparently Conrad tries to place games from folded RR zines with other GMs. Mostly they seem to end up in his lap! GS
 Railway Rivals Rating Service, Craig Mills, 3024 Pascal St. North, Roseville, MN 55113. In his zine *This Train Is Bound For Glory*, Craig reports on completed PBM and PBEM RR games and publishes a rating system for American RR players. SC

For international RR player ratings (using a different system than Craig), Stuart Armstrong, 15 Park Lane, Beaconsfield, Bucks., U.K. is the source. CVM

Rostherne Games Representative, Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, OH 43017. Ken is the official representative in the United States for Rostherne Games, publishers of *Railway Rivals* and *Bus Boss*. Ken is generally the only source for the rules and maps for RR or BB. A set of rules for RR or BB is \$1.00; paper maps for each game are also \$1.00. At present there are about 10-15 BB maps and 40-50 RR maps available. SC

(Ken is a good source for PBEM information.) CVM
 Runestone Poll, Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St., Milford, MA 01757-3554. The Runestone Poll is an annual popularity contest for the hobby's zines, subzines, and GMs.

Although many publishers take the Poll quite seriously, it is intended primarily to provide fun and to provoke discussion. Despite the immense quantity of statistical claptrap which I provide in the Poll publication *The Roar of the Crowd* each year, the Poll is not a scientific survey—it's more like voting for the All-Star team than answering questions for the Gallup Poll.

New hobbyists sometimes express their reluctance to vote in the Poll, especially if they've only seen one or two zines. There's really no reason to hold back; the scoring criteria give more weight to those who've seen more zines, anyway. So get out there and *vote!* EB

Supernova, Bruce Reiff, 2207 Smokey View Blvd., Powell, OH 43065. This is the other "novice packet," well worth the \$1.00 that Bruce charges. Bruce recently sent me a big batch of *Supernovas*, permitting me to include it with issues of ZR that go out to novices. GS
 U.S. Orphan Service, Eric Ozog, 9509 209th Avenue East, Bonney Lake, WA 98390. I'm the Hobby's exorcist, resurrecting games from the graveyard of folded zines. We are in an unprecedented Hobby downturn. I need your support to help me place orphaned games in new homes in a timely fashion. If you're a player in a zine you haven't seen in three months, and the zine used to come out on a regular basis, then by all means tell me—don't wait six months or a year to take action! I will make every effort to place any game—no matter how long it was in limbo—providing I can find GMs and players willing.

To folding GMs: I appeal to you to "face the music": don't put off rehousing your games. The longer you wait, the more likely it is that players will drop out. I'm here to help; your players will thank you too. Small donation\$ are appreciated. EO

So that's it! Another one bites the dust. Sorry if this "Hobby Services" section got a little truncated, but due to my excellent planning I ended up about a page over, and had to "take steps" in order to squeeze everything in.

There's just enough space to tell you that this thing was produced on a Macintosh IICI computer, and printed on a Texas Instruments microLaser PS35 printer. MS Word was used for text editing, QuarkXPress for final page layout.



printed on paper made 100%
 from post-consumer waste